

Religion in China

Major Concepts and
Minority Positions

Edited by Max Deeg
and Bernhard Scheid

Verlag der
Österreichischen Akademie
der Wissenschaften



OAW

MAX DEEG, BERNHARD SCHEID (EDS.)

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Nanjing's Sanzang Pagoda with the Zifeng Tower, a modern architectural landmark,
in the background. The Sanzang Pagoda is named after the famous Buddhist
pilgrim Xuanzang and is said to treasure some of his relics.

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Dedicated to the memory of Prof. Dr. Otto Ladstätter (1933–2005)

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Foreword – “cum apologia”

The fate of this volume of collected articles needs a slight variant of the usual “habent sua fata libelli”: “habent sua fata auctores libelli”. The focus on the authors’ fate becomes obvious when the reader looks back at the event where the papers collected in this volume were originally presented. This was an international workshop on Chinese religions organized by Prof. Dr. Otto Ladstätter (†2005) at the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (IKGA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Sadly, Prof. Ladstätter passed away before work on this volume could be finished. Incidentally, one of the authors, Prof. Dr. Erich Zürcher (†2008), followed him a few years later. The loss of the project’s “father” put the task of publication on the probably most inadequate shoulders imaginable. After Professor Ladstätter’s untimely death, I simply happened to be the only contributor available in Vienna to continue the editorial task. Consequently, Prof. Dr. Ernst Steinkellner, then Director of the IKGA, asked me to continue Professor Ladstätter’s project as a single editor. While the work on the volume first ran smoothly, not least thanks to the editorial assistance of Mrs. Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek from the IKGA, my move from Vienna to Cardiff caused considerable delays. In addition, the IKGA was relocated and restructured twice during the same time, while Mrs. Peck-Kubaczek left the IKGA without finishing her editorial work. I had already given up hope that the volume could be published at all, when Dr. Bernhard Scheid, japanologist at the IKGA, contacted me and offered his assistance. It is therefore due to his efforts that the last obstacles in the complicated production process of this volume could be solved in the end. We had to make a principal decision whether to fully update the contributions or to edit and publish them in the form they had reached up to the last major revision by Mrs. Peck-Kubaczek. In order not to postpone the publication of the edition any longer and considering the inconvenience and – in the case of Professor Zürcher’s essay – impossibility for a fundamental revision by the authors, we decided to publish all contributions as they were. I have only updated the “Introduction” with the most important recent publications in the field of Chinese religions,

while Bernhard Scheid brought footnotes and references into a single format and took care of the layout and the index. I still hope that the essays collected in this volume will be of interest especially since they cover such a wide range of Chinese religions, including contributions on the so-called Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which are normally either restricted to very specialised contexts or treated separately from the standard set of the “Three Teachings” (*san-jiao* 三教) – Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism – attributed to the Middle Kingdom. With this in mind I do not expect to have gained much merit (*punya* or *gongde* 功德 in the Buddhist sense) by this belated publication, but at least have repaid a small amount of my “Bringschuld” for the support and friendship I have received during my time in Vienna and afterwards from the directors, Professor Steinkellner and his successor, the late Dr. Helmut Krasser († 2014), and other members of the IKGA.

Cardiff, 24th March 2014

Max Deeg

Contributors

CHIAO Wei, professor emeritus, contributed significantly to the establishment of a department for Chinese Studies at the University of Trier. He received his PhD in philosophy, ethnology, and linguistics at the University of Vienna. Since 1971 he has been working as Professor of Chinese Studies in Bonn and Trier. His major research topics include: linguistics (also lexicography and neologisms), Chinese philosophy, Chan Buddhism and Daoism.

Max DEEG is Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Cardiff. He received his PhD in Indian Studies at the University of Würzburg. From 2002 to 2006 he was professor at the Institute for Systematic Theology at the University of Vienna. His research interests include in particular Buddhist narratives and their roles for the construction of identity in premodern Buddhist communities.

Irene EBER is Louis Frieberg Professor of East Asian Studies (emeritus) at the Department of East Asian Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and senior fellow of the Truman Research Institute. She has published widely on religion in China, the Jewish diaspora in China and on Chinese literature.

Dru C. GLADNEY is Professor of Anthropology at Pomona College. He was Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa from 1993–2006 and has worked as professor h.c. at Central Nationalities University, Beijing, and Shanghai University. His research topics include ethnic and cultural nationalism in Asia, in particular the peoples, politics, and cultures of the Silk Road and Muslim Chinese (or Hui).

Roman MALEK, S.V.D., is Professor of Religious Studies at the Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule St. Augustin near Bonn. He is a missionary of the Steyler Order (S.V.D.), sinologist and former editor in chief of

Monumenta Serica – Journal of Oriental Studies, China Heute, and editor of the Monumenta Serica Monograph Series. He has published widely on religion, particularly on Christianity, in Chinese culture.

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Erik ZÜRCHER (†2008) was Professor Emeritus of East Asian History at the University of Leiden, where he chaired the Institute of Chinese Studies from 1974 to 1990. His research interests included the reception of foreign complex systems of thought in premodern China, in particular of Buddhism (*The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 1972), but also of Christianity and the Jesuit mission.

Major Periods in Chinese History

Shang 商 dynasty, ca. 1570–1046 BCE

Zhou 周 dynasty, 1045–256 BCE

Qin 秦 dynasty, 221–206 BCE

Han 漢 dynasty, 206 BCE – 220 CE

Three Kingdoms (Wei 魏, Shu 蜀, Wu 吳), 220–280

Jin 晉 dynasty, 265–420

Southern and Northern Dynasties (Nanbeichao 南北朝), 420–589

Sui 隋 dynasty, 581–618

Tang 唐 dynasty, 618–907

Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (Wudai shiguo 五代十國), 907–960

Song 宋 dynasty, 960–1279

Yuan 元 dynasty, 1271–1368

Ming 明 dynasty, 1368–1644

Qing 清 dynasty, 1644–1911

Republic of China, 1912–1949

People's Republic of China, 1949–present

Religion in China

Introduction

Max Deeg

In the West, “Chinese religion(s)” and “Chinese spirituality” have received a great deal of attention in the last years. This can generally be observed in the popular interest in such esoteric themes such as Fengshui 風水, and interest in the intellectual and spiritual background of the highly popular Chinese medicine and pre-“wellness” phenomena Taiqiquan 太極拳 and Qigong 氣功. Qigong has also brought Chinese religions into the headlines of the newspapers: through the controversy between the Chinese government and the Falungong 法輪功 and its leader Li Hongzhi 李洪志 the public has become aware that there is at least conflict concerning religion in the Peoples’ Republic of China, a modern communist-socialist state which, since the coming to power of the Communist party and especially after the brutal sweepings of the Cultural revolution, was popularly believed to have gotten rid of its “opium for the people.” Despite official Chinese descriptions and census-like documents, it seems that the real status quo of religions – those organized in state-recognized associations, the religious underground organizations, as well as the diffuse range of “folk religions” that flow as an undercurrent in Chinese traditions – in the Peoples’ Republic is rather unclear and in constant motion,¹ and the notion of “religious fever” (*Religionsfieber*, Ch. *zongjiao-re* 宗教熱) in China as it has been described by Roman Malek² still has to be proven in situ. The study of religions in mainland China and their development there must counterbalance the previous focus on Taiwan that has, until recently, dominated the Western discourse on traditional Chinese religions. This stands

¹ The description of the state of religions in mainland China in MacInnis’ *Religion in China Today* (MacInnis 1989) is already outdated and needs a sequel.

² See, e.g. Malek 1995; see also Malek 1996, pp. 203–207.

true, even though religious studies have begun to develop in Taiwan, after a long period of state-supported secularity, for a while now. A new development is also to be seen in mainland China where Chinese religions are now not only studied in the context of historical and sociological studies but as an academic subject in the framework of an emerging Religious Studies discipline, established as independent disciplines e.g. at Renmin University (Beijing), and Fudan University (Shanghai).

The popular interest in Chinese religion(s) in the West has its correlation in academic research. The number of publications on Chinese religions has increased considerably over the last few decades. A journal exclusively dedicated to the study of Chinese religions published in a Western language³ is just one indication of this development, and introductions and anthologies in the form of textbooks⁴ show that, at least in North American universities and colleges, Chinese religions have gained a place in the curricula of humanities departments. Extensive bibliographies and overviews on the subject have been published⁵ and a useful survey on the current state of affairs has been made available⁶ which, for the earlier periods, has now been complemented by a series of monographs⁷. This trend will hopefully continue for the sake of scholars who, in addition to their individual fields of expertise, want to maintain a general overview of this branch of Religious Studies, a subject that, due to its wealth of historical sources and contemporary developments, is virtually exploding in terms of research and publications.

In this context, the title of the present volume reads rather presumptuous. Collecting representative papers on “Chinese religion” tries to achieve the impossible. The contributions to this volume also seem to underline this very point: they had to decide between providing a general overview of their subject-religion (Chiao) or a detailed study of a single aspect in one religion (Deeg, Zürcher).

Owing to the particular history of the present volume (see the Foreword), certain lacunae in this collection of essays must be frankly admitted. The question of the religious nature of Confucianism, for in-

³ The *Journal of Chinese Religions* of the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions.

⁴ Thompson 1969; Sommer 1995.

⁵ Thompson 1987; Thompson/Seaman 1993.

⁶ Overmyer, et al. 1995a and 1995b.

⁷ Lagerwey/Kalinowsky 2009; Lagerwey/Lü 2010.

stance, would certainly have deserved a chapter of its own.⁸ The reader may also wonder why there is no chapter on folk religion or popular religion (*minjian zongjiao* 民間宗教). In fact, important work has been done in these areas in recent years,⁹ which was, however, not available at the time when the present contributions were written.

To give an outline of this volume, we may divide Chinese religions – in a quasi traditional sinocentric manner – into two main groups: autochthonous and foreign in origin.¹⁰ From such a perspective, the present volume has a clear emphasis on the latter group: one paper on Buddhism (Deeg) and another on Judaism (Eber) and two each on Islam (Gladney, Wang) and on Christianity (Zürcher, Malek), while only one article is about an “autochthonous” religion, Daoism (Chiao). Reasons can be brought forward for this imbalance and particular emphasis on “minority religions” such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. From the advent of Chinese studies in the West, promulgated by the Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see the article by Erich Zürcher in this volume), the imperial state “religion”, so-called Confucianism, was primarily studied as it was conceived by traditional Chinese scholars as well as Western missionaries and scholars of sinology as the Chinese mainstream religiosity, whereas Buddhism, as a foreign and thus corrupt and inferior religion, was rather neglected.¹¹ On the other hand, sinologists of the first generation – e.g. the French scholars Abel Remusat, Édouard Chavannes, and Paul Pelliot – were especially interested in Buddhist material in Chinese because it provided sources that documented the connection between China and what the Chinese called “Western Regions” (Xiyu 西域), although in general the study of Chinese Buddhist texts never reached the same degree of importance for the study of (Indian) Buddhism as their Tibetan equivalents. Dealing mainly with “foreign” religions, the overall framework of this volume can be seen as mirroring the way in which religions have

⁸ The discourse on whether Confucianism is a religion or not reaches back to the Jesuit mission and the Rites Controversy but also has been taken up again recently by the representatives of New Confucianism or Neo-Confucianism such as Du Weiming 杜維明.

⁹ See, for instance, Seiwert 2003, Chau 2005, Overmyer 2009, or Chamberlain 2009.

¹⁰ This division is, of course, heuristic and does not comply with critical scholarship; it does not take into account the blending of religious traditions often considered typical Chinese and called syncretistic. On this point, see the article by Roman Malek in this volume.

¹¹ On the “Orientalist” development and background of sinology, see Deeg 2003.

been adapted and integrated into Chinese society in the past and in the present, how they have become amalgamated with Chinese culture, but also how they have kept their own inherent features in the midst of the Chinese cultural mainstream discourse. Concentrating on “minority” or “marginal” religions¹² not only makes sense in quality – the mutual cultural process of attraction and repulsion can be studied more easily in the case of Islam, Judaism and Christianity than with acculturated and historically diversified phenomenon such as Buddhism, with its long history in China – but also based on the argument of reversed quantity, namely, that neglected topics of study are to be promoted.

The diversity of topics in the papers of this volume definitely has the advantage of showing that we should beware of rashly speaking of Chinese religion in the singular, postulating, of course, not the existence of a single Chinese religion, but rather something like a typical Chinese “religiosity” projected by the traditional concept of *sanjiao heyi* 三教合一, “The three teachings (Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) are one.” A careful approach should, however, not prevent us from looking for unvarying elements in the development of religions in China – which leads us back to the topic of the acculturation and adaptation of foreign religions into a Chinese environment.

As the only “autochthonous” religion in this volume, Daoism is treated in an overview by Chiao Wei. After giving a condensed survey of the beginnings of Daoism with the (philosophical) writings of Laozi (*Daodejing*) and Zhuangzi, the establishment of institutionalized Daoism through Zhang (Dao)ling and the development of Daoist canonical scriptures, Chiao goes on to explain the basic ideas and elements underlying Daoist religion (cosmogony, soteriology, alchemy for longevity or immortality, etc.). Chiao describes the development of the different branches (or schools) of Daoism (Zhengyi 正一, Quanzheng 全真), their present state and their (historical) relationship with the relevant imperial rule. He sees a relation between Daoist virtues and the strength and endurance of the Chinese in the hard struggle of survival. He then discusses basic Daoist concepts (*dao*, *ziran*, *wuwei*) and their meaning for the past and, possibly, for the future. Chiao finally points to the revival of Daoism in modern China, especially in the southern provinces; the success of Daoism lies in its giving a model or orientation both to

¹² Cf. Malek in this volume.

the lower classes and the intellectual classes in a world of increasing disintegration.¹³

Max Deeg takes up the topic (and problem) of the sinification (or sinicization) of the foreign religion Buddhism into the Chinese self-awareness of their culture, an awareness that was already strongly developed at the time of Buddhism's appearance. Deeg concentrates on the early centuries of reception and acceptance of Buddhism in China, especially the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (Nanbeichao), and shows how early Chinese Buddhism tried to make the concrete historical timetable of Chinese antiquity compatible to the *Heilsgeschichte* of Indian Buddhism, as defined by the dates of birth, enlightenment and *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. Deeg argues that a pro-Buddhist interpretation can be found in some of the earliest Chinese efforts of "writing times and spaces together:" the death of the Buddha coinciding with the shift from the Shang tyranny and the beginning of the reign of the Zhou, which thus portentously interconnects traditional Chinese historiography with the Buddhist calculation of time. In the model of history that is discussed, the Chinese idea of the rise and fall of dynasties – specifically that of the Zhou – is made compatible with the Buddhist idea of the decay of the Buddhist teaching, the decay of the dharma, which itself is closely connected to early Chinese Buddhist messianic ideas surrounding the figure of the future Buddha Maitreya (Mile). This, on one hand, proved very fertile, but at the same time, in the subsequent development of Buddhism it attracted the suspicion and hostility of most of the later Chinese dynasties.

Zhuo Xinping, director of the Department of Religious Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Science (Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan), in his article "Religious Policy and the Conception of Religion in China" touches on the highly sensitive topic of how and under which circumstances religions in the Peoples' Republic of China are recognized as such. Zhuo gives an overview of the different positions of various intellectual and ideological groups towards the concept of religion, especially the critical voices in late imperial and early republican China. He finally gives an outline of the official position of the Communist Party

¹³ To the selected bibliography of mainly German works – the original paper was written in German – one might add, in addition to other numerous books on the subject in English, recent important publications like Kohn 2000 or Pregadio 2008. Now also a chronologically arranged, bibliographical overview of the Daoist canon has been published: Schipper/Verellen 2004.

concerning the role and function of religion in a socialist society and state, including the recent positive development of the Party's recognizing (world) religion as an important and indispensable element of society. Most interesting is the fact that a theory such as Huntington's "clash of civilizations" can be considered a factor in the conceptualization of an acceptable relationship between religion and a socialist state. Zhuo's paper shows how closely religious policy and the problem of a theoretical – and one may add: normative – concept and definition of religion are interwoven. At the same time, however, it is astonishing how similar the modern approach in the study of religion is to this understanding of religion in its social and cultural function – despite a rather normative tendency. This might point to more liberal tendencies in religious policy developing in China, as Zhuo indicates in his paper.

Irene Eber, writing on Jews in China, divides her paper into two main sections. The first is dedicated to the Jewish community in Kaifeng beginning with the erecting of a synagogue in the southern Chinese city in 1163. Eber is even quite convinced of being able to trace the first Jews in China to the Tang period, based on indications of Jewish merchants having been in China at that time. The Kaifeng community, though still attested by early Catholic missionaries in China, ceased to exist at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Eber sees the slow loss of Jewish identity connected to the fact that social affiliation was defined rather by lineage and agnatic groups than by affiliation with a ritual community. Nevertheless, within the framework of this lineage identity, the Jews of Kaifeng managed to retain their Jewish identity by means of sinicized practices (holidays, keeping of the Torah, calendar). Interestingly enough, today there is a revival of Jewish identity through conversion in Kaifeng, with some of the converts even studying in Israel. In the second section, Eber discusses the case of the Jewish diaspora in Shanghai that existed from the middle of the nineteenth century and that was of quite heterogeneous origin (both Oriental and European). She shows how the different communities developed organizational structures (synagogues, schools, publication organs) that lasted until the gradual exodus at the end of the 1950s after the breakdown of the treaty port situation. The Shanghai communities were clearly an atypical case of a religious community, as they existed in the atypical environment of the most westernized city of China. Today, a small Jewish community has survived only in Hong Kong.

Erich Zürcher presents the topic of how early Jesuit missionaries and autochthon Christians in the South Chinese area of Fujian acted and reacted during the late Ming dynasty in the process of adopting and maintaining a religious self-identity. He focuses on the aspects of “guilt – sin – remorse – confession – absolution – penance.” Dealing with this complex of religious concepts is more than justified, because some of them – especially the Christian concept of “sin” – have been used in the past to show the uniqueness of the Christian world view and soteriology, a world view that is not found in this particular way in Chinese religion (!) nor in other religions. Zürcher, not restricting himself to Jesuit writings but also using original Chinese sources, shows where Christianity was able to build upon already existing religious ideas in Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. He shows thereby which of its features were actually incompatible with traditional Chinese religions and thus felt to be “foreign” by the Chinese Christians as well as their Chinese fellowmen. This has led to the contemporary Chinese judgment of Christianity as a “strict” religion. The paper clearly shows that both statements concerning typical Chinese religiosity and also questions of how far a foreign religion was adapted – sinicized – must be tested and validated by thorough and careful study of original sources and documents; it is worthwhile mentioning that Zürcher stresses the quality of some of his sources as being prescriptive and normative, thus avoiding the decontextualization and defunctionalization of sources that is so often met with in the study of historical religious documents.

Roman Malek, in his contribution on “Christendom in China,” stresses the fact that the history of Christianity, as a foreign and “marginal” religion and with regard to its function in the respective historical Chinese context, reflects the state and the changes of Chinese society as well as Chinese “Christendom.” The term “Christendom” is deliberately used throughout because of its broader generic meaning. Malek gives an overview of the history of Christianity in China under the rule of the Communist Party; he presents the wide variety of Christian organizations, from those officially recognized to underground communities, but also stresses the fact that Christianity has also taken on other forms of social appearance such as so-called Cultural Christianity, Elite Christianity, etc. Malek gives a clarifying sketch of a variety of categories that at first glance seem puzzling, as for instance “Christendom” between illegality and a status that is officially recognized, both in its Catholic and Protestant forms, and describes in detail developments in

the Underground Catholic Church as well as its relation to the official Church, which is still an open issue in China. He refers to the increasing number of newly founded Christian groups and sects, which are primarily located in the countryside and grouped around charismatic leaders. One tends to ask – after Malek’s description of these groups in the categories used by Christian “cult”-specialists in the West, though he rejects the official Chinese terminology of “subversive” and “orthodox” – why these groups are still labeled as Christian. If one retains the attribute “Christian,” the problem of sinicization slips in here through the backdoor again, and could be expressed by the term “syncretism.” The relatively open character of Chinese “Christendom” is also seen in the notion of “Cultural Christians,” that is, members mainly of the intellectual elite who do not belong to one of the organized forms of Christianity in China and who therefore lack the formal “requisites” of membership such as baptism, but who derive their “Christendom” in the form of a *weltanschauung*. It seems that “Cultural Christians” form the bridge between “formal” Christianity and the phenomenon that Malek calls “Christianity as an object of academic research.” For Malek, the future of “Christendom” in China is safe, although it is clear that not all its forms as described here will survive.

In his paper, Wang Jianping presents an astonishing and detailed overview of Muslim activities in today’s China, correcting, as it were, the general idea that this religion is concentrated in China’s most Western areas. He shows how in the relatively stable political structure of Chinese Muslims, traditionally organized in small, independent communities (*jama’at*) with culturally and linguistically different regional backgrounds (Uighurs, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Hui, etc.), a kind of “ecumenical” self-awareness of Islamic universality (*umma*) has started to develop that crosses ethnic and denominational borderlines and thus sometimes is even able to oppose state authority successfully. Wang clearly points out that the conditions for this change of attitude and options is due to the liberalized economic situation in China during the 1980s that lead to a higher degree of mobility and economical independence of Chinese Muslim community members, creating interregional as well as international movement (pilgrimage, exchange of *akhonds*, i.e. Islamic teachers), and also the necessary educational infrastructure (*madrasas*, i.e. Quran schools, materials distributed by traditional media such as books and periodicals, as well as modern media such as videos, CDs, websites, etc.) to nourish the “Revival Movement of Is-

lam” (Wang) in China. It also becomes clear that within the framework of the Chinese policy of recognizing Muslims as ethnic minorities with the corresponding privileges, this new search for a common identity leads to a kind of encapsulation. It has also led to the “radicalization” of – for instance – the independence movement in Xinjiang and to social friction in other regions, problems that the authorities have had to deal with. The example of Chinese Muslims shows how a traditionally well-rooted and united religion with influential connections to the international community is able to become a strong partner in the state-religion dialogue, but also how the suspicion of the state can be aroused against such semi-independent groups that have a long history in China. As Wang stresses at the end of his article, the future of Muslims in China will strongly depend upon how the centralized government and the Communist Party navigates between the Scylla of control and the Charybdis of tolerance in yielding religious, administrative and economical freedom.

What is touched on in Wang’s paper is the very topic of Dru Gladney’s contribution: the question of accommodation (sinicization) of Muslim communities into Chinese society, especially the group labeled as the Hui. Gladney emphasizes the problems of expressions such as Hui or Uighur in terms of ethnicity as well as cultural, historical and linguistic aspects. He touches on current difficulties, such as Muslim separatism within the Uighurs in Xinjiang and the connected problems (alleged terrorism, international reactions, economic decline) and their handling by the Chinese authorities, thus adding, as it were, the puzzle piece of Islam in China that was missing in Wang’s paper. Gladney’s focus is on Chinese Hui Muslims, their establishment in China and their integration into or adaptation to the Chinese cultural environment; he describes the different waves, forms and layers of Islam in history: first, the traditional Chinese Islam, called *gedimu* in Chinese (from Arab. *qadīm*, “old”), with its strong mosque and village-centered structure, and then the advent, development and characteristics of the different Sufi orders (Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, etc.) that were able to create trans-regional network structures. A third wave was caused by the higher degree of mobility and a strengthening of Muslim self-identity after the fall of the Qing dynasty and during the republican period. Muslims, coming back from pilgrimages to Arabia, introduced Wahhabi reform Islam (Ikhwan Muslim Brotherhood) to China. Most interestingly, this group was in line with the Chinese reformers’ ideas of nationalism and modernism.

This group also initially supported the communists because of their concepts of equity, autonomy and freedom of religion, until being disappointed by the development of religious policy in the PRC. This changed again with Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic reform policy after 1978, creating, however, a new group of problems similar to the ones caused by the rising Han domination of social and economic resources. Gladney does not consider the friction and contradiction between orthodox Muslim concepts and the adaptation to traditional Chinese practices to be part of phenomena such as syncretism/"sinification," but rather – referring to Max Weber – as an ongoing process of "inculturation" of Islam in China, a process of making sense of a religious tradition in a cultural environment that has not risen from this religious tradition. The outcome of this process is not at all clear, not least because of the current mobility of Chinese Muslims across the borders of China into Islamic "internationalism."

Both articles on Islam in China excel in their detailed knowledge of primary and secondary sources, and reflect extensive field work in the regions, thus delivering a picture of the changing and shifting state of this religion, which has existed in China from the days of the Arabian conquest of Central Asia during the period of the Tang dynasty. It was able to keep its stronghold in this region under centuries of Chinese administration, and even spread to parts of China that were culturally dominated by the Han ethnicity.

The volume thus presents historical facets of religions in China spanning a period of more than two thousand years in an open framework that is supplemented by an overview of the state of religions in China from an "inside" view (Zhuo) and – in the case of the two contemporary religions "Christendom" and Islam – an "outside" view (Malek, Gladney). The book hopes to contribute to the study of aspects of Chinese religions – namely, foreign and/or minority religions and the religious situation in present China – that have been somewhat neglected topics in mainstream Western sinological circles, and also in China itself due to the political situation there during most of the second half of the twentieth century.

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Daoism in China

Chiao Wei

The original meaning of Dao 道 was “path.” Laotse 老子 understood Dao as the source of all things, and after his time still other meanings such as “method” appeared. Precursors of Daoism can be found in the shamanism of antiquity and the idea of eternal life of the Qin-Han period (221 BCE–25 CE). The concept of *yin* and *yang* and the theory of the five elements (which both developed ca. 300 BCE) also had an influence on Daoism. But although the Daoist religion uses the terms of the Daoist philosophies and regards Laotse’s *Daodejing* 道德經 and the works of Zhuangzi 莊子 to be canonical scriptures, the religion differs significantly from Daoist philosophies. For the most part, their connection is only the name, which was used by the Daoist religion as a recognized placard in order to achieve wider propagation.

Daoism as a religion emerged only long after the lives of the two Daoist philosophers Laotse and Zhuangzi and it took a long time to establish itself in China. The religion is said to have been founded by Zhang Ling 張陵 during the reign of the Emperor Shun of Han 漢順帝 (r. 125–144 CE). Zhang Ling venerated Laotse as the true founder of the Daoist religion and the *Daodejing* as its holy scripture. According to tradition, Laotse appeared to Zhang Ling while he was meditating in a cave on the Heming 鶴鳴, and instructed him to be a master and lead the people back to the correct path. Subsequently Zhang Ling trained many students to become Daoist priests and treated the sick with his healing powers. He had patients brought into a quiet room in which they had to confess their transgressions. These confessions were then written down by a Daoist priest. This confession, which was related to their illness, was offered to heaven in three ways: placed on a mountain, buried in the ground and sunk in a river.

This chapter was translated from the original German by Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek.

Max Deeg/Bernhard Scheid (eds.), *Religion in China*, pp. 13–28.

In subsequent generations, the position of the spiritual leader of the Daoist religion was inherited and the seat of the leader was moved from Heming to Mount Longhu (Lunghu-shan 龙虎山, Dragon Tiger Mountain) in Jiangxi 江西.

In 1949 the Daoist leader went into exile in Taiwan. However, since 1980 Mount Longhu has again become full of life, as I saw with my own eyes in 1998. The residence of the leader has been renovated and the Chinese government is interested in letting the Daoist religion spread. As a result, today pilgrims are again coming to Jiangxi.

Various factors were important for the emergence of the Daoist religion. It initially developed out of shamanism and the folk religions of the time. In Chinese antiquity the rulers in heaven (Di 帝) were worshiped, as was nature, especially mountains, rivers, thunder and stars. Ancestor worship also played a large role in the development of Daoism. A forerunner of Daoist amulets is found in the way that offerings were presented to the ancestors by priests or shamans. This took place in a special manner, the shamans receiving a sign from each spirit that was then written down.

Legends about the *shenxian* 神仙, the immortals, and sorcery are also basic elements of Daoism. The belief in *shenxian* can be considered one of the most fundamental features of the Daoist religion. Immortality is described as having the following traits: immortals look like normal persons, immortality is attainable, and immortality lends supernatural powers that allow a person to take on other forms, move mountains, cause rain to fall and accomplish other miraculous things. The belief in *shenxian* probably emerged in the fifth century BCE. Magicians (*fangshi* 方士) of that time professed that one could find a key to immortality on the islands in the ocean. The first emperor of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) even sent out ships to look for this key as did Emperor Wu 漢武帝 of the Han dynasty (r. 140–88 BCE).

As mentioned above, another source of the Daoist religion was the original Daoist philosophy. Both Laotse's *Daodejing* and the work of Zhuangzi influenced the Daoist religion. An example is found in the chapter *Zaiyou*: "He who cares for his body and can save his energy will live forever."¹ And a final important basis for the Daoist religion was Confucianism, especially the concept of loyalty and reverence.²

¹ Cf. Guo 1986, chap. 11, p. 173.

² Cf. Ren 1991, p. 14f.; Zhang 1996, p. 19.

Another factor that must be mentioned with regard to the emergence of Daoism is the historical or social environment in which it emerged. The social conditions of the period were quite favorable for the religion appearing, whereby three aspects are significant: 1) The Han rulers were deeply superstitious and believed in omens and spirits. They thus tended to distance themselves from the strictly rational and intellectual world of the Confucianists. This made for fertile ground for the Daoist religion's development. 2) The idea of immortality had already fascinated a long line of emperors, as mentioned above. During the reign of Emperor Wu, a number of magicians were trained to this end. This aspiration of the rulers to immortality was also emulated by the general population. 3) At the end of the Han dynasty (ca. 200 CE) a number of wars were fought that made the life of the people ever more intolerable. They sought refuge and shelter in religion. The Daoist religion as propagated by Zhang Ling offered the longed-for relief. To spread his teachings he used the *Taipingjing* 太平經,³ the "peace text," a text that describes the means for society to return to harmony.

Daoism is a pantheistic religion. Its cosmos not only includes a spiritual ruler, but also the "three pure wise ones" *sanqing* 三清 (Illus. 1a-1c) as well as a string of other spirits who float in heaven, or live on or below the earth. In addition to these, there are many *xianren* 仙人, immortals, who move in heaven, or live on mountains, islands or other special places. There is, however, a well-established hierarchy between the spirits and the immortals. Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536), in his *Zhenling yeweitu* 真靈業位圖 (Catalogue of the Ranking of the Spirits and Immortals), listed 688 spirits and classified them according to seven degrees.⁴ The system of degrees mirrors the feudal or ruling system of the period. These spirits or heroes were adopted from Chinese folk religion, sagas or even Buddhism.

³ The *Taipingjing* is extant in three versions, by Gan Zhongke 甘忠可, Yu Ji 于吉 and Zhang Ling 張陵, but all three are incomplete. In the Ming Era (1368–1644) only 57 of the original 170 volumes were still extant. The work portrays a broad band of traditional Chinese ideas, including, among other things, *yin* and *yang*, the theory of the five elements, astronomy, prophecies concerning the world of spirits, as well as descriptions of the social conditions in China around 200 CE. The work, regarded to be the fundamental scripture of the Daoist religion, is most likely not the work of a single author, but rather a collection of texts by various authors. In the following I refer to the standard edition of Wang 1985.

⁴ Tao 1985, vol. 5, pp. 0019–32; Cf. also Min 1994, p. 799.

Of the few texts from the early period of Daoism that have come down to us, the most important are the *Daodejing* and the *Taipingjing*. With time, however, Daoist texts and texts about Daoism became more and more numerous. By 1457, in the Ming period, a total of 5,485 volumes had been written, but since this time no new works have been added to the corpus of Daoist writings.

Although Daoists regard the *Daodejing* their main text, it does not fulfill all Daoist needs with regard to a holy scripture. Therefore additional texts were produced, of which the oldest and most important is the *Taipingjing*, which dates to 130 CE. It was allegedly revealed to one of the authors, Yu Ji 于吉, by an immortal. The most important topics may be summarized as follows: First, *yuanqi* 元氣 (the original power) is the source of the world but it is subordinate to the Dao. *Yangqi* 陽氣 (male power), *heqi* 和氣 (harmony) and *yinqi* 陰氣 (female power) are derived from *yuanqi*. These three *qi* (powers), corresponding to heaven, earth and human beings, must be in harmony with one another in order for peace and stability to prevail in the world. Natural phenomena are a reflection of the politics and state of the current society. Natural catastrophes occur when political affairs are not in order, and can be prevented only when such affairs are well ordered, as, for example, desisting from capital punishment and the rich donating some of their wealth to the poor.

Next, a system of *shenxian*, supernatural beings, exists. It is divided into six categories, of which *shenren* 神人 occupy the highest position, followed by the *zhenren* 真人, *xianren* 仙人, *daoren* 道人, *shengren* 聖人 and *xianren* 賢人.⁵ Each type of supernatural being has a specific function. In order to help heaven rule the world, the supernatural beings communicate with heaven, to which the *shenren* and *zhenren* are closest.

Third, human beings must take responsibility for the transgressions and sins of their ancestors and relatives. Because of this concept, humans must diligently strive to do good deeds. The responsibility of the individual extends to the whole society. Ultimately all humans are exhorted to do no evil so that the requirements for harmony are fulfilled and the world remains in order.

On one hand the *Taipingjing* asserts that human beings have a predetermined destiny that is subject to the power of fate, and on the other

⁵ Wang 1985, p. 289.

hand it emphasizes that one can master one's fate through one's own actions.⁶ It is, however, also stated that very few persons can become a *shenxian*, not even one in ten thousand.⁷ But if a person always performs good deeds and strives for the Dao, he or she can reach their personal best. For certain chosen ones who strive for the Dao, the metamorphosis into a *shenxian* will be successful, but in any case, the average person who strives for the Dao will live a long life. Even simpletons, if they strive for the Dao, will be granted a relatively long life,⁸ and thus it is clear that in any case striving for the Dao is worthwhile. In order to reach the Dao and become immortal, the following points must be observed: One must be loyal to one's rulers, honour one's teachers and revere one's parents. In this case *xiao* 孝, reverence, is of particular importance. In the *Taipingjing* it is stated: "No one who strives for the Dao will succeed in attaining it if they lack piety."⁹ In addition to moral requirements, the care of the body and soul is important: they should both be strengthened through mental and physical exercises. An immortality potion will be given from heaven to the person who has earned it through exceptional achievements. One must test one's conscience, repent one's transgressions and reprimand oneself daily, both in the morning and in the evening. One must be honest at all times. In addition, there are other commandments for immortality, but all of them will not be listed here.¹⁰

Taken as a whole, the *Taipingjing* delineates an ideal world in which justice, peace and harmony prevails, a world that will exist when human beings behave in the manner described. The ideal world of the *Taipingjing* prompted many followers to strive for the Dao.

Another important early Daoist text is the *Zhouyi cantongqi* 周易參同契.¹¹ It was written in 142 CE and concerns the production of an immor-

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 438.

⁸ Ibid., p. 289.

⁹ Ibid., p. 656.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 717.

¹¹ The *Zhouyi cantongqi* is said to have been composed by Wei Boyang 魏伯陽 around 200 CE. The work deals with alchemy and provides a method for the actual production of an immortality potion. Its three parts deal with the *I Ching* "Book of Changes," the thoughts of the Yellow Emperor and those of Laotse. The *I Ching* determines the exact point in time that is favourable for the manufacture of the immortality potion. The thoughts of the Yellow Emperor and Laotse form the basis for the "production" within the human body of an (immaterial?) "inner potion"

tality potion. If translated literally, its title can have a number of meanings. The text deals with alchemy, describing chemical substances, their volumes and weights. It also describes details about making such a potion, including the temperature of the fire, the potion's effects, etc.

A primary goal of Daoist believers is a long or, if possible, eternal life, which should be attained in one's own body. According to the Daoist religion, anyone can reach this goal if various methods are followed and particular exercises are performed. These include a special diet, breathing exercises, meditation, specific medications and the performance of Daoist religious services. Over time, these methods resulted in guides for longevity, as well as important practical works in medicine, chemistry and pharmacology. The rituals in the Daoist religion are based on the idea that one's life is dependant on one's own behavior. Whether one's life is short or long is not only dependent on heaven, destiny or an outside power, but on human beings themselves and how they shape their lives. A person can thus lengthen his life and even reach immortality by practicing various exercises. This is the particularly positive Daoist concept of life.

But Daoists do not merely want to lengthen their life, they want to become an immortal, a *xianren*. In addition to magical potions, the Daoist religious way of thinking is also essential here. The Daoists derived the possibility of immortality from the mystic character of the Dao and its eternal nature. The Dao itself cannot be visualized. It is endowed with its own vital energy and its own will power. The Dao created everything in the world and exists within all things, including human beings. One can reach the Dao only if one follows certain rules and performs certain exercises. If one attains the Dao one also attains the mystic vital energy and, like the Dao, will have eternal life. The possibility of humans to continue to live as an immortal is explained with the help of the theory of *jing* 精 (primary matter, being), *qi* 氣 (breath) and *shen* 神 (spirit). In the Daoists' opinion, the three factors *jing*, *qi* and *shen* are the fundamental factors of human life. If one dies young it is because the *jing* was spent, the *qi* exhausted and the *shen* wasted away. However, if one knows how to be frugal with these powers and takes care of them,

that should confer immortality. The alchemy section unifies all three parts (the word *can* means "three"). The work is composed in the form of a poem and is very difficult to understand; numerous commentaries exist, the most famous being that of the philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Cf. Zhu 1989, pp. 1f.; Qing 1988, pp. 123ff.

it is possible to attain immortality. The Daoist methods should enable the spirit and body to live forever. With these methods the individual should be able to overcome the boundaries of life. According to the Daoist concept it is possible to achieve immortality through transformation. Master Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) said: “Transformation is a normal part of heaven and earth. Therefore, the dead can be revived and one can transform a man into a woman.”¹² One is able to transform oneself into another shape such as a bird or another creature. In the Daoist point of view, life can be prolonged through the ingestion of herbs or certain medicines. If one finds the right medicine, this will also enable one to have a long life. Master Ge Hong adds: “One can care for the body with herbs and medicine so no diseases can develop from within nor infect it from without. In this way one can have a long life.”¹³

The Daoist schools are as diverse as the sources of Daoism themselves. Only the two most important of these schools of Daoist religious thought can be dealt with here. The first school calls itself Zhengyi-pai 正一派, the “correct” or “true school”. It developed out of the Tianshi-dao 天師道 school and is based on Mount Longhu in the Jiangxi province. Monasteries are of no special importance in this school; its followers are allowed to have a family. The leadership of the Tianshi School is hereditary. Its followers revere the *shenxian*, the immortals and the spirits. They paint magical paintings and pray using magic formulas in order to beckon the spirits and banish evil demons. In Daoist religious services, in which prayers are said, good fortune is summoned and bad luck is warded off. The patriarch, the highest religious leader of the Zhengyi-pai school, is called the “heaven’s master of Zhang” Zhang Tianshi 張天師. Zhang is venerated as having been the founder of the Daoist religion in the later Han period. The title was bestowed by the emperor and is hereditary.

The second school calls itself the “School of All Truths”, Quanzhen-dao 全真道. It was founded by Wang Chongyang 王重陽, who was originally a Confucianist, during the Jin 金 dynasty (1115–1234). After having met a *xianren* he gave up his vocation and converted to the Daoist religion. He attempted to combine Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. For this reason he required his followers to recite the works *Daodejing*,

¹² Cf. Ge 1986, Chpt. 16, p. 71. The *Baopu zi* by Ge Hong is a supplement to the *Zhouyi cantongqi*. It contains above all a detailed description of breathing exercises that must be observed when producing the immortality potion.

¹³ Ibid. Neipian, chap. 3, p. 8.

Xinjing 心經 (the Buddhist Heart Sutra), and *Xiaojing* 孝經 (the Confucian classic on filial piety). Above all he adopted a great deal from Chan Buddhism. The Quanzhen School does not concern itself particularly with magic formulas or alchemy. It requires its adherents to follow a monastic life. They must accept all forms of insult and selflessly help others. Murder and sexual intercourse are forbidden. In their place one is required to fast and sleep very little. All desires are to be eradicated. Only then can one recover one's original spirit. Often the followers of this school live many years as hermits in caves on mountains where they practise rigid discipline. *Jing*, *qi* and *shen* (primary matter, breath, spirit) are made stronger through meditation and other exercises in order to reach heaven by passing through the fontanel. This is the goal of this school. On the way, the body is left behind and can decompose with no further thought.

The Daoist Association of China resumed its activities with China's opening to the West in 1980. This organisation represents the interests of the followers of the Daoist religion in China. In the same year renovation began in Beijing on the "White Cloud Monastery," Baiyunguan 白雲觀 (Illus. 2 and 3), built in 739. It was reopened in 1982. It is a monastery of the Quanzhen School. In the same year, twenty-three monasteries were chosen as major Daoist monasteries, including the above-mentioned Baiyun monastery and the residence of Master Zhang on the Longhu-shan. This is regarded as the seat of the Zhengyi School. Its last spiritual head, Zhang Enbo 張恩溥, the leader of the sixty-fourth generation, died in 1969 in Taipei. At present only his pupil is active at the residence. Through these activities the Daoist religion is slowly experiencing a renaissance in China. Contacts to Taiwan and other regions have been renewed. By 1992 many large monasteries or temples had been reopened, about four hundred in total, mostly in large or middle-sized cities. Over a thousand small monasteries had been reopened. In that year about twelve thousand Daoist priests of the Quanzhen School lived in these monasteries. In addition there were about fifty thousand Daoists of the Zhengyi School, living primarily with their families, and about ten thousand youth acolytes of the same school. In the meantime these figures must be higher.

The development and spread of Daoism was always dependent on the favour of imperial patrons and their milieu. The Tang and Song rulers, for instance, identified strongly with Daoism, supported the Daoists financially and helped them achieve high respect. At the same time the

Daoists were always loyal to the respective rulers and always considered themselves to be their subjects. Daoism, especially the Quanzhen School, strived for synthesis with Confucianism and Buddhism. It was tolerant towards Buddhism, despite the fact that Buddhist and Daoist dogma are far removed from one another. Buddhism is striving for a future nirvana, Daoism for paradise in the here and now. However, a bond between the two positions is particularly useful in a world which is becoming ever closer. Daoism is a particularly receptive religion and has always been able to adapt itself. Following setbacks in the attempts to prepare an immortality potion, it began to concentrate on meditation and the strengthening of the spirit in order to attain immortality.

The Quanzhen School, which developed in the Yuan period, signified a reform with respect to the Zhengyi School. It demanded considerably more discipline from those who had dedicated their lives to Daoism, a monastic life in a monastery or the life of a hermit on a mountain. According to the Daoist concept, the *shenxian* also live in the earth, in mountains and in rivers. Thus, humans make contact with the *shenxian* on the earth and also in the mountains, such as on the five holy mountains which include the Emei-shan and the Qingcheng-shan. These mountains are venerated and considered holy, because people believe that *shenxian* live there or that they are the place where Daoists have attained immortality. It is said that the founder of the Quanzhen School, Wang Chongyang, attained immortality on Mount Hua, and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, one of the "Eight Immortals",¹⁴ on Mount Zhongnan. Consequently, mountains have become the object of pilgrimages.

The belief in a close relationship between humans and the spirits reaches into the distant past in China. The idea that spirits live in homes in the form of stove spirits, or that there are spirits of wealth or of doorways has been held since early times. The idea that immortals inhabit the world around us has emerged from the Chinese mentality that has been shaped by realistic and pragmatic thinking. Accordingly, one does not want to enter paradise only after death, but rather here

¹⁴ The "Eight Immortals," Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and others, appear in China for the first time in the sixth century. They were used as figures in theatre pieces and on occasion were given the leading roles. The "Eight Immortals" were a favourite motif in porcelain painting of the Ming period, for example for birthdays and weddings. Due to this they became well known everywhere, and even today they still enjoy great popularity in China. One can often still find small porcelain figures portraying the "Eight Immortals".

and now. This idea most likely has to do with the living conditions in China, conditions that are dependent on the environment. It is well known that the Chinese culture emerged from the catchment-basin of the Yellow River. Life in this area, because of the adverse natural conditions, was extremely difficult. Hot summers turned to cold winters and periods of drought alternated with times of flooding. From earliest times humans had to battle with the powers of nature to ensure their survival. Daily life meant daily struggle. Hence the wish for a pleasant life already in this world is understandable. As documented in the earliest texts, the desire for long life and wealth was already formulated in Chinese antiquity. Immortality was seen to be eternal life in this world. This indicates an acceptance of the real world in which one yearns to continue living.

The resilient and untiring fighting energy of these people enabled their survival in this region. This is part of the Chinese heritage that has become the Chinese tradition. It is just this tradition that has been a moving force in the economic expansion since 1980. That which has been accomplished in China can be accredited to this fighting spirit and to pragmatic thinking. Daoism has been built on a realistic foundation. Even if its goal is immortality, one is satisfied with attaining long life and remaining healthy. In addition to the spiritual and physical exercises of the individual, good deeds also play an important role. The accumulation of good deeds is important for one's descendants, who profit from them. Then again, one's fellow citizens also profit. This accumulation of good deeds is called *jide* 積德. It is said that good deeds will be rewarded in heaven. For this reason there is a strong incentive for such behaviour. Society profits from it.

The Daoist concept of justice was often the moving force behind the numerous peasant uprisings against corrupt leadership and social injustices. In these uprisings the peasants carried banners bearing the names of Daoist spirits or gods. Thus, Daoism can be regarded as a benefactor of the masses and it recruited many followers in this way. However, Daoism has not only helped people as a religion; its contributions to medicine, pharmacy, Qigong 氣功, etc., have also resulted in many benefits.

To conclude I would like to outline a few more fundamental Daoist concepts, and show how they were not only of importance in the past, but are also important in the present and will be in the future.

The first important concept is that of *dao fa ziran* 道法自然. Literally this means: “The Dao follows the *ziran*.” But what does *ziran* mean? In this context it is not a synonym for nature, but rather an equivalent of the expression, also of importance, *wuwei* 無為, which means “not interfering.” To be more accurate, *ziran* is the passive form of *wuwei*. It is a tenet of the Dao or a form of the Dao that is influenced neither by humans nor by nature. With respect to this *ziran-wuwei*, in Dao the natural development and course of things is perceived as not needing interference.¹⁵ The principal of harmony in the relationship between humans and nature derives from this concept. Humans should maintain a harmonious relationship with the environment (nature), follow the laws of nature, and not pursue their own greed as that would seriously upset the balance between humans and nature. *Ziran* is the main concept of Daoism. One who abides by this concept will guide all things in the proper direction.

The next important concept is the above-mentioned *wuwei*. As already stated, this means “not to interfere”. In Chapter 37 in Laotse’s *Daodejing* it reads: *Dao chang wuwei er wu bu wei* 道常無為而無不為. This translates as: “The Dao never acts, but there is nothing it does not do.”¹⁶ *Wuwei* is the most important principle of Daoism and is derived from the thought *dao fa ziran*, which means, as explained above, that the Dao follows the natural course of events. This natural course is conversely *wuwei*. Accordingly, one lets affairs develop in their own way. For this reason Laotse says: *Wo wu wei er min zi hua* 我無為而民自化. This means: “Although I do not act, the people step forward themselves.”¹⁷

It is important here to note that *wuwei* does not mean that one should do nothing at all. Rather it means that one should not guide the course of events artificially, one should not apply any force to them. In other words, one should leave things in peace, should let them develop according to their own laws and not desire to influence them in a particular manner or to steer them in another direction. The interpretation of *wuwei* in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 expresses this even more clearly: “With respect to *wuwei*, humans should let things take their own course. Only then should one act oneself.” Thus, *wuwei* means that one should let things develop in their own individual manner.¹⁸

¹⁵ Wang 1986, Vol. 3, Chpt. 17, p. 10; Chpt. 64, p. 39.

¹⁶ Ibid., Chpt. 37, p. 21.

¹⁷ Ibid., Chpt. 57, p. 35.

¹⁸ Gao 1986, Vol. 7, Chpt. 1, p. 8.

Next follows the thought *fan zhe dao zhi dong*¹⁹ 反者道之動, which means: "The Dao moves by returning." This is a further important Daoist principle, namely, that movement does not advance forward, but rather returns to its original starting point. This starting point is the Dao. According to the Daoist opinion, humans have moved ever further from the Dao because of various influences of the world. An adult has long lost the ideal condition of a small child. For the Daoist it is therefore important to return to this ideal condition. Then one becomes reunited with the Dao. Daoists also believe that this return, namely the renunciation of fame, wealth and any kind of pleasure, will ensure a long life, if not even immortality. Daoists have observed in nature that plants and animals have different life spans. Turtles, cranes, pine trees and cypress trees all live for quite a long time. They all have a longer life span than humans. From this observation they have come to the conclusion that life spans are relative. In their opinion, since humans are the highest living creature, their life span should be very long and potentially they can be immortal.

The Chinese philosopher Jiang Shen 蔣伸 (799–881) was of the opinion that *fan zhe dao zhi dong* illustrates the Daoist trait of searching for immortality within oneself. Daoists do not take the view that humans must control nature in order to attain longevity. On the contrary, humans should regulate themselves to lengthen their lives. The Daoist sciences and practices do not aim to contain nature, but rather to control the human ego. It is questionable whether one can actually attain longevity in this way. However, in any case this idea may be a possible alternative to present-day success-oriented and profit-centered lifestyles.

In China today Daoism is experiencing a revival, and in some areas, especially in the southern provinces, one could even speak of a renaissance. In these areas Daoist priests are dealing with taking care of the ill, with funerals, etc. Today there are even Daoist newspapers and societies. Scientific research is also taking an interest in Daoism and there is a collection of new scholarly literature.

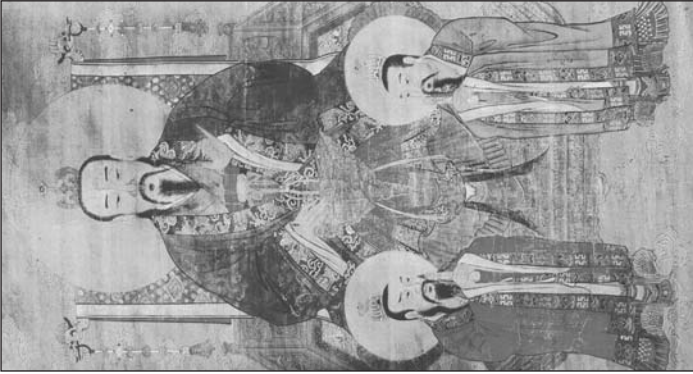
Since its founding, the Daoist religion has concentrated on serving the masses. It became the support and salvation for many peasants. For this reason it has survived through the long Chinese history despite many hurdles. In the Chinese countryside today, new problems are de-

¹⁹ Wang 1986, Chpt. 40, p. 25.

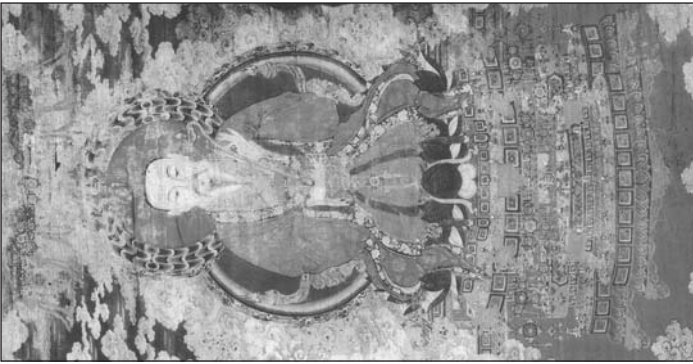
veloping because of globalization. The Daoist religion can also offer its assistance here. However, not only the masses of peasants find solace in Daoism, but it is also a refuge for many intellectuals in times of becoming disoriented or unsuccessful. With its help one can retreat into nature or into one's home in the hope of being able to unify oneself with heaven and the Dao. One can also cherish hopes of being able to become a *zhenren* (a Daoist saint).

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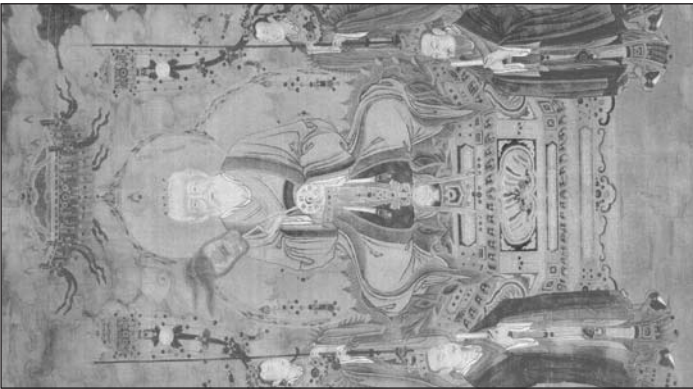
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Ill. 1a:
 Yuqing Yuanshi Tianzun
 玉清元始天尊



Ill. 1b:
 Shangqing Lingbao Tianzun
 上清灵宝天尊



Ill. 1c:
 Taiqing Daode Tianzun
 太清道德天尊

Illustrations 1a–c: The Three Pure Ones of Daoism

- a) The Jade Pure Celestial Lord of the Primordial Beginning
- b) The Supreme Pure Celestial Lord of the Numinous Treasure
- c) The Grand Pure Celestial Lord of the Tao and its Virtues



Illustration 2: White Cloud Temple, Beijing
Baiyunguan 白雲觀, Entrance Gate



Illustration 3: White Cloud Temple, Beijing
Baiyunguan 白雲觀, Hall of the Three Pure Ones
and the Four Guardians 三清四御殿

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Writing Times and Spaces Together

Experiments to Create an Early Sino-Buddhist Historiography

Max Deeg

One of the most interesting kinds of processes in the history of religion(s) is that which occurs when a religion is transferred to a new cultural environment. Numerous theoretical terms of religious studies are used to describe this process: syncretism, adaptation, change of paradigms, inculturation, ethno-religiosity and more. Expressed in these terms is the obvious shift of basic social, cultural, and religious notions that occurs when two cultural entities come into contact. This shift can be almost one-sided if the giving culture has a stronger impact on the receiving culture which has been on a lower cultural level before the contact. This was the case with the European tribal cultures such as the Celtic and Germanic when they came into contact initially with the Roman civilization, and later with Christianity. It is also the case with the peripheral nations of the Sinitic sphere, outstanding examples being Japan and Korea. What happened there is, at least as far as we can judge from the extant sources, that the receiving cultural entities were almost completely drowned and newly (re) shaped by their master-culture(s) in terms of both material and intellectual life.

The case is different, however, when a historically mature culture with strong cultural self-confidence comes into contact with another culture borrowing from its cultural reservoir only selected items as, for example, China's adaptation of Buddhism from the Indian culture. Here it is quite fascinating to see what has been borrowed and how that which was borrowed has been changed or adapted to the already existing environment, a process usually called the "*sinicization*" (Greg-

ory Schopen)¹ or “*sinification*” (e.g. Peter N. Gregory)² of Buddhism – the counter-concept, as it were, of Hu Shi’s “*indianization*” of Chinese culture³. While it is clear that Buddhism in China in its mature period, beginning with, let us say, the Sui period, has indeed undergone a change that may be described by the terms just mentioned – leading to such typical Chinese schools and “sects” as Huayan 華嚴 and Chan 禪 which never had a direct Indian ancestor or counterpart – it is difficult to trace the earlier transformation of general cultural concepts in the context of both classical Chinese thinking and Buddhist ideas inherited from the Indian motherland of this religion.

Two of these general cultural concepts and elementary categories of human thinking are certainly time and space, belonging to the categories which the German philosopher Immanuel Kant has described as a priori, irreducible and independent. One would expect, therefore, concepts of time and space in different cultures to be similar. I will, however, not deal here with the abstract concepts of time and space that concerned Kant, but I would like to give examples of how concrete historical time and geographical gaps between two cultures were dealt with in early Chinese Buddhism, looking particularly at the fourth and fifth century.

The absolute meaning willingly ascribed by most human beings to absolute dates in the framework of religious and cultural starting points, to temporal fix points like the birth of Jesus Christ, the *hajj* of Muhammad, obscures some problems. Why is it – one could ask – that so many people are excited about a yearly date that is defined by a distance of time to an event in history that is not even accurately dated or determined, and this even though many of these people claim to stand totally outside the religious context that gives this date its meaning, as for instance Christmas in the Christian tradition being the date of the birth of the Saviour? One could also ask whether the global validity of our Western time system is really and universally recognized by other traditions and cultures. And whether there are historical examples of a conflict between two time systems in one and the same culture. To give only one example of such a problematic discussion: some time ago the question was raised in a German-language internet forum that discusses religious matters, of whether there will be more terrorist attacks on

¹ Schopen 1984 (1997).

² Gregory 1991.

³ Traditionally written Hu Shih 胡實, (1891–1962); on “indianization” cf. Hu 1936.

9/11 and why this date was chosen at all by the “Islamist” terrorists in 2001, people whom one would expect to have referred to the Islamic calendar.

All these questions may seem to be out of place in the context of Chinese Buddhism, but they are in some way all connected with the problem of how the Chinese, as a people with an ancient historiographical tradition of their own, dealt with Buddhist historical concepts in general, and in particular, concerned themselves with the starting point of this religion, the life of its founder. The questions may generally show us how relative time systems are and have been, and that there is a need to come to terms with them if they come into contact, especially if both or even if one of them claims a higher degree of “truth” as conveyed and legitimized by a religious context. In the example that I will deal with, the main point seems to be that socially and culturally used time systems, which are very often brought into historiographical genres, are manipulated in order to give fixed starting points in the past. The time between these points and later periods is usually filled with a string of events that are then transmitted as “history.”

In the following, I would provisionally like to define historiography as the attempt to structure time and space into a converging line of narration, of writing time and space together. It should be stressed that in the discussion of historiography, space for the most part seems to be a neglected factor. The reason for this is quite obvious for me: usually the “history” of a specified time, culture or social stratum is presented along a line that the text tries to portray as being a constant, flowing stream of time in which the events are to be placed. The spatial, that is, the geographical framework of history is usually well-defined or presumed. However, historiography always has a serious problem when two traditions that do not come from the same cultural and geographical environment, from the framework of the same “cultural memory,”⁴ must be harmonized. The problem then consists in closing the obvious geographical gap when parallelizing sometimes entirely contrary time-tables of two or more traditions and in order to get rid of the vexing problem of different time concepts in two different realms of space. To accomplish this goal, often the initial step of the compilers of historical texts is to synchronize the starting points of the respective cultures or traditions.

⁴ Assmann 1997.

Before we switch to our direct subject, Chinese historiography, let us first have a short look at a few Western historiographical traditions, be it only for the sake of a comparative view point. The European historiographers of antiquity (Herodot, Thukydidēs, Xenophon, Polybios of Megalopolis, Tacitus, Sallustus, Caesar, Livius) did not need to harmonize different cultural strings⁵; they only portrayed chronology and history in the well-known and accepted pattern of connecting a certain event with a certain important personality, usually a ruler. It was not until old pagan traditions met with the even more powerful Jewish-Christian conceptions that European historiographers met the difficulty of combining the incompatibilities of two traditions. European medieval “universal histories” in Europe (Gioacchino da Fiore, Vincent de Beauvais)⁶ were thus primarily concerned with what their authors and readers thought to be world history in the soteriological and eschatological framework of Christianity; they combined events from the Old Testament with subjects of the Greek and Roman antiquity or those of their own cultural antiquity into one chronological line, very often starting from the creation of the world, continuing with the subsequent Biblical history of mankind, jumping to the story of Troy, the founding of Rome and the life of Jesus before finally arriving in their own present. Sometimes the events in the different cultural regions were presented in the form of synchronized annals. The inconsistencies and gaps in such historiographical concepts and patterns, which are obvious for a modern reader, were easily eliminated and filled by a synthesis of Jewish “historiography”, antique culture and Christian soteriology. Ecclesiastic historiography, from Eusebios of Caesarea on, used the antique past, both Occidental and Oriental, to depict the traces of God’s masterplan for the world even in a past not yet Christian. Despite the strong Christian domination, even pagan history was used by Christian authors, as can be seen in the *History of the Goths*, written by the Roman minister of the Germanic-Gothic rulers of Italy, Cassiodorus. Another approach to autochthon history is the *Heimskringla*, the “Circle of the Home (of Mankind),” of the medieval Icelandic Christian author Snor-

⁵ This is especially true for the historiographies of the Roman Empire (cf. Christ 1988), but was not so strict in the case of the Greek historiographers who also inserted geographical and ethnographical material, and sometimes tried to parallelize the information which they gained about foreign nations with their own chronology as traced back to the mythical past of the gods (cf. Gschnitzer 1988).

⁶ Cf. Keen 1988.

ri Sturluson (1179–1241),⁷ in which the mythical past of the Germanic gods and forefathers is – in a similar manner to the stories of Chinese antiquity – presented in euhemerized form, thus dethroning the old Pagan gods in their ancient heavenly abodes and making them rulers on earth; they were even thought to have come from antique Troy as the similarity between its name and that of one of the old gods, Thor, impiled. This history of the kings finally resulted in the Christianization of the Scandinavians.

Similar phenomena of writing beyond cultural boundaries, or better: of combining two cultural histories can be observed in the early historiographical traditions of Buddhist countries such as Tibet, Korea or Japan. Tibetan historiography, paradigmatically represented by works such as the *History of the Dharma* (*Chos 'byung*) by Bu ston written in 1322, or the so called *Blue Annals* (*Bod kyi yul du chos dang chos smra ba ji ltar byung ba'i rim pa Deb ther sngon po, Deb sngon*) by Gos lo tsa ba Gzhon nu dpal, written ca. 1476/78, was from the very beginning linear chronological and Buddhist, starting with the life of Śākyamuni, covering the advent and development of Buddhism in Tibet and continuing up to the days of the authors. In Japan and Korea the oldest historiographies were conceived in two complementary ways: the Japanese *Kojiki* 古事記 (written 712, covering the period of earliest antiquity until the reign of Suiko Tennō 推古天皇, 592–628) and the Korean *Samguk-sagi* 三國史記 (written by Kim Pu-sik 金富軾, 12th century) were mythical histories of the countries' past; the Japanese *Nihongi* 日本記 (or: *Nihon-shoki*, written 720, covering the early period up to the reign of empress Jitō Tennō 持統天皇, 690–697)⁸ and the Korean *Samguk-yusa* 三國遺事 (Chin. *Sanguo-yishi*)⁹ written by the monk Ilyōn 一然 (Chin. Yiran) at the end of the thirteenth century, both start with the pre-Buddhist past of the countries, and then also deal, one more and the other less, with Buddhist history. These Asian traditions of historiography did not have too many problems with the discontinuity of the autochthon and Buddhist tradition because they were either cultivated and dominated by Buddhism, or had to match the achievements of Chinese culture and the introduction of Buddhism with strong secular powers, therefore avoiding an absolute concentration on matters Buddhist even to the extent of excluding the early Indian history of Buddhism.

⁷ See Beck 1994.

⁸ Cf. Kato 1990, p. 42.

⁹ Cf. Ha and Mintz 1972.

Concepts of historiography that are able to jump back and forth in two different cultural traditions and layers without feeling a sort of discontinuity, as was more or less the case in the medieval European and the early Japanese, Korean and Tibetan traditions of historiography, were obviously not possible for Buddhism in China, not least of all because the Chinese, with their classics, the *Shujing* 書經, *Chunqiu* 春秋 and the *Shiji* 史記, already had an orthodox historiography that Buddhism had to deal with when it entered China at the end of the first century CE. The historiographer first had to combine two different strings of chronological and historical traditions together – he then also had to close the geographical gap between China and India, the motherland of Buddhism.

In the early period of Buddhism in China only universalist concepts seemed to be able to compete with and to match the classical Chinese chronological and historiographical model; they were able to show that in a soteriological framework of religion, in our case Buddhism, China and India were part of a common scenario. The Buddhist Jambudvīpa, able to cope with an indo-centric interpretation as well as a wider geographical approach, became the matrix in which spaces were brought together¹⁰; the Buddhist conception of the two soteriologically important periods, which sandwich the historical present between the age of the Buddha Śākyamuni and the coming *kalpa* of the future Buddha Maitreya, paved the way for a convergence of the time line of traditional China that began in the ancient times of the legendary rulers and the line of time of Buddhist history from the days of the Buddha, not least because they both converged in the future at the climax of the arrival of Maitreya (Mile 彌勒).¹¹ History was extended beyond the limits of the historical present by the powerful instrument of Buddhist prophecy, Skt. *vyākaraṇa*, Chin. *shouji* 授記.

To give you just one example for the thesis that the bringing together of data from the autochthon Chinese antiquity and the information about the story of the Buddha was crucial for at least one kind of interaction between Chinese culture and Buddhism, I would like to draw attention to the text *Lihuo-lun* 理惑論, the *Treatise of Removing Doubts*, a text incorporated into the Buddhist apologetic collection *Hongming-ji* 弘明記 as its first part. Without entering the discussion concerning the

¹⁰ See Deeg 1999a.

¹¹ For the complex of Maitreya, see Deeg 1999b.

dating of this text,¹² it can well represent a relatively early example of the contest between ideas seen as being traditionally Chinese and the answers of a Buddhist apologist, Master Mou(zi) 牟(子). The apologist does not really try to harmonize the standpoint of the traditionalist with his own Buddhist one, but the line of argumentation of the debaters very often clearly refers to the mythical and semi-mythical history of China of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 皇帝), as well as to Yao 堯, Shun 舜, Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius) and Laozi 老子. Mouzi's point and manner of argument frequently consists in showing that the old Chinese traditions are by no means any more reliable than the Buddhist texts. In the seventh chapter of the *Lihuo-lun*, for instance, we find the following dialogue:

A critic asked: If the Way of the Buddha is so eminently respectable and great, why did not Emperors Yao and Shun, or the Duke of Chou 周公, or Confucius practice it? In the Seven Classics one sees no mention [of Buddhist teaching]. ... Mou-tzu said: ... Yao served Yin Shou and Shun served Wu Ch'eng. Tan [i.e., the Duke of Chou] studied with Lü Wang, and Confucius with Lao Tan. Yet none of these persons appear in the Seven Classics! ...¹³

One important feature of the quoted passage is that it clearly shows that apologists of Buddhism had to deal with the historicity of the Buddha and his teaching in the light of the Chinese traditional past. In our example the author is using a well-set example of *argumentum ex silentio*, a counter-proof derived from the silence of the Chinese historical sources.

The thesis presented here is that early Sino-Buddhist non-canonical and non-commentary literature often was a program to combine the two cultural spaces, the Buddhist religious space with that of China's glorious traditional past. The protagonists of this process were so successful in connecting the traditional Chinese space and time conceptions with those of Indo-Buddhism, that the later Buddhist historiographers of the Tang and Song periods could write diachronic sequences in the purely chronological *biannian* 編年 style without serious problems of incompatibility between the two traditions. However, I will not

¹² Zürcher 1972, pp. 13–15.

¹³ T.2102.2b.26ff. 問曰。佛道至尊至大。堯舜周孔曷不修之乎。七經之中不見其辭。 ... 牟子曰。書不必孔丘之言。 ... 堯事尹壽。舜事務成。且學呂望。丘學老聃。亦俱不見於七經也; translated by John P. Keenan in Keenan 1994, p. 79.

deal with this later period, the outlines of which have been thoroughly investigated by H. Schmidt-Glintzer in his work on Buddhist sectarian historiography¹⁴, but rather will attempt to look for early traces – experiments as I have called it rather provisionally in the title – of Buddhist chronology and historiography and of the religious environment in which these were able to rise.

Writing Pasts and Spaces Together

The beginning of Buddhist time calculation is usually the date of the physical death or *parinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni near the north Indian town of Kuśinagara. Thus, Chinese Buddhists, in order to show the historicity and antiquity of their religious tradition from a relatively early period, were preoccupied with the question of when, according to their own Chinese traditional chronology, the Buddha had lived.

It is generally assumed that the historical research of the date of the Buddha was connected to two problems with which the Chinese Buddhists were confronted: The competition with the Daoists, who had come forth with the *Laozi-huahu-jing* 老子化胡經, the *Sūtra of Laozi converting the (Western) barbarians*,¹⁵ forced the Buddhists to prove that the Buddha had actually lived before Laozi, and thus they attempted to trace his lifetime back as far as possible into the past. This kind of calculation stood in a certain contradiction to the ideology of the three stages or ages: that of the true *dharma*, the semblance of the *dharma*, and of the final *dharma* (*zhengfa* 正法 – *xiangfa* 像法 – *mofa* 末法).¹⁶ In this framework Chinese Buddhists wanted to know where their own present position in the soteriological process was: According to the dating of the Buddha into the Chinese antiquity of the early Zhou dynasty and the standard division of the periods into five hundred years of *zhengfa* plus one thousand years of *xiangfa*,¹⁷ Buddhism would have reached the Middle Kingdom under the reign of Han Mingdi 漢明帝 (28–75 CE)

¹⁴ Schmidt-Glintzer 1982.

¹⁵ See Zürcher 1972, pp. 290ff; Kohn 1995, pp. 195ff; Kohn 1998; Deeg 2003.

¹⁶ For the translation of these terms, see Nattier 1991.

¹⁷ As in the *Candragarbhāsūtra*; also 1,000 plus 500 in the *Karunapundarikāsūtra*; in the *Mahāmāyāsūtra* fifteen periods of 100 years: Nattier 1991, pp. 48ff. One may speculate as to whether the 300-year period between *nirvāṇa* and the transmission of the *dharma* to the East has something to do with a system of five periods of 300 years each.

towards the end of the period of the semblance of the *dharma* (*xiangfa*). This led to another trend: the tracing of the arrival of Buddhism back to a past beyond the date given in the traditional, well-known story of Han Mingdi's dream of the Golden Man (*jinren* 金人) and the legend of the advent of the first Buddhist missionaries, Kāśyapa Mātāṅga (She Moteng 攝摩騰) and Dharmaratna (Zhu Falan 竺法蘭), and the first Buddhist scripture in China (the *Sūtra in Forty-Two Chapters*, *Sishier-zhang-jing* 四十二章經).¹⁸ All these attempts or experiments may be described as actions of *writing times together*.

The successful early datings in China of the Buddha's life, his *nirvāṇa* and his birth, were made by a process of compatibilisation of the old Chinese chronicles and the Buddhist scriptures. The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* reports in all its versions that a heavy earthquake shook the regions in the moment of the "Great Extinction" of the Buddha¹⁹. The legends about the birth of the Buddha also report that the night was bright when the Great Teacher was born.

What had to be done now was to check the Chinese chronicles for similar kinds of natural phenomena or omnia. These were easily found in the old Chinese records. This way of dating is presented in early historiographical accounts on Buddhism such as Fei Changfang's 費長房 *Lidai-sanbao-ji* 歷代三寶記 (T.2034) from 597 CE, that begins an encyclopedic history with a discussion of the various dates of the Buddha's death; Fei himself supports the date of king Zhuang 莊王 of Zhou (696–682 BCE).²⁰

¹⁸ About other legends of an earlier arrival of Buddhism in China, see Zürcher 1972, pp. 19ff.: e.g. the story of the Indian *śramaṇa* Shilifang 室利防 arriving with other monks and *sūtras* at the court of Qin Shihuangdi 秦始皇帝 (221–208 BCE) as reported in the *Lidai-sanbao-ji*.

¹⁹ The Buddha, in connection with the earthquake at his decision to give up the option for the prolongement of his life, gives eight causes for such earthquakes, the last six of which are – *cum grano salis*: the descent of the bodhisattva from Tuṣita heaven, the birth of the bodhisattva, the attainment of enlightenment, the first sermon, the giving up of the prolongement of life and the final *nirvāṇa*: Waldschmidt 1944, pp. 103f.; for the *nirvāṇa* earthquake see pp. 251f.

²⁰ This date is also adopted in the well-known chapter *Shilao-zhi* 釋老志 of the *Weishu* 魏書 (translated after Tsukamoto 1990, p. 132): "Śākya(muni) was the son of the king of Kapilavastu (Jiaweiwei) in India (Tianzhu). ... In the night of the eighth day of the fourth month he was born from the right hip of his mother. ... The time when Śākya(muni) was born was the ninth year (of the reign) of King Zhuang of Zhou. (In the) *Chunqiu* is reported that in the seventh year of Duke Zhuang of Lu, in winter, in the fourth month, the fixed stars were not visible, (but nevertheless)

A detailed discussion of all the dates that were usual in Buddhist historiography – including the so-called dotted record (*dianji* 點記) which comes closest to an objectively correct date of 485 B.C. for the *nirvāṇa* – can be skipped because extensive work has been done on this topic in the volumes edited by Heinz Bechert on the *Dating of the Historical Buddha*.²¹ In addition, some years ago a very good condensed discussion of the whole complex was published by Hubert Durt.²²

There is, however, another interesting and early example showing the basic interest that Chinese Buddhists had (and had to have) for this kind of computation. This evidence is – as far as I know – the oldest Chinese source of its kind. It is found in Faxian's 法顯 (337?–422?) *Foguo-ji* 佛國記, the *Report on Buddhist kingdoms*, also called *Gaoseng-Faxian-zhuan* 高僧法顯傳 (T.2085). Faxian, after having crossed the Karakorum mountain range (*Xueshan* 雪山, the Snow Mountains),²³ arrived at the upper stream of the river Indus at a place that he calls Tuoli 陀歷 and which has been identified with modern Darel in northern Pakistan. In Tuoli there was a colossal wooden standing statue of Maitreya, made by an artisan who had been taken to the Tuṣita heaven by an *arhat* in order to create an image of Maitreya. As can be seen from other short accounts of Chinese monks who traveled there around the same time such as in the fragments of the *Mingseng-zhuan* 明僧傳 and in the *Gaoseng-zhuan* 高僧傳 (T.2059), the spot was a very popular pilgrimage site to visualize Maitreya. Faxian interpolates an explanation of the historical meaning of the Maitreya statue into his narrative thread of the journey:

The monks [in China] asked Faxian if he knew when the Buddhist dharma had first come to the East. [Fa]xian answered: 'If you ask the people of these countries [that is: northwest India], they all say that there is an old tradition [saying] that from the [time of] the construction of the Maitreya statue there were Indian *śramaṇas* who crossed this river [the Indus].' The statue was made more than 300 years after the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha, [its erection] reckoned as being in the period

the night was bright. Altogether that makes years until the eighth year of the (era) Wuding (550) of the Wei (dynasty)." Another very popular calculation was that of the Buddha's birth into the reign of King Zhao 昭 of Zhou, respectively the date of his *parinirvāṇa* into the reign of King Mu 穆 of Zhou.

²¹ Bechert 1991–1997, articles by Franke, Hirakawa, Chen, Durt, Bhikkhu Pasadika; Durt 1994. Also, see the discussion in: Zürcher 1972, pp. 269ff.

²² Durt 1994, see esp. pp. 23ff.

²³ On the route from Khotan to Gandhāra taken by Faxian, see Deeg 2000.

of King Ping of the Zhou [dynasty]. The ‘Great Teaching’ started with this statue. Who, other than the great master Maitreya, who will be the successor of Śākya[muni], could spread the Three Jewels [*triratna*] and let the people outside India know the dharma? Because one knows that destiny is not something which men [have under control], there are good reasons that the dream of the emperor Ming of the Han was in fact [as it has been reported].²⁴

Important here is that Faxian does not give the usual calculation going straight back to the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha, but gives the date of the transmission of the *dharma* across the river Indus, which signifies the line between India proper and the regions beyond. Thus, geography seems to be just as important for him as mere chronology. The intention of the story of the colossal Maitreya statue seems to be to show that three hundred years after the death of the Buddha, the *dharma* had already reached the Western Regions and, subsequently and unofficially, also China and thus this occurred so early that it still fell into the era of the “true *dharma*” (*saddharma/zhengfa* 正法).

Another striking fact of this report is that Faxian obviously tries to bolster the Chinese computations through Indian traditions: he asked the *people of the region* (*bituren* 彼土人). Obviously Faxian’s intentions are to show that this tradition was not only invented by Chinese Buddhists, but was also to be found in India.

Faxian supports his computation by relating an episode that occurred at the end of his stay in India proper around 410 CE. In Ceylon he had the opportunity to see the procession of the tooth-relic of the Buddha. A man who represented the king and rode on the royal elephant, claimed that 1,497 years had passed from the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha to the present.²⁵ Needless to say, no chronology of this kind can be found in any Indian Buddhist source.

If one tries to determine the reason lying behind the dating presented by Faxian one cannot rely, however, on later Chinese sources. The *Lidai-sanbao-ji* mentions Faxian’s report but obviously does not under-

²⁴ T.2085.858a.11ff. 眾僧問法顯。佛法東過其始可知耶。顯云。訪問彼土人。皆云。古老相傳。自立彌勒菩薩像。後便有天竺沙門。齋經律過此河者。像立在佛泥洹後三百許年。計於周氏平王時。由茲而言。大教宣流始自此像。非夫彌勒大士繼軌釋迦。孰能令三寶宣通邊人識法。固知冥運之開本非人事。則漢明帝之夢有由而然矣。

²⁵ T.2085.865a.20ff., esp. 26f.: 泥洹已來一千四百九十七年。世間眼滅 (“Since the *nirvāṇa*, 1,497 years have passed [since] the ‘eye of the world’ [the Buddha] has passed away.”)

stand the motivation behind its dating and in turn calculates a slightly incorrect date: “If one calculates the birth date of the Buddha according to the *Faxian-zhuan*, it is the 26th year *Jia-wu* of the reign of Wu Yi of the Yin dynasty [1198–1195 BCE]; to today, the 17th year *Ding-si* of the first emperor [*kaihuang*: Wendi 文帝] of the Sui [dynasty] [597 CE], 1,681 years have already passed.”²⁶

The pattern that I would suggest to interpret these dates is the “writing together of times” of the Buddhist and Chinese history and the incorporation of the meaning attributed to each in the framework of both Buddhist eschatology as well as the traditional Chinese theories of the historical rise and fall of dynasties.

To understand Faxian’s dates I would thus suggest the following: the date of the Buddha’s death counting back from A.D. 410, would be in the case of both years indicated by Faxian: 1.) 300 years earlier than the beginning of the reign of King Ping 平 of Zhou (770–729 B.C.) and 2.) the period of 1,497 years, both numbers indicating the reign of the kings Wen 文 or Wu 武 (1073–1068 B.C.)²⁷ of Zhou, the traditional liberators from the Shang 商 tyranny and the founders of the Western Zhou²⁸. Looking for an omen-filled period in the Chinese past to reflect the life and death of the Buddha and with his death the beginning of the period of the true *dharma* in India, the transfer of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命) from the Shang to the Zhou was an appropriate date. Seen from the standpoint of Buddhist teleology, the spread of the *dharma* eastward across the Indus during the reign of King Ping is not less meaningful: The expulsion of the Zhou and the move of the capital to Luoyang 洛陽 under King Ping signifies the beginning of the Eastern Zhou, which is traditionally seen as being the beginning of the end of

²⁶ T.2034.23a.16. 依法顯傳推佛生時則當殷世武乙二十六年甲午。至今開皇十七年丁巳便已一千六百八十一。In his calculation, Hubert Durt (1994) follows the *Lidai-san-bao-ji* without checking the results, and further takes this to be the date of the Buddha’s *nirvāṇa* rather than Fei Changfang’s computation of the Buddha’s birth. It should be noticed that Fei made a similar mistake, because he calculated the birth date – not the *nirvāṇa* – of the Buddha, arriving at 1084 (the *nirvāṇa* would then have been around 1000).

²⁷ According to the classical chronology presented by Sima Qian 司馬遷; cf. Nienhauser 1994, p. 59.

²⁸ Faxian’s dates, in the first case, would result in the year 1070, and in the second, 1087.

this dynasty²⁹. This was, in the Buddhist time-conception as presented by Faxian, balanced on a soteriological level by the eastward move of the *dharma*. Speaking in Buddhist terms of teleology, the decline of the Eastern Zhou corresponded to the decline of the true *dharma* in the second half of its period.

To give one more example for this kind of calculation: the apologetic collection *Guang-hongming-ji* 廣弘明記 (T.2103) of the Tang-monk Daoxuan 道宣 contains a treatise, the *Erjiao-lun* 二教論, the *Dispute on the Two Teachings*, attributed to Shi Daoan 釋道安 – not the famous Daoan of the fourth century, but a monk from the second half of the sixth century – in which he presents us with several chronological calculations including the one preferred by Kumārajīva (343–413):

Further: according to the annual record of dharma-master Kumārajīva and to the inscription of the stone-pillar [?] [the date] is perfectly identical with the Chunqiu-fu: the Tathāgata was born in the fifth year Yichou of King Huan of Zhou, he had left his home in the twenty-third year Kui-wei of King Huan, had attained enlightenment in the tenth year Jiawu of King Zhuang and entered nirvāṇa in the fifteenth year Jia-shen of King Xiang. To today this makes 1,250 years³⁰.

This chronology is not any less interesting than Faxian's, because it seems to indicate a different result from a different temporal point of view, although it is grounded on a similar soteriological concept: Pre-supposing 500-year periods, the *mofa* period would be just at its peak around 570, the date the *Erjiao-lun* was written; but it would also mean that Kumārajīva had thought himself to be living in a time when the *mofa* period had just begun (A.D 363: 687 B.C., the date of the enlightenment of the Buddha, plus 1000 years). Speaking in eschatological terms one could argue that the end of the three periods of the *dharma*, be it apocalyptic or not, had been expected to take place at the beginning of the fifth century and that Buddhist timetables were reshaped

²⁹ As Sima Qian states (*Shiji* 4): "At the time of King Ping the house of the Zhou degenerated and the strong ones among the feudal lords subjugated the weak ones." Cf. Kuhn 1991, p. 194. It may be well possible that the reluctance of the Chinese Buddhist authors to adopt a date of the Buddha falling into the era of the Eastern Zhou had something to do with the negative image of that period.

³⁰ T.2103.142a.19ff. 又依什法師年紀及石柱銘。並與春秋符同。如來周桓王五年歲次乙丑生。桓王二十三年歲次癸未出家。莊王十年歲在甲午成佛。襄王十五年歲在甲申滅度。至今一千二百五年。 This is also already referred to in the *Lidai-sanbao-ji* (T.2034.23a.19f).

accordingly – as is so often the case when expectations of a near end of the world or a period are not fulfilled – by bringing the Buddha's dates closer to the historical present and by extending the timetables of decay³¹.

Now, to return to the *Foguoji*: The part of Faxian's report which I have just discussed is clearly interwoven with a complex of information belonging to the same framework of ideas: the timetable of the decay of the *dharma* and the advent of Maitreya, and the underlying conception of soteriological history. The number 1,497 is too exact to be without meaning, the meaning certainly being that the *mofa* period would come to an end in only a few years³². It also indicates the expectations and hope for the future beyond this eschatological timetable.

Writing Spaces and Future Times Together

Writing spaces together is a process in early Chinese Buddhism that attempts to imbed and integrate China as a geographical and cultural entity into the Indian Buddhist teleological and soteriological master-plan. Such an attempt can, for instance, be seen in the protoarchaeological discoveries of stupas and inscriptions in China during the reigns of various emperors which were ascribed to the ideal Buddhist ruler, the *cakravartin* Aśoka, thus showing that China was already part of the Buddhist holy geography in the time of the famous Mauryan king³³.

It is again Faxian who gives us an early report about a tradition which obviously tried to embed China into a soterio-eschatological Buddhist geography and timetable, this time in rather mythological ranges. Faxian reports that, during his two-year stay in Śrī Laṅkā, he heard an Indian monk (*tianzhu-daoren* 天竺道人) sitting on a high chair reciting a *sūtra* about the destiny of the Buddha's alms bowl, the *buddhapātra* (*fobo* 佛鉢), with the following content: the bowl was first in Vaiśālī, then in Gandhāra, where Faxian had seen it in the city of Puruṣapura, the contemporary Peshawar; after successive periods of 1,100 years

³¹ Already clear in the *Lidai-sanbao-ji* (T. 2034.23a.21ff.), according to which the periods of *zhengfa* and *xiangfa* last 1,000 years each and the *mofa* lasts 10,000 years.

³² For general considerations on Buddhist eschatological, millenaristic and apocalyptic ideas, see Nattier 1991; Hubbard 2001, pp. 36ff.; Deeg 1999b.

³³ The notion and function of Aśoka, Ayu-wang 阿育王, and the monuments ascribed to him in Chinese Buddhist and secular writing is a subject upon which more research needs to be done. I have discussed this briefly in Deeg 2001.

each the bowl will go to the country of the Western Yueshi (Rouzhi) 月氏, to Khotan/Yutian 于闐, to Kuča/Quci 屈茨, China/Han-di 漢地, Ceylon/Shizi-guo 師子國 and then back to Middle India (Zhong-tianzhu 中天竺). Then the bowl will rise to the Tuṣita heaven (Doushu-tian 兜術天) to Maitreya, and after seven heavenly days will return to earth, to Jambudvīpa (Yanfuti 閻浮提). The *nāga*-king Sāgara (*Hai-longwang* 海龍王) will keep it in his palace on the ground of the ocean until Maitreya attains enlightenment. After the bowl has disappeared, the *dharma* will decline, the world and mankind will degenerate until men only reach the age of five years and all evil persons will have killed one another. The righteous will again practice a moral life until they again live to the age of 80,000 years. Then Maitreya will come down to the earth.³⁴ It is interesting to note that Faxian emphasizes that the recitator had prohibited the spoken text to be written down – Faxian obviously ignored this, but his observation nevertheless leaves us open to speculations about the original form of the *sūtra*.

Here we can see an attempt to extend the historiographical line beyond the present, in this case by again using the tool that seems to be typical for the Buddhist manner of dealing with history: a prophecy.

The first question which I have asked myself is whether such a *sūtra*, with a geographical knowledge about the regions of Central Asia and China and their subsequent incorporation into a soteriological legend or myth, could really have been composed and recited in the southernmost part of the Buddhist *oikumene*, in Ceylon. There is no tradition, whatsoever, in other, autochthonous southern Buddhist sources that would indicate the existence of a legend about the Buddha's bowl. However, in the *Mahāvamsa* (Mhv.), the *Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, there is a report, that Mahinda's companion, the *śrāmaṇera* (Pāli *samaṇera*) Sumana, brought the relics of the Buddha to Ceylon in the bowl of the Buddha³⁵, and according to the same source, the bowl would have been on the island at the time Faxian was there, probably under the reign of

³⁴ T.2085.865c.1ff.

³⁵ Mhv.17.12; according to 20.13 the bowl was enshrined by king Devānaṃ Piyatissa; 23.48 relates that king *Mahanāga* rescued the bowl from an attack of the Ḍamilas, but that it was taken by them to the mainland (55); 37.192: under the reign of Upatissa the bowl is suddenly back in Ceylon; see also 61.56 and 61 (Jayabāhu I.), 64.30 (Parakkamabāhu), 70.266 and 310 (Gajabāhu), 72.297 (Manabharāṇa), *passim*. The last mention of the bowl is in the middle of the fourth century (Parakkamabāhu IV). The alms bowl is still said to be enshrined in a small *dagoba* near Kandy (Geiger 1986, p. 213). It is important to notice that the bowl, together with the tooth

the King Upatissa and/or King Mahānāma. Despite this, it is also clear that the relic did not have the same value and function in Ceylon as it had in other Buddhist regions.³⁶

The legend that Faxian heard seems to originate from the Indian Northwest, from Gandhāra, where we have enough illustrations in works of art to appreciate the importance of this relic³⁷. Finally Faxian's report on the bowl in Puruṣapura/Fulousha 弗樓沙 (Peshawar)³⁸ is the oldest witness for its existence – not mentioning the contradictory statement in Kumārajīva's biography, according to which the bowl should already have been in Kashgar (Shale 沙勒) in Central Asia at that time³⁹; in the subsequent two centuries the bowl was also located in Persia,⁴⁰ and according to the *Weishu* 魏書, was even brought to China. This capability of the bowl to be in different places, sometimes at the same time, had already caused Huijiao 慧皎, in his? biography of the monk Zhimeng 智猛, to state that relics like the *uṣṇīṣa* and the bowl of the Buddha have supernatural powers.⁴¹ Although we do not have an Indian text on the bowl, the oldest Chinese *sūtra* catalogue, Sengyou's 僧祐 *Chu-sanzang-jiji* 出三藏記集 (T.2145) mentions *sūtras* on the subject which, unfortunately, are now lost. The best example of the bowl going to foreign regions, and maybe as far as to China, is found in the fourth century apocryphal *Fo-miedu-hou-guanlian-zangsong-jing* 佛滅度後棺斂葬送經 (T.392), the *Sūtra of the coffining and cremation of the Buddha after the Nirvāṇa*, in which it is stated that the bowl will fly to the black-haired people and will convert them to the *dharma* and lead them to good conduct. The *Samyuktāgama/Za-ahan-jing* 雜阿含經 (T.99), in

relic, was a kind of royal talisman, but was never connected to any Buddhist eschatological conception.

³⁶ As a symbol of buddhaship, cf. Wang-Toutaint 1994.

³⁷ See Kuwayama 1990.

³⁸ T.2085.858b.21ff.

³⁹ Biography of Kumārajīva in *Gaoseng-zhuan* 高僧傳 (T.2059.330b.25) and *Chu-sanzang-jiji* 出三藏記集 (T.2145.114a.3); see also Wang-Toutaint 1990, p. 65.

⁴⁰ According to Xuanzang 玄奘. See Wang-Toutaint 1990, p. 65.

⁴¹ T.2059. 343c.7ff. 余歷尋遊方沙門記列道路。時或不同。佛頂骨處亦乖爽。將知遊往天竺非止一路。頂茨靈遷時屈異中翔。故傳述見聞難以例也。 (“I have enquired into the records and the routes of the travelling *śramaṇas* and sometimes they are not the same, and the places, [where] the Buddha's alms bowl [and] his *uṣṇīṣa* [are] are not either. One should know [by this that] there is not only one way to travel to India [and that] the *uṣṇīṣa* and the bowl are miraculously moving and sometimes wander to different places, [and that] it is therefore difficult to make corresponding sense of what has been reported, seen and heard”).

a passage that was probably inserted into the collection later, has the Buddha predict that 1,000 years after his *nirvāṇa*, when the *dharma* declines, the *uṣṇīṣa*, his tooth and his bowl will go to the East. The northwestern origin of such legends around the bowl are indirectly supported by the *Lianhuamian-jing* 蓮華面經 (T.386), the *Sūtra of Lotus-Face*, which was translated in 585 by Narendrayaśas/Naliantiyeshe 那連提耶舍, who came from the northwestern region of India, where at that time theories about the decay of the *dharma* were widely known. A direct indication of such an origin in northwest India is found in a description of the lost *Sūtra of the Buddha's bowl*, *Fobo-jing* 佛鉢經, which was already lost at the time Senyou compiled his catalogue at the beginning of the sixth century. This account is found in the Buddhist encyclopedia *Fayuan-zhulin* 法苑珠林 (T.2122): the *sūtra* was of North-Indian origin, brought to China by the meditation-master Saṅghayaśas/Sengjiayeshe 僧迦耶舍, and it described the voyage of the bowl from India to China. This corresponds well to the facts about the *sūtra* as heard by Faxian in Ceylon.

It is clear from these examples that the pilgrim record of Faxian is structured on references to the same framework of beliefs and ideas: upon entering India Faxian reports on the Buddhist soteriological timetable, and at the point of leaving India via Śrī Laṅkā he refers to the same, entwining them with the help of a calculated number of years. 1,497 years are certainly meant to indicate that Faxian presumed the present in which he lived to be the end of the *dharma*, so that there was only one hope for salvation left: the coming of Maitreya or, as an alternative and option, the ascension to Tuṣita, after death or by visualization, to receive this bodhisattva's blissful teaching.

Conclusion

Finally let us return to the broader context of early Chinese Buddhism. As I hope to have shown, it was not incidental that Faxian started and ended his report on Buddhist India with references to the synchronology of the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* and Chinese traditional history, and to eschatological concepts concerning Maitreya. My opinion is that Faxian belonged to the inner circle of the master Shi Daoan 釋道安 (A.D. 312–385): his particular interest in the *Vinaya*, which was the reason for his journey, seems to indicate this, but it would also explain his special interest in Maitreya and the legends and prophecies centered around this

figure. This, Faxian would have shared with his presumed master, who in 385 had vowed to be reborn in the Tuṣita heaven near Maitreya⁴². The interest of Daoan in the legend of the Buddha's bowl is shown, again, in the *Chu-sanzang-jiji*, where, in a list of extracts from different *sūtras* for the daily use of the monks, Daoan quotes the *Fo-shou-shibo-luji* 佛受石鉢錄記, *Record of the Buddha receiving the stone alms bowl*, from the Buddha-vita (*Taizi-*)*Ruiying-benqi-jing* (太子)瑞應本起經 (T.185) translated by Zhi Qian 支謙 (third century).

The computations of the dates of the Buddha by means of Chinese chronology may go back to Daoan as well. As is well-known, he was the first Chinese cleric with a critical historical sense: he compiled the first *sūtra* catalogue, which is known as *Zongli-zhongjing-mulu* 綜理眾經目錄 and which is preserved in the *Chu-sanzang-jiji*. A definite reason for this interest was the need for a distinction between true teachings and false teachings in the texts in a period in which the *dharma* was considered to be nearly extinguished.

Daoan was also interested in geography, especially that of the peripheries of both China and India, and especially that of Northwest India, exactly the region in which the giant Maitreya was standing as a symbol of the *dharma*-connection between India and the Eastern realms, and also as a reminder that the end of the *dharma* was near. It is not yet clear where the basic motivation for Daoan's famous vow to be born in Maitreya's heaven, Tuṣita, came from, but it seems possible that this – and maybe the compilation of the catalogue – had something to do with the idea that the end of the *dharma*, 1,500 years after the death of the Buddha, would be near the time of his impending death (in 385). This probably presupposed historical calculations of the kind that are reflected in Faxian's account.

What I have tried with my two examples is to show that the early attempts to create a Sino-Buddhist prototype of historiography by parallelizing Chinese and Indian antiquity arose from the pressure to harmonize the Buddhists' own religious past, which was located in India, with the Chinese sense and need for historical credibility. This was reinforced by the belief that the end of the *dharma* was near, and the need, therefore, to determine exactly which period one was living in. In order to achieve this, not only histories had to be combined, but also

⁴² Reported in *Gaoseng-zhuan* 5, T.2059.353a.; cf. Tsukamoto/Hurvitz 1985, pp. 753ff.; Zürcher 1972, pp. 194f.

two basically different sacred spaces. It was this need for an inclusivist sacred geography and its actual creation – to embed China into the sacred space of Buddhism – which, ironically, proved to be one of the most successful tools for Chinese Buddhists to emancipate themselves more and more from their Indian motherland.

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Religious Policy and the Concept of Religion in China

Zhuo Xinping

The concept of religion in China corresponds closely to the behavior of the Chinese in their social life and their cultural identity in relation to religion. In the process of the modernization of China during the twentieth century, religion has been understood by the Chinese in many ways. Today there is no single understanding of religion and it is discussed from various viewpoints. In any case, religion is evaluated in its spiritual, cultural and social structural sense. Spiritually, religion is seen to be a personal or mystical experience. In this sense religion should be a private matter and it is understood to be human spirituality. Seen culturally, religion is understood to be a particular tradition of a people or to be an expression of human civilization. Religion is namely a cultural phenomenon in the history of mankind. Seen from the viewpoint of society's structure, religion is understood as a social organization or a political power. Religion as collective coexistence and a social structure certainly has its function and influence in society. In this case religion is interwoven with the problem complexes of political stability, national unity and continuing social amity. In this context religion is both considered and accepted a highly complex social and cultural phenomenon. For this reason, for most Chinese today religious understanding is a sensitive topic. The religion politics of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the government of China are closely connected to this understanding. Based on the current improvements in religious understanding as a result of China's opening to the outside and recent economic and political reforms, it has become possible for religion politics to develop in China today.

The Historical Background of Religious Understanding in China

In China, the twentieth century began with an unfavorable climate for religion. At the turn of the century, most Chinese had nearly no strong religious self-assurance. The concept of religion was also not particularly clear. The traditional religions such as Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism experienced a decline in China just in this period. After the Opium Wars, Christianity had left a negative impression on most Chinese as being an indivisible part of imperialist aggression and colonization. In the period of social upheaval in which China found itself at the beginning of the twentieth century, resistance developed not only towards the religious traditions of China's past but also towards religious influences from Europe, especially Christianity. In the Revolution of 1911 the demise of the feudal system in China was linked to the weakening of traditional religious influence on Chinese society. The New Culture Movement began shortly afterwards, decisive for the entire process of Chinese modernization in the twentieth century. The unmistakable and direct expression of the New Culture Movement was the May Fourth Movement in the year 1919. Characteristic signs of this movement were the introduction of the concepts of "science" and "democracy" to China and the criticism of imperialism and feudalism. Confucianism, as a feudalistic consciousness and a conservative remnant from the Chinese past, was strongly criticized in this context. The Communist Party of China was founded in the year 1921 in this atmosphere of the new cultural movement. Just after its founding, in 1922, there was an "Anti-Christian Movement" as well as an "Anti-Religion Movement" all over China, especially in the intellectual circles of Beijing and Shanghai. Many Chinese communists took part in these theoretical discussions against religion in general and Christianity in particular. In such movements as well in the beginning of the communist development in China, resistance towards religion was perceptible.

Precisely this trend in the understanding of religion was displayed in the attitude of a group of well-known scholars in China. Emphasis on the difference between religion and philosophy was characteristic, as was the leave-taking of religion in Chinese self-awareness and in the cultural development in China. Some intellectual reformers in China carried out comparisons between philosophy and religion in which they emphasized the special meaning and function of philosophy in Chinese culture. In contrast they regarded religion rather condescending-

ly. In their opinion, the Chinese intellectual tradition held philosophy in high esteem. It contained the principle of philosophical skepticism, which should be the basis for scientific investigation. Philosophy was conscious of formulating questions. Owing to this intention, namely, to investigate these questions, rationality was thoroughly employed in philosophy. An active and curious mind leads to philosophical discoveries and mental development. Since an attitude of faith stands behind every religion, this satisfaction in belief hinders mental exploration and intellectual curiosity and annuls the necessity for rationality. The decision in the past of the traditional Chinese “literati” to be interested in philosophy rather than in religion was therefore praised. Such intellectuals were very happy and content, because the intellectual and cultural tradition in China revealed above all a tradition of philosophy. In this heritage of ideas there should be no place for religion. One representative of this period, Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873–1929) even stated: “What differentiates China from other nations is that we have no religion.”¹ Thus the Chinese intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century were united in their belief that the Chinese nation was a-religious and that the Chinese had developed a culture without religion.

Strictly speaking, Confucianism was also considered to be a philosophy and not a religion. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and other Jesuits who had come to China stated for the first time that Confucianism was not a religion but was rather only a set of traditional customs. They said this in order to avoid the Chinese “Rites Controversy”. At the beginning of the twentieth century Liang Qichao also stated that Confucianism was not a religion. However, after the “1911 Revolution” Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858–1927) and some conservative intellectuals in China attempted to see Confucianism as the state religion and to reactivate it along these lines. However, this attempt failed, and in the process Confucianism as a religion was judged negatively and was highly criticized. At that time Buddhism was not considered to be a Chinese tradition but a foreign religious import. Moreover, the typical characteristics of Buddhism were regarded to be a philosophy and not a religion. Daoism was actually the only native religion in China, but it was seen in its connection with folk religions or even with superstitious practices, traditional customs, and habits of the Chinese people. For this reason Chinese intellectuals were very

¹ Cf. Zhuo 1999, p. 67.

proud in their assumption that China was the only nation in the world without a religion.

The Chinese intellectuals of that period realized to a certain degree that China could not be detached from the religious way of life in antiquity. But in this respect religion was understood to be merely a lower or more primitive step in the historical development of Chinese culture. The need for a religious way of life in the contemporary development of China was thus negated. If there was still religion in China, it should be replaced with aesthetic education. For the Chinese the process of enlightenment should be from religion to aesthetics. In August, 1917, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1949), another well-known reformer and the president of Beijing University during the period of the new cultural movements, published his famous talk entitled “Replace Religion with Aesthetic Education.”² Cai understood religion to be an old-fashioned pedagogical method. He admitted that every nation had experienced periods in which education rested wholly in the hands of religious organizations. Earlier, religious education had encompassed the basic elements of intellectual, moral, physical, and aesthetical education. The situation had fundamentally changed through modern scientific developments. Religion played an ever smaller role in the understanding and self-realization of the individual and his environment. Mystical phenomena could now be de-mythologized through human reason and scientific methods. Natural history and social conditions could be explained scientifically. Religious laws, formed thousands of years earlier, were no longer suited to the needs of modern society. Religion had lost its importance in moral, spiritual and physical education. Religion was still of value only in the teaching of aesthetics. But Cai Yuanpei was of the opinion that even here education must depart from religion, because if one held on to religion in the teaching of aesthetics, connections to the intellectual and moral aspects of religion would easily occur. This in turn would stand in the way of pure aesthetic perception. In contrast, this new education in aesthetics should be free, progressive and universal. For Cai, replacing religion with aesthetics education was necessary for the modern development of human society. Religion was only a temporary product of human history, and the era of religion had already passed. Cai Yuanpei, in this anti-religion movement, also criticized Christianity strongly. For him, it did not seem necessary for China to have a religion. In this period most Chinese intellectuals emphasized

² Cai 1917.

that the traditional culture of China should be molded by philosophy. And this culture would be superior to all other cultures that were carried by a religious spirit. Although there were reactions and arguments from the Christian churches, in China the rejection of religion was overriding.

Pointing Out the Social Aspects in the Term Religion in China

Religion is translated into Chinese as “*zongjiao*” 宗教. The term *zongjiao* is actually made up of two words, namely *zong* 宗 and *jiao* 教. Originally *jiao* was used very often for religious forms in Chinese history, as for example the names in Chinese for Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism which are, respectively, *ru-jiao* 儒教, *fo-jiao* 佛教 and *dao-jiao* 道教. *Jiao* is a Chinese word that carries the parallel meanings of religion, preaching, upbringing and instruction. However, in the original concept of *jiao* there was no obvious semantic level that indicated “religion”, but rather *jiao* most commonly meant instruction and upbringing. The following expression for the origin of *jiao* is given in the “Book of Changes” (*Yijing* 易經): “Thus the Saint used the godly path to bestow instruction, and the entire world joined him.” Confucius explained the relationship between *tian* 天 (heaven), *dao* 道 (path) and *jiao* (instruction) in the work “Proportion and Centre” (*Zhongyong* 中庸) as follows: “What heaven determined (for humans) is their being. What leads this being (to righteousness) is the path. What trains the path is the upbringing.” Generally *ru-shi-dao san-jiao* 儒释道三教, namely the three religions Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, can also be translated as “the three teachings of Confucius, Buddha and Dao”. The origin of the combination *zongjiao* is found in the context of Buddhist expressions. Buddhism called that which the Buddha said “*jiao*”, and that which the disciples of Buddha said “*zong*”. *Jiao* is therefore the “teaching” of Buddha, whereas *zong* are the schools resulting from this teaching. To reiterate, in Buddhism *zongjiao* is merely the Buddhist doctrine. In this tradition *jiao* is not normally understood as religion, but rather as the enlightenment of the Chinese.

Only at the beginning of the twentieth century did the European idea of religion enter the Chinese language, by way of Japanese, as *zongjiao*. With this introduction of European theology, the term religion received a complex of meanings in China. In this understanding of religion the Chinese usually emphasized the concrete social existence of religion

in the form of groups of people or social organizations. When speaking of religion, one meant primarily the social structure and the sociological function of religion. It is for this reason that the Chinese religion philosopher and Christian thinker Wang Zhixin 王治心 (1881–1968) at one point said: “When we think of religion we are reminded of tall temples, majestic churches and all the well-structured and well-organized material aspects that are tied to this concept. It is difficult to believe that, in the final analysis, every material aspect of religion results from a supreme spirit. Originally the word ‘religion’ didn’t only mean a system, but also human feelings of devotion and worship. In our translation of the word religion with *zongjiao*, the term has lost some of this original connotation. When we hear the word *zongjiao* we tend to imagine a structured organization with which a certain portion of mankind identifies.”³ With this understanding of religion as a social structure and organization, the Chinese intellectuals considered only a minority of the Chinese population to have a religion. In this, the concepts of “spirituality” and “belief” were clearly separated from that of “religion”. To be more precise, this understanding of religion developed at the expense of humanity’s religious spirit and of the existence of religious interests beyond religious organizations. Another theological philosopher and Christian thinker, Xie Fuya 謝扶雅 (1892–1991), drew the following comparison in this respect: “There are, in fact, large differences between the Western concept of *religio* and our *zongjiao*. If we look for synonyms for the word *religio* in Chinese dictionaries, the word *dao* is possibly suggested. Two connotations are associated with this word simultaneously: substance and function [...]. The image of harmony between the individual and the cosmos resonates in *dao*, but it also includes aspects of activity, and the conforming of the individual to society.”⁴ Until today, the focal point of the understanding of religion of many theoreticians of religion in China has rested primarily with the study of religious organizations or institutions. In China, a faith without a social organization or structure is not recognized as a religion, or as a perfected form of religion. Religion, spirituality, and faith are clearly distinguished from one another here. In this sense, religion is understood to be only a sum of religious ideas (spirituality or faith), religious practices and religious organization.

³ Wang 1988, p. 1.

⁴ Xie 1950, p. 250.

The Religious Politics of the Communist Party of China

The Communist Party of China (CPC) was founded in 1921 in the atmosphere of the new cultural and the anti-religion movements. From its founding, the CPC's understanding of religion was closely tied to the party's political and economic considerations. In addition, its understanding of religion was deeply influenced by Marxist and Leninist religious theories. However, with the founding of the CPC the following principles were very clear and decisive for its relation to religion:

1. There were differences in ideology and world view between communism and religion. However, the CPC would not combat religion directly. Religious phenomena had surely their economic, social, and existential reasons. The CPC should be aware of these reasons, and, at the outset, reform and improve the society that was responsible for religion's emergence. Thus, the political and economic conflict with feudalism and imperialism should replace the battle against theocracy and superstition.
2. In the process of the Chinese revolution it should be possible for communists and religious followers, on the basis of mutual respect, to create a political alliance in the fight against imperialism and feudalism. At the ideological level there was no compromise or similarity between the CPC and religion. At the political and practical level however, there was indeed a consensus between the two and a unified front had to be founded. The communists and religious followers should find a mutual basis for the liberation of China and avoid their ideological conflicts. The theory of the unified front was namely one of the most important secret weapons of the CPC during the Chinese revolution.
3. The freedom of religious belief should be respected and protected. Religious beliefs were namely the private matter of religious followers. The CPC's duty should be the development and reform of society. With the progress and improvement of Chinese society, religious followers will have no further use for their beliefs, and thus will give up their religious beliefs of themselves. In this process of social development and historical progress, religion will gradually disappear from human history. For this reason it is unnecessary and improper for the CPC to fight against religion directly.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, religious freedom was theoretically guaranteed in the new constitution. The principle of a political alliance and unified front with religious followers is, as always, emphasized by the CPC. During this time, the CPC had a theory of the "five characteristics" of religion in this framework, namely that religion had a mass characteristic as well as national, international, complex, and long-term characteristics. At the same time, however, a reform or a conforming of religion itself to the new society should also be called for. All religions in China must shift from their connection to the old Chinese society to conformity with the new socialist society. This means that religion must overcome, on one hand, as in Buddhism and Daoism, its feudalistic elements, and on the other, as in Christianity, its imperialistic pressures. In reality, religion was considered for a short time, especially from 1957 to 1977, to be merely a passive, negative factor in the establishment of Chinese socialism. After the Cultural Revolution, especially since the opening of China to the outside and its economic and political reforms since 1977, freedom of religious beliefs is again valued. In addition to the "five characteristics" of religion, the cultural character of religion has been included. In 1982, *Document 19*, "About the basic viewpoints and basis politics in relation to religion in the socialist period of our nation," was published by the CPC. This document demonstrates a new starting point for religion politics and the understanding of religion through the opening of China to the outside. In the new state of social development of China and its relations abroad, the CPC maintains the standpoint of "extreme care", "absolute seriousness", and "constant reflection" in relation to religious problems. Specifically, the proper treatment of such religious problems by the CPC affects the stability of society, the unity of the nationalities in China as well as the influence or reputation of China in the world.

To elucidate the basic viewpoints of the CPC's religion politics in this period, the following ten points must be noted:

1. Religion has a process of emergence, development and decline. Religion will exist for a long time in socialist society. In socialism, religion may not be abolished or developed by the government.
2. Freedom of religious belief is protected by the constitution. Citizens have not only the freedom to believe in a religion, but also the freedom not to believe in a religion.

3. On one hand, it is important to propagate atheism, but the difference between theism and atheism must not be seen as a political dichotomy. The correct relationship between the two should be solidarity and cooperation in politics and mutual respect of beliefs.
4. The state should supervise the law concerning religious issues, protect normal religious activities and their lawful interests, and prevent and repress unlawful and criminal activities in the use of religion.
5. The discrepancy of the Chinese religions is primarily a discrepancy within the people. However, under certain circumstances it is also possible that antagonistic discrepancies arise. These two dissimilar discrepancies must be rigorously differentiated and dealt with appropriately and carefully.
6. China will adhere to the principle of independence, self-sufficiency, and self-governance in religious matters, and resist any sort of infiltration into religious practices through foreign enemy powers. The interference in China's religious affairs by any religious organization or a public figure from a foreign country is not allowed.
7. The patriotic religious organizations are good bridges between the CPC, the government, and the religious believers in China. Their positive role should unfold to its fullest extent.
8. The priests of patriotic religious organizations should have a systematic education that includes administration.
9. Religion should be positively guided to actively conform to the socialist society. The circle of religion should keep its activities within the lawfully allowed framework.
10. All religious organizations and public figures must uphold the dignity of the law, the interests of the people, the unity of the nationalities, and the unity of the state.

These principles are primarily portrayed on the political and social level. However, some basic theoretical considerations about the existence and function of religion in China are present in the new situation:

1. Concerning the nature and the conception of religion: The first and most fundamental question concerning the understanding of religion is that of the nature of religion. According to Marxist understanding, religion is a "reversed view of the world" that reflects a "reversed world". In this context, Lenin understood the thesis "reli-

gion is the opium of the people” to be “the cornerstone of Marxism’s entire weltanschauung on the question of religion”. However, with this theoretical premise it is very difficult to assess the existence of religion in socialist China today. If religion is a “reversed awareness of the world”, is then our socialist nation a “reversed world”? This is really a dilemma in the discussion about the nature and existence of religion in today’s China. One must either accept this thesis and thus criticize and deny our own social basis, or simply cautiously ignore this topic. At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s this difference of opinion lead to heated debates in Chinese theoretical circles. This debate, called the “opium war between north and south China”, brought the analysis of Marxist statements about religion a step further, and had a positive effect on the understanding of religion in China. In such an analysis, religion is defined as a spiritual belief or ideology. Thus the question stands: Is religion necessarily the unavoidable adversary for the Marxist or socialist ideology and weltanschauung? At this level it is still difficult in China today for the Marxist theory of religion to come to a consensus or compromise, but the principle of “progressive development with time” and “progressive renewal with time” in today’s Marxism with Chinese characteristics brings us new hope. The primary distinguishing feature of the dialectic method in Marxism is the emphasis on the movement, development and continual transformation of all things. Cultural patterns are subject to a continual modification. Every period has its own conditions. Not only ideas and thoughts, but even epistemological norms are continually renewed. In historical development both religion and Marxism can and actually will continually renew themselves and change. In the future, a consensus of the two will be thereby also possible. This can guarantee the ultimate normalization of the relationship between them.

2. Concerning the social function of religion: At the present time there are theoretical, sociological and ideological definitions of religion in China. That is to say, the concept of religion is apprehended either from the viewpoint of its ideological beliefs or judged by its social function and meaning. If one has difficulties with an ideological consensus, one rather examines the meaning and value of religion from the viewpoint of its social function. In this understanding, however, both the positive and negative functions of religion are stressed. Included in religion’s positive functions in socialist China are name-

ly its function of psychological conformity, social integration, the socialization of individuals, and the awareness of equality, culture and good manners. However, the possible negative functions of religion are also not ignored, such as conservatism, fatalism, fanaticism, the psychological repression of reality, the division of society through the emphasis on individual denominations instead of social unity, etc. Here the subjective evaluation or differentiation between correct and incorrect is not mentioned, but rather only an objective description of religion's positive or negative function for society. The active adaptation of religion to Chinese society is namely to develop its positive functions and avoid those that are negative.

3. Concerning the existence of religion in contemporary China: It is clear that religion will long exist in China and will influence the broad masses. In this respect one must answer the question: Is religion a basic part of the social superstructure in China? Are the religious faithful also a part of the broad masses that President Jiang Zemin 江泽民 emphasizes in his theory of the "Three Representatives"?
4. Concerning the relationship between religion and politics: Through religion's "intermediary condition", in modern society the political function of religion is normally indirectly realized as being "a-political". The principle in contemporary society is, for most states, the separation of religion and politics or of religion and government. However, religion in China remains in a very difficult relationship to politics. It should not be entirely clear whether it exists separately from politics or inseparably. On one hand, one stresses the difference between religious world views and the current mainstream of the socialist ideology, and on the other hand, religious organization has a very strong political consciousness. This is a contradiction that does not seem to be in harmony with the present day development in China. At the moment one talks about legislation for religious matters in China. However, such legislation is very difficult without a consensus on the basic concept of religion and religious understanding. To put it clearly, in this state of affairs one does not understand whether such legislation should protect the rights and duties of believers or limit religious activities.

New Developments in Religion Politics and the Understanding of Religion in China

From December 10 to 12, 2001, a national conference about religious matters and religion politics in China was convened. At the conference President Jiang Zemin listed three characteristics of contemporary world religions:

1. The existence of religion has its deep historical and social roots. Religion will exist for a very long time and will have lasting effects. Marxism holds the view that, with the development of social productive resources, the progress of civilization and the increase of reflective awareness of the population, and through these, the gradual reduction of the basis and prerequisites for religious existence, religion will finally vanish. However, the disappearance of religion is a very long-term process that may last longer than the final extinction of classes and states.
2. Religion is closely tied to economic, political, and cultural problems, and therefore has a large influence on the stability of society. The prerequisite for the existence of religion is faith in broad masses of the population. This mass character of religion very often gives rise to tremendous social force. If handled correctly this force can have a very positive role in the development and the stability of society. If not, it can have a negative and even destructive function. This crucial point is dependent on the effective establishment and administration of religion.
3. Religion is also very often involved in international conflicts and real battles and is therefore an important factor in international relations as well as in world politics. Through their expansion, some of the world's large religions are already multi-national religions. In this sense religion is not only an important factor in international relations and in world politics, but is also interwoven with their contradictions and conflicts. For this reason one must not underestimate the influence of religion in contemporary world politics. If not handled correctly, religion can churn up a stormy sea in international affairs, and can give rise to the so-called "clash of civilizations".

This conference made the fundamental tasks needed for the new century in religious matters even clearer. The required work entails these

five aspects: 1) the integral implementation of freedom in religious beliefs in the politics of the CPC, 2) the administration of religious matters in accordance with the law, 3) the active guiding of religion to social conformity, 4) the adherence to the principles of independence, autonomy and self-organization of religions in China, and 5) the establishment and development of a patriotic united front between the CPC and the religious sphere.

Shortly after this conference, on December 16, 2001, a young vice-minister named Pan Yue 潘岳 from the office of State Advisory Board for Economic Structure Reforms published an article entitled “The necessity for the development of Marxist religious theories over time”. In this article he described his understanding of the relationship between the Communist Party and religion. He stressed: 1) Religion is no longer “opium for the masses”. The significance of religion as a “theory about the hereafter” and as “wisdom for the next life” is that the Communist Party should not treat it as an enemy but rather as a mirror. 2) The function of religion’s spiritual recompensation is irreplaceable. One must respect the spiritual world and the religious way of life of the population. 3) Religion has special functions for the population as, for example, psychic, moral, and cultural functions as well functions in the service and well-being of the people. 4) In socialist society it is necessary to create a new scientific and rational relationship between religion and the government as well as between religion and politics. It is namely possible that they work very well with each other. Quoting Lenin, he even implied in his article that religious believers, inasmuch as they are part of the political consensus and work together on the united front, would be allowed to become members of the Communist Party. His opinion immediately set off heated debates and also sharp criticism in China. The differences of opinion regarding religion can once again be clearly observed. It is interesting to note that this article had very positive reactions in religious circles on the Chinese mainland and also received fantastic speculations in Hong Kong and its vicinity.

To conclude we should observe that religious politics and religious understanding in China today stands at a crossroad. The deliberation about religious matters in China is primarily motivated by political and social interests. If religion, both in China and abroad, can contribute positively to Chinese development and transformation, then we certainly have wide possibilities for the active acceptance of religion by the CPC and the

Chinese population, not only in the sense of politics, society and culture, but finally also in the sense of weltanschauung and spirituality.

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Chinese Jews and Jews in China

Kaifeng – Shanghai

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In both imperial and modern China, Jews were a small minority in comparison to the larger Moslem and Christian minorities. At most there may have been several thousand Jews in past ages and possibly around 30,000 by the mid-twentieth century. Yet these small communities have invited considerable scholarly attention over the years, and their histories of remoter periods and more recent times have raised a number of questions. One of these, and the one to be taken up in this paper, is how the Jews in Kaifeng 開封 and in Shanghai, each at a different time and a different place, accommodated themselves to the Chinese environment. By Chinese Jews, I mean primarily those who settled in Kaifeng in the twelfth century, the initial group being augmented by newcomers probably over the next two hundred years. By Jews in China, I have in mind the disparate groups who arrived in Shanghai after the Opium War (1839–1842) that consisted initially of mostly Sephardi Jews,¹ then Russian, and later Central European Jews.

Although we speak of Kaifeng Jews, it must be remembered that at least until the seventeenth century, Jewish communities existed in Ningbo 寧波, Yangzhou 揚州, and Ningxia 寧夏. The more recent Shanghai communities were similarly not the only ones. There were also organized communities in Harbin and Tianjin 天津, although they were

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¹ Sephardi communities were widespread throughout the Mediterranean countries, North Africa, the Balkans, but also in portions of Western and Central Europe. Sephardim have distinctive rituals, differences in liturgy and some traditions that differ from those of the Ashkenazim. Most of the Sephardim who came to Shanghai hailed originally from Iraq and are often also referred to as Baghdadis.

smaller. In this paper I will discuss only the Kaifeng Jews, as data about the other communities is lacking, and the Shanghai communities.

Beginnings of the Kaifeng Jewish Community

Jewish merchants, having come overland, probably traded on the Chang'an 長安 market during the Tang dynasty.² They might also have reached China by sea, sailing together with Arab merchants to Guangzhou 廣州 (Canton), but there is little or no evidence to support this conclusively. Nor is there evidence for the presence of an actual Jewish community during the Tang dynasty. The existence of a later Jewish community in Kaifeng is, however, amply documented on five stelae inscriptions, dating from 1489, 1512, two from 1663, and 1679, although the information on these is fragmentary.³ According to the 1489 stele, the first synagogue was built in Kaifeng in 1163, which indicates that by then a sufficient number of Jews had arrived to warrant a house of prayer. It can be assumed that they were merchants who came in small groups over a period of time together with other merchants headed for the capital of the empire. The 1489 inscription states that they were cotton merchants from India (*Tianzhu* 天竺). This seems plausible, as cotton began to be cultivated only during the Northern Song dynasty in the Yangzi (Changjiang 長江) delta and was not yet widely available throughout the empire. Where precisely they came from in India is not known, nor can we be certain that they were Indian Jews.⁴ Quite likely they arrived in Kaifeng before the Jurchen (*Ruzhen* 女真) army laid

² A *selikhot* or penitential prayer written on paper and dating from the Tang dynasty was found in Dunhuang 敦煌. As paper was not in general use in Europe at that time, it must be assumed that it was written in China by someone who left by the overland route (Berger/Schwab 1913, pp. 139–175). Figurines of Persians and so-called Semitic merchants and musicians are well known. Among them are figurines in distinctive, non-Persian garb that could be of Jews from farther west, or even from Franco-German lands.

³ The stelae were inscribed and erected to commemorate special events in communal life. The 1489 inscription commemorates the reconstruction of the synagogue buildings after the disastrous flood of 1461, and that of 1512, on the reverse side, provides supplementary information. The stone with the two 1663 inscriptions (now lost) was erected after the 1642 flood. The occasion for the 1679 inscription was the erection of the Zhao family archway. The Chinese texts can be found in White 1966/II, pp. 35–39, 51–54, 80–85, 94–95, and 104–107.

⁴ Merchants from different places tended to band together for sea voyages, constituting a polyglot society that traded far and wide (Ghosh 1992). There is apparent

siege to the city in the winter of 1126, capturing the capital in January 1127. It is doubtful that traders would have ventured into a war zone, which would have endangered their merchandise, either during the hostilities, or even shortly thereafter. It is nevertheless clear that they built their synagogue when Kaifeng was under foreign rule and when it was no longer the capital.

The attraction to merchants of Song Kaifeng was the city's flourishing commerce. With more than one million inhabitants within the city walls and its suburbs, Kaifeng was an "open" city, with none of the constraints that had characterized earlier Chinese cities. As argued persuasively by Heng Chye Kiang, Kaifeng boasted a flowering urban culture with commerce and consumerism a part of urban life.⁵ In this new kind of city with its unrestrained commercial and entertainment establishments, a group of foreign merchants would have had no difficulty finding their place. What may have been considered a temporary residence at first, became, however, a permanent home due to the unsettled conditions – a peace treaty was signed only in 1141 – but also because trading relations between the Jin 金 dynasty (1115–1234) and the Southern Song (1127–1279) were maintained.⁶ The fact that they built a synagogue after Kaifeng had come under Jin control (together with the rest of North China) may very well indicate that trading conditions continued to be favorable and that they had settled permanently in Kaifeng.

No doubt, relations with other Jewish communities were maintained in the Jin period and especially during the subsequent Yuan dynasty. As a result of the flourishing caravan and sea trade in the Mongol period, Jews from other parts of the vast Mongol empire may have settled in Kaifeng and in other cities. However, we know nothing about them, how they perpetuated their Judaism, how precisely they made their living, or how they were accepted by their Chinese hosts. The first further information is not until three centuries later, from the Ming dynasty. Even then, the data that can be gleaned from the 1489 and 1512 inscriptions is very fragmentary. The information from these, useful to this topic, can be summarized as follows. The Jews had assumed, or were permitted to assume, Chinese surnames in the early years of the

ly a Kaifeng connection to both Persia and Yemen in the later liturgy of the Kaifeng Jews (Werblowsky 1994, pp. 587–595).

⁵ Heng 1999.

⁶ Shiba 1983, pp. 102–103.

Ming dynasty. Jews from other communities contributed to the reconstruction of the synagogue devastated by flood in 1461, indicative both of the prosperity of communities other than Kaifeng and of contacts between communities. Two scrolls of the Torah were provided by Ningbo Jews, which furthermore, supports the assumption that it, too, must have been a flourishing community at the time.⁷

From Communal to Family Identity

The Jesuits have provided more concrete information about the Kaifeng Jews in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A famous meeting took place in 1605 between the Jew Ai Tian 艾田, who had come to Beijing in search of an official appointment, and Matteo Ricci (1551–1610). This episode – Ricci assuming that Ai Tian was Christian and Ai Tian thinking that Ricci was Jewish – is well known and needs no further comment. More importantly, in the wake of this meeting a number of Jesuit fathers visited Kaifeng until the year 1723, when they were confined to Beijing and Guangzhou by order of the Yongzheng 雍正 emperor (r. 1723–1735). The Jesuit letters, together with the 1663 and the 1679 inscriptions, reveal a picture of a prosperous and successful community. Its members led rich Jewish lives in addition to being active in Chinese society, with a number of families reaching elite status when sons received official appointments in the imperial bureaucracy. A drawing of the synagogue, based on sketches prepared by Jean Domenge in 1722, shows a Chinese-style building of imposing size.⁸ Unfortunately, nothing is known of the fate of the Jews between the last Jesuit visit in 1723 and the first Protestant visitor, W.A.P. Martin, in 1866, whose dramatic description of the visit still makes enjoyable reading.⁹

Clearly, however, by the mid-nineteenth century the Jewish community had been declining for quite some time. There was no longer a head (*zhangjiao* 長教) of the community, the last one having died in 1810. Circumcision was also no longer practiced and knowledge of Hebrew had ceased. Abstinance from pork was apparently still practiced, possibly under Moslem influence. The synagogue had, however disappeared.

⁷ Leslie 1972, pp. 27–30.

⁸ The drawing is of the synagogue that was rebuilt in 1663 after it had been destroyed by a flood in 1642 caused by Li Zicheng 李自成 (ca. 1605–1645) rebels cutting the Yellow River dykes in the waning days of the Ming dynasty.

⁹ Martin 1866, p. 2.

It had been severely damaged by floods in 1849 and was dismantled some time thereafter.

This brief outline raises a number of questions. How had the Jews maintained their Jewish identity for seven centuries with minimal or no contacts with co-religionists outside of China? Considering that their numbers were not augmented from outside of China for something like three centuries, how were they able to maintain a numerically adequate population? Why were they not rapidly assimilated by the Chinese society, which had erected no barriers against them and apparently did not discriminate against Jews? Should we seek answers concerning the maintenance of Jewish identity in the strength of Jewish practices, or rather in those aspects of Chinese culture and society that were conducive to their continuing identification as Jews? In the following I shall argue that it was a unique combination of both.

The acquisition of Chinese surnames, mentioned earlier, may be considered a major step for Jewish integration into Chinese society. This occurred at more or less the same time that the Chinese family organization into lineages was adopted. Such a transition was not a major step for these Jews, since most or all were undoubtedly Sephardi, whose custom it was to organize into clans. Moreover, Sephardi Jews practiced polygamy, which, depending on their means, they continued to practice in Kaifeng. Their memorial or genealogy book of some centuries later lists the first wife as Jewish and other wives as Chinese.¹⁰ Possibly they took Chinese wives due to the scarcity of Jewish women. Be that as it may, it suggests more importantly a more rapid population growth than if they had been monogamous.

But Chinese lineages differ in several ways from what is understood by the term clan. A lineage generally traces its origin to one ancestor, goes by one surname, is domiciled in one locality, and holds some property, including a burial ground, in common. Evidence for the assumption of such lineage organization by the Kaifeng Jews comes from two sources: inscriptions on the stelae and cemeteries. The 1663a inscription mentions "seven surnames" (*qixing* 七姓), clearly indicating that lineages are being referred to. The 1679 inscription states that seventy-three names consist of five hundred families (*jia* 家).¹¹ Secondly, family cemeteries

¹⁰ Leslie 1984. The memorial book was closed ca. 1670. It is now held at the Library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹¹ White 1966, II, p. 94. For the Chinese texts of the inscriptions, I have used those reproduced in White.

came into use. Indeed, even if a Jewish cemetery had ever existed in Kaifeng, it has long disappeared. And precisely when this custom was adopted is uncertain. It may have been after the 1642 flood, but in any event, it occurred well after the lineage family organization was prevalent. Wang Yisha refers to several family cemeteries in Kaifeng's suburbs and adjoining hamlets, among which the Jin 金 and Li 李 cemeteries each have a "foremost" grave, marked "Old Ancestor's Grave".¹² Graves thus marked are meant to indicate symbolically agnatic affiliation and the original ancestor of the lineage.¹³

The transformation into lineages has significant implications for the question of identity. As a result of this transformation, identification with a larger and amorphous Jewish community beyond China's borders became less important than identification with the lineage and agnatic group. As long as lineages remained Jewish, individual Jews were unlikely to abandon their Jewish identity. Although Jewishness could be abandoned and forgotten by an entire family, especially if that family left Kaifeng, Jewishness continued within the lineage as long as a family remained intact and was domiciled in the same locality. There is, furthermore, no evidence that the Jews ever were a community in the sense in which we know other Jewish communities, with institutions and their designated functions. Indeed, these were not needed as the lineage performed such functions on behalf of its families. Therefore, instead of identifying with a Jewish people, Kaifeng Jewish identity became a family-centered identity.

This transformation was accompanied and reinforced by how they (or perhaps even more, their Chinese neighbors) came to regard their Jewish practices, namely as similar to those of a religious sect. Like Chinese sects, the Jews were called a *jiao* 教, which may be variously translated as religion, religious sect, or teaching, and this is how they referred to themselves in the inscriptions. When the word Israel (*Yici-loye* 一賜樂業) occurs in the inscriptions, it is not used as the name of a people, but refers to the founding or establishment of the teaching.¹⁴ The inscriptions, furthermore, refer to the Jews as "followers of the teaching," that is as a sect.¹⁵ But their Chinese neighbors apparently

¹² Wang 1984, pp. 183–184.

¹³ Cohen 1990, p. 513. Cohen points out that the Old Ancestor's grave was at the apex of a triangular arrangement of graves.

¹⁴ White 1966, II, pp. 35, 52, 80.

¹⁵ White 1966, II, pp. 83, 94, 104.

used more specific names: Tiaojin-jiao 挑筋教 (sinew-extracting sect), Jiaojing-jiao 教經教 (scripture teaching sect) and *lanmao huihui* 藍帽回回 (blue cap Muslims). None of these names appear on the stela, and Jean-Paul Gozani's observation of 1704 that the name "sinew-extracting sect" was bestowed on the Jews by the "idolaters"¹⁶ would confirm that these names were not of their own invention.

As admirably described by Daniel Overmyer popular sectarianism, specifically syncretic sectarianism, consisting of mixtures of Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, and folk elements, flourished in various parts of the Chinese empire, including the North China Plain.¹⁷ It was a localized and highly fragmented phenomenon and the sects were known by a variety of names. Part of the rural as well as the urban scene, sectarians shared a number of characteristics that were not too dissimilar from those of the Jews. Sectarians had a meeting place; a set of sacred writings used only by those who participated in sectarian worship; a leader who kept the scriptures; and practices specific to the sect such as dietary customs.

Which practices the Jews kept can be learned from the inscriptions, the various Jesuit reports, and the few manuscripts that have been recovered from Kaifeng. The Jews observed the major festivals, including Rosh Hodesh (the first moon), Purim, and the 9th of Av, which commemorates the destruction of the Temple. They prayed three times a day with a *minyán* (ten men), read the weekly Torah portion, and on special occasions as required, read the *haphtarah* (prophetic portion). They kept the Sabbath, lighting no fires and doing no work. Kosher slaughter was practiced (as reflected in the name the Chinese had given the Jews), although a *shokhet* (butcher) is not specifically mentioned. Circumcision was also practiced, but again a *mohel* (expert in circumcision) is not mentioned. According to Donald Leslie, it is doubtful that they managed to keep the Jewish calendar in order, as periodic adjustments have to be made. It is, therefore, also doubtful that they observed the festivals at their proper times.¹⁸ They had, of course, prayer books and scrolls of the Torah, but whether they had books of the Talmud is uncertain.¹⁹ They followed rabbinic practices while praying, and one might conjec-

¹⁶ Leslie 1972, p. 108.

¹⁷ Overmyer 1976.

¹⁸ Leslie 1972, pp. 86–90.

¹⁹ Leslie 1972, p. 154. Leslie doubts that they had Talmudic books, but writes that they were definitely rabbinates.

ture that they had some Talmudic books in the early days that were later lost. Jewish practices were in some instances (Passover in spring, Tabernacles in autumn) linked to Chinese practices and observances, reinforcing the sectarian identity. Gradually, therefore, the connection to a foreign and universal religion was severed and ties were established to native and local religions. Therefore, not only in appearance but also in their life-style, the Jews were neither strangers nor outsiders in Chinese society. The sinification of Judaism allowed Kaifeng Jews to retain a Jewish identity, and it allowed them to practice a kind of Judaism that assumed specifically Chinese features.

It is obviously easier to say something about the practices that continued to be in use for close to eight hundred years than it is to discuss matters of belief. The inscriptions do not yield sufficient evidence for describing the beliefs these Jews held. A book by Zhao Yingdou 趙映斗 – a Kaifeng Jew actively involved in community affairs – of ten chapters with the suggestive title *Mingdao xu* 明道序 (Preface to the Illustrious Way) might have furnished some clues, but it is unfortunately no longer extant.²⁰ However, the inscriptions indicate that the basis of their belief continued to be monotheism. There is no mention of Chinese deities in the inscriptions, and *Shangdi* 上帝 occurs only when quotations from the Chinese Classics are used, in particular on the horizontal and vertical tablets.²¹ Heaven (*Tian* 天) is used generally when God is referred to, although *Di* 帝 does occur occasionally, as in the 1663b inscription.²² Yet, there is also ample evidence in the inscriptions that monotheism was combined with Chinese moral precepts, such as the cardinal virtues of filial piety (*xiao* 孝), loyalty (*zhong* 忠), benevolence (*ren* 仁), and righteousness (*yi* 義).²³

Aside from questions of belief, attempts to establish succession and transmission, as well as to provide Kaifeng Jewish history with a Chinese context are especially noteworthy. The succession always begins with Adam, moves on to Abraham, as the founder, and continues from Abraham to Moses. The 1663a inscription adds Noah after Adam,²⁴ and

²⁰ White 1966, II, pp. 66, 123–124; Leslie 1972, p. 47.

²¹ White 1966, II, pp. 121–154.

²² White 1966, II, p. 80. Apparently the men who composed the inscriptions were not troubled, as would be later Protestant missionaries, whether the term *Tian* truly reflected the monotheist concept. See Eber 1999.

²³ White 1966, II, p. 81.

²⁴ White 1966, I, p. 80.

the 1489 inscription ends the succession with Ezra.²⁵ In the earliest inscription, Adam is referred to as Adam-Pan Gu 盤古,²⁶ that is as one person, and Abraham is said to be of the nineteenth generation after Adam. The 1512 inscription adds that Adam came originally from India (Tian-zhu 天竺).²⁷ The 1489 inscription places Abraham's establishment of the "true teaching" in the 146th year of the Zhou dynasty, or 977/6 BCE. Moses is said to have lived in the 613th year of the Zhou, or 510/09 BCE. These dates do not seem to have any special significance in the Chinese calendar, and one wonders why they were chosen. For Ezra no dates are supplied. Both the 1512 and the 1679 inscriptions date the arrival of the teaching to the Han dynasty.²⁸

Time and space (even the mythic time of Pan Gu) are the significant ingredients that have helped move Jewish history into a Chinese historical context. The important personages now have dates that coincide with the early Chinese history of the Zhou dynasty. Adam, moreover, though he is a progenitor and not a founder, is given a recognizable origin in India instead of an unfamiliar place. Therefore, Abraham, as his descendant, can also be placed in a known geographical area. Finally, the arrival of the religion in the Han dynasty provides the necessary starting point for Jewish development in China. Were there other writings that developed these ideas more concretely, ideas that are stated only briefly in the inscriptions? Perhaps, but all that can be safely stated on the basis of the stelae is that the creation of a Jewish-Chinese history contributed to, and was part of the process of sinification.²⁹

After W.A.P. Martin's 1866 visit, a number of other visitors went to Kaifeng, leaving accounts that Michael Pollak has appropriately called in a chapter heading "Outright Lies, Tall Tales, and a Few Truths."³⁰ But no matter what the shortcomings of these visitors' stories were, whether they spoke to few or many, those with whom they spoke continued to think of themselves as Jews. Since the 1970s memories of having been Jewish have been revived through outside contacts. Jewish visitors to

²⁵ White 1966, II, p. 35.

²⁶ According to one of the Chinese creation myths, Pan Gu is the giant from whose body the world was created.

²⁷ White 1966, II, p. 52.

²⁸ White 1966, II, pp. 52, 104.

²⁹ I am grateful to Max Deeg who, in his excellent conference lecture and essay in this volume, has helped me pinpoint the two aspects of time and space.

³⁰ Pollak 1980, p. 235.

Kaifeng have imported knowledge about Jewish practices, onto which some members of erstwhile Jewish families (especially the Shi 石, Jin 金, and Zhao 趙 families) graft half-remembered, half imagined recollections in an attempt to reinvent Judaism.³¹ “Descendant of Jews” (*youtai houyi* 猶太後裔) is recorded in some registration cards.³² But according to the legal (*halakhic*) Jewish definition, being a descendant does not necessarily establish the Jewishness of the person, as descent is determined by the status of the mother.³³ But, as Pollak, points out, it is unlikely that non-Jewish women who married Jewish men were converted after the last rabbi died around 1810.³⁴ Thus present-day Kaifeng individuals who identify themselves as Jews can be accepted as *halakhically* Jewish only if they were to formally convert, although it goes without saying that the *halakhic* definition has been challenged time and again, both in Israel and in the diaspora.

It is possible, however, that some might be considering conversion. In recent years, a few young Kaifeng men have been mentioned as studying at Jerusalem religious schools (*yeshivot*), although whether their studies are for the purpose of conversion and/or returning to Kaifeng as teachers is not clear. During the 2001–2002 academic year, Shi Lei studied Hebrew and Jewish subjects at Bar Ilan University.³⁵ An Institute of Jewish Studies has been established at He’nan University 河南大学. Presumably it will attract Kaifeng descendants as students, who would like to study their heritage as an academic subject. It is difficult to say how widespread, how long lasting, or how genuine this interest in Judaism is. Can it lead to an actual revival of Kaifeng Judaism and what characteristics might such a revival have? Historically, being Jewish in Chinese Kaifeng meant as-

³¹ Shi Zhongyu, for example, remembered that during the spring festival his father wrote Chinese characters with chicken blood on the door frame of his house “to guard against the devil.” With minor variations this story is repeated by others. Some remember Japanese soldiers searching for Jews in Kaifeng (Wren 1982; Laytner 1982).

³² A photocopy of a Shi family member’s registration card is in the author’s possession.

³³ *EJ* 1971/10, p. 23. The *Mishnah* tractate *Qidushin* (3:12) of the Talmud states succinctly that the offspring of a gentile woman (married to a Jewish man) receive her status, to which Maimonides (Moses Ben Maimon) (1135–1204) added that the status of the father is not considered in this case (Neusner 1984/26, 201–202; Rabinowitz/Grossman 1965/5, 98). The Talmudic injunction is based on the biblical pronouncement (Ex. 19:6 and Lev. 20:26).

³⁴ Pollak 1980, p. 235.

³⁵ Abraham 2001, pp. 1, 6.

serting particularity within a society consisting of particular groups. It did not mean religious separateness. In present-day Kaifeng, the formal assumption of Judaism would have different implications and could have different consequences.

The Shanghai Jewish Communities

Whereas the Kaifeng Jews were not truly a community, Judaism being family centered and sectarian, the case of Shanghai is different. From the mid-19th century three distinct communities developed in Shanghai, communities which, except for the fact that they were Jewish, had little else in common. Sephardi Jews (or Baghdadis) came to Shanghai in the 1840s together with the British. They came for the most part from Iraq via India, were English speakers, and established their homes and business enterprises in the International Settlement. Russian Jews came next, some by way of Harbin in the early 1900s, and the bulk after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. They settled in the French Concession, while the poorer among them went to live in Hongkou 虹口, which was part of the International Settlement north of Suzhou Creek 苏州河. The Central European refugees, mostly German and Austrian but also some Poles, Czechs, and others came after 1933, the greater part arriving between November 1938 and September 1939. Most of the Central Europeans settled in Hongkou, although some took up residence in the International Settlement. A fourth and distinctly different group arrived in 1941. It consisted of a number of secular Polish-Jewish writers and intellectuals, a number of Polish and Lithuanian rabbis, and several religious schools together with their rabbinic teachers.³⁶ This group of mostly ultra-Orthodox men (not many had brought wives and families) carved out a Shanghai existence for themselves vastly different from that of other refugees. Thus in 1941 there were English, Russian, and German-speaking Jews in Shanghai – aside from a small group of Yiddish speakers – each group culturally as well as religiously different from the other. Numerically, the Sephardi group remained the smallest with something over one thousand people. The Russian group was larger, numbering between five and six thousand persons. But, by the end of

³⁶ Most of them had fled Poland for Lithuania before August 1940. They were able to obtain Curacao visas that, in turn, enabled them to procure Russian and Japanese transit visas. They arrived in Kōbe and remained there until the Japanese shipped them to Shanghai.

1941, by far the largest group were the Central Europeans, with around twenty thousand Jews. In the treaty port Shanghai, the culturally and linguistically different groups of Jews found a congenial environment conducive to the maintenance of their differences.

Shanghai was a mosaic of districts, consisting of the Chinese areas, the International Settlement, and the French Concession. The International Settlement was similarly a mosaic of populations made up of many different kinds of Europeans, Asians, and Chinese. The Chinese population was by far the largest, and continued to grow as refugees poured into the metropolis in 1937. The number of foreigners was, in comparison, insignificant: there were White Russians, Japanese, Indians, Germans, French, Italians, and others, each forming a kind of enclave in the unique treaty port setting. But these were not, as Robert Bickers and Christian Henriot write, colonialist communities. The foreigners were rather a large collection of various kinds of people pursuing their "interests in the interstices of empire, adroitly operating on the margins of treaty legality, using extraterritoriality, and the grey areas offered by colonial citizenship and settler autonomy, to further their own end." The treaty system, the authors argue, enabled nationals to develop new identities,³⁷ allowing them at the same time to preserve earlier identities such as linguistic and religious. Foreigners, writes Betty Wei, and Chinese remained separate, even while working together and competing with one another.³⁸ The millions of Chinese were far from a homogenous population, whether they lived in the International Settlement or in the Chinese-administered city. Shanghai's Chinese population was largely made up of people who had left their native towns and villages in search of work and livelihood in the metropolis. Together with the masses of destitute refugees who arrived after the outbreak of hostilities in 1937, the Chinese population, too, was composed of disparate ethnic groups.³⁹

Communication within each group, Chinese and foreign, was maintained by means of newspapers and radio broadcasts. In addition to Chinese newspapers, English dailies and an array of weeklies in Russian, Polish, German, and Yiddish were available. Among the Jewish papers, some weeklies served the non-Jewish population, others speci-

³⁷ Bickers/Henriot 2000, pp. 4–5.

³⁸ Wei 1990, p. 104.

³⁹ Honig 1992 describes one such ethnic group, the much-maligned Subei people, who hailed originally from Jiangsu 江蘇 Province, north of the Yangzi.

cally addressed religious or secular Jews. The subject of publishing will be discussed in greater detail below.

Synagogues, Rabbis, and Observances

The Shanghai Jewish communities were not only culturally diverse, religious differences created additional fragmentation, especially within the Ashkenazi community, into secular, observant, and ultra-religious. This fragmentation duplicated, of course, the European Jewish religious scene (with the exception of the small, though highly influential Baghdadi presence). Together with the absence of a pronounced anti-Semitism (except among the White Russians), there was in the treaty port no political authority able or empowered to enforce uniformity and conformity, and thus variations and differences could be maintained and perpetuated.

The three Jewish groups, Baghdadi, Russian, and Central European, maintained separate synagogues. The earliest were those of the Sephardi Jews; Beth El was established in 1887 and its splinter group, She'erit Israel, in 1900. Their initially temporary prayer houses were later replaced by two splendid structures: Ohel Rachel in 1920, financed by Sir Jacob Elias Sassoon (1843–1916), and Beth Aharon in 1927, financed by Silas Aaron Hardoon.⁴⁰ By the early years of the twentieth century, enough Russian Jews had arrived in Shanghai to feel the need of a congregation of their own. They did not build a synagogue, but used the premises of the Sephardi She'erit Israel synagogue. Ohel Moshe (Oihel Moishe), as it was called, moved to its own building in 1927, and in 1941, the New Synagogue was constructed in the French Concession.⁴¹ The approximately twenty thousand Central European refugees fully reflected the complexity of modern Judaism, now transplanted into the treaty port context. Aside from the Central European and Polish secularists, the refugees represented the entire spectrum of Reform, Liberal, and ultra-Orthodox Jewry. Due to their diversity and their sojourner status, building a synagogue was out of the question; for services on festivals and the high holy days they used various premises, while for

⁴⁰ Silas Hardoon (1851–1931) was a colorful Shanghai personality who, perhaps influenced by his Eurasian wife, played a considerable role in Chinese affairs. For an anecdotal biography, see Xu 1983.

⁴¹ Kranzler 1976, pp. 60–61.

the ultra-Orthodox rabbis and their students Beth Aharon was made available.

During the nearly one hundred years of Jewish populations in Shanghai, rabbis, who were responsible for the communities' spiritual and everyday lives, were often hard to find. Obviously, they would have to speak the language of their congregants and they would have had to come from abroad in order to have received rabbinic training. For the Baghdadis, finding a rabbi presented special problems because, in addition to familiarity with Sephardi liturgy and customs, he had to be an English speaker in order to represent the status-conscious community in the International Settlement.⁴² The Baghdadis eventually compromised on the first requirement in preference of the English language requirement. The Russian community was more fortunate. Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi (1891-1954), after serving in Vladivostok, came to Shanghai in 1926, remaining the Russian congregation's leader for the next twenty-one years.⁴³ More research is needed to better understand the religious diversity of the Central European refugees. Rabbis were certainly among them, but customs often differed within what may be broadly described as Reform Judaism,⁴⁴ and splinter groups tended to develop.

Except for the staunchest of secularists, the Jews celebrated the major festivals and observed the high holy days. Practices varied, depending on cultural background and religious fervor. Simhat Torah, for example, the conclusion of the yearly cycle of Torah reading, was celebrated as joyously with song and dance by the Hasidim of the Mir Yeshiva as if they had never left their homes.⁴⁵ Whereas the ultra-Orthodox continued to maintain strict Sabbath observance, most of the Jewish population did not, which was a constant irritant to the Orthodox community. Many of the Sephardi businessmen, who had been strictly observant at one time, had grown lax by the 1930s. Russians, most of whom were merchants and storekeepers, did not close for the Sabbath. Neither did the Central European refugees desist from trying to make a living.

⁴² Meyer 2000, p. 363. Meyer discusses this and other questions in greater detail elsewhere (Meyer 2003).

⁴³ Kranzler 1976, pp. 60, 79–80.

⁴⁴ Reform congregations, for example, might or might not have separate seating for men and women, head covering for men, a choir, an organ, and the like. The general term "reform" does not adequately describe these differences.

⁴⁵ Hertsman 1999, p. 27.

Kashruth (regulations concerning dietary laws) was maintained longest by the Sephardi Jews, even after other observances had been abandoned. This included ritual slaughter, abstaining from forbidden foods like shellfish or pork, and keeping meat and milk strictly separate. Both the Russian and the Central European communities were more lax. Yet, in the shelters (*Heime*), where many of the destitute refugees lived upon arrival, kosher kitchen facilities were maintained, and the organizations responsible for refugee welfare made every effort to adhere to dietary laws.⁴⁶ It is not clear how the problem of *matzoth* (unleavened bread) during the Passover week was handled, especially during the three years of war when wheat shortages developed. The ultra-Orthodox group would have been especially affected, as rituals concerning the grinding of the flour in addition to the manner of preparing the dough and baking had to be strictly observed.

Community Organizations

Prior to the large number of refugees arriving in 1938, both the Baghdadi and Russian communities had each established institutions and organizational structures dealing with financial support, welfare, charity, burial, and other communal matters. These were, however, not sufficient to manage the massive aid effort that was required to help settle the refugees. Some form of cooperation between the two established communities was necessary and both rose to the challenge, with the Sephardi community taking the lead, perhaps because they felt the pressure of the British more keenly than did the Russians. Even before ever larger shiploads of refugees landed in Shanghai, the Shanghai Municipal Council had indicated that it could not be responsible for the Jews' maintenance; the burden would have to be shouldered by local Jewry.⁴⁷ As a result, several new organizations for relief purposes were established. Here I shall discuss one community organization and two aid organizations only: burial societies, because of their importance in communal life, and two organizations responsible for refugees' aid, the Committee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai (CAEJR) and HICEM.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Kranzler 1976, p. 410.

⁴⁷ YVA 1938/1939.

⁴⁸ HICEM stands for HIAS ICA-Emigdirect. The organization was supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Hebrew Sheltering and

The ritual preparation of the corpse and burial have an important place in Jewish observances, and burial societies occupy a central position in all Jewish communities. In Shanghai, the Sephardi burial society (*Hevra Kadisha*) was established in 1862, probably at about the same time as the founding of its first cemetery on Mohawk Road (now Huangpu 黄埔 Road). The Russian community organized its burial society in 1922, having interred its dead in the Sephardi cemetery in a separate section until they acquired their own cemetery on Baikal Road (now Weiming Road). The refugees initially used both the Ashkenazi burial society and cemetery, until finally they, too, organized their own burial society in 1940 and acquired land for their cemetery on Columbia Road. Due to the high mortality rate among the refugees, a fourth cemetery (on Point Road) was added in 1941.⁴⁹ In life as well as in death the three communities maintained their separateness. Unfortunately, the four cemeteries were moved between 1957 and 1959 to Qingpu 青浦 County, in the environs of Shanghai, and have since disappeared.⁵⁰

The Committee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees was established in the fall of 1938 as an amalgamation of previous relief committees and brought together Baghdadis, Russians, and refugees.⁵¹ Prominent businessmen active in Shanghai commerce assumed a major role, raising funds both locally and abroad. It is to the credit of men like Michelle Speelman (c. 1877–?) and Ellis Hayim (1894–1977) who, without experience in social welfare, nonetheless saw to it that the refugees were given shelter and were fed. The standing of these men in

Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and the London-based Jewish Colonization Association (ICA). The HICEM bureau was located in Harbin until September 1939, when it moved to Shanghai. The CAEJR was supported by the JDC and by funds raised in Shanghai.

⁴⁹ Kranzler 1976, p. 425. I thank Ralph B. Hirsch for making available to me a list of “Central European Jewish Refugees who Died in Shanghai, 1940–1945.” The list, first published in the New York *Aufbau*, April 12, 19, 26, and May 3, 1946, consists of 1,433 names. I thank Itamar Livny for his preliminary examination of the list, which shows that nearly twice as many men died than women in Shanghai and that infant mortality was comparatively higher than that of older children. The higher male mortality reflects, no doubt, the larger number of Jewish men in Shanghai. A more detailed analysis of the list should reveal further useful data.

⁵⁰ JDC 1958, 1960. In July 1958, the Jewish community was notified by the Chinese authorities that 4,000 graves were to be moved. By January 6, 1960 three cemeteries had been moved. About current efforts to recover some of the gravestones, see Bar-Gal 2002.

⁵¹ Kranzler 1976, pp. 93–96.

the business community enabled them, furthermore, to maintain contacts with the Shanghai Municipal Council and the Japanese authorities on behalf of the refugees.⁵² The committee ceased to function after the start of the Pacific War, when British passport holders, like Ellis Hayim, were interned by the Japanese. Thus, in February 1943, when the Japanese authorities ordered the relocation of stateless refugees to the “designated area,” or ghetto, in Hongkou, they also ordered the Russian communal association to assume the care of the refugees. The new committee was known as the Shanghai Ashkenazi Collaborating Relief Association, or SACRA.⁵³

The HICEM office, under the direction of Meyer Birman (1891–1955), engaged in an unprecedented rescue operation that was just short of heroic. First in Harbin and then in Shanghai from September 1939 until December 1941, when the office was closed by the Japanese, Birman disseminated information about China and helped move refugees in and out of Shanghai. He wrote thousands of letters to relief agencies throughout the world, trying to help locate and relocate refugees. Despite limited funds, his office paid fees for border crossings and for documents required by the Shanghai Municipal Police, ship passage for visa holders, and the like. Birman tirelessly explored every avenue, followed every lead, both of how to bring Jews to the safe haven of Shanghai and, as the clouds of war gathered, how to find other countries of refuge once routes from Shanghai increasingly closed down.⁵⁴

Educational Institutions and Publishing

Schools for the young developed but slowly and in accordance with the needs and growth of the three communities. In the early years of the Baghdadi community, Jewish education for boys was taken care of at home. They were instructed in prayers and Bible by their fathers or the

⁵² This sometimes backfired. For example, in 1940 Inuzuka Koreshige 犬塚惟重 (1890–1965) demanded that Ellis Hayim write a letter stating how grateful the Jews were for the way the Japanese treated them. Hayim refused (PRO 1940).

⁵³ Kranzler 1976, pp. 521–522.

⁵⁴ Altman/Eber 2000, pp. 51–86. Birman’s letters often reveal the desperation that must have been felt in Shanghai as war seemed inevitable. For example, on November 6, 1941, Birman wrote that Shanghai is cut off from most countries, and one week later, on November 13, 1941, that “The situation is growing steadily worse, Shanghai is now also cut off from Central and South America”(CAHJP 1941a).

community's teacher (*melamed*), essentially a private tutor who taught the boys in their homes. But by 1902, a Hebrew school (*Talmud Torah*) for boys was established on the premises of the She'erit Israel synagogue. In time, this religious school developed into the Shanghai Jewish School with a British-based curriculum and instruction in English. Those who could afford it preferred, however, to send their children to British public schools, so that only pupils from less affluent Baghdadi families attended the Shanghai Jewish School.⁵⁵ Some Russian parents, particularly those who wanted their children educated in the British style, also sent their children to this school. Whereas socially the parents of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews remained distant, some of the younger generation interacted at least during school hours.

Despite the fact that few of the Central European refugees brought families with school age children and large families were quite the exception,⁵⁶ more school facilities were nevertheless required due to the influx. Sir Horace Kadoorie (1902–1995), well known for having endowed a number of educational institutions in China, Asia, and the Middle East, established in 1937 the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association (better known as the Kadoorie School). Instruction was also in English and the curriculum included Hebrew, Bible studies, as well as Chinese. The nominal fee charged attracted children from less well-off families.⁵⁷ As in the Shanghai Jewish School, the younger generation here too had an opportunity to interact.

The Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT) vocational school fulfilled a vital function for older teenagers and adults from 1941 on, by providing training in various skills and trades. Significantly, Russians cooperated with Sephardi Jews to make this vocational school a success.⁵⁸ William Deman, a refugee from Vienna, established on his own initiative a business school that offered training in office skills and languages. The Gregg School of Business (later Gregg College) also operated from 1941 on.⁵⁹ Finally, the Asia Seminar should be also mentioned. Creatively organized by W.Y. Tonn, who had pursued

⁵⁵ Meyer 2000, pp. 365–366.

⁵⁶ Large intact families were mostly found among the ultra-Orthodox from Poland. For example, according to Birman, in a group of ten rabbis only three were without families. The others had four or five children (CAHJP 1941b).

⁵⁷ Meyer 2000, p. 369; Kranzler 1976, pp. 390–391.

⁵⁸ Kranzler 1976, pp. 395–396.

⁵⁹ YVA 1988, pp. 124–126.

Chinese studies in Berlin, the Seminar offered instruction in languages as diverse as Hebrew, Urdu, Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese from 1943 on. Its lecture series on Chinese thought and art added an intellectual dimension to the otherwise drab Hongkou existence.⁶⁰

The rabbis and their students were part of the refugee community, yet they lived their lives separately from the others, as indeed they had done earlier in Kōbe, where they had first landed after leaving Lithuania, and still earlier, in Poland. Once they were settled, the yeshiva students, under the guidance of their rabbis, resumed rigorous study schedules. The distance that separated their way of life from that of the secular Jews did not prevent, however, a number of refugee teenage boys from joining them, and in the Mir Yeshiva they were apparently accepted by both teachers and students. It may have been the strictly regulated life of prayer and study that attracted the youngsters, or perhaps it was the better quality food available among the ultra-Orthodox.⁶¹ There is no denying, however, that the yeshiva students' unflagging devotion to study as well as their maintenance of ritual purity in daily life was exemplary.

Study in the yeshiva is the study of texts. Concerned about the scarcity of Talmudic books for their students, the rabbis decided to reproduce the books they had by lithography. They succeeded in finding a Chinese printer, and over time most of the titles of the Talmud were reprinted,⁶² an accomplishment that was hailed as a "historic event" in the Yiddish press.⁶³

Aside from this undertaking, a considerable number of Jewish newspapers and journals flourished in Shanghai, printing in German, Yiddish, and Russian. Although some of the weeklies or monthlies were short-lived, publishing only a few issues before they folded, as a communication effort within each community this publishing activity was a remarkable feat. Here I will mention only some of the papers. The *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt* and *Gemeindeblatt der jüdischen Gemeinde* ad-

⁶⁰ YVA 1988, pp. 154–155.

⁶¹ Tobias 1999, p. 79.

⁶² Kranzler 1976, p. 434. According to Kranzler, nearly 100 titles were reprinted. Another list mentions 104 titles (Alboim 1999–2000, pp. 74–86). *Kontras* (*Kontras* 1960–1961) states that between 1941 and 1942, the Mir Yeshiva published 56 or 58 titles of 100–150 copies each. The titles included prayer books and complete Bibles with commentaries (*Mikra'ot gedolot*).

⁶³ *UL* 1942.

dressed the religiously observant German refugee population. For secular German speakers there was the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*, which had the longest run among the various publications; *Die Gelbe Post* was intended for the more intellectually inclined reader.⁶⁴ Russian readers read *Nasha Zhizn* (Our Life), which included a Yiddish page, later replaced by an English page. The religious party, Agudat Yisrael, published two Yiddish papers, *Di Yiddishe Shtime fun vaytn Mizrakh* (The Jewish Voice from the Far East) and *Dos Vort* (The Word). Last but not least was the English language monthly, *Israel's Messenger*, which served almost exclusively the Sephardi community and was the official organ of the Shanghai Zionist Association. More research is necessary to do full justice to this impressive publishing activity, of which the above is only the barest outline.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, from it we can safely conclude that the intellectual level of the three Jewish communities was remarkably high, consisting not only of readers but boasting also a considerable number of writers, whose contributions were featured in the papers.

The exodus from China after World War II was gradual, lasting well into the 1950s. A few Baghdadis, like members of the Kadoorie family, who had been pillars of the Shanghai community, resettled in Hong Kong, eventually finding their last resting place in the Hong Kong Jewish cemetery.⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, many Baghdadis might have considered remaining in Shanghai after the end of war, yet the treaty port days were clearly over and Shanghai would never be the same. Nor would they ever again be able to lead the kind of Jewish lives that they and their forbears had created in the treaty port. The Sephardi-Shanghai past was transformed into a time and place remembered.

Some of the Central European refugees returned to their countries of origin, but most opted for America or Israel, as did the majority of the Russian community, while others made their homes in Australia. The Judaism they had brought with them from Germany, Austria, or Russia had not essentially changed in Shanghai. Wherever they went thereaf-

⁶⁴ For more about the paper and its editor, see Kreissler 2000, pp. 511–524.

⁶⁵ The unpublished “Di Yiddishe Presse in Chine, 1937–1947,” prepared by Asher Rozenboim and held by the Institute for Jewish Research Archive (YIVO/Yidisher Vissenshaftlikher Institut), lists 46 Jewish publications in all of China. Unfortunately, only single issues of most of these papers are available. Some have disappeared altogether.

⁶⁶ This is an unusually beautiful and interesting cemetery with its many styles of gravestones and varieties of inscriptions, representing the different cultural backgrounds of Hong Kong Jewry. Eber/Hsia 2003 (in Hebrew).

ter, they would again be part of Jewish communities and congregations similarly observant or secular. Shanghai seems to have been no more than a passing episode of hardship in the lives of the ultra-Orthodox and *yeshivoth*, and they continued a life of study and prayer in their new environment, whether in Israel or the diaspora.

The erstwhile Shanghai-landers, as some like to refer to themselves, remember their China days with great fondness. If some had felt regrets over years lost,⁶⁷ such feelings vanished in time and are not perpetuated by the younger generation. In the last two decades, reunions have taken place and tours undertaken to Shanghai to revisit the homes where they once lived and where they were children or teenagers. Memories are kept alive (or undergo change) in documentaries about Shanghai-landers— in particular the refugees among them – and in memoirs about their Jewish-Shanghai past.

Judaism in China Today

Except for Hong Kong and an incipient Shanghai community, today there are no organized Jewish communities with synagogues and Jewish institutions in China. Those individuals who identify themselves as Jewish in Kaifeng today are not Jewish in accordance with *halakha*. They are the descendants of Jews. Can we say that by following the reintroduced religious practices they are now “Jewish”?⁶⁸ But perhaps whether Kaifeng Jews are, or are not, *halakhically* Jews does not matter to those who are interested in the revitalization of Kaifeng Judaism. Anson Laytner, for example, speaks of “reviving Jewish culture,” and Len Hew, a descendant of the Zhao family, wants to revive the community. I would question the term “revival,” however, for it is surely not Qing dynasty Kaifeng Judaism that they wish to see revived. Nor is it obvious what is meant by “Jewish culture,” and where to draw the line between culture and observing religious commandments (*mitzvoth*). Well meaning, no doubt, as these efforts at revival are, they raise a number of questions, including those of faith and belief.

⁶⁷ Fein 1945, pp. 27–30.

⁶⁸ This and other problems are also raised in a 1998 documentary “Minyan in Kaifeng,” in which a group of young Western Jews questions the many complex aspects of Jewish identity.

Today Jews from Western countries and Israel work in China – about 150 are said to reside in Beijing – as transient businessmen and professionals. The largest number is in Shanghai, estimated at three hundred, and in 2002 the Shanghai Jewish Community Center was inaugurated.⁶⁹ But these Jews are only temporarily in China, remaining there for longer or shorter periods of time. They do not have synagogues, although services take place in Beijing and at several locations in Shanghai. The Ohel Rachel synagogue is not used for daily prayer.

Matters are different in Hong Kong. A small but vital Jewish community was reconstituted after World War II that has flourished ever since and has, in fact, grown larger than it was between the wars. Consisting of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, this community represents the entire spectrum of Judaism, from orthodox observance of the Habad movement to Reform Judaism. The Jewish Club, donated by Sir Eli Kadoorie (1867–1944) in 1909 to the community, is now the Jewish Community Center, and Ohel Leah, the synagogue built by Sir Jacob Sassoon in 1902, is still in use. Even though a large number of Hong Kong's Jews live there only temporarily, its nearly three thousand Jews are an interesting mix of descendants of old Sephardi families, Australians, South Africans, Americans, Israelis, and British, and their common language is English. Thus in this small corner of China, Judaism continues to flourish, not of Chinese Jews but of Jews in China, many of whom, nonetheless, consider China their home.

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⁶⁹ *BIYS* 2002, 1.

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Sin and Penance in Fujian Christianity in Late Ming Times

Erik Zürcher

The choice of the subject needs a few words of explanation: why sin and penance, why Fujian 福建, and why the late Ming? Firstly, the theme “sin and penance” as it figures in the title of this paper is an elliptic formula used for the sake of brevity. It actually refers to the whole complex of “guilt – sin – remorse – confession – absolution – penance”, as experienced, expressed and practiced in early Chinese Christianity. When going through the impressive corpus of contemporary source materials – more than 200 seventeenth-century texts written by Jesuit missionaries, Chinese converts, sympathizers and opponents – one is struck by the central role played by that theme. Of course the Christian awareness of sin, the ritual of confession and the sacrament of absolution belonged to the “foreign input”: they formed part of orthodox Roman Catholic doctrine as it was propagated by the western missionaries. But here we rather are concerned with the receiving end: the way in which that complex was received by Christian literati and functioned in a Chinese context.

Secondly, there are good reasons to focus upon Fujian. During the last decades of the Ming, Fujian, and especially its coastal zone, was one of the most flourishing and most promising theaters of the Jesuit mission. This mainly was due to the effort deployed by one remarkable man, the Italian missionary Giulio Aleni (Ai Rulüe 艾儒略, 1582–1649) after his arrival in Fuzhou in 1625.¹ Under the protection of some important sponsors he established himself in the provincial capital Fuzhou 福州, and from there he started his campaign, traveling to almost every part of the province. Within ten years Christian communities had

¹ For Giulio Aleni see Pfister 1932, 126–137; Dehergne 1973; Lipiello/Malek 1997; Menegon 1994; Goodrich 1976; Pan 1994; Lin 1992; Zürcher 1990.

been established under local lower gentry leadership in the major cities, with Fuzhou and Quanzhou 泉州 as the main centers.

In the perspective chosen for this paper – the contextualization of the Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven as an exotic marginal religion in the Chinese milieu – Fujian is especially important because of the amount and quality of the Chinese source materials that have been preserved, not only Aleni's own large output of Chinese texts, but also works written by Chinese converts, some of which are truly unique in nature.²

Thirdly, the rather limited time span covered (the quarter century between Aleni's arrival in 1625 and ca. 1650) is imposed by the tragic course of events. The terrible devastations wrought by the Qing conquest in the years 1647–1648 and, somewhat later, the forced depopulation of the coastal zone dealt a blow from which the Jesuit mission in Fujian never recovered.

The Chinese Context

In introducing the subject, let me not stay too long on the high, oxygen-poor summits of generalization. The feeling of guilt, in the sense of the painful awareness of having willfully transgressed the norms of moral conduct, of course forms part of human experience, at least in all major civilizations. In the religious sphere the concept of sin, in the sense of a deliberate violation of rules that are imposed by higher beings or that form part of a cosmic order, is present in all major religions, as is the urge to eliminate it (or escape from its consequences) by some kind of moral purification.

In China self-examination and self-accusation have a long history, both within and outside the religious sphere, and much has been written about it ever since Wolfram Eberhard, in his pioneering study *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, showed the importance of interiorized guilt

² Special mention may be made of the eight-juan 卷 *Kouduo richao* 口鐸日抄 (Diary of Daily Admonitions), a collection of notes of conversations held by Aleni and some other missionaries with Chinese scholars in the years 1630–1640, compiled by Li Jiubiao 李九標; *Lixiu yijian* 勵脩一鑑 (A Mirror for Self-Cultivation), compiled by Li Jiubiao's brother Li Jiugong 李九功, containing, *inter alia*, a number of Chinese Christian miracle tales; *Shensi lu* 慎思錄 (A Record of Meditations) by Li Jiugong (posthumously published by his son, ca. 1680), and *Xichao chongzheng ji* 熙朝崇正集 (Orthodoxy Extolled in this Glorious Era), a collection of poems presented to Aleni by Chinese scholars.

in Chinese culture. Other landmarks are the studies by Wu Pei-yi on self-examination and confession; by Cynthia Brokaw on the so-called Ledgers of Merit and Demerit; by Sakai Tadao on morality books; and, on the Buddhist side, by Yü Chün-fang, and by Kuo Li-ying in her work on confession and remorse in Chinese Buddhism.³ Thanks to their efforts we can discern the contours of the Chinese indigenous landscape in which the Christian practices took place.

In the Confucian tradition, and especially in Neo-Confucianism, self-investigation (*xingshen* 省身), the critical moral assessment of one's own thoughts, words and actions as a first step in the process of self-improvement, had always played a very important role. The examination of conscience was focused on the observance of social virtues and on the elimination of egoistic impulses that stand in the way of their realization, but it always had a metaphysical dimension as well, for the Confucian virtues reflect the qualities of the cosmos itself. We are living in a moral universe; by realizing the inborn goodness of our nature we conform to the intention of Heaven. In Neo-Confucianism, the practice of self-investigation had also given rise to a type of spiritual exercise with religious overtones called *jingzuo* 靜坐, "quiet-sitting", no doubt under the influence of Chan Buddhism. *Jingzuo* introspection was practiced in the early morning or at the end of the day, in a secluded room, sometimes for a considerable time. It was an exercise on mental purification, and the contemplation of transgressions committed no doubt formed part of it, but there is no evidence that feelings of acute remorse and penance played a dominating role in it.

However, as Wu Pei-yi has shown, this rather optimistic self-image of the Confucian practitant underwent a remarkable change in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Roughly between 1570 and 1670 we find in certain Confucian circles what Wu Pei-yi calls "a deep awareness of the human proclivity to evil, an urgent need to counter this proclivity, a readiness for self-disclosure, and a deep anguish over one's own wrongdoings." This wave of *zisong* 自訟, "self-indictment", no doubt bore the stamp of the *Zeitgeist* of the late Ming, a period of social unrest, political turmoil, and, in some circles, libertarianism and conspicuous spending. It may well have been one reaction to the evils of the time, an introspective counterpart of Confucian moral crusades like the Donglin 東林 movement. On the other hand, it also may have been stimulated by

³ Eberhard 1967; Wu 1979; Brokaw 1987 and 1991; Sakai 1960; Yü 1981; Kuo 1994.

contemporary Buddhist or Buddho-Daoist practices of confession and self-investigation. It goes without saying that it is highly relevant to our subject, for two reasons: the coincidence in time, and the fact that it took place in the milieu of Confucian scholars, the primary target group of the Jesuit mission. But it also should be noted that in a strictly Confucian sphere, penitence is not coupled with the idea of divine retribution: ideally self-cultivation is supposed to be undertaken for its own sake, and not as a means to acquire *gong* 功, “merit”, or *fu* 福, “good fortune”.

In Buddhist and Daoist penitence, the accumulation of merit and the quest for good fortune play a central role, as does the belief in a universal law of retribution supervised or mediated by divine powers. There can be no doubt that the origin of lay penitential rites must be sought in monastic Buddhism. Since very early times the monks of a local parish were obliged to hold fortnightly *upoṣadha* meetings during which all the monastic rules were recited one by one. The rules are arranged in categories in descending order, from the most serious faults warranting permanent expulsion to minor transgressions that merely deserve to be criticized, or just to be noted. The confessional element lies in the fact that transgressors are supposed to report their fault when the relevant rule has been recited, and that the presiding monks can decide to impose a penance. This recurring purification rite always has been considered indispensable for maintaining the “purity” (*qingjing* 清靜) of the Buddhist order, without which it cannot function.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the increased participation of lay believers, both men and women, in religious life stimulated the development of collective penitential rituals (*chanhui* 懺悔) in which both clergy and laity took part. Like other Mahāyāna rituals, they served a double purpose. On the one hand, the confession of sins and the declaration of remorse are acts of moral purification that generate merit (*gong*) for the individual believer, resulting in improving his or her karmic destiny. On the other hand, the Mahāyāna belief in the possibility of “transferring” the merit thus gained to other persons (or at least of sharing it with them) stimulated their popularity, because such rites could be used to improve the lot of, for instance, deceased parents. *Chanhui* meetings also have an important devotional aspect, for the force of karma (which is impersonal and inexorable) is not directly influenced by the participant, but through the mediation of benevolent superhuman powers (Bodhisattvas or Buddhas) to whom the penitents appeal for mercy and forgiveness. In all this the role of the priests is essential: the priests

perform the ceremonial, they recite the confessional texts on behalf of the participants, and they transfer the merit to others. Their expert liturgical knowledge and their state of ascetic purity give them access to the divine powers. The latter are not only prayed to, but “invited”, and are believed actually to be present during the ceremonial.

An important further step was made by the popularization of the so-called Bodhisattva vow, a practice that probably dates from the fifth century A.D., and that in the course of time has become a standard element in Chinese Buddhist life. During this ritual, the candidate individually makes the vow to follow the Bodhisattva career before three senior monks; at the same time Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are called to witness. Since the Bodhisattva ordination is impossible without moral purification, he or she has to practice penitence and confession regarding all the forty-eight forgivable sins listed in the formulary, with utter sincerity and devotion, six times per day, before the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Absolution – in the sense of a guaranteed remission of sins – is not conferred by a monk but by the divine powers themselves; it takes the form of some kind of supernatural “sign” (*xiang* 相) revealed to the practicant in a vision or in a dream. If after a full year the sign does not appear, the practicant’s karmic burden is too heavy, and the initiation has to be postponed till the next life. In this ritual, the act of penitence and the quest for forgiveness have become individualized, but the form of the confessional always is stereotyped and generalized. The practicant seeks redemption from sins of a certain category (e.g. vocal sins like lying, slander and backbiting) ever committed in the course of innumerable lives and in the present life; he or she promises not to commit them again, and asks for forgiveness. No specific sinful deeds actually committed are mentioned. In fact, in the Buddhist perspective it would make no sense to do so, because the vast majority of sins committed are supposed to date from former lives and cannot be remembered by the penitent.

In religious Daoism, confession started as a magical purification method associated with healing, the patient meditating on his sins and the Daoist master acting as an intermediary asking the divine powers to remove the pollution. However, already in early medieval times this was supplanted by *chanhui* rituals closely patterned after Buddhist examples. The belief in rebirth and karmic retribution became incorporated into Daoism, the main difference being that the ultimate aim pursued by the believer is not Buddhahood but becoming an Immortal.

On the other hand, the belief in “divine controllers” (deities reporting all transgressions to the higher echelons of the heavenly bureaucracy) and the idea that these acts were carefully recorded appear to be of Daoist origin and to have been taken over by Buddhism.

The latter belief in the recording and “quantification” of sin eventually became the doctrinal basis of a type of moralistic book-keeping known as *Gongguo ge* 功過格, “Ledgers of Merit and Demerit”. The oldest surviving example is a Daoist text of the twelfth century, but the genre and the practice based on it only became wide-spread in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when many *Gongguo ge* were published, also of Buddhist or Buddho-Confucian inspiration. In those later ledgers, the supernatural element (divine beings shortening or lengthening one’s life span on the basis of the account made up of merit and demerit points) is less prominent, although the system always presupposes some kind of divine or karmic retribution. The emphasis is on daily practice: each one of the positive and negative acts listed is worth a certain number of “merits” (*gong*) or “demerits” (*guo*), and this enables the user to keep track of his moral development and to improve his karmic situation. The importance of the *Gongguo ge* for the present subject lies in the fact that here, unlike in the Buddhist penitentials, the user renders account of specific transgressions that are recorded one by one and shortly after the event. It also marks a further stage of individualization: by using the ledger one controls the process of merit accumulation and thereby becomes master of one’s own fate. The system was widely accepted; on the other hand it occasionally was criticized by orthodox Confucians because of its “vulgar” emphasis on reward and punishment, and, as we shall see, also by Christians, albeit for other reasons.

After this brief survey of contemporary types of moral self-examination and confession let us turn to the main subject. How did Christian ideas concerning sin, remorse and release, and their ritual expression in confession and absolution, fit into this Chinese context?

There can be no doubt that to non-believers much of it seemed strange, but at the same time it was not so totally different from Chinese practice as to be quite unintelligible. The Christian practice of contemplating one’s own sinful deeds formed part of a program of meditative exercises (called *xingxiu* 省脩, “investigation and cultivation”, a Confucian term) that was reminiscent of Confucian *jingzuo*, “quiet-sitting”. Christian texts contained detailed lists of categorized sins to be used as a moral guide, almost like *Gongguo ge*. Like Buddhist and Daoist

believers, Christian penitents appealed to a supernatural power, with a priest acting as an intermediary. Sincere remorse followed by expiation was considered a means to accumulate “merit” and to improve one’s lot in the hereafter. Especially to Confucian scholars with Buddhist inclinations (as there were many in seventeenth-century Fujian) all this must have sounded somewhat familiar. But on the other hand the Christian complex showed a number of features that set it apart and defined its uniqueness in the Chinese context. In what follows I shall try to identify some of the most salient distinctive features of the Christian practice of *gaojie* 告解 (lit. “indictment and remission”).

“Confucian Monotheism”

Christians had their own definition of sin (*zui* 罪), one that was inextricably bound up with their belief in a single God, the Lord of Heaven, defined as the Great Father-and-Mother and the Great Ruler of the universe. He is both *ren* 仁, “benevolent”, and *yi* 義, “righteous”. Being benevolent, he loves every human being, even the most obstinate sinner, who like all other human beings has been endowed with the freedom to choose between good and evil so that he can mend his ways. But, being righteous, the Lord of Heaven also is the stern and impartial judge of souls. He knows whatever we think, say or do, and, in addition, he has written evidence, for all our good deeds are recorded by angels, and all our transgressions by devils.⁴ Since he is both the supreme Parent and the supreme Ruler, every sinful deed must be considered an act of rebellion: the sinner is both *buxiao* 不孝, “unfilial”, and *buzhong* 不忠, “disloyal” – the two most heinous crimes in the traditional Confucian scale of delicts.

Since the Lord of Heaven is compassionate, sins can be forgiven if they are duly regretted, confessed and expiated, but only during the present life on earth. After death the situation has become frozen: good is good and bad is bad; there is no middle way.⁵ As Aleni tells a critical Fujian scholar: compare it with your examination system. As long as you are composing your essay you can make any correction and improvement you like, but once you have handed it in, the Chief Examiner

⁴ KDRC 6.11a (devils) and 11b (angels).

⁵ The point is already made by Matteo Ricci in TZSY 6.11a (TXCH vol. I, p.553); Lancashire/Hu 1985, p 333. Cf. also KDRC 3.27a–b; DKW p.25b, and SSL 3.41a.

is inexorable: even the slightest mistake will lead to rejection and disgrace.⁶ Even having the slightest doubt about God's righteousness is an act of rebellion: Aleni takes one of his disciples to task because he, as a filial son, cannot imagine that he would enjoy bliss in heaven while his parents are tortured in hell.⁷ And when another critic remarks that the amount of sin one has committed always is limited, and that therefore the unlimited eternal punishment in hell is disproportionate, he is told that in view of God's supreme majesty even the slightest transgression is a major offence.⁸ We can understand why outsiders considered Christianity to be very *yan* 嚴, "severe"⁹

The Priest as a Mediator

Between the Lord of Heaven and the believer stands the figure of the priest as a mediator and as a ritual expert. He is a foreigner, for till the very end of the seventeenth century no Chinese priests were ordained. In Fujian Christianity, the role of the Jesuits as bearers of new scientific knowledge was of secondary importance. Since the making of astronomical observations was an imperial prerogative there was no observatory where they could exhibit their skills, and the Fujian gentry showed surprisingly little interest in those matters. To them the foreign master was, first and foremost, a *duode* 鐸德 (short for *saze'erduode* 撒澤爾鐸德 = *sacerdote*, "priest") or *shenfu* 神父, "spiritual father". In several ways that role was rather familiar in the Chinese context, in spite of its exotic trappings. During rituals the priest's sacral status (already implied by his celibatarian purity) was enhanced by his liturgical vestments and his use of unintelligible Latin mantras. Even the mystery of the Eucharist may have reminded outsiders of the way in which in Chinese cults, a deity or an ancestral spirit is "invited" to descend and to be present at the ritual.

⁶ KDRC 3.14a. Xiong Shiqi 熊世旗 has elaborated the examination metaphor in a *baihua* pamphlet entitled *Ce dai jing yu* 策怠警喻 (A Warning Allegory to Urge On the Indolent), with a preface by Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠 (1557–1627) dated 1627; repr. in XJH vol. 1, pp.141–146.

⁷ KDRC 3.3a.

⁸ KDRC 5.12b–13a: this may be compared with making an impolite remark. If made to a commoner it is of no consequence, but if made to the ruler the result may be fatal. The same argument in Diego de Pantoja's (1571–1618) PZYQ 2.13a and in Francesco Sambiasi's (1582–1649) LYL 2.20b (TXCH vol. II, p. 1252.)

⁹ KDRC 8.1b; cf. also Li Jiugong in SSL 2.15a.

However, the role played by the Christian priest in the rite of confession and absolution does not appear to have any counterpart in traditional Chinese religion. In Buddhist penitential rites, the priest acts as a messenger reciting the confessional formulas and transferring the merit to other beings, but there is no question of his having the divine and exclusive authority to remit sins. The uniqueness of the Christian sacrament is stressed by Aleni: although other doctrines may “exhort people by good words”, only our doctrine knows absolution, and only Christians can receive it.¹⁰

The power attributed to the Christian priest required some explanation. In an interesting pamphlet entitled *Lingxi gaojie yaogui* 領洗告解要規, “Essentials of Baptism and Confession”, Zhang Geng 張賡, the leader of the Christian community in Quanzhou, answered some of the questions that had arisen, apparently even among believers. One of the questions is: “If I feel sincere remorse and the Lord of Heaven forgives me, why must there be a priest?” Another is: “The priest is our brother; why then must he sit so majestically in front of the Lord[’s altar] and listen to our confession, while we are kneeling down – is that not arrogance?” In his reply Zhang Geng draws an interesting parallel (borrowed from *Mencius*): During confession the priest’s position is comparable to that of the *shi*, the boy-medium who in the ancient ancestral ritual impersonated the soul of the dead; he was a young boy, but in that situation even elder relatives would kneel down and honor him.¹¹ Elsewhere Yang Tingyun and Aleni give the dogmatically correct explanation: the priest is authorized to confer absolution, for it is the Lord of Heaven himself who has entrusted the remission of sins to Saint Peter and hence, through apostolic succession, to the Pope, who again has conferred it upon all priests.¹²

Confession and Moral Self-Improvement

Confession only is effective if preceded by careful self-investigation that leads to a clear awareness of one’s faults and to the inner feeling

¹⁰ DZZG 3.7a.

¹¹ LXGJ 2a–3a.

¹² TSMB p. 62b (WXXB vol.I, p. 364). Cf. Aleni in DZZG 3.1a-2b: God has delegated the care of spiritual life to the Pope and the latter’s “officials charged with religion”, just as he has entrusted the administration of worldly affairs to the ruler and his senior officials.

of *tonghui* 痛悔, “bitter remorse”. The texts contain some guidelines for the methodical contemplation of one’s own moral conduct. They appear to be influenced by the Jesuit Spiritual Exercises, but they also show some affinity with Confucian self-cultivation and *jingzuo*. The practice forms part of the daily observances that every believer is supposed to perform. At dawn the practicant meditates and asks for God’s help to spend the day without committing any sins. At the end of each day he carefully reviews all his acts of thought, speech and body, whatever evil he may have done, and whatever good he may have failed to do. In the case of minor transgressions he thinks about a way to amend them, and the more serious ones are stored in his memory awaiting confession. Utmost care must be taken not to forget any sinful act, for no merit is gained by incomplete confession. It is therefore advisable to note them down in writing. At the end of each month or each fortnight all the major faults are inventoried, and if a priest is available an appointment must be made.¹³ The daily and monthly inventorying and recording of sins is useless if it is not accompanied by an intense feeling of guilt and remorse. Remorse can be inspired by fear, but it is better to follow the example of a filial son who simply cannot bear the thought of having neglected his parents, even if they do not reprimand him.¹⁴

All this sounds very methodical and programmatic. In fact, the Christian community leader Li Jiugong treats confession-and-absolution (*gaojie*) as a method of progressive spiritual purification, almost in a mechanical way. First one confesses the most grievous sins; after these have been forgiven one turns to the lighter ones. In this way one progresses until one is free from sin. As an additional exercise, it is advisable to remember the more serious sins one has committed and to confess once again.¹⁵

Confession should be made as frequently as possible, but actually only believers living in or near the few larger cities were able to do so. The others had to wait for the rare occasions when a priest visited their communities, and at best they would meet a missionary once a year. In the meantime, as Fan Zhong 范中 remarks in his *Brief Introduction to the Holy Doctrine* (*Shengjiao xiaoyin* 聖教小引, 1633), one must practice “self-accusation” and firmly decide not to sin again.¹⁶

¹³ DZZG 1.27b–29a; cf. also KDRC 3.5b and 4.24a; SSL 3.42a, and DKW p. 56b.

¹⁴ KDRC 3.22b–23a.

¹⁵ SSL 1.9a–10a.

¹⁶ SJXY pp.8b–9a.

Of course any suggestion that the Christian confession resembles the Buddhist *chanhui* is to be rejected. Yang Tingyun (an erstwhile devout lay Buddhist, hence well informed about such ceremonials) remarks that the Buddhist ceremonial is no more than an outward routinized ritual, not based on genuine self-examination. He also aptly observes that in *chanhui*, sins are listed in only very general terms, and that no mention is made of any specific sinful acts committed by the believers: “When *chanhui* has been completed, they still do not know what their confession has been about.”¹⁷

The Classification of Sins

Occasionally, mention is made in Christian texts of the use of *Gongguo ge*, “Ledgers of Merit and Demerit.” In an interesting conversation with a member of a Daoist association, Aleni agrees that in principle reflection about one’s own sins is always commendable, but he adds that it remains ineffective as long as the practicant does not realize against whom he is sinning.¹⁸ Li Jiugong criticizes the system because in the *Ledgers* both merits and demerits are listed. The inclusion of meritorious deeds leads to self-complacency. Christians only note down their transgressions: “That is the method to achieve saintliness (*zuo sheng zhi fang* 作聖之方).”¹⁹

In one respect, however, the *Gongguo ge* system does bear some resemblance to the Christian method: in both cases a great number of acts (in the Christian case only negative ones) are formulated, categorized and methodically listed. An extensive survey of sinful acts (201 items, many more than found in any *Gongguo ge*) is included in Aleni’s *Di zui zheng gui* 滌罪正規 (“Correct Rules for the Elimination of Sins”), arranged according to the Ten Commandments and the Seven Cardinal Sins. In the introductory section, Aleni explains how this part of the book must be used. Since it is essential that the penitent be clearly aware of any fault he may have committed, including the persons involved and the circumstances, the list is presented as an aid “carefully to be consulted item by item”. Minor transgressions are also listed, for “the mirror is only wiped clean if even the smallest specks of dust are

¹⁷ DYP 2.19a–b. Cf. also KDRC 7.19a–b: Buddhist penitence is a sheer fraud.

¹⁸ KDRC 4.12a–b.

¹⁹ SSL 3.11a.

removed.”²⁰ It also is significant that Aleni published a shortened version of this work in one *juan* that consists of the list with only a few additional paragraphs. This *Dizui zheng gui lue* 滌罪正規略 was probably intended to be diffused on a wider scale than the original four-*juan* version, as a simple guide to confession.²¹

In its general arrangement and classification, Aleni’s inventory follows the European model. However, since it had to be used by Chinese converts, its content has been thoroughly adapted to the Chinese environment. Especially in sections dealing with religious activities and mantic techniques and with social relations (notably the prohibition of concubinage) the adaptation is obvious. Of course the text is normative and prescriptive, and therefore cannot be taken faithfully to reflect actual behavior, but as a “typology of sin” it is indicative of the formal value system that was current among Christian devotees. In what follows, special attention will be paid to two categories of offences: cases of superstitious behavior, and sins related to family life and other hierarchical social relations.

Sins Relating to Superstition

True to the principles of the monopolistic Mediterranean type of religion that the Jesuits propagated, virtually all beliefs and practices of Chinese religious life were declared anathema and presented as the work of the devil. Certain Confucian rituals were deemed acceptable, but only in a “purified” form, stripped of all superstitious elements. By doing so they naturally sided with the most orthodox and purist wing of Confucianism. Since medieval times there had been concerned scholars fulminating against Buddhist superstition and Daoist magic; some Neo-Confucians rejected “vulgar” practices like geomancy and the burning of counterfeit paper money, and excluded Buddhist priests

²⁰ DZZG 2.9a. In Yang Tingyun’s Christian biography by Ding Zhilin it is expressly said that Yang used Aleni’s DZZG as a guideline for self-investigation and confession; cf. YQY p. 8b (XJH vol. I, p. 232).

²¹ Aleni’s DZZGL has been included in the collection *Tongku jingji* 痛苦經蹟 (“Scriptural Texts Relating to Rigorous Observance”), compiled by João Fróis (Fu Ruowang 伏若望, 1591–1638); it is reproduced in WXS vol.III, pp. 1195–1272. I have not been able to consult another compendium entitled *Huizui yaozhi* 悔罪要指 (“The Essential Meaning of Repentance”). In Standaert 2001, p. 624, it is said to be by Lazzaro Cattaneo (Guo Jujing 郭居靜, 1560–1640), “edited by Aleni in the 1630s.”

from their funerary rituals. But in general even purists accepted the existence of such practices as belonging to the way of life of the unenlightened masses, and they did not want to eradicate them. Moreover, since in the Confucian tradition the personification of evil is unknown, they never would regard them as being inspired by any Prince of Darkness.

But that vision was very much alive among Christians. Both the Jesuits and their converts were convinced that the forces of evil preferably used false doctrines, magic arts and supernatural phenomena as means to delude mankind. In his *Shen gui zhengji* 神鬼正紀 (“Correct Description of Angels and Demons”, ca. 1630) Alfonso Vagnone (Gao Yizhi 高一志, 1568–1640) presents an interesting list of satanic supernatural phenomena, such as voices heard in the air, automatic script, images coming to life and uttering prophesies, and telekinesis. Possession by a demon can manifest itself by glossolalia (an uneducated person suddenly being able to speak foreign languages and to quote difficult texts), clairvoyance, thought-reading, and enormous physical strength.²² Forswearing pagan beliefs and rituals was a prerequisite for becoming a Christian. The act was ritualized: before baptism the neophyte had to forsake all his former superstitions, to remove and destroy (by burning or burying) all the “demonic” images he possessed, and to burn all his non-Christian religious texts and talismans.²³ The ostentatious break with the past could not escape public attention, for it also meant that converts removed the protective images (“door gods”) that had decorated the entrance of their homes and replaced them by the emblem of Christ.

In Christian sources, much attention is paid to the description and condemnation of popular religious beliefs and customs. More than thirty of these are listed by Inácio da Costa (Guo Najue 郭納爵, 1603–1666) in his *Zhuo sumi pian* 燭俗迷篇 (“Elucidating Vulgar Superstitions”) of ca. 1642. In Aleni’s *Di zui zheng gui* the emphasis naturally is on their prohibition: they are listed as “sinful” (*you zui* 有罪) under the First Commandment, i.e. as acts of rebellion against God himself. They comprise three categories of offences:

²² *Shen gui zhengji*, 4 j.; manuscript in Xujiahui Library, Shanghai (modern transcript). Cf. also KDRC 2.31a: all pagan rituals are inspired by the devil.

²³ SJXY p.7a. Cf. also KDRC 6.1b-2a: before baptism Christians are held to remove all idols from the altar in their house chapels (*jiatang* 家堂).

- Firstly, all mantic techniques such as fortune-telling by drawing divination lots and by using the planchette, geomancy, the election of lucky days, physiognomy and astrology, are qualified as sinful.
- Secondly, also sinful is any kind of contact with Buddhism or Daoism. It is a long list that includes visiting temples and reciting scriptures and mantras; making vows; holding *jiao* 醮 rituals; contributing money to the restoration and decoration of temples and to the making of idols; copying and possessing pagan scriptures; not destroying one's pagan texts and idols before baptism but selling them or giving them away, and any personal "contaminating" contact with Buddhist monks, Daoist priests and magicians.
- Thirdly, it is a sin to believe in pagan faith-healing and prophetic dreams; to ascribe supernatural powers to herbs, trees and animals; to write Daoist charms; to pronounce spells; and to join brotherhoods sealed with blood.²⁴

We never shall know to what extent these prohibitions were heeded by the mass of believers. The very fact that they are listed suggests that at least some Christians engaged in such ungodly activities. But in any case we may conclude that really conscientious believers were obliged to renounce virtually the whole body of traditional religion and religious lore, and by doing so could not but marginalize themselves as a group.

Sins Relating to Social Life

Many sins pertaining to family life and other hierarchical social relations are appended to the Fourth and the Sixth Commandment ("Honor thy father and thy mother" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery"). The Commandments are used as headings covering a number of analogous offences, as also was done in western confessionals. Thus, sinful conduct mentioned under the Fourth Commandment is not restricted to the relation between children and parents, but is extended to cover relations between other juniors and seniors within and outside the family: teacher and pupils, master and servants, and husband and wife. Only a few of these sins are explicitly related to Christianity, notably committing sacrilegious acts in serving one's parents and failing to

²⁴ DZZG 1.10b–11b; a somewhat less comprehensive list is provided in DZZGL pp. 5b–6a (WXSb vol. III, pp. 1206–1207).

provide religious instruction to one's relatives. Apart from these, the list reads like a survey of traditional Confucian morality expressed in prohibitions.

This is not amazing, for both the Jesuits (before the Rites Controversy) and their educated converts always claimed that their doctrine represented what is *zheng* 正 (“normative, correct, orthodox”), implying that it fully conformed to Confucian values and, indeed, could contribute to their realization. Expectably, the most grievous sin in this category is lack of filial piety. Inferiors sin by not submitting to their superiors; pupils by disobeying their teachers; subjects by trespassing the laws of the authorities (*guanfu* 官府); the wife by not serving her husband. On the other hand, the master of the house commits a sin if he maltreats his slaves and servants, and the husband if he does not provide his wife with her daily necessities.²⁵ Social inequality is natural and intended by God – and if there were no poor, how would the rich be able to gain merit by charity?²⁶

The only very important exception is the absolute prohibition of polygamy, i.e. the taking of a concubine. In the list of sins, concubinage ranks higher than sodomy, enjoying pornography and visiting prostitutes. It is to be condemned even if no son is born from regular marriage.²⁷ On this point no compromise was possible: cases are known of very distinguished prospective converts being refused baptism until they had sent away their concubine, and if after baptism a member of the congregation yielded to social pressure and took a concubine he risked being excommunicated.²⁸ The condemnation of concubinage was

²⁵ DZZG 1.14b–16a and 18a–b; DZZGL pp. 8b–10a and 12b–13a (WXS vol. III, pp. 1212–1215 and pp. 1220–1221).

²⁶ KDRC 1.14b–16a and 4.4a–5b.

²⁷ KDRC 2.28a–29b; cf. also the interesting argument brought forward by Aleni: if, as sometimes happens, childlessness is due to the husband's physical condition, would then his wife be allowed to take a second husband? (KDRC 2.28b).

²⁸ A well-documented case of the latter is that of Wang Zheng, the well-known technologist and “pillar of the faith” in Xi'an, who for some time was excommunicated because he, at an advanced age, had taken a concubine under heavy family pressure. He was readmitted only after having sent her away and having made a written statement of remorse – a curious document that has survived. It is appended to the collection of edifying tales presented orally by Adam Schall (Tang Ruowang 湯若望, 1592–1666) and noted down and edited by Wang Zheng 王徵, entitled *Chongyi tang riji suibi* 崇一堂日記隨筆 (Daily Record of Miscellanea Made at the Chongyi Church), Xi'an, 1638; WXS vol. II, pp. 833–837.

a Christian innovation that raised serious problems and controversies. To many outsiders it seemed to confirm the immoral nature of that religion, because it violated the Confucian rule that a filial son must use any means to secure male offspring.

The Ritual

The actual ritual of penitence, confession and absolution closely follows the European model. The believer is expected to make confession at least once a year, in the church, in front of the altar, where the priest is seated. He is supposed to have prepared himself by self-investigation and remorse, “as if facing a stern judge”. He approaches the priest, takes off his cap (in Chinese eyes a very humiliating gesture) and kneels down; he kowtows and recites the “Scripture of Confession” (*Huizui jing* 悔罪經, the Confiteor). After having described the sins committed since his last confession, he recites the formulaic profession of remorse, and asks forgiveness. The priest then comments upon the nature and gravity of the sins confessed, and confers absolution. In case of serious faults he imposes a penance. The penitent puts on his cap, thanks the priest and leaves.²⁹

Unlike the Buddhist *chanhui*, the Christian confession was individual, personal and highly confidential. The penitent was held to report about his sinful deeds and inclinations, and even to disclose his most secret feelings and temptations, giving details as to time, place, frequency, circumstances, and persons involved. Especially in the Chinese context, this created a psychological barrier of shame and humiliation. In his tract about baptism and confession mentioned above, Zhang Geng refers to the hesitation felt by many believers: “It is disgraceful and shameful to confess your own sins!”, and: “It is disgraceful that confession is so direct and complete!”³⁰ Elsewhere Aleni, answering some questions that evidently were inspired by feelings of shame, has to disappoint his interlocutor: no, sinful deeds have to be confessed one by one, and not summarized in general terms; no, confession must be oral

²⁹ DZZG 3.2a-22a. Needless to say that all this refers to confessions made by male believers. For female penitents there must have been special procedures, for the missionaries had to be extremely cautious in having any contact – let alone this kind of confidential face-to-face conversation – with women.

³⁰ LXGJ pp.3b-4a.

and cannot be made in writing.³¹ In a section significantly named “Be Ashamed of Sinning, not of Confessing”, he tells a story illustrating that it is the devil himself who inspires such shame in order to prevent the sinner from being saved.³²

Penance

The last stage of the procedure is that of penance: the task of expiation imposed by the confessor, both for the benefit of the penitent (for expiation is a means to gain merit) and as a compensation for the harm done to others. The content varies according to the type of sin. Acts of impiety towards God are compensated by religious observances like prayer and reciting texts, harm inflicted upon others, by charity. The third category, to which much attention is paid, serves to expiate sinful deeds resulting from the weakness of the flesh. It consists of acts of self-mortification (*ku* 苦) such as shorter or longer periods of asceticism (including rigorous fasting and sexual abstinence) and self-castigation.

Self-mortification, even in extreme forms, was by no means unknown in traditional China. Self-mutilation (notably feeding one's ailing parent with one's own flesh) and very rigorous mourning practices were considered laudable expressions of filial piety. Pilgrims occasionally indulged in at least a show of self-laceration. Burning scars in the top of the skull formed a regular part of Buddhist ordination; many Buddhist monks sacrificed fingers by burning, and monks publicly torturing themselves while collecting alms were a common sight in Chinese cities. Christian asceticism had its own peculiar forms and its own inner motivation, but as a phenomenon it was not unfamiliar.

Chinese Christians had their role models near at hand. The exemplary lives of saints (a genre of pious literature that was very popular in Christian circles) abounded with stories of extreme ascetics and self-torture. In addition, some Jesuits themselves could show the way, for self-mortification was extensively practiced in the period in Europe, as well as by some missionaries in China. In fact, Aleni himself is said to have done so, chastising himself with a whip every night, “in order

³¹ DZZG 3.7a–10b.

³² DZZGL pp. 34b–35b (WXS vol. III, pp.1264–1266).

to appease the Lord's anger."³³ Especially in Fujian, zealous converts are said to have indulged in long and bloody disciplines, "carrying iron chains" to such an extent that Aleni had to restrain them.³⁴ He had to do the same with Zhang Shi 張識 (Zhang Geng's eldest son, baptized "Michael"), when the young zealot made a vow to chastise his body with a thousand lashes during the forty days of Lent.³⁵ Flagellation and rigorous fasting appear to have been the most common types of bodily penance, but reference is also made to other practices such as sleeping in an upright position or on the floor, and wearing a horsehair shirt and a girdle made of coarse rope or metal.³⁶

Of course we must not assume that the majority of believers went to such extremes; in most cases penance was no doubt routinized and superficial. But even if draconic methods of chastising the flesh were only confined to a small minority, they must have reinforced the general opinion that Christianity was very "severe".

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have made an attempt to treat one essential element of the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven in its Chinese context and to identify points of convergence and of difference. Late Ming Christianity in Fujian was not an alien body: as a not insignificant minority religion, it formed part of the varied religious landscape of the region. It was practiced by small groups that held distinctive and sometimes even dissenting ideas centered on the belief in the Lord of Heaven, the divine autocrat and controller of human fate in life and death. All the other beliefs and rituals current in this Christian subculture bore the stamp of a very strong monotheistic creed that had no counterpart in the traditional Chinese world-view.

The Christian complex of sin, confession and penance shows many points of convergence with contemporary traditional trends, ideas and practices, as noted above. In a general way it also conformed to the general trend towards individualization, and it certainly showed affinity

³³ As related by Li Sixuan 李嗣玄 in his biography of Aleni, SJAX p. 7a; cf. Zürcher 1997, pp. 85–128, esp. p. 114.

³⁴ Cf. Pfister 1932, p. 132.

³⁵ ZS p. 3b.

³⁶ YQY p. 9a; SJXY p. 9a–b.

with the Confucian puritanical reaction to real or supposed moral decay, laxity and libertarianism.

On the other hand, the complex is illustrative of an alternative, idiosyncratic faith and life-style, the deviant character of which was still enhanced by its non-Chinese origin, by the presence of western priests, and by the fact that the latter derived their power to remit sins from a foreign sacral authority: a shadowy figure called “the Religious Sovereign” (*jiaowang* 教王 or *jiaohuang* 教皇, the Pope). In addition, among outsiders, Christian rigorousness and the many obligations that serious believers were compelled to fulfill appear to have been a source of amazement and ridicule: “They laugh at us and say that our religion makes us suffer.”³⁷ Aleni counters this complaint by pointing out to his disciple that outsiders do not know about the heavenly reward that is in store for devout Christians. Believers have to exert themselves constantly, like scholars who are preparing themselves for examinations or like peasants who work their fields till their hands and feet have grown callous. The burden of being a practicing member of a Christian congregation may be illustrated by a passage from the *Meditations* (*Shensi lu*), in which Aleni’s erstwhile disciple Li Jiugong exhorts his brethren to stand firm:

It often happens that those who just have become followers of the Teaching of Heaven are jeered at and ridiculed ... But if we are afraid of being laughed at by others for doing good, must we then refrain from doing it, just to avoid ridicule? If we do that, we must turn inward and criticize ourselves. The Scripture says that metal is tested by a blazing fire, and that virtue is tested through hardship. If you cannot stand one jeer, you may be sure that your religious fortitude is too weak. You rather should use that ridicule as an incentive, like a horse that runs faster when it sees the whip.³⁸

³⁷ KDRC 6.15a.

³⁸ SSL 3.1a–2a; cf. also KDRC 6.15b–16a.

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Christendom and its Manifestations in China Today

Roman Malek, S.V.D.

Preliminaries

Christendom,¹ or – according to today’s Chinese terminology – Jidu-zongjiao 基督宗教, i.e., the Religion of Jesus Christ, has tried several times to gain a foothold in China in order to settle there institutionally in the form of different Christian Churches and denominations. Since the first encounter of the Eastern Syrian Church (Nestorianism) with China in the seventh century, Christendom has had various manifestations, and we might actually speak of different “Christendoms” in the “Middle Kingdom” (Zhongguo 中国). This is evidenced by the fact that the four missionary attempts (the Nestorian in the seventh century, the Franciscan in the thirteenth century, the Jesuit in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox attempts in the nineteenth century)² were carried out quite independently from one another, as well as by the terms attributed to the historical forms of Christendom in the course of Chinese history: Jingjiao 景教 – the “Teaching/Religion of Light” for Nestorianism, i.e., the Eastern Syrian Church; Tianzhu-jiao 天主教 – the “Teach-

¹ Here, I use the term Christendom intentionally as it seems to better embrace all the Christian phenomena, e.g., the Christian civilization rather than an institutional “churched” religion (not only) in China. Christendom “stands for a polity as well as religion, for a nation as well as for a people. Christendom in this sense was an ideal which inspired and dignified many centuries of history and which has not yet altogether lost its power over the minds of men”. (Urquhart 1908, p. 699)

² For the history of these attempts, see especially Latourette and Standaert 2001. There are, of course, numerous studies on the history of each of the forms and aspects of Christendom in China. For a bibliography, see Standaert 2001.

ing/Religion of the Lord of Heaven” (Tianzhuism),³ also called *jiujiao* 旧教 (the “Old Teaching”) for Catholicism; Jidu-jiao 基督教 or Yesu-jiao 耶稣教 (the “Teaching/Religion of Jesus Christ”) called also *xinjiao* 新教 (the “New Teaching”) for Protestantism; Dongzheng-jiao 东正教 (the “Orthodox Eastern Teaching/Religion”) for the Orthodox Church. Since the times of the Jesuits, Christianity was also called “Western teaching/religion” (*xixue* 西学).

Document 19 (“The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country’s Socialist Period”) of the Communist Party of China from the year 1982, which is still effective today, lists five officially-recognized religions in China: Buddhism (Fojiao 佛教), Daoism (Daojiao 道教), Islam (Yisilan-jiao 伊斯兰教), Catholicism (Tianzhu-jiao), and Protestantism (Jidu-jiao).⁴ Thus, Christendom in China today, from the point of view of religious policy, is not regarded as *one* religion, but possesses two officially recognized (orthodox, *zheng* 正) manifestations: Catholicism, exclusively represented by the Catholic Patriotic Association (Zhongguo Tianzhu-jiao Aiguohui 中国天主教爱国会), and Protestantism, represented by the Protestant Patriotic Three-Self-Movement (Zhongguo Jidu-jiao Aiguo Sanzi Yundong 中国基督教爱国三自运动). The Russian-Orthodox Church (Dongzheng-jiao) is not officially recognized as a religion; rather, the believers of this Church are ascribed to minorities (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族, especially, the Russian minority in China).⁵ It might be remarked here that also in traditional China, the imperial state had the prerogative to determine – according to any criteria whatsoever – which teaching/religion (*jiao* 教) was to be classified as “orthodox,” i.e., officially recognized by the state, and which was to be regarded as an “evil teaching/religion/cult” (*xiejiao* 邪教).⁶

In contrast to the political point of view, the *Zongjiao cidian* 宗教词典 (*Dictionary of Religions*), published in 1981 in Shanghai, characterizes Christendom (the “Religion of Christ,” Jidu-jiao) rather more accurately as follows (p. 936f.):

Jidu-jiao (Religion of Christ): Common expression for all religious groups which recognize Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world. The

³ Erik Zürcher describes the Christianity of the Ming and Qing periods as “Tianzhuism.” See Zürcher 1994, p. 50.

⁴ See MacInnis, pp. 8–26.

⁵ For the Orthodox Church in China today, see Pozdniaev 1999a and 1999b.

⁶ See, among others, Malek 1989.

Christian religion comprises the Catholic, the Orthodox, and the “new” religion (*xinjiao*, Protestantism) as well as a number of smaller groups. The Christian religion, Buddhism, and Islam together are called the three big world religions. Christendom developed in the first century in Palestine and slowly spread within the whole Roman Empire. It believes that Shangdi 上帝 (the Supreme Ruler on High, i.e., the Protestant name for God) or Tianzhu 天主 (the Lord of Heaven, i.e., the Catholic name for God) has created and directs the world; it assumes that mankind has sinned beginning with its progenitor and that it suffers miserably in sin and may only be redeemed through faith in God and his son Jesus Christ. It regards the collection of the books (taken over from the Jewish religion) of the Old and the New Testament as the Holy Scripture.

In general, Christendom in China – in which manifestation whatsoever – may be characterized as a “marginal” “foreign religion” (*yangjiao* 洋教).⁷ Until today, Christians form a very small minority of approximately only two percent of the Chinese population, and exercise – seen from the socio-cultural point of view – only a small amount of regional influence. From the religio-political point of view, however, the Christian Churches form units which, due to various reasons, are being suppressed or at least controlled – as was also the case in traditional China. In contrast to Buddhism, which in the first century C.E. also came to China as a “foreign religion” but was able to strike roots in Chinese culture, Christendom has never become regarded as a “Chinese religion.” Generally speaking, in China, Christendom was and is seen as “Western Christendom,” a “Western religion.” This refers to the Christian reality in all its manifestations.

Historiography shows that the various manifestations of Christendom in China were closely connected with the various changes that took place in Chinese society. Only in the last 150 years (i.e., after the Opium Wars and the Taiping Rebellion) has Christendom unfolded many faces and played different roles in China. For instance, it was first – consciously or not – an important factor in modernization. It then became more and more marginalized, criticized, fought, and eliminated from social life. Despite this, it has surprisingly become a spiritual force and has again been a factor in the process of modernization in today’s Chi-

⁷ Regarding the question of “marginality” of Christendom in China, which cannot be explored here in more detail, see especially Zürcher 1993a, 1993b and 1997. With regard to the category “foreign religion” within the Chinese context, see, among others, Seiwert 1987.

na. On one hand, these alternating roles mirror the changes that have taken place within Chinese society; on the other hand, they also reflect changes in Chinese Christendom.⁸

In addition, since the last missionary encounter between Christianity and China at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, within Chinese and Christian traditions important events have occurred. Such events include the May Fourth Movement of 1919, the adoption of Western Marxism in the 1920s, the “Liberation” of 1949, the ecumenical movement, the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the dialogue of religions, efforts towards in-culturation and contextualization, China’s opening to the West, modernization endeavors, as well as many others. A general understanding of Christian history and ideas has started to grow within Chinese society, helped by research and publications on Christendom being carried out in China itself. A totally new, changed situation has developed which poses the question of religion (*zongjiao wenti* 宗教问题) and Christendom in China in a new way. After both the Chinese and the Christian traditions have been sifted through a sieve of criticism and changes, they no longer seem to radically exclude one another. Among other reasons, this has led to the fact that also outside the Churches, more and more people are becoming interested in Christendom from a historical, philosophical, artistic, or ethical point of view. Outside of the Chinese state and party structures, a constant decrease in negative attitudes towards Christendom can be observed. At the same time, it seems to gradually lose its character as a “Western religion” and become (as Buddhism did), while still “foreign,” an in-cultured (*bendihua* 本地化, *bensehua* 本色化) tradition – as some Chinese experts in religious studies have remarked.⁹ Due to quite strong local roots and, at the same time, the isolation of the Catholic communities from their “non-Christian” environment, Catholicism in some regions in China is regarded not only as a religion (*zongjiao* 宗教), but also as an ethnic group (*minzu* 民族).¹⁰

⁸ Cf. Gao 2000 and 2002.

⁹ See, e.g., Xi Wen 1995, pp. 1–5.

¹⁰ See the remarks of the sociologist Richard Madsen, (Madsen 1998, esp. p. 53): “Rural Catholicism is less a chosen faith than an ascribed status. ... A Chinese rural Catholic community is formed by bonds that for most practical purposes cannot be broken unless one leaves the countryside. ... Chinese Catholicism ... is a kind of ethnicity.” Cf. also Madsen 2001, pp. 233–249.

In this new context, Christendom in China has unfolded various and rather independent manifestations. In China today, we can distinguish in principle two main manifestations of Christendom: (1) the Church(ed), i.e., institutionalized Christendom and, (2) the “non-Church(ed),” i.e., non-institutionalized Christendom.

(1) The Church(ed), institutionalized manifestations of Christendom in China include the Catholic and the Protestant Churches in their three independent forms: (a) the official Church recognized by the State; (b) the unofficial Catholic Underground Church and the Protestant House Churches not recognized by the Chinese Government; and (c) various forms of new religiosity, the so-called “Christian sects or groups” which also belong to these institutionalized manifestations of Christendom. Due to the reasons mentioned above, the Russian-Orthodox Church is not considered here. Anthony Lam from the Holy Spirit Study Center in Hong Kong proposes the following categorization of the Christian Church(ed) groups (with special regard to the Catholic Church): (a) Underground extremists who refuse to cooperate with any government-sanctioned system; (b) underground sectors registered with the government; (c) Open Church sectors registered with the government; (d) Open Church sectors registered with both the government and the Patriotic Association.¹¹

(2) Included in the “non-Church(ed),” non-institutionalized manifestations of Christendom in China are, especially, (a) the so-called Cultural Christianity or the Cultural Christians, and, as well, (b) Christendom as an subject of academic research, i.e., as an academic discipline at universities, academies, and institutes. Here, Christendom can in a positive sense become a subject of academic research and teaching, but also an object of (not only Marxist) criticism.

According to Chinese academics, these main manifestations of Christendom might be subsumed under two other categories, namely, that of “folk Christianity” or “popular Christianity” of the majority of believers, and that of “elite Christianity,” which also includes “cultural Christians.”¹² “Folk (rural) Christianity” has especially developed in the countryside and often takes on fundamentalist or syncretistic traits.¹³

¹¹ Lam 2000, esp. p. 21.

¹² See Zhuo 1998; Zhuo 2001.

¹³ For the rural manifestations of Christendom in China, see, among others: “A Study of the Religious Faith of Fishing People in Qingpu County,” in MacInnis 1989, pp. 272–283; Litzinger 1996; Liang 1999; Sweeten 2001.

“Elite Christianity” has mainly developed among intellectuals and is understood as a *weltanschauung*, a system of values (i.e., an *ideo[theo]logy*) and not as a Church(ed) form of Christianity.

From the above remarks it is apparent that when speaking about “Christendom” this contribution neither exclusively nor primarily refers to the Christian Churches and the theology of the Christian Church, but rather is examining the Christian religion or teaching with its numerous historical and ideological facets.

A quite different level is presented by Christendom as an object of the government’s religious political control, for which analysts often use the category *orthodoxy/heterodoxy* (*zheng/xie* 正/邪).¹⁴ According to this scheme, three types of religiosity in China can be distinguished: (1) orthodox or legal religion(s) or teaching (in traditional China – and practically until today – represented exclusively by Confucianism or the currently dominating State doctrine); (2) unorthodox but legal religions (in the PR China, the five “recognized religions,” including Catholicism and Protestantism); (3) heterodox and illegal religions (all unregistered “sects” and groups, new religious movements, and Underground or House Churches).

This contribution tries, phenomenologically, to sketch the main manifestations of Christendom in China today (PR China), e.g., of Catholicism and Protestantism in their official and unofficial forms, the new Christian religiosity (the so-called Christian sects) as well as the so-called Cultural Christianity and Christianity as an object of criticism and research. Excluded here are the manifestations of Christianity in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.

The Church(ed), Institutional Manifestations of Christendom in China

The Church(ed), institutional manifestations of Christendom in China include the Catholic and Protestant Churches in their three forms: (a) the official Churches recognized by the Chinese Government, sometimes erroneously called “Patriotic” or “National”; (b) the unofficial, “illegal” Underground or House Churches not recognized by the Chinese Government; (c) various forms of new religiosity, the so-called Chris-

¹⁴ See Yang 1961; Malek 2001; Zürcher 1997, esp. pp. 615–622.

tian sects, which must also be included in institutionally-structured Christendom.

(a) The Official Churches, Recognized by the Government

Each officially recognized and registered religion in the PR China must be represented by a Patriotic Association. In this way, Christendom in China today officially only exists within the framework of the Patriotic Associations, i.e., the Patriotic Association of the Chinese Catholic Church and the Protestant Patriotic Three-Self-Movement. All manifestations of Christendom that are not officially recognized and are not registered with these Patriotic organizations are considered illegal (*feifa* 非法) or heretical (*xie* 邪), and are persecuted; they can only exercise their activities in the so-called Underground.

The Patriotic Associations (“mass organizations”) of the Churches, which were founded in the 1950s, are based on the Three-Self-Principles (or Autonomies) formulated already in the 1930s by Chinese theologians: 1. Self-support (*ziyang* 自养), i.e., having financial independence and not accepting foreign aid; 2. Self-propagation (*zichuan* 自传), i.e., propagating the Gospel solely with the help of local Chinese personnel; 3. Self-management (*zizhi* 自治), i.e., administering the Church in China independently, without foreign influence.¹⁵ Patriotism (*aiguo* 爱国) is the first condition for positive treatment of the Christian Churches by the Communist state. This means at least outward consent with the current ruling orthodoxy (i.e., the leadership of the CCP and the role of the Three-Self-Principles). The statutes of the Patriotic Associations formulate these principles explicitly.¹⁶ The subordination of the Christian Churches under the Patriotic Associations, and of the Associations under the leadership of the Party through “cooperation” with the State Council’s Bureau for Religious Affairs, until today remains a fundamental condition for the public (official) activity of the Christian Churches.

¹⁵ For the Patriotic Association and Three-Self-Movement, see “La vraie nature de l’Association Patriotique des catholiques chinois,” in: *Eglises d’Asie. Dossiers et documents* 1994/4, pp. 1–35; Malek/Plate 1987; Wickeri 1988; Malek 1990; Malek 1996. For a critical analysis of these principles, see Chang 1999.

¹⁶ See, for example, the statutes of the Catholic Patriotic Association in: *China heute* 1987, pp. 39–41; “Neue Satzungen der katholischen Gremien in der VR China,” in: *China heute* 1992, pp. 162–164; “Constitution of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (1997),” in: *China Study Journal* 13 (1998) 1, pp. 60–66.

The official Churches, as a rule, follow the regulations of the Party and Government and do not accept “interference” from abroad, even though today there are broad contacts with Churches outside of China. The administration of the Church follows the policy of independence and autonomy. On the Catholic side, this autonomy is especially emphasized by the fact that the Patriotic Association elects and ordains its own bishops. These are, in most cases, recognized by the Holy See despite the non-existent diplomatic relations between Beijing and the Vatican. These independent ordinations cause an incomplete *communio* between the Chinese Catholic Church and the Universal Church. In the past, the official Church, due to the political pressure of the Communist Party, expressed a certain hostility towards Rome and the Pope. Later, however, this attitude became more and more moderate. Today, even the official Catholic Church publicly recognizes that the Primate of the Pope is part of the Catholic faith.

To a large extent, the internal situation of the Church(ed) manifestations of Christendom is known. It is, however, much more complicated than we can glean in official reports or than is commonly thought. To characterize the present situation of the Churches in China comprehensively, we may name four aspects which more or less represent today's situation: (1) The complexity of the ecclesiastical situation (depending on the confession, denomination, place and/or, e.g., the diocese) and the increasing non-transparency with regard to the so-called Underground Church or the Protestant House Churches. They show a simultaneous development of extensive “gray areas” between the Underground and the official Church;¹⁷ (2) a very intensive religious (sacramental) life and innumerable activities that are not proportional to the personnel and the financial possibilities of the Churches; (3) still-existing needs in both theological and material matters; (4) a dramatic irreconcilability among all the groups within the Christian Churches.¹⁸

Through many decades – taking Protestant Christians as one example – the Patriotic Three-Self-Movement was the only legal organization

¹⁷ Jean Charbonnier remarks in his article “The ‘Underground’ Church” that “quite a number of analyses carried out in recent years all agree as to the existence of an intermediate group – actually comprising a majority – that is neither underground nor patriotic. These members of the faithful practice their religion openly, and refuse to reject the authority of the pope.” (Charbonnier 1993, p. 53.)

¹⁸ For details, see Malek 1995a.

of Chinese Protestantism.¹⁹ This organizational standardization had socio-political and historical reasons. In the meantime, however, Chinese Protestantism has developed a nearly inestimable organizational variety.²⁰ In the meantime, the so-called post-denominational situation (the building-up of only one united “Church of Jesus Christ” under the leadership of the Three-Self-Movement), which at the end of the 1950s was imposed on the Church, seems no longer to exist.

The social conditions in China today (especially, poverty in the countryside) has led to specific characteristics regarding the membership structure of the Protestant (and also Catholic) Churches in the countryside: Among their members are many old people, many women, and many illiterate persons. This situation has improved somewhat over the last decade, but, all in all, these characteristics are still valid.²¹ It is understandable that Christians in the countryside attach more importance to ritual activities than Church dogmas. It is also understandable that due to their living conditions they do not care much about theology, and that their main focus is on their real interests. Many Christians, for example, regard the difference between being Christian and non-Christian as being the most important distinctive feature. This fundamentalism results in the fact that in the Chinese villages there is a sectarian thinking and a strong tendency towards a kind of “Christian folk religion.”

In the cities, the Church(ed) Christendom has developed differently from the countryside. As more and more intellectuals and young people come to the Churches, the structure of Christendom in the cities has changed significantly, which without any doubt has had positive effects on the marginalized situation of Chinese Christendom as a whole. On the other hand, however, the rising number of intellectuals among Christians leads to increasing demands towards the Churches.²² At the

¹⁹ See, among others, Hunter/Chan 1993, esp. pp. 72–80.

²⁰ For the institutions of the Protestant Church in China, see Hunter/Chan 1993, pp. 53–65, and Wickeri 1988, esp. pp. 146–153.

²¹ For statistical data on the Christians in the countryside, see, for example: He/Liu 1989; Li 1994; Luo 2001; Zhao 2001.

²² According to Sun Li (*Shijie zongjiao wenhua* 1995, pp. 20–24), in 1990, there were more than 100,000 Protestant Christians and 23 churches in Shanghai. Among the Christians, 27% were between 18 and 40 years of age, 26% between 41 and 59, and 47% over 60. In the context of the history after 1949, the author then analyzes the motivations and contents of the faith of the age group 18 to 40, and refers to the fact that recently there are many educated Christians (*you wenhua de jidu-*

moment, the Churches in the Chinese cities still come up against many limiting factors, and the contradiction between the spiritual needs of the believers and the lack of Church service is very noticeable. It can be said, however, that since the 1980s the Church(ed) Christendom in China has changed significantly. After the Cultural Revolution, Church life was allowed again and the Churches initiated various activities. They increased their contacts with foreign Churches and broadened the range of these contacts. The Chinese Churches have become active in the field of emergency aid and other social services, as the examples of the Protestant Amity Foundation in Nanjing and the Catholic Beifang Jinde 北方进德 in Shijiazhuang show.²³

Between 1980 and 1990, the number of Protestants nearly doubled, from about three to more than five million. The general inadequacy of Chinese statistics and varying definitions of Protestant “Christians” (registered, not registered, baptized, sympathizers, followers of Christians groups, etc.), however, impede statistical data. An unpublished report of the Bureau for Statistics of the PR China counts 63 million Protestants. A report in the *People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报) published in 2001 estimates that there are 67 million “illegal” Protestants organized in “House Churches.”²⁴

(b) Unofficial, Underground or House Churches, not Recognized by the Chinese Government

The somewhat vague terms “Underground” or “House Church” refer to Churches that, due to the political situation, perform their activities clandestinely or – from the viewpoint of the State – illegally, not officially. Three conditions, according to Anthony Lam, “must be present for an underground phenomenon to take effect. Firstly, the government must forbid its existence; secondly, it must be organised and active within a

tu) in this group, this to a great extent characterizing the image of Christianity in Shanghai. Cf. also Wu 1993. Wu writes (p. 15): “Although the number of Christians in Beijing is too small to reflect the whole situation of the Christian believers in mainland China, they are better educated and they represent the major tendencies in the development of Christianity on the mainland.”

²³ For Amity Foundation, see Whyte 1988, pp. 420–422, *Amity Newsletter* (Nanjing), and *Amity News Service* (Hong Kong). For Beifang Jinde, see “*Beifang jinde: Erste katholische sozial-karitative Einrichtung.*” In: *China heute XX* (2001), pp. 11f.

²⁴ For the question of statistics on Christians in China, see, among others, Hunter/Chan 1993, esp. pp. 66–71 (“Reporting statistics”); “How many Christians are there in China?” In: *China Study Journal* 10 (1995) 2, pp. 15–18.

given society; and thirdly, its structure must run parallel to the one that has authorised government approval.”²⁵ In China, this unique ecclesiastical phenomenon is not new: it did not develop only after the Communist takeover in 1949, but already in the 18th century. After the imperial ban on Catholic missionaries, clandestine communities existed, as the example of the life and work of the Austrian Bishop of Nanjing, Gottfried F.X. Laimbeckhoven S.J. (1707–1787), illustrates,²⁶ and as the research of Robert E. Entenmann verifies.²⁷

Within Chinese Protestantism, there are distinctions between (a) the official Church of the Three-Self-Movement, (b) meeting places belonging to the Three-Self, (c) the half-independent Churches in the countryside, and (d) the so-called House Churches.²⁸

- (a) The official Church of the Three-Self and its meeting places are legal, registered, and public religious meeting sites. They are distinct in that the official Church of the Three-Self has its own church buildings, especially in the cities, and – usually – full-time ministers.
- (b) In smaller cities, small market towns, or in the outskirts of cities there are also Three-Self meeting places. These are fixed and registered meeting places, but, they are not required to be church buildings. They seldom have ministers who receive a regular formation.²⁹
- (c) With regard to the half-independent Churches in the countryside, most often these have been founded by lay people and are in remote rural areas. Some of them are not registered with the government and their relationship with the Three-Self-Movement is also quite complicated. Some of these Churches accept financial help from the Three-Self-Movement, even though they do not belong to the Three-Self. Others refuse any contact with the Three-Self. The most obvious common characteristic of such groups is a “charismatic leader” at the top.

²⁵ See Lam 1999. Regarding the *Problematik* of the Underground Church, see further Charbonnier 1993, pp. 52–70; “Lettera pastorale della Conferenza episcopale cattolica (non ufficiale) ai fedeli della Cina,” in: *Asia News* 1995, No. 3, pp. 28–31.

²⁶ For his clandestine itinerant life and work, see Krahl 1964; Malek 2000.

²⁷ See Entenmann 1996 and 1987.

²⁸ For these divisions of the Protestant Church in China, see Hunter/Chan 1993, *passim*.

²⁹ For Protestant meeting places, see Ying 1996.

(d) House Churches have developed due to many different reasons. Some are the result of very specific regional and denominational traditions, others are the result of having dissociated themselves from the Three-Self for political or even simply practical reasons. The term “House Churches” includes all Christian communities in China other than those which are under direct jurisdiction of the Three-Self and Christian Council (the so-called *Lianhui* 联合会, i.e., the official Protestant Church). They form communities through personal networks and are characterized, among other things, by lay preachers and the spiritual-emotional character of their services.³⁰ They are, as Zhong Min and Chan Kim-Kwong have observed, “vibrant in faith, evangelistic in outreaching, fundamentalistic in doctrine, pious in devotion, informal in liturgy, spontaneous in development and flexible in structure.”³¹

The Chinese authorities, likewise, do not make a blanket judgment of the Underground groups, but distinguish between five different “underground forces:” (1) those groups that support the government and the Patriotic Associations, but have not been recognized by the government; (2) those that do not want to belong to Patriotic Associations, whose activities, however, are not opposed to the country’s laws and regulations on religions; (3) those who dissociate themselves from the Patriotic Associations, not out of political reasons, but due to religious and “sectarian” thinking and differences; (4) those who do not want to join the Patriotic Associations, because they have suffered under the “extreme Leftists” in the past and their wounds have not yet healed, or because their persecutors still hold offices within the Patriotic Associations; (5) a small minority of truly “hostile elements” that use religion to carry out “illegal and criminal” activities. The first four groups – according to Party documents – are different from the last with regard to their situation and nature. Although they should be understood as groups of believers who are not subject to the leadership of the Patriotic Associations and are not registered within religious venues approved by the State, they cannot be treated as hostile or opposition groups.³²

³⁰ For a characterization of the Protestant groups, see Hunter/Chan 1993, esp. pp. 81–88.

³¹ Zhong/Chan 1993, p. 251.

³² See “Bewertung und Analyse der gegenwärtigen religiösen Situation Chinas,” in: *China heute* XII (1993), pp. 12–19 (transl. from *Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu* 當代宗教研究 1991/1).

The Catholic Underground Church can be considered as a case in point for the “underground force” that quite representatively illustrates unofficial manifestations of Christendom in China today. The division within the Catholic Church in China began in 1957, when the Patriotic Association of the Chinese Catholic Church came into being, which in the same year brought about the first episcopal consecrations without the approval of the Holy See. A small group of bishops, priests, and lay people emerged who joined the Patriotic Association; at the same time, however, an opposition to the Association and the new Communist state arose.³³ Following the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and the so-called opening of China, the gap between the two groups within the Catholic Church not only became more clearly visible, but deepened more and more. Decisive for this development was, among others, the document of the *Propaganda Fide* from 1978 (*Facultates et privilegia sacerdotibus fidelibusque in territorio Sinarum degentibus concessa his perdurantibus circumstantiis*), as it allowed the small number of legitimate (“loyal to Rome”) bishops who had not joined the Patriotic Association to perform ordinations of bishops and priests without prior formal approval of the Holy See; it allowed the priests who did not belong to the Patriotic Association to administer the sacraments in all of China.³⁴ These privileges contributed to the fact that the group “loyal to Rome” became more active than before the Cultural Revolution. It remained, however, unrecognized by the government. At the same time, the official Church was newly formed with the help of the government. This made the contrast still more obvious and conflicts inevitable. Furthermore, in 1989 an independent underground Bishops’ Conference was founded.

The activities of the Underground Church in China are not completely clandestine. As its bishops, priests and nuns do not have governmental permission to work, they cannot exercise their ministry publicly. The characteristic of the Underground Church, therefore, is its illegality with regard to the State and not an “existence in catacombs.” The bishops and priests, as well as their activities, are regarded as illegal according to the State’s law; according to the Church canon law, however, they are legitimate, as they keep the full communion with the Pope. In the beginning of the division, the loyalty to the Pope (the so-called loyalty

³³ For the history of the Catholic Church after the “Liberation” of 1949, see R. Malek, “Der Neuaufbau der katholischen Kirche in der Volksrepublik China,” in Malek/Plate 1987, pp. 27–68; Tong 1993.

³⁴ For the text of the *Facultates*, see Chan 1987, pp. 438–442.

to Rome) was the main characteristic of the Underground Church. Today, however, after the majority of the official bishops have been recognized by the Pope and the name of the Pope may be mentioned publicly, not only in prayers, "loyalty to Rome" is no longer a criterion of differentiation. Since, however, a formal connection with the Pope and the Holy See, which does not recognize the PR China, is not possible and any activity in this direction is interpreted as being hostile to the State, the Underground Church remains clandestine. The existence of the Underground Church is today, therefore, rather due to restrictive religious policies and the non-recognition of the PR China (and the recognition of the Republic of China in Taiwan) by the Vatican.³⁵

The official and unofficial Churches have parallel structures, meaning that the Catholic diocesan bishop's sees that were set up in 1946 are often occupied twice.³⁶ Both parts of the Catholic Church have their own Bishops' Conference. Neither is, however, recognized by the Holy See. Both groups exist without direct connection to the Pope. The Catholic Underground Church in China, claims to be the only true Catholic Church in China. Due to these and other reasons, the gap as well as the irreconcilability between the two groups within the Catholic Church in China is growing. Thus, the reconciliation of the two groups remains of urgent concern to the Chinese Church as well as to the Universal Church.³⁷

According to government statistics, there are more than five million Catholics, over 5,000 church buildings, more than 2,000 chapels, 70 bishops, and nearly 2,000 priests in the PR China. Since the opening of China, especially, after the so-called *Document 19* of 1982, twenty theological seminaries (with more than 1,000 seminarians) as well as numerous convents have been opened. Non-governmental estimates, however, maintain that there are approximately 10 to 15 million Catholics in China, with the Underground Church becoming stronger. The Catholic Underground in China has approximately 60 "clandestine"

³⁵ For other causes of clandestinity, see Charbonnier 1993, esp. pp. 55–57 ("To understand the causes of clandestinity, we must refer to its historical genesis").

³⁶ With regard to the Catholic hierarchical structure of the Church in China today, see Lam 2000, esp. pp. 19f. and 21f. Lam speaks in this context about the "duplication of authority."

³⁷ For these questions, see Tang 1993; Heyndricx 1993; Anon. 1992.

bishops, more than 1,000 priests, over 1,000 nuns, and most probably 5 to 7 million believers.³⁸

c) Christian Groups and Sects

In addition to the official and unofficial manifestations of Christendom in China in the last decades, innumerable Christian groups and sects have been revived or have newly arisen.³⁹ They constitute the third institutional manifestation of Christendom in China. Within this constantly growing “new Christian religiosity,” which, as yet, has remained both little explored and noticed (except by the controlling authorities of the PR China), we can distinguish diverse contents and manifestations. More detailed material exists about sixteen of such groups or “sects.”⁴⁰ They bear curious names, and include: for example, the “Shouters” or “Yellers” (Huhanpai 呼喊派), founded in 1967, with ca. 200,000 members in the Provinces of He’nan, Fujian, Zhejiang, Anhui, Hebei, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang; “The Established King” (Beiliwang 被立王), founded in ca. 1987 in Anhui, with more than 100,000 members in Anhui, Hunan, Guangdong;⁴¹ “The Teaching of the Supreme Deity” (Zhushenjiao 主神教), founded in 1993 in Anhui, with more than 10,000 members in 22 Provinces; “The Eastern Lightning” (Dongfang Shandianjiao 东方闪电教), founded in 1990 in Zhengzhou (He’nan), with an unknown number of members in He’nan, Shandong, Shanxi, Heilongjiang; “The Way of Resurrection” (Fuhuodao 复活道), founded in 1990 in He’nan, with today more than 10,000 members in more than 20 counties and towns/cities in the Provinces of He’nan and Anhui; “The Teaching of Reincarnation” (Chongshengpai 重生派), founded in 1968 in He’nan, with, it is said, three million followers in He’nan, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hubei, and other provinces; “The Community of Disciples” or “Disciples Sect” (Mentuhui 门徒会), founded around 1989 in Shaanxi, with more than 500,000 members.⁴²

³⁸ There is no exact statistical data on the Catholic Church in China, but see, for instance, “Catholic statistics 1996,” in: *China Study Journal* 12 (1997) 1, p. 33, “How many Catholics are there in China?” in: *ibid.*, No. 3, pp. 48f. See also the statistics in *China heute* XX (2001), pp. 18f.; *ibid.*, XXI (2002), pp. 21f.

³⁹ For these and other details, see Malek 1995b.

⁴⁰ See, among others, Kupfer 2001, *passim*; Yu 1999.

⁴¹ See Luo 1998.

⁴² See Lu 1998.

In present-day China, these groups enjoy a growing number of followers. They are characterized by charismatic leaders,⁴³ complex and flexible organization, as well as teachings that deal with salvation and redemption. They take up the indigenous forms of Protestantism that arose in the 1920s and 1930s under the influence of a Western charismatic renewal and Pentecostal movements. Such a consciously constructed connection with former Christian groups serves as a legitimization to attract new members. In a certain sense, they also stand in the tradition of the Chinese folk religious sects and represent not only a major challenge for the Chinese State, but also for institutionalized Church(ed) Christendom.⁴⁴

Most groups are based solely in the countryside. Data about membership and geographical distribution are only “guesstimates.” Membership figures vary from a thousand to several hundred thousand, or even “several ten thousands.” Ye Xiaowen 叶小文, former Director of the National Bureau of Religious Affairs, quotes the Ministry for Public Security, which mentions 15 groups with about 500,000 followers.⁴⁵ According to estimates from Hong Kong (*Associated Press*, 9 December 1999), ten of these Christian groups have altogether three million members.

The geographical extension of these groups seems enormous. Usually, they are spread out over several provinces. The “Teaching of the Supreme Deity” and the “Community of Disciples” have the largest trans-regional sphere of activity in China. The first was established in towns or cities and in counties of 22 Provinces and has formulated a clear strategy for development that is reminiscent of the guerilla tactics of the Communist Party during its formative period: from the villages to the cities, from the peasants to the Party cadres, intellectuals, and other high strata of society. Its members are supposed to get acquainted with management law, cadres, and similar political affairs.

⁴³ According to Kupfer (2001), biographical data on the founders or leaders of groups inspired by Christianity is rare. The data presented in most cases emphasizes a poor or peasant background and minimal or hardly-existent education. The writings of the communities present the life of their leaders in a very mystical and glorified light. It is remarkable that most of the founders have already lived in a Christian context. Influenced by family members or friends, they also became members of Protestant, mostly unregistered, House Churches.

⁴⁴ For Christian and other “sects,” see Harrell/Perry 1982; Deng 1996; Lambert 1998; Liang 1999.

⁴⁵ See Ye 1999.

The membership structure of these groups reflects the whole range of a clan or a village: children, juveniles, adults, and the elderly. The percentage of young women with a middle-school degree is relatively high. Students and young people also form a large group.⁴⁶ Party cadres being members of these groups inspired by Christianity, in contrast to the Falungong 法轮功, does not seem to be a problem of regional or national scope.⁴⁷

Protestant communities, especially the “House Churches,” often serve as recruiting centers for new members of these groups. The main reason for much of the attraction is, above all, a lack of knowledge about the Christian doctrine. Apart from spiritual promises, some groups also offer material incentives to potential members. The members, however, are required to offer material property to the leader as a “gift” or “sacrifice”, thus investing into one’s own salvation and eternal life.

The Christian groups are characterized by a hierarchical, nation-wide organizational structure, with fixed competences, rights, and duties. The leader of a community possesses absolute authority. Besides a complex organizational structure, norms for behavior, disciplinary measures and sanctions are important elements of these groups. In order to strengthen the internal organization, the “Community of Disciples,” e.g., has a very exclusive marriage policy: Members of the group may only practice intermarriage. With the help of a ban on newspapers and other reading materials as well as a ban on television, the connection to the outside world is supposed to be cut, and the loyalty towards the group assured. To what extent these groups exercise

⁴⁶ In Hunan province, about 95% of the members of the “Teaching of the Supreme Deity” are young people; more than 60% of them have had at least a middle school education. There are hardly any statistics on the socio-economical background of the members. Furthermore, we cannot assume that the descriptions we have access to have selected representative cases. Daniel L. Overmyer’s statement on Buddhist folk religion in traditional China is also valid for today’s situation: “The fact that the membership of many groups consisted primarily of peasants doesn’t really prove anything, because from 70 to 80 percent of the population itself were peasants” (Overmyer 1976, p. 18).

⁴⁷ According to an investigation about the membership structure of the “Community of Disciples” in one county in Sichuan Province, about 5% of its members were Party members. Furthermore, in some of the villages, former Party officials joined the “Community.” In one county in Shaanxi Province, in 1995 about 100 Party members and 80 representatives of the Peoples’ Congress of that province were members of the local “Community of Disciples.”

psychological pressure (“brain washing”) on the members, can only be circumstantially evidenced.

A central characteristic of the Christian groups is the phenomenon of spiritual healing: Illness is regarded as an expression of somebody’s being possessed by an evil spirit or demon, or as a result of sinful behavior. Regular medical treatment and, especially, Western medicine are rejected.⁴⁸ Prophecies regarding the “Last Judgement” in connection with redemption form another aspect of the teachings. The teachings of the known groups always include salvation and apocalyptic ideas.

Besides a widely branched organizational network, many groups practice a community life in their headquarters. Many activities take place during the night. One main activity during the assemblies is “glossolalia,” described by the groups themselves mostly as “communication with God” or “the revelation of God.”

The spreading of the teaching, i.e., the recruitment of new followers, is one of the main activities of all communities. Most of the groups make use of various publications – brochures, books, and other media – in order to spread their teaching, e.g., at train stations, in trains, or in villages, etc. There is not much known about the number of copies of the distributed materials. Some groups organize special classes, in which members are prepared for missionary work. They often use business activities in order to be able to do their missionary work in a concealed way: hairdressing salons, car repair shops, restaurants, and *wushu*-schools are regarded as discreet and unsuspecting meeting points. To what extent the groups are really motivated by the aim of reaching political power is not clear.

All the groups mentioned here refer to the Bible and to Christian ideas, which have developed in China under the inclusion of folk religious traditions. There is always a latent syncretism present. The existence of the groups is well known, but their organizational structures and teachings are only partly known. Therefore, a typology or classification of these groups is difficult. The characteristics “subversive” and “heterodox” are political classifications according to the State’s religious policy and not analytical categories, and therefore not helpful.⁴⁹

The challenge of the above-mentioned Christian groups for the Chinese Government and also for the Churches is very strong. Moreover,

⁴⁸ For this phenomenon among Chinese Christians, see Währisch-Oblau 1999.

⁴⁹ Regarding the classification of new religious movements, see Barker 1987.

the emergence and growth of interest in religion in the last decades (since ca. 1980) indicates a growing desire for spiritual-religious support. This need is also visible with the non-Church(ed) institutional manifestations of Christendom in China.

The Non-Church(ed), Non-Institutional Manifestations of Christendom in China: “Elite Christianity”

(a) “Cultural Christianity”

The phenomenon of the “cultural Christians” (*wenhua jidutu* 文化基督徒) or “cultural Christianity” (*jidu zongjiao wenhua* 基督宗教文化) is regarded as the most distinctive manifestation of the non-Church(ed), non-institutional Christendom.⁵⁰ Following Acts 18,24–28, the “cultural Christians” are also described as “Apollos” or “Nicodems” of China.

The “cultural Christians” are intellectuals who, mainly through the study of Western culture and religions, have developed a certain affinity for the Christian faith or theology. However, they opt to stay outside of the Churches, which, according to their opinion do not possess a genuinely theological power, as they either follow the State too closely or – as with the Underground – seem to be too “sectarian”. Therefore, they are (and remain) non-baptized and “non-Churched.” They are “cultural Christians,” and their influence on the intellectual climate of the Chinese society seems to be more distinct than that of the Churches. It is a phenomenon that moves the relationship between Chinese culture and Christianity (and religion in general) into a totally new perspective.

For these “cultural Christians” Christianity is – if it is permitted to say so – an “ideo(theo)logy” that does not necessarily lead to baptism and a life according to the faith. Only with reservations, the writings of these Christians may be described as theological (in the sense of the Church). A prominent academic, Liu Xiaofeng 刘小枫, who also belongs to the “cultural Christians,” says that they only accept and defend Christianity as a cultural conception, as a *weltanschauung*. Insofar, they are not “true Christians,” because somebody “who accepts the Christian

⁵⁰ This term goes back to the Anglican Bishop K.H. Ting (Ding Guangxun 丁光训) who, when answering the question whether persons like the painter Ding Fang, the writer Sun Xiaoling, or the philosopher He Guanghu are Christians, described them as “cultural Christians” and said that this was a cultural “expression of being a Christian.”

creed only as a cultural conception indeed cannot be called a Christian. [...] Only a small percentage of the intellectuals interested in Christianity have also made a decision to profess this existential experience.”⁵¹ Liu Xiaofeng continues that in China perhaps we cannot help but distinguish between Christians outside of the denominations and the members of the Christian Churches. Here, he refers to the interpretational models of Ernst Troeltsch, Jürgen Moltmann, and the controversies that Dietrich Bonhoeffer triggered off with his idea of “*religionsloses Christentum*.”⁵²

This interest in Christendom outside of the Churches, especially, among intellectuals, is, without any doubt, a theological challenge for the Chinese Churches. This new understanding of Christendom, opines the historian of religion, Zhuo Xinping, gains its force not so much from inside the Chinese Church with all its traditional attachments, but above all from a totally new generation, namely, that of the experts in religious science, philosophers, theologians, writers, poets, artists, and other scholars who are very much interested in Christian culture and try to use it in order to reshape and preserve the traditional Chinese culture. They regard the Christian culture as one of the significant developmental tendencies in world history; they consider it a strong impulse for their own thinking, with its two extremes, the Confucian and the Daoist or Buddhist *Lebensanschauung*. They see the cultural value of Christendom not only in the Occident, but also for China. This, concludes Zhuo Xinping, is meant by the so-called cultural understanding of religion in general and Christendom in particular.⁵³

The “cultural Christians” see their main task in enriching the Christian coloring of Chinese culture and fostering the spread of the Christian spirit of culture, the humanities, and education. In the PR China, there are a large number of books, journals, articles, and conferences

⁵¹ Liu 1993, p. 3.

⁵² Liu 1993, p. 3f. Similar objectives are also known from Christian Europe, e.g., with the “*Protestantenverein*” and the “Cultural Protestantism” (*Kulturprotestantismus*). The “*Protestantenverein*” was aiming at the reconciliation of religion and culture, and postulated Protestantism as the moral foundation of culture and state. Thus Christianity did not realize itself within the Churches, but in the transformation into a Christian world. The idea was to form the Protestant culture, to establish Protestantism as cultural factor or as a cultural force. In this context, however, later on, an accelerated decline of denominational Christianity into a cultural Christianity was diagnosed. See, among others, Graf 1992.

⁵³ Cf. Zhuo 1998, p. 197f.; Wu 2000.

on philosophy, theology, and the history of Christianity⁵⁴ that verify the hypothesis that this “cultural Christianity” has in the meantime become a cultural “force” within Chinese society, especially through its close connection with academic research on Christendom in the PR China, which, in my opinion, is the fifth important manifestation of Chinese Christendom.

(b) Christianity as an Object of Academic Research

Research on Christendom in China during the last two decades has experienced some significant changes, often described as a change of paradigms.⁵⁵ A very special aspect of this change of paradigms is the academic and non-Church research on Christendom by Chinese scholars in the PR China, as well as the presence of Christianity as an academic discipline at universities, academies of science as well as their institutes. Since I have described this academic manifestation of Christendom in detail elsewhere, I will limit myself here to some remarks only.⁵⁶

First of all, we have to emphasize the fact (or, as some put it: the phenomenon) that numerous intellectuals in the PR China – philosophers, historians, scholars of literary and religious studies and other disciplines – study Christian thinking and expect from it a stimulation of Chinese spiritual life and a moral-spiritual counterbalance to the materialism that is spreading everywhere in China. They are interested in a modern, “enlightened” Christendom. They do research on the history of Christendom in China as well as in the West; they devote themselves “theoretically” to the many aspects of Christian thought. Similar to the time of the May Fourth Movement – as has been explained by Liu Xiaofeng⁵⁷ – in China today we have once again a “competition of ideas.” Socialism and Communism in China, however, have fundamentally changed the relationship between the Chinese and Christian cultures: The former tensions between the foreign (Western) Christianity and the indigenous tradition of the orthodox Confucianism have turned into tensions between Christianity and the new orthodoxy, namely, Marxism-Communism (also stemming from the West), i.e., into an “internal” or “domestic” tension between cultural ideas from the West on Chinese soil.

⁵⁴ See Malek 1995c.

⁵⁵ Nicolas Standaert gives a detailed survey of this topic. See Standaert 1997.

⁵⁶ See, among others, Malek 2002.

⁵⁷ Liu 1996.

Here it is, of course, not possible to present the whole spectrum of the current research on Christianity in the PR China in detail. I once again refer to other publications,⁵⁸ and limit myself to some interpretations proposed by Liu Xiaofeng.

The academic research on Christendom, according to Liu Xiaofeng, is a “cultural-theoretical type of Christian thought” that does not consider and transmit the denominational dogmatics, but simply a “Christian science” (*“Christentumswissenschaft”*). In this way, i.e., by the incorporation of this *“Christentumswissenschaft”* into the universities and institutes, Christendom becomes a “structural element” of Chinese culture. This means that today’s cultural system of the PR China enables the blending of Christian and Chinese cultural thought (i.e, a specific “inculturation” of Christendom). From the viewpoint of cultural anthropology this also means that the academic research on Christendom will eventually become *Chinese* Christian thought. Liu Xiaofeng is furthermore convinced that alone due to the modernization of China, Christendom as a “cultural good” has already penetrated Chinese culture. The relation between Chinese culture and Christendom as a “foreign religion,” therefore, is no longer a dialogue between cultures, but an existential dialogue: “The development of Chinese Christendom, from a form influenced from the outside to a form of it’s own, does not only ... change the traditional relationship between Chinese culture and Christendom, but also the direction of the future development of Chinese culture itself,” says Liu.⁵⁹ The traditional division within Christendom, too, which was imported by the missionaries into China and harmed the development of Christendom in China, has nothing to do with China itself. According to Liu, the phenomenon of “cultural Christianity” is ecumenical and corresponds to the universality of Christendom.⁶⁰

Following Ernst Troeltsch, who in his *Soziallehren* saw Christendom holding a threefold social shape – as Church, sect, and mystics – Liu Xiaofeng divides the various manifestations of Chinese Christendom into similar types. According to his typology, the Catholic and Protestant official Churches as well as the Protestant movements that are independent from the West may be regarded as the “Churches” of present-day China. “Their attitude towards society, government, and nation as well as their tendency to be connected with the State power, clearly

⁵⁸ Cf. Malek 1999.

⁵⁹ Liu 1996, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Liu 1996.

demonstrate these characteristics.”⁶¹ The unofficial groups, especially the Protestant “House Churches,” may be regarded as “sects” due to their structure as well their nature. However, the Catholic Underground Church is, according to Liu, an exception. The “cultural Christianity” and Christendom as an academic discipline (*Christentumswissenschaft*), according to Liu Xiaofeng, due to their nature and form, belong to Troeltsch’s type of “mystics.” He stresses three characteristic points of these “mystics”: (1) the definite individual character of faith and the distance to institutional forms; (2) the emphasis on the cultural dimensions and meaning of Christendom; (3) the spontaneous tendency towards an academic and reflected religiosity, i.e., towards a “theology,”⁶² which I term “ideo(theo)logy,” in contrast to the theology of the Churches.

The Churches in China today do not recognize the “cultural Christianity,” the “sects” reject it. The “cultural Christians,” on the other hand, regard the form of faith of the “sects” incomprehensible. Liu Xiaofeng believes that the lack of a Chinese “systematic theology” has serious negative effects on Chinese Christendom. If, however, “cultural Christianity” in China really gains a foothold and is able to foster the development of a “systematic theology” and a Christian philosophy (Liu speaks about a “cultural theology”), it could be path-breaking for the whole Chinese Christendom, formally as well as with regard to the doctrine.⁶³

The question, however, remains unanswered: Will the non-Church and non-institutional Christendom in China spread more vividly than the Church Christianity? Will the “cultural Christianity” become a dominant future manifestation of Chinese Christendom?

Concluding Remarks

Even though Chinese Christendom in all its manifestations still is regarded as a “marginal” “foreign religion,” today, it seems to lose its Western character and has become a growing – howsoever characterized – sinicized socio-cultural force.⁶⁴ In China, today, there is a dis-

⁶¹ Liu 1996, p. 6.

⁶² Liu 1996, p. 7.

⁶³ Liu 1996.

⁶⁴ Wu Xinming writes in this context: “Although Christianity cannot yet compete with Buddhism in the matter of sinicisation, contemporary scholars have already begun to use the expression ‘Chinese Christianity’ instead of ‘western Christianity

course on a “religious culture” (*zongjiao wenhua* 宗教文化), on the “religious spirit of the culture” (*wenhua zongjiao jingshen* 文化宗教精神), and, in this context, also on a “Christian culture” (*jidu-jiao wenhua* or *jidu zongjiao wenhua* 基督宗教文化) as in integral part of the Chinese socio-cultural life.⁶⁵ Since 1995, the journal *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* 世界宗教文化 has been published in this spirit.

The present spiritual situation in China is often compared to the situation around the May Fourth Movement in 1919. As in the May Fourth Movement, the credibility of the Confucian tradition began to falter; at present, the credibility of the Marxist-Communist ideals is swaying. According to Liu Xiaofeng, the discrediting of the given ideology, i.e., the “crisis of faith” (*xinyang weiji* 信仰危机) demands a remodeling of the cultural ideas, values, and ideals. Through the politics of “Opening to the West,” an assimilation of various Western ideas and a search for a new cultural orientation has begun already in the 1980s. Due to this search, various, even contrasting, tendencies of thought have developed and at the moment, none of them is prevailing. The Christian orientation, though small, still is – as Liu Xiaofeng says – a conspicuous and amazing sound in the “cacophony of the cultural rearrangement.”

The revival of religiosity in China today, including the diverse manifestations of Christendom, evidences that what is called religion or religiosity is truly alive and propagating itself – despite the restrictive religious policy and despite the Marxist predictions about the death of religion. In China, certain manifestations of Christendom will surely die out. Other manifestations of Christendom, however, show that they are able to influence the life of the people significantly.

The theologian and philosopher of religion Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) once described religion as the “citadel of hope.”⁶⁶ This description also applies to the role of the resurrecting religiosity being played out

in China’ to describe the Christianity which has grown up in China during the past hundred years, just as for many scholars became accustomed to using ‘Chinese Buddhism’ to describe ‘the development of Indian Buddhism in China.’ Of course, by comparison with the long history of Chinese civilisation, the history of Christianity during the period of China’s development is, after all, very short.” (Wu 2000, p. 13.)

⁶⁵ See Zhang-Kubin 1993, p. 35; Leeb 2000. In this context, D.L. Overmyer’s remark is interesting, namely, that the Chinese scholars often use the term *wenhua* instead of *zongjiao* or *xinyang* in order to avoid possible difficulties with the authorities (see Overmyer 2001, p. 108, n. 9).

⁶⁶ Niebuhr 1932, pp. 60–62.

at least in some segments of today's Chinese society – including various manifestations of Christendom – in the PR China today. Christendom in China, thus, has become a phenomenon with an open future, but – in the words of Wu Xinming – it has “the ability to bring into play the contribution it should make to the way in which Chinese culture engages with other world cultures, for the further enrichment and development of Chinese culture itself.”⁶⁷

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⁶⁷ Wu 2000, p. 13.

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Unity in Diversity

The Islamic Revival Movement in China Today

Wang Jianping

Until recently, China's Muslim tradition received relatively little systematic study. However, some recent scholarly works in English have begun to address the history and present state of Muslims and Islam in China.¹ In his book *Muslim Chinese*, Dru Gladney (Gladney 1991) offered one of the first extensive reports on Hui 回 Muslims in post-Mao China – the largest Muslim ethnic minority group in China – and a general portrait of China's Muslim peoples. But since it appeared, only a few works have dealt with the Islamic revival movement that has occurred in China during the 1990s.² In China, scholarly recognition of the importance and diversity of China's Islamic heritage has also been slowly growing. According to statistics from the Islamic Association of China, at the end of the twentieth century China had a Muslim population of more than 20 million³, 35,000 mosques⁴ and 46,000 *akhond* (Persian: 'teacher, clergyman') or clerics working for Muslim communities, 20,000 *khalifas* (Arabic for 'successors of the Prophet Muhammad' – the religious students studying in *madaris*, plural of *madrasa* = religious schools)⁵ and there are at least a thousand local Islamic associations (including 422 at the county level), which co-

¹ For the most representative works, see Israeli 1994 and 1981, Leslie 1981 and 1986, Pillsbury 1973, Lipman 1997, Fletcher 1995 and Gladney 1991.

² See Dillon 1996 and 1999, Rudelson 1998 and 1999, Gillette 2000, Jaschok/Shui 2000. As for Chinese scholarly works, due to the sensitivity of the topic in China, the author has not seen any special books on Islamic studies that have been published regarding the current situation.

³ Cf. Yu 2002.

⁴ This statistic of the number of mosques in China is apparently an underestimate. According to a figure given by a Muslim scholar in an unofficial publication, the mosques in China number more than 40,000; see fn. 17.

⁵ Cf. Wan 1999.

ordinate Islamic affairs with government authorities under the control of the Communist Party.⁶

This paper will discuss the current state of Islam and Muslim communities in China based on extensive reading of periodicals published by many Islamic organizations and communities, interviews with Muslims from many walks of life, and finally the direct observations made during visits to many Muslim communities in different parts of China over the last decade. It will also build on other studies of contemporary Muslim China that have appeared in Chinese and English in recent years.

The Muslim Community in China

Any examination of Islam in China must not overlook the basic organization of the Muslim community – its grassroots organizations, and the basic components of Islamic social life in China. Here a fundamental issue is the ‘exceptional’ character of Islam compared to other Chinese religious traditions. A fundamental difference between Islam and the Buddhist and Daoist religions that have traditionally dominated Chinese society is that Islam is an organized religion and Muslims live in a community based on Islamic law (*shari'a*). Other than monasteries and temples in which monks live in secluded settings only occasionally open to others, Chinese Buddhism and Daoism generally have no exclusive religious communities. Historically, the only exceptions to this rule were a few sects which arose at certain times in Chinese history. Chinese religions are not ‘organized religions’. In China, as elsewhere, Christianity has been a religion centered on church communities. But generally Christian churches have focused on spiritual activities, and have stayed removed from the economic, social and cultural activities that Muslim communities have encompassed. Thus, no other religion in China combines spiritual faith with mundane matters as intimately as Islam.

Another striking difference between Islam and other religions in China is that the Islamic faith is closely related to ethnicity; Muslims in China are nearly all classified by the Chinese government as belonging to one of several ethnic minority groups. Chinese followers of Buddhism, Daoism and Christianity have no such specifically ethnic links

⁶ Cf. Mu 2001.

and national social status. But, as will be explained in greater detail below, China's Muslims belong to ethnic minority groups, principally Hui and Uighur (Wei wuer-zu 维吾尔族).

The typical Muslim community centers on a mosque, and its members enjoy a shared religious commitment as well as economic and social-cultural activities. In Arabic, such a community is called a *jama'a*. In this community all adult male members have equal rights and responsibilities to participate in communal affairs. Consensus over decisions concerning the mosque is arrived at by a board of management headed by a director and several elders. They also take care of routine affairs such as mosque maintenance, finances, education, administration, and daily activities that directly tie the mosque to Muslim life and public affairs.⁷

In China the majority of Muslims, except for members of several Sufi orders, follow the traditional Sunni custom in which each *jama'a* is a quite independent body and there are no strong cross-affiliations between communities. There is no central leadership of these communities, although there are strong spiritual and cultural bonds between them and there is also a widespread Islamic fraternal sentiment. Each *jama'a* is more autonomous than, say, a Han 汉 Chinese village or neighborhood, and other Muslim communities cannot interfere in its affairs or restrain its autonomy.

The *jama'a* has two parts: a mosque administration board, which is made up of members of the community and a *madrasa* (religious school) composed of the people mainly coming from outside the community, such as *akhonds*⁸ (or imams) and *khalifas*.⁹ Most Muslim communities in China have customary regulations that stipulate that a cleric, such as an *imam*, should be invited from another Muslim community to supervise the religious affairs and religious school of the host community. The essential requirements of the *imam* are: first, he must be knowledgeable in the Arabic Quran and Islamic theology; and second, he must be a virtuous, upright person willing to dedicate himself to Islam and his community. The qualities considered necessary for the selection of the

⁷ Cf. Suo 2002.

⁸ *Akhond* refers to religious clerics who staff mosques and *madaris*; imams or *Akhonds* of *madrasa* teaching are the chief clerics of mosques.

⁹ Concerning the structure of Muslim communities in China, even in history we can observe these parallel divisions among the Hui communities in Yunnan 云南. Cf. Wang 1996.

director and elderly members into the mosque management board are: a sense of responsibility and justice, as well as readiness for selfless engagement for their community. Usually, the term for members of the Mosque administration and the *imam* is three years, but their tenure can be extended for another term or longer if the community chooses.¹⁰

The Muslim community is thus centered on the mosque where the *akhond* and other clergy reside and preach. The mosque is a communal center providing religious services and instruction, as well as important social, cultural, economic and public welfare functions. Thus, Muslims regard the mosque as the soul of their community. In China, mosques have often come to be more active and effective units of community than the villages and urban neighborhood committees that dominate the grassroots Han social fabric.

Indeed, as grassroots secular power in China has eroded since the 1980s because of corruption and commercial reforms, mosque-based communities of Muslim society have actually strengthened their role in communal affairs. Today almost all the important affairs in rural China such as family planning, education, village elections, social security, and anti-drug campaigns, cannot take place without at least the tacit support of the *akhond* or *imam*. In Muslim communities the *akhond* is often more influential than local party officials, and before an important task is undertaken, officials must consult with the *akhond*. In many cases, the government officials may ask the *imam* to deliver a speech after the *jum'a* (the Friday prayers of the congregation) to communicate official policies and resulting measures to the followers.

In Muslim communities the *akhond* is the most prominent public figure, and his views can exert a powerful influence on ordinary members of the community. In not a few cases the director of mosque administration board is also a village cadre, thus combining the religious and secular administrative roles. If the director of the mosque board is not a village official, his authority may nevertheless exceed the power of local party and government officials whose bureaucratic status prevents them from enjoying the same authority in the community. This is one

¹⁰ This part in general has been summarized by the author after visits to various Muslim communities in China. Other Muslim scholars in Islamic periodicals such as *Kaituo* 开拓 (*Pioneer*), *Yisilan wenhua yanjiu* 伊斯兰文化研究 (Journal of Islamic Culture), and *Muslim tongxun* 穆斯林通讯 (Muslim Newsletter), etc. have also discussed this issue.

important reason the state has been losing authority among the Muslim believers in heavily Islamic parts of China.

After decades of restrictions and even harsh repression, the Chinese government began to adopt a more pragmatic policy towards religion in the 1980s, and this new tolerance ignited a revival of Islam. Now growing numbers of Muslims attend mosques to pray and attend religious services. Mosques in regions with a strong Islamic tradition such as Xinjiang 新疆, Gansu 甘肃, Ningxia 宁夏, Yunnan 云南, Hebei 河北, He'nan 河南 and Shaanxi 陕西, are often full to overflowing during the Friday *jum'a* prayers. Many pious Chinese Muslims pray five times a day, and in Muslim dominant areas an Islamic ceremony can attract more than ten thousand believers to pray and listen to the *wa'z* (Arabic: a sermon delivered by an influential *imam*).¹¹ The mosque black board always has posted the long list of the names of the Muslims who pay *zakat* (Arabic, alms) or contribute money or other items for religious purposes.

In urban mosques it is also not unusual to see Uighur Muslims praying side by side with Hui Muslims – a sign that Islamic fraternal feelings can cross ethnic boundaries.¹² It is also not uncommon to see Muslim women in heavily Muslim areas such as Kashgar (Kashi 喀什), Hotan (Hetian 和田), Lanzhou 兰州, Linxia 临夏, Weizhou 韦州 and Xi'an 西安 wearing the headscarves and modest dress many followers believe the Holy Quran stipulates. During Ramadan, the fasting month of the Islamic calendar, many Muslims now abstain from food and drink during the daytime.

Even in communities with weaker religious traditions, Muslims often observe basic Islamic customs such as refusing to eat pork and other foods proscribed by Quranic dietary law, observing Muslim practices in weddings, funerals and burial services, observing the ritual of

¹¹ For instance, in 1981 in Shadian 沙甸, a Hui community in Yunnan, the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad was attended by 50,000 Muslims; the annual Islamic festival has for the last decade usually been celebrated by 10,000 Muslims (Wang/Ma 1996). Other big Muslim communities in Northwest China can also have such large gatherings for religious festivals, i.e., the Id-Kan Mosque in Kashgara and the Hui communities in Linxia of Gansu.

¹² In Beijing on Xinjiang Street 新疆村 many Uighur businessmen have opened restaurants and shops for commercial activities for people going to the Jingshifang 锦什坊 and the Haidian 海淀 Mosques for religious services.

giving Arabic names to new-born children, and following Islamic ritual in the slaughter of livestock.

Although the distance between China and Saudi Arabia is considerable, and most Chinese Muslims are poor, the number of followers applying to perform the *hajj* – the pilgrimage to Mecca that each Muslim has to perform at least once – has been growing steadily since the 1980s. In spite of an annual official quota of 2000 *hajjis* in recent years,¹³ the actual number of Chinese Muslims making the pilgrimage every year may be more than 6000; many go to Saudi Arabia on other pretexts such as visiting relatives and doing business.

To sum up, with the revival of Islamic consciousness and religious traditions in China, most Chinese Muslims can now freely practice the basic requirements of Islam, and the number of Muslims determined to strictly follow all 'Five Pillars' of the Islamic faith is growing quickly.

The Diversity of China's Muslim Communities

Although Islamic traditions have revived strongly in China since the 1980s, China's Muslim communities are very diverse in terms of geographical location, ethnicity, languages, cultural features, and even their various doctrinal schools and religious practices.

1) First, the Muslim population in China is distributed widely but unevenly. All of China's 32 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities have Muslim populations. Out of China's nearly 2,400 counties, more than 2,300 have Muslims.¹⁴ However, the geographic concentration of the Muslim population in China is also highly uneven: more than two thirds of China's Muslims live in the country's northwest, particularly in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu 新疆维吾尔自治区), Gansu Province, the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region (Ningxia Hui Zizhiqu 宁夏回族自治区), and Qinghai 青海 Province. The other third of the Muslim population is largely concentrated in predominantly Muslim areas in a number of other provinces: He'nan, Hebei, Yunnan, Shandong 山东, and Anhui 安徽.¹⁵ Although

¹³ The number of *hajjis* who performed a pilgrimage to Mecca in 2000 was 2200, and in 2002 about 2000, cited from my interview with an official at the Islamic Association of China 中国伊斯兰教协会, Feb. 8, 2002; Also cf. Ma Yongguang 2002.

¹⁴ Cf. Zhang Tianlu 1991.

¹⁵ See Map 2 and Map 3 in Wang Jianping 2001, p. xx-xxi.

most of China's regions outside the northwest have very small Muslim populations, these populations tend to live in dense concentrations; they dominate certain urban neighborhoods or villages, often close to historically strategic geographic sites such as rivers, canals or communication hubs. This remarkable feature of Muslims' residential patterns is a product of history: many Muslims moved into central inland and coastal China during the Yuan 元, Ming 明 and Qing 清 Dynasties, serving as militia in imperial armies, and they were stationed in strategic encampments from which 'Hui' Muslim communities evolved.

2) The Muslim population in China is also ethnically very diverse. There are ten ethnic minority groups in China that are classed as Muslim peoples. They are the Hui, Uighur, Kazakh (Hasake-zu 哈萨克族), Kyrgyz (Keerkezi-zu 柯尔克孜族), Dongxiang-su 东乡族, Uzbeks (Wuzibieke-zu 乌孜别克族), Tatars (Tataer-zu 塔塔尔族), Tajik (Tajike-zu 塔吉克族), Salar (Sala-zu 撒拉族), and Bonan (Bao'an-zu 保安族). The largest group is the Hui – mainly Chinese-speaking Muslims who are distinguished from Han Chinese largely by their religion alone – who number over 10 million and make up a little more than a half of the Muslim population in China.

The next largest group of Muslims is the Uighur people, who number eight million according to the latest census statistics.¹⁶ The Uighur are followed by the Kazakh people, with a population of 1.5 million; the Dongxiang, with around 500,000; and the Kyrgyz with 200,000. The Salar have a population of 100,000, and the Tajik, Uzbeks and Bao'an have populations between 13,000 and 40,000. The smallest Muslim ethnic group is the Tatars, with a population of around 6,000.¹⁷

Linguistically, the majority of Hui speak Mandarin Chinese as well as the various Chinese dialects also spoken by local Han Chinese; a small number of Hui also speak Mongol, Thai, Bai and Tibetan thanks to a long history of association and intermarriage with these other ethnic groups. Several thousand Hui Muslims live on Hainan 海南, a large island province in the South China Sea, and they speak a Vietnamese-Ma-

¹⁶ The census of 1990 gave the Uighur population as 7,214,431. The census of 2001 has not given any broken down statistics concerning the Muslim population in China. The figure of eight million is rather a very reserved estimate of the author.

¹⁷ All figures are given in reference to the census of 1990 adjusted by the author according to the natural growth of these Muslim peoples. Cf. *Beijing Review* 1990, p. 3 (Major Data of the 1990 Census) and p. 30 (Population of China's Ethnic Nationalities).

lay language inherited from ancestors who came from Southeast Asia. The Uighur, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Salar and Tatars each speak their own distinctive languages, all belonging to the Turkic-Altai language family. The Dongxiang and the Bao'an speak a mixed Turkic-Mongol language also influenced by Mandarin Chinese. Finally, the Tajik speak an eastern Iranian language.

3) Although they share a common faith, Muslims in China belong to very diverse cultural traditions. The Hui have been more open to Han Chinese culture than other Muslim groups. The forefathers of the Hui came from Central Asia, Persia, Arabia and western Asia. But after many generations of intermarriage with Han Chinese and other ethnic groups, and encouraged by assimilation policies imposed by imperial governments, most Hui look like Han Chinese. In many ways they have absorbed Han Chinese culture and customs in language, dress, and social habits – with the exception of Muslim practices concerning diet, birth, marriages and funerals.

The Turkic-Altai speaking Muslim peoples generally resemble their Central Asian counterparts in cultural traditions and customs. The Kazakhs and Kyrgyz retain a nomadic tribal life with traces of pre-Islamic culture, including some shamanistic elements. Historically, the Uighur, Uzbeks and Tatars were mostly sedentary peoples who lived in settlements around oases; they manifest a strong farming and commercial traditions. The Dongxiang, Salar and Bao'an lead a life of farming, trading and herding, reflecting their demanding surroundings: geographically isolated areas with mixed economic activities. The mountain-dwelling Tajiks' lifestyle reflects their ties to Iranian culture and is similar to their ethnic counterparts in Tajikistan and Afghanistan.¹⁸

4) Islam in China is to some extent divided by the same doctrinal divisions and divergent religious practices to be found in the rest of the Muslim world. The majority of Muslims in China adhere to the Hanafi School 哈乃斐学派, the one of the four *madhhabs*, or theological-juristic schools, in Sunni Islam. But among Chinese Muslims there are divisions between Sufi mysticism and non-Sufi streams of Islam; between the Ikhwani School¹⁹ and the traditional Qadim (Gedimu 格迪目, from

¹⁸ Xiren et al. 1994, pp. 91-135.

¹⁹ *Ikhwani* (Yihewani 伊赫瓦尼, Arabic for 'brotherhood'), originating from the Wahabit (*Wahabi* 瓦哈比) movement in Arabia and introduced into China in the late

Arab. "old") School, which is more tolerant of indigenous cultures; and between the Sunni and Shi'a groups.

It is safe to say 99% of Muslims in China are adherents of Sunni Islam. But at least of one third of the Sunni Muslims in China are followers of various Sufi orders. There are four major Sufi orders present in China: Jahriyya (Zhehelinye 哲赫林耶), Khufiyya (Hufeiye 虎非耶), Qadiriyya (Gadelinye 嘎德林耶) and Kubrawiyya (Kuburenye 库不忍耶). There are also some smaller orders such as Shaddhliyya (Shazilinye 沙孜林耶), Suhrawadiyya (Suhelawadiye 苏赫拉瓦底耶), Chistiyya (Qiesidiye 切斯底耶) and Qalandariyya (Gelandaiye 格兰岱耶). The largest group among the main four Sufi orders is the Khufiyya, with 2.5 million followers. But it is sub-divided into many sub-orders and schools. The Jahriyya also is divided into several groups with a total membership of 1.5 million. The Qadiriyya has a membership of about half a million. The smallest Sufi order is the Kubrawiyya, whose adherents mainly belong to the Dongxiang ethnic group in Gansu Province. These figures of the Sufi fellows only include those of the Hui, Dongxiang, Salar and Bao'an Muslim peoples. As for the statistics of the Sufi membership among the Turkic Muslims in China, the reserved figure probably is around more than one million.

Non-Sufi believers are also divided into several groups. The largest group is the Qadim, the traditional group which has accommodated local cultures in its faith. At a conservative estimate, the Qadim or the traditional Sunni group has at least ten millions followers in communities throughout China (including the figures both the Hui and other Turkic groups).²⁰ The Ikhwani movement has at least 2 million members in China. It split into two groups in the 1930s: the mainstream Ikhwani and the Salafiyya (Sailafeiye 赛拉菲耶), whose members venerate first three generations after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

There are several major differences between the Ikhwani and the Qadim or the traditional Sunni group. One of them is that the Ikhwani oppose to ritual tomb pilgrimages, veneration of the dead and celebration of the Maulid (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday), all of which are practiced by the Qadim. The Ikhwani group regards these practices

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, later on they developed into a distinguished group differing from the Wahhabiyya.

²⁰ The figures of the Qadim and the Ikhwani groups are based on the tables provided by Ma Tong 马通's work with my estimation data including other Muslim peoples in China. See Ma Tong 1983, pp. 352–353.

as Chinese or indigenous acculturations and deviations from the righteous path of Islam. China's founding Ikhwani leaders were influenced by the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia they encountered during their *hajj* there, and they came back to China vowing to expunge alien Chinese practices from Muslim communities and restore Islam in China to the true way of Allah. The Ikhwani group is also opposed to all forms of Sufism. The slogan they popularized in the early 20th century was, "Down with *menhuan* 门宦 (Chinese for Sufism) and destroy the *qubba* (Arabic, referring to the tombs of the Sufi saints)".²¹ Nowadays, 'purist' Chinese Muslims who wish to practice a more 'orthodox' Islam often belong to Ikhwani communities. Unlike the term Wahhabi, the Ikhwani School of the Hui Muslims does not have negative connotations of politicization and radicalism, and in fact Ikhwani groups are tolerated by the Chinese government.

The major differences between Sufi and the non-Sufi groups are the following: First, a Sufi order has a religious leader who appoints his representatives to supervise his communities; non-Sufi groups have no such central leadership, and no hierarchical structure that spans local communities.²² Second, the leaders of Sufi orders and suborders usually pass their power onto designated successors, in most cases chosen from their own kin or disciples. By contrast, non-Sufi groups choose their imams through community consensus. Third, Sufis practice a kind of mysticism (*tariqa*, Arabic for 'the way toward Allah') alien to non-Sufi Islam. In their rituals they emphasize *dhikr* (chanting accompanied by body movements) and meditation. Non-Sufi groups are devoted to fulfilling the religious obligations sanctioned by the Quran and the Sunna, and they reject the ritualistic and meditative practices of the Sufi. Fourth, Sufi orders are centered on a *qubba*, or tomb (*mazar*, Arabic, refers to the tomb of a Sufi saint among the Turkic Muslim communities) complexes holding the graves of the orders' founding saints, and Sufi disciples believe in *karama* – miracles accomplished by saints (*wali* 瓦里), or by Sufi masters. Therefore, they regard pilgrimages to tombs as

²¹ Ma Tong 1983, p. 133.

²² This is only considered relatively, not absolutely since in the special time and special circumstance, i.e., in the time of the Muslim insurrection against the oppression of Chinese imperial authorities, the non-Sufi groups such as Qadim Muslims could formulate a central leadership or a prominent Muslim leader who led all Muslims fighting against the non-Muslim rulers. The most remarkable example is Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 (1823–1872) and Ma Dexin 马德新 (1794–1874) in the Yunnanese Muslim rebellion (19th century). See Bai Shouyi 1953.

their most important rituals, even more important than the pilgrimage to Mecca. Some Sufi groups even deem their Sufi leaders to have divine natures equivalent to the Prophet Muhammad or even Allah. However, the non-Sufi groups, particularly the Ikhwani, reject these practices as aberrations; they regard tomb venerating as a heresy.

There are also many other divisions that differentiate China's Muslim communities. More than half of China's Tajik Muslims in China follow Ismai'il Shi'ism, or Seventh Imam sect in the Shi'a faith. They regard the Aga Khan as their spiritual leader, and pay annual tribute to his representatives from abroad. Many Uighurs in Yarkand (Yeerqiang 叶尔羌, today Shache 莎车) in southern Xinjiang are followers of the Twelfth Imam Shi'a, or the majority Shi'i group in the Islamic world. In addition, a small number of Hui in Xinjiang and Gansu follow Twelfth Imam Shi'ism.²³

5) Chinese Muslims display a wide range of day-to-day religious practices. The sedentary Hui, Uighur and Uzbek Muslims pray regularly in mosques, and pious Muslims even pray five times a day. The nomadic Kazakh and Kyrgyz Muslims pray possibly one or two times a day in their tents. Fasting during Ramadan is widespread among Muslims in Northwest China, but Hui who live in coastal China often observe only a few days' fasting or do not fast at all. The Turkic Muslims of western China celebrate the Id al-Qurban (Day of Sacrifice) as the biggest Islamic festival. But the Hui mark the end of Ramadan as the most important Islamic festival. Many Hui communities in southwest China even treat Maulid, the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, as the biggest Islamic festival.

While the Hui have adopted many Chinese customs and cultural habits, the Turkic and Tajik Muslims retain the traditions of Turkic and Iranian Islam, including some pre-Islamic elements drawn from shamanism, Manichaeism, Buddhism and star-worship.²⁴ In the cities and towns Muslims often drink alcohol, but in regions with strong Islamic traditions drinking is regarded as a grave violation of Islamic law. In

²³ On the Shi'a among the Hui in Xinjiang, I got the information from my trip to the region in 2000; A Xinjiang Hui surnamed Yu 禹, now doing trade in Beijing, claims himself to be a Shi'a and assures me that there is a small group of Shi'a among the Hui in Yili 伊犁 of North Xinjiang. On the Shi'a Hui in Gansu, I got the information from my colleague Prof. Feng Jinyuan 冯今源 who saw them in his fieldwork in the 1980s.

²⁴ Zhao Enru 2000.

western China many Muslims take it as a religious duty to send their children to study the Arabic Quran and Islam in *madaris*, but full-scale *madrasa* education in the eastern part of China is considerably rare. Many Muslims in central and eastern China understand being Muslim to mean avoiding pork meat and little more; but for many ethnically Turkic Muslims in China's west Islam is a whole way of life, and they must follow the Quran and Sunna in their entirety. Among the Sufi groups the different orders sometimes clash each other just for a small variety in the tone of chanting the Quranic text, the method of meditation or in some ritual formation.²⁵

The Impetus to Unity Among China's Muslim Communities

Although the many factors described above offer a picture of tremendous diversity in Islam in China, there is also clearly a trend towards greater unity among these Muslim communities, particularly over the past two decades of economic reform. There are several factors encouraging greater unity among China's Muslim communities.

I. Umma Solidarity

The sentiment of *umma* (Arabic, 'Muslim nationhood or fraternity') links otherwise disparate Muslim communities together as they all strive to survive in a non-Muslim society. If one visits a mosque in Shanghai, China's largest commercial and industrial city where many Uighur businesspeople travel to do business, one often sees Uighur Muslims praying alongside Hui Muslims. The Uighurs do not have their own mosque, and so the two communities pray together. In many other big cities, such as Beijing, Guangzhou 广州, Xi'an, Lanzhou and Shenzhen 深圳, it is common for Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds to pray together. The same applies to Hui travelers in Xinjiang; if they cannot find a mosque for Hui Muslims, they attend a Uighur mosque to pray. In *madaris* in Beijing and elsewhere throughout China, Uighur *khalifa* sit beside Hui *khalifa* in the same classroom studying the Quran and other Islamic subjects. Some Sufi orders such as Lingming Tang 灵明堂 and some sub-orders of Khufiyya also have trans-ethnic membership. As

²⁵ Ma Tong has recorded many cases of such clashes and even sanguinary conflicts among the different Sufi orders or suborders in China's history (Ma Tong 1983).

regional mobility grows, this kind of cross-ethnic religious mixing is also growing.

Occasionally, this trans-ethnic religious sentiment has also given rise to trans-ethnic protests. In 1989 Muslims in Beijing, Shanghai, Lanzhou, Kunming 昆明, Urumqi (Wulumuqi 乌鲁木齐), Xi'an and Xining 西宁 protested against a Chinese book *Sexual Customs* which had passages insulting to Islam. The public rallies brought together Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Dongxiang, and Salar Muslims with Hui Muslims. Under great pressure, the Chinese authorities banned the book and put the two Chinese authors under house arrest.²⁶

Such *umma* solidarity is also reflected in mosque building and maintenance and Islamic education. When a local community builds or renovates a mosque, funds for the task are collected not only from the community itself, but also from other communities and individual Muslims even in far distant regions. Likewise, funding for *madrassa* schools and Islamic festivals often comes from a wide variety of sources. When a local Muslim community celebrates major Islamic holidays such as the Id al-Qurban, the end of the Ramadan, and the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, representatives from other Muslim communities are invited to participate in the festival and may travel thousands of kilometers to attend.²⁷

II. Shared Faith

The various Muslim ethnic groups and different Islamic schools described above share the same basic religious beliefs and practices, and this in itself helps to encourage unity between communities. Any Muslim – Uighur, Uzbek, Tajik, Dongxiang, or Hui – certainly believes in the same Quran, the Prophet Muhammad and probably hopes to master Arabic; all pious Muslims follow the same essential Five Pillars of Islam: reciting the Islamic credo in Arabic, praying, giving alms, fasting, and, if possible, making a pilgrimage to Mecca. The social cement that this shared faith generates is seen, for example, in social events that bring different groups together. In annual competitions of Quranic chanting

²⁶ Gladney 1991; see also Wang Jianping 1996b (The Incident of *Book of Sexual Customs* in China).

²⁷ Many pieces of the monument stones in various mosques have the inscription texts display this point, and the author himself has clearly seen the inter-links of Muslim communities concerning building mosque and Islamic festival celebration in his many trips to the Muslim communities in China. See Yu/Lei 2001.

organized by the Islamic Association of China or by local Islamic associations, Uighur Muslims and Muslims from other ethnic groups join with Hui Muslims in reciting the Arabic Quran with all the fluency and melody they can muster; this skill is considered a great virtue by all Muslims in China.

The basic creed of Islam that Muslims subscribe to is generally the same across communities, with some variations reflecting local cultural adjustments. In encountering a non-Islamic environment with a strong Han Chinese cultural influence, Chinese Muslims tend to focus on their own communities, and they prefer to mix with other followers of Islam rather than assimilating into Han Chinese culture. Muslims everywhere across China uphold the same dietary customs and dine at *halal* (according to Islamic regulations) restaurants or cafeterias. They also often pepper their conversation with some Arabic or Persian vocabulary, although they may speak Mandarin Chinese or Chinese dialects, especially if they are Hui.²⁸ Muslims away from home often find it easier to socialize with other Muslims and receive hospitality from locals Muslims. When Chinese Muslims meet other Muslims, they often greet each other with *dost* (Persian, ‘friend’) or *salam* (Arabic, peace). The way of Islamic way of life is thus deeply rooted in habits and traditions that transcend communal boundaries.

III. Crossregional Solidarity

Chinese Muslims have developed strong sympathies for the injustices they perceive other Muslims suffering in a predominantly non-Muslim society, and they have proven willing to aid other Muslim communities. There have been cases of Chinese Muslims acting in concert to resist or protest hostility from wider society. In late 2000 the “Yangxin Incident” occurred in which Hui Muslims in Yangxin 阳信, Shandong, fought with Han Chinese after Muslim bans on eating pork were mocked and violated. Hui from Mengcun 孟村, Hebei Province, traveled to Yangxin to show their solidarity with their fellow Muslims brothers. When the Hui protestors from Mengcun marched into Yangxin their way was blocked by armed police. The local government mishandled the incident and six Hui Muslim civilians were killed in the ensuing gunfire.²⁹ After word of this tragedy spread across China, many Muslim communities in Hebei, Shandong, He’nan, Tianjin and even Beijing mobilized and held protests

²⁸ See Wang Jianping 2001a.

²⁹ Gao Yaokuan 2002, p. 50.

demanding the government redress this injustice and pay compensation for the deaths.³⁰ Muslims in other regions donated money to the families of those who died or were injured. The central government, fearing wider instability, moved very swiftly to assuage Muslim anger and dismissed local leaders in Yangxin, including the chief of the police force. The government also met all the demands raised by the Hui protesters.³¹

In early 2001 a Sufi suborder (the Salar Menhuan) in Guanghe County 广河县, Gansu Province, broke out in internal fighting after its master passed away and there was a dispute over who was his rightful successor. The fighting cost two lives, and local authorities ordered the temporary closure of the suborder's mosque. The Sufi believers then had no place to pray, and other neighboring Muslim communities invited the Sufi believers to pray in their mosques, although they belonged to different Sufi orders and different ethnic groups.³²

It is not unusual for a Uighur Muslim to seek shelter in a Hui mosque or community if traveling in central and eastern China. The traveler may even receive a few days' free accommodation from his co-believers despite different cultural backgrounds and customs.

The sentiment of the *umma* can therefore act as a unifying force transcending barriers between different communities, groups and schools. Indeed, throughout China's history many Muslim uprisings against imperial governments contained different Muslim groups: Hui, Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Salar, Dongxiang, and others.³³

IV. Muslim Networks

In the wake of China's economic reforms, overlapping trade, communications and cultural networks have been emerging in Chinese Muslim

³⁰ The author is aware of this through interviews he held with the participants from these provinces at a conference held in Beijing, November 2001.

³¹ Refer to the Xinhua News Agency's report at the beginning of 2001; confirmed by the author's interviews with the Hui Muslims from North China during a conference held by Islamic Association of China (Zhongguo Yisilan-jiao Xiehui 中国伊斯兰教协会), Beijing, November 9–12, 2001.

³² Based on the author's personal observations in his fieldwork in Guanghe of Gansu, January 30, 2001.

³³ For example, the Muslim uprisings in Xinjiang in the 18th and the 19th centuries, the Muslim uprisings in Northwest China and in Yunnan in the 19th century. See Tan 2000, pp. 48–64; Jin 1989, p. 43; Gao Wenyuan 1998.

society. The growing influence of these networks in China is described in the following six scenes:

1) The Muslim economic network in China: After China opened its door to a market economy in the 1980s, private enterprise developed rapidly, and Muslims have taken advantage of liberalizing economic policies to set up their own business. Many Muslim-owned restaurants, workshops, shops, hotels, and companies have mushroomed across the country. According to recent statistics, in Beijing alone there are at least two thousand Muslim-owned enterprises such as restaurants, cafeteria, butchers, hotel, kindergartens, and other private businesses.³⁴

In many areas of China markets for *halal* beef and mutton and other Muslim foodstuffs, leather, handicrafts, and herbs have absolutely become dominated by Muslims. Many of these private Muslim enterprises contribute part of their profits to mosques and Islamic schools. Their donations have already given rise to informal Islamic charity foundations serving Islamic welfare and public welfare. Some Muslim businessmen have founded business syndicates with many branches spanning many regions. Sha Pengcheng 沙鹏程, a Hui Muslim entrepreneur who owns a traditional Hui medical company in Xi'an and exports medicine to many countries in Middle East, Southeast Asia and European and American countries won the 2000 Economic Pioneer Prize sponsored by Omar Foundation in Los Angeles.³⁵ Many Chinese Muslims also use their connections with their friends in Islamic countries to do international business linking up with international Islamic foundations.

2) A regional network of transportation, communication and commercial links fostering economic and trade cooperation among Muslim communities: Even in imperial China, Muslims were famed for their far-reaching transport and commerce networks, such as the Silk Road, the Spice Road and trans-Asiatic caravan trade. For Muslims in China, as elsewhere, the early career of Muhammad as a trader set an example of combining commerce and piety. Traditionally, Chinese Muslims traded in porcelain, silk, textiles, minerals, tea, jade and other commodities. Muslims also developed special secret signs and practices to protect

³⁴ Peng 2001, p. 32; Peng 1996, p. 183; I gained this figure also from my interview with the Deputy Secretary in General of Islamic Association of Beijing (Beijing Yisilanjiao Xiehui 北京伊斯兰教协会) in June of 2002.

³⁵ News reported by *Zhongguo muslim* 2001/2, p. 41.

their trade, and they formed trade guilds to regulate trade and transportation.

Today, China's Muslims, especially the Hui and the Uighur peoples, have inherited a traditional proclivity for trade and commerce.³⁶ In western China, particularly in mountainous regions such as Yunnan, Gansu and Guizhou 贵州 where communications are backward, Muslims still dominate the modern 'caravan' trade of today. In these and other regions, Muslim owners of motor vehicles have developed regional networks carry passengers and goods. The trading traditions of China's Muslim communities, and their wider religious networks, have been given new life and influence in the wake of China's economic reforms, and this new influence is also reflected in strengthened contacts between Muslims across the country.

3) A network of production and distribution of Islamic goods to meet the demand of believers in China: Muslims in China have also developed their own networks to make and distribute daily goods used by Muslims everywhere. Muslims make and sell *halal* foods for residents and travelers. Many mosques have shops to distribute special religious items such as soap, white caps, cloth to wrap corpses, prayer badges, jewelry, headscarves, prayer carpets, porcelain, incense and incense-burner, and Islamic booklets and publications. The commercial links created by the circulation of these Islamic goods made by Chinese Muslims have formed an Islamic economy that to a considerable degree independent of the Han Chinese economy and commercial distribution networks.

4) The creation of Islamic websites: With the spread of the Internet, Islamic communities throughout China have also taken to using high technology to communicate. Two dozen or so Islamic websites have been set up by the Muslims in China since the last few years.³⁷ Most of them are devoted to spreading the doctrine of Islam and instructing Muslim people in their faith, and there are also a few Muslim-oriented commercial and academic websites run by Muslims. Islamic religious websites are usually operated by Hui Muslim teachers and students in *madaris*. Much of the content explains the basic tenets of Islam and promotes Islamic culture. The websites also report news from the rest of the Islamic world and offer commentaries on current Muslim affairs; for example, the reaction of the Muslim world to the September 11 ter-

³⁶ For Islamic economy, see Lai 1992.

³⁷ Pan/Hu 2002, p. 24.

rorist attacks and the bombing in Afghanistan afterward.³⁸ Quite a few articles criticize the spread of materialism in contemporary Chinese society, and discuss how Muslims should protect their faith in an atmosphere of spiritual crisis.

Many young Muslims also socialize in special Muslim internet ‘chat rooms,’ and these rooms have also acted as a bridge for forming friendships between them. For instance, In April 2002 a traffic accident killed three Hui Muslim students from the Zhaotong Madrasa (Zhaotong Jing-xuexiao 昭通经学校) in Yunnan during a spring vacation outing; after news of the tragedy was posted on Internet, many Muslims from across China sent messages of condolence to Zhaotong Madrasa, and also sent donations to the families of the deceased and the school.³⁹ Many websites have opened discussion forums on topics such as how to be a true Muslim, attitudes towards the Chinese language, how to maintain faith in a non-Muslim social environment, and whether Muslims are allowed to sell drugs to others. These Islamic websites have become another channel for reviving and spreading Islamic tradition and culture in China.

5) A network of Islamic publications: In contemporary China a network has evolved to produce and distribute Muslim newspapers, magazines and books, as well as cassettes, videocassettes and CDs diskette of Islamic materials.⁴⁰ Many Muslim entrepreneurs, driven by religious piety, have opened Islamic bookshops, publishers, cultural centers and libraries to spread Islamic knowledge and strengthen ethnic-religious identity. Hundreds, even thousands, of Islamic shops distribute Islamic books, magazines and audio-visual materials throughout China. They sell material such as recordings of Quranic recitations; Arabic sermons (*wa'z*) delivered by famous clerics; sermons delivered during Friday prayers by notable imams or Khatib (*khutba*); and films and documentaries on the history and traditions of Islam, as well as on current affairs such as the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the Afghanistan War.

Muslim printing houses in many places, especially in northwest China, have published tens of thousands copies of Islamic books including

³⁸ Zhang Chengzhi 2002.

³⁹ *Musilin tongxun*, June 2002, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁰ Many Islamic publications such as *Kaituo*, *Musilin tongxun*, *Gansu musilin* 甘肃穆斯林林 (Muslims in Gansu) and *A min* 阿敏 (Peace) have the special column for “advertisement” to sell the Islamic books, cassettes and videocassettes with the Islamic contents.

the Arabic Quran, the *hadith*, the works of the *shari'a*, the *tafsir* (commentaries of the Holy Quran), *kalam* (theological-dogmatic discourses), works on Sufism, Islamic history, and instructional handbooks on Islam. These Islamic bookshops, centers and associations have created an informal system to distribute ideas and information to all Muslim communities nationwide, thus binding together scattered communities into an consciously Islamic.

6) A network of Islamic education has developed which spans different Chinese Muslim communities. China's Muslims communities are so widely dispersed and so religiously diverse it is impossible for any one community to maintain a system of religious education relying only on its own funding, teachers and students. Muslim communities in China usually like to invite an *akhond* from outside to take charge of *madrassa* schooling. On the other hand, a community with a strong Islamic tradition regards it as a duty to send its knowledgeable, pious *akhond* to do religious work in other communities, even remote ones, to revive and spread Islam.

It is not uncommon nowadays, for example, for an *imam* from Xinjiang to travel to Guangzhou in South China to act as an *imam* of a mosque there and give religious instruction in the *madrassa*. When a famous *akhond* opened a course on the Arabic Quran, *shari'a* and *hadith* in a *madrassa* in Yunnan, many students came from distant places such as Guizhou, Sichuan 四川, Gansu, Ningxia, Heilongjiang 黑龙江, Hainan and He'nan to study under his guidance. The local community also regarded it as a duty and honor to accommodate these students from other communities. When they graduate, these *madrassa* students will probably accept positions as imams in their home or other communities.

Often larger communities with strong Islamic traditions establish big *madrassa*, and invite prominent Islamic scholars to recruit and teach Muslim students. There are also heavily Muslim areas with many mosques and *madaris* boasting famous Islamic teachers who attract large groups of students; these areas have developed reputations as China's "Little Meccas" (*xiao maijia* 小麦加), and their influence radiates out to other Muslim communities throughout their home regions. Currently, they can be found in Xinjiang (at Kashgar, Hotan, Yarkand, Turfan, Aksu, and Yili); Gansu (Linxia, Guanghe and Lanzhou); Ningxia (Weizhou, Yinchuan 银川, and Tongxin 同心); Yunnan (Shadian 沙甸, Kunming, Weishan 巍山, Najiaying 纳家营, and Dali 大理); Shaanxi (Xi'an); Shanxi 山西 (Changzhi 长治); He'nan (Zhengzhou 郑州, Sang-

po 桑坡, Baizhai 白寨, and Gadangdian 疙瘩店); and Hebei (Cangzhou 沧州).⁴¹ They are widely considered by Chinese Muslims to be central places of Islam in China. These “Little Meccas” act as regional hubs in a loose nationwide network of Islamic education.⁴² They could potentially play a central role in uniting scattered communities at a regional level, becoming regional headquarters for guiding Muslim interaction with the majority Han Chinese society and the Chinese state.

The Features of the Islamic Revival Movement in China

I. Mosques

The Islamic revival in China over recent decades is vividly displayed in the building of many new mosques, in both Arabic style with domes and Chinese style with pagodas, and the restoration and enlargement of many existing mosques.⁴³ These mosques play a fundamental role in the religious, social and cultural life of Muslims; they cannot live a proper Islamic life without a mosque led by an *akhond*. Among Sufi orders, many *mazar* complexes, mosques and spiritual residences have been rebuilt since the government took a more tolerant attitude towards religion in the 1980s.⁴⁴ Over the last decade I have visited and photographed many mosques and *mazars* throughout China: the deserts and oases of South Xinjiang; large modern mosques with big domes and tall minarets newly built in Yunnan, Gansu, Shanghai and Ningxia; traditional Chinese temple-style mosques in Shaanxi, Jiangsu 江苏, Beijing and Tianjin; and many small mosques in the northern Chinese countryside of Hebei and He’nan.

A mosque is an architectural complex with many religious, social and cultural functions.⁴⁵ As China is so remote from Mecca and Medina, the centers of the Islamic world, and as many Muslim communities – particularly the Hui – are surrounded by non-Muslim majorities, Chinese mosques are widely regarded by Muslims as a particularly sacred

⁴¹ On this central place in Hebei, see Wu Piqing 1999, vol. 2.

⁴² Concerning the theory of “Little Mecca” in studies of Islam of China, refer to the author’s doctoral dissertation (Wang Jianping 1996a), pp. 158–160.

⁴³ See Wu Jianwei 1995 and 1998.

⁴⁴ See Dawut 2001, the latest book on *mazar*, published by Dawut Rahila, a female Uighur scholar in Xinjiang; see also Dawut 2002, p. 44.

⁴⁵ For more specific information, see Feng 1992, pp. 30–34 and Wang Jianping 1996a, pp. 130–133.

sites that play a central role in community life. A mosque complex often has walls to keep out non-Muslim intruders.⁴⁶ It usually consists of a prayer hall, rooms for ritual ablution, a religious school, a *khalifa's* dormitory, an *akhond's* residence, a *maita* (Arabic for 'corpse') room where the deceased are kept, a meeting room, a courtyard or garden, a kitchen, storerooms, and a shop that sells religious books and items, a minaret and historic relics such as tomb stones and memorials. In some areas mosques include special prayer halls for women. Given mosques' central importance, over recent years many Chinese Muslim communities build large, elegant mosques, and even small, poor villages can boast quite grand ones. Since the 1980s, many communities have built mosques in the Arabic architectural style with large domes, tall minarets, and crescent symbols.

The mosque is usually a complex that functions not only as a religious site but also as a site for education, cultural activities, social and economic exchanges, and even martial arts training. Now we turn to the most significant of those functions for the Islamic revival movement in China: education and publications, both closely linked with mosques.

II. Islamic Education

Islamic scholars in China have argued that in every mosque the *madrasa*, or religious school (*jingxuexiao* 经学校), should be at the center of the mosque's life.⁴⁷ At a conservative estimate, there are about 40,000 mosques in China, and at least half of them have a *madrasa* or *madrasa*-style religious school in which the children learn the teachings of Islam learning and pious young Muslims are trained to be clerics. China may thus have about 20,000 Islamic schools or Quranic study centers of varying sizes and status. Local estimates also suggest that these schools are numerous; for example, Linxia Prefecture, Gansu, has a reputation of being a "Little Mecca," and it had more than 10,000 *madrasa* students studying at various Islamic schools in 1997.⁴⁸ For China as a whole, at a conservative estimate there are probably more than 200,000 students studying in *madaris*.

⁴⁶ Not only a few mosques put a wooden board on the gate of the prayer hall written in Chinese: No non-Muslim is allowed to enter the hall. I observed this kind of board in my fieldwork in Yunnan, Gansu, Hebei and Beijing.

⁴⁷ Wang Naiwen 2000, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Zhang Zhihua 1997, p. 19.

Islamic education in China can be divided into three sectors: official *madaris*, private *madaris* tolerated by local authorities, and finally, and most widespread, community-run general instruction in Islam.⁴⁹

The official *madaris* are sponsored and administrated by the Islamic Association of China, a semi-government body in charge of Islamic affairs, and by provincial-level Islamic Associations. The aim of the official *madaris* is to train imams or *akhonds* to serve important Muslim communities or work as intermediaries between the government and communities. At present, there are more than ten official *madaris* across the country: Urumqi, Xinjiang; Lanzhou, Gansu; Yinchuan, Ningxia; Zhengzhou, He'nan Province, where more than one million Hui Muslims live; Shenyang 沈阳, Liaoning 辽宁; Kunming, Yunnan; Xining, Qinghai; Shijiazhuang 石家庄, Hebei; and a national *madrasa* and a municipal *madrasa* in Beijing.⁵⁰

Some regions and municipalities have also opened the training classes for *akhond*; these can be found in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Huhehot (Huhehaote 呼和浩特), and other areas. According to 1999 statistics, there were 20,000 Muslim students studying in these various official *madaris* and training classes.⁵¹ The official *madaris* have regular curricula. Besides the Quran and *hadith* and other Islamic subjects, they have introduced modern Arabic as well as Marxist philosophy, Chinese history, Chinese language, computer training and English. The graduates are granted a diploma equivalent to a college degree.

But the number of students graduating from official *madaris* is far less than the demand for graduates from Muslim communities across China. The authorities have allowed Muslim communities to collect funds and open their own *madaris*, but these schools must be registered with, and supervised by, government religious affairs departments. (As this author observed during a trip to Linxia there are also unregistered *madaris* or Quranic classes).

Against this background, thousands of private *madaris*, large and small, have mushroomed all over China. Some prominent private *madaris* can recruit several hundred students and boast impressive modern buildings and sports grounds far larger than many official

⁴⁹ For more detailed information, see Wang Jianping 2001.

⁵⁰ Based on the author's interview with an official who works at China Madrasa (Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Jingxueyuan 中国伊斯兰教经学院) in Beijing, May, 2000.

⁵¹ Wan 1999, pp. 17–18.

madaris. For example, the Linxia Arabic School in Gansu Province has even established a women's college as well as a men's one, and both have several hundred students from all over China who come to study Islam and Arabic. Other prominent private *madaris* include the Tongxin Madrasa, the Nanguan Mosque Madrasa (Nanguan Quingzhensi Jingxuexiao 南关清真寺经学校), and the Weizhou Madrasa in Ningxia; the Xiguan 西关 Mosque Madrasa and Boshuxiang 柏树巷 Mosque Madrasa in Lanzhou; the Guanghe Madrasa in Gansu; the Najiaying Madrasa (Najiaying Yisilan Wenhua Xueyuan 纳家营伊斯兰文化学院), Dali Arabic School (Dali Alaboyu Xuexiao 大理阿拉伯语学校), Kaiyuan 开远 Arabic School, and Huihuideng 回辉登 Madrasa in Yunnan; the Gadangdian 疙瘩店 Arabic School, Zhoukou Amin 周口阿敏 Arabic School, and Baizhai 白寨 Arabic School in He'nan; and the Changzhi Arabic College (Changzhi Alaboyu Xueyuan 长治阿拉伯语学院) in Shanxi, Daqi 大祁 Mosque Madrasa and Xinhua 新华 Mosque Madrasa in Linxia, Gansu.

After more than ten years' operation, many of these large-scale private *madaris* have a stable body of students and teachers, and are well equipped with computers and photocopiers. Some of them even have their own libraries containing thousands of Arabic books from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and other Islamic countries.⁵² Certainly, most private *madaris* in China are very small, with only several students (*khalifas*) and an *akhond* (or *imam*) who teaches them Islamic doctrine in the courtyard of a mosque.

The textbooks and curricula of these private *madaris* vary greatly depending on their locations and the religious traditions of the *akhonds* who run them. Some use modern Arabic textbooks and new teaching methods; others use old fashioned religious textbooks and follow the traditional *madrasa* schooling methods that have been passed on by *akhonds* for many generations.⁵³ Most graduates students of private *madaris* work as clerics in their hometown mosques. But many students choose other occupations, although they usually remain faithful Muslims and play some core role in the affairs of their communities.

The last type of *madrasa*-style Islamic education is the general Islamic education offered by many communities. For instance, there are Quranic schools affiliated to mosques which offer classes during the

⁵² Based on the author's personal observation in Linxia and Lanzhou of Gansu Province, January 2001.

⁵³ Wang Jianping 2001.

winter and summer school vacations. There are also occasional classes taught by *akhond* for kindergarten children, adults or university students. These schools, classes and short-term programs do not aim to train the clerics but rather provide their students with basic knowledge of Islam: to teach them how to perform ritual ablution, how to pray, how to recite the core passages of the Quran.⁵⁴ The impact of these shorter teaching programs should not be underestimated; they help to reaffirm the Muslim identity of many participants, and some Muslim clerics have pointed out in articles how participants can experience a spiritual re-birth.⁵⁵

All the funds for private *madaris* and the primary Islamic education come from alms donated by Muslim believers. The results of this privately-supported network of Islamic education are striking: even in cosmopolitan cities like Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai one can find many children studying the Quranic phases and basic Islam teachings at mosque schools during the summer vacation.

III. Islamic Publications

With the resurgence of Islamic consciousness and the strengthening of Muslim identity, and also the growing role of the mass media in Chinese society, Chinese Muslims in China are increasingly publishing their own newspapers, magazines and periodicals to spread their ideas.

Lin Song 林松, a professor of Quranic studies at the Central University of Nationalities (Zhongyang Minzu Daxue 中央民族大学) in Beijing, has estimated there are more than fifty Islamic periodicals sponsored and published by Muslims in different parts of China.⁵⁶ Many of them have become more influential with the rise of Islamic nationalism and religious ideology among China's Muslim communities, particularly Hui communities. These periodicals are entirely supported by donations collected from believers nationwide, and many editors of these periodicals are volunteers. Most editors and contributors are the Hui Muslim intellectuals, students and clerics. A few titles, such as *Kaituo* (Pioneer), *Gansu musulin* (Muslims in Gansu), *Musulintongxun* (Muslim Newsletter), or *Yisilan wenhua yanjiu* (Journal of Islamic Culture), have

⁵⁴ Dawud 2000; see also Musa 1991.

⁵⁵ Ma Minglian 1997, p. 53.

⁵⁶ Personal interview with Prof. Lin Song 林松, August 12, 2001 in Beijing. For a more detailed introduction to these periodicals published by different Muslim organizations and communities in China, see Wang Jianping 2001.

print runs of more than 10,000 for every issue, and their distribution covers all China. The longest surviving such magazine is more than twenty years old, and many have published for more than five years. Mostly subscribers receive them for free.

The contents of these magazines are very rich. These periodicals address subjects such as Islamic education, Islamic history, and Islamic philosophy, and also carry translations from Arabic publications; their columns cover Quranic studies, *wa'z* (sermons) and *hadith*, discussions of Islamic doctrine such as *kalam* (theology) and *shari'a* law, Quranic commentaries on community news, and news reports from the Islamic world. They also address controversies in China's Muslim societies. For instance, Muslim intellectuals and clerics have debated crucial issues such as Islamic education reform, how Islam should adapt to the modern world, how to combat the 'decadent' Chinese cultural influences in Hui communities, and how to revive Islamic tradition.

Increasingly, these magazines have also begun to address sensitive political issues. A recent issue of *Amin* 阿敏, a magazine published by a *madrasa* in Zhoukou 周口, He'nan Province, strongly criticized the aggressive policies adopted by Ariel Sharon against Palestinians and criticized American foreign policy in the Middle East. The magazine expressed the solidarity of He'nan's Hui Muslims with the Palestinian people, supporting their struggle against Israeli occupation.⁵⁷ A magazine published by Tianmu 天穆 Hui community in Tianjin even appealed to the Islamic Association of China to organize a Muslim Volunteer Army to go to Palestine and stand by side the Palestinian people against Israel as it killed the Palestinian youths in the occupied land.⁵⁸

These Islamic magazines and newspapers have helped to foster the growth of Islam nationalism in China, and sometimes voiced a radically Islamic response to the West and secular Chinese society. Thus the emergence of these Islamic periodicals has not only helped to link up networks of Muslim communities throughout China, it has also given voice to aspirations for a strong, unified Islamic identity.

⁵⁷ See *A min*, Winter Issue, 2001 with an article extracted from an official newspaper. Not only *Amin* but also other Islamic periodicals in China have similar articles or express the same views, as for instance, *Shanghai musilin* 上海穆斯林 (Muslims in Shanghai), *Kaituo*, *Gansu musilin*, or *Musilin tongxun*.

⁵⁸ "Qingyuan shu" 请愿书 ("Appealing Call"), *Tianmu musilin* 天穆穆斯林 14, May 20, 2002, p. 3.

IV. *Islamic Movements*

7) The new push of the Ikhwani movement: The Wahhabi school of Islamic revival first emerged in China at the end of the 19th century.⁵⁹ It became the Ikhwani movement from the 1920s to the 1940s, when it spread across China and converted many Qadim communities into Ikhwani ones. The Ikhwani movement was encouraged by Hui Muslim warlords such as Ma Hongbin 马鸿宾, (1884–1960), Ma Hongkui 马鸿逵 (1892–1970), Ma Buqing 马步青 (1901–1977), and Ma Bufang 马步芳 (1903–1945), and it developed rapidly in northwest China. Ikhwani doctrine even became the dominant stream of Islam in the northwest during that period.⁶⁰

Ikhwani influence gradually faded away after 1949, when Islam as a whole was intensely restricted from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. But after the 1980s, when Islamic religious activities were allowed to resume, the Ikhwani movement again developed momentum. Ikhwani activists have sponsored pilgrimages to Mecca, study in Arabic countries by Chinese Muslim youths, and missionary work in China by clergy from Arabic countries.

Many Ikhwani activists advocate purifying the Islamic way of life among the Muslim communities in China; they complain that Qadim communities have absorbed too many Chinese cultural influences which diverge from the orthodox path, and they have demanded the eradication of these alien influences. Inspired by a faith in the pristine Islam of Mecca founded by the Prophet Muhammad, Chinese Ikhwani activists have also torn down traditional temple-like mosques and replaced them with Arabic-style architecture.⁶¹

They have opposed Chinese cultural influences in weddings, funerals and other rituals. They demand women wear headscarves in public, and even ask young girls attending public schools or college to wear headscarves. They have also admonished Muslims to abstain from any alcohol and opposed young students indulging in pop music, movies, mixed dancing, and unhealthy television programs. Some extremists

⁵⁹ Ma Tong 2000, pp. 95–107.

⁶⁰ Qi 1996, pp. 62–65.

⁶¹ The author personally observed in his trips to Yunnan and Gansu that many historical Chinese style mosques were demolished by Hui Muslims, particularly the Ikhwani groups, and were rebuilt with the mosques in Arabic architectural style on the same sites.

have even destroyed the decorations on mosques structure and Islamic historical relics.⁶²

Among the ethnically Turkic peoples of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region the Ikhwani (often by Chinese officials called as the Wahhabiyya, however, the local Uighurs who are the members of this group entitled themselves with the Sunni tradition; as for those Uighurs who oppose this group labeling them as the Wahhabiyya) movement has been intertwined with a nationalist campaign for an independent Eastern Turkistan. There it has vocally condemned Sufi mystical practices and pro-Beijing tendencies in social and political life, and it has also attacked the implementation of family plan programs among Turkic Muslims. Some Ikhwani followers even advocate a fundamentalist theory of *jihad* (holy war): killing or expelling 'infidels' (Han Chinese) from their land.⁶³ The Xinjiang government fears that a strong Ikhwani presence in southern Xinjiang could spark instability and fuel the separatist movement there; a few years ago it issued a ban on Wahhabiyya organizations and disbanded any Wahhabiyya communities, dismissing their clergymen, even jailing them in the 'Strike-Hard' campaign against national separatism. The central government of China entrusted the official Islamic Association of China to issue a new sermon (*wa'z*) collection devoted to denouncing nationalist separatism among Uighur clergymen.⁶⁴ The Xinjiang Chinese government has also organized training classes to instruct Uighur imams and *akhonds* in the theories of Marxism and Mao Zedong on religion, and to instruct them in combating religious extremism and separatism.

8) Revival of Islam among Qadim communities: Although most Chinese Qadim communities (in the Uighur areas, they are entitled as "the traditional Sunni group") are not as radical and political as the Ikhwani (or the Wahhabiyya labeled by the government in Xinjiang) movement,

⁶² Many Ikhwani communities even have prohibited their religious students to watch TV or read Chinese literature in Linxia of Gansu where the Ikhwani movement is strong; the author's personal observation when visiting that area during January and February, 2001.

⁶³ See *Tiantang de yaoshi* 天堂的钥匙 (The Key to the Paradise), a hand-copied Uighur text circulated among the Uighur underground, 1999.

⁶⁴ 200,000 copies of a *wa'z* speech collection in Uighur language have been printed and distributed to Uighur clerics in Xinjiang in 2001, according to Shams al-Din 夏木西丁, the deputy Chairman of the Islamic Association of China (personal interview, Beijing, November, 2001); see also Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Jiaowu Zhidao Weiyuanhui 2001.

they have also experienced a revival of Islam since the 1980s. The manifestations of this re-Islamization include the following:

- a) Renewed enthusiasm for Quranic study among Muslims: Before the 1980s, only 10% of the Uighur Muslims could know how to chant the Quranic version in Arabic or Uighur language, however, there are 90% more Uighur are able to recite or are studying the Quran at present.⁶⁵ Among the Hui and other Muslim peoples, many communities have opened part-time classes to study the Quran taught by community *akhonds*.⁶⁶
- b) Sending Islamic missionary teams from religious centers, large *madaris*, communities with strong Islamic traditions to distant villages and communities: The Linxia Arabic School has sent several groups of the missionary teams made up of *madrasa* teachers and students across northwest China, they have also journeyed a thousand kilometers to Yunnan in southwest China for Islamic missionary work. The teachers and students spread Islamic teaching among the Hui communities in these regions and promoting renewed Islamic consciousness, all in the hope of creating a unified community of believers (*umma*) across China.⁶⁷
- c) Anti-drug and anti-alcohol campaigns launched by religious activists among the Muslim communities: In Xi'an and in Tianjin the Muslim communities organized an anti-alcohol campaign in the 1990s and in 2001.⁶⁸ They campaigned for local Islamic restaurants and shops to stop selling any alcohol, and urged Hui Muslims to give up alcohol and censure those who broke Islamic law. Many Muslim communities in Gansu, Ningxia and Yunnan have launched strong campaigns to fight drug trafficking and heroin use, which they condemned as *haram* (Arabic: 'prohibited by Islamic law'). Muslims in these communities denounced drug trafficking by traders from Muslim communities describing it as a disgrace for Muslims to engage in such crimes.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Cited from Khahna 卡哈纳, an Uighur scholar (now residing at Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States), at the conference of Civilization Dialogue between Confucianism and Islam, Nanjing, China, August 8-11, 2002.

⁶⁶ Ma Xiulan 2000.

⁶⁷ Yibulaxin 2001.

⁶⁸ Gillette 2000, pp. 167-178; Gao Yaokuan 2002, pp. 100-103.

⁶⁹ Abdu 1999.

d) A resurgence of Muslim identity among young people: Confronted with widespread Han prejudice against religious believers as backward and ignorant, many Muslim young people are proud of their identity as Muslims.⁷⁰ Many young Muslim girls wear headscarves and modest Islamic clothes in public, sometimes enduring contemptuous glances from non-Muslims. Many Muslims find resolve and assurance in their faith when confronted with a Chinese society afflicted, as they see it, by materialism, corruption and immorality. Their faith teaches them that at the end of the world God will judge all people and punish evil and reward good, and also that Islam will certainly defeat materialism and *shaitan* (Arabic, 'satan') in a final battle.⁷¹

9) The revival movement among Sufi orders: Like Ikhwani and Qadim groups in China, various Chinese Sufi orders have also experienced a revival movement during the past decade. This Sufi renaissance is reflected in several trends:

a) A more coherent organizational structure has emerged among various Sufi orders, thus enhancing the binds between Sufi leaders and disciples. Many orders have built strong, fortress-style monasteries (*qubba*) which form semi-autonomous socio-economic bodies. For instance, the Lingming Tang, a Sufi suborder under the Qadiriyya Order in Lanzhou, has a membership of 200,000. Its members spent more than ten year and 100 million Yuan (about 10 million Euro in 2005) to build a huge headquarters complex, as well as a highway, irrigation works, ponds, power lines, a cattle farm, vegetable gardens, and small workshops.⁷² The Lingming Tang has several branch-monasteries in other parts of China, and their leaders are nominated by the suborder's leader Wang Shoutian 汪寿天. Shaykh Wang regularly travels to his Sufi communities to collect alms and administer communal affairs. He has several *akhonds* devoted to *madrassa* education, and managers in charge of finance, business and transport. Many Sufi orders resemble the Lingming Tang in having a hierarchical organization: a leader, his representatives in different areas, other subordinates in scattered communities, disciples who imple-

⁷⁰ Tong 2000.

⁷¹ Ali 2000.

⁷² Personal observations during my fieldwork at Lingming Tang, Lanzhou, Jan. 23 to Feb. 1, 2001.

- ment the leader's religious instructions, and staff who work for the order in various fields.
- b) Prominent *shaykhs* or Sufi *walis* exercise absolute power over their followers. In communist society the Party once wielded absolute power. In the wake of the religious revival of the past two decades, however, in Sufi orders the power of the party has given way to the *shaykh* or *murshid* (Arabic: guide). A *murid* (Arabic: follower) or disciple of a Sufi master must wholly submit himself to his master; must absolutely obey the *shaykh*. So a Sufi leader can mobilize his followers – often a large force – thanks to the closed boundaries of Sufi organization.
- c) Forming tight social and religious networks: Many Sufi orders have developed networks of followers that span counties, regions and provinces. The Jahriyya, Khufiyya and Qadiriyya have communities that spread throughout most parts of China. Through centralized leadership, these Sufi organizations have established a widely cast net of organizational, communications and economic networks. Because of their mystic nature and sometimes clandestine ways, other groups – even non-Sufi Muslims – find it impossible to penetrate their networks. The experiences of repression in imperial times and persecution in recent decades have led Sufi orders to turn inwards for protection and support. This makes some Sufi orders highly suspect in the eyes of government authorities. In recent years there have been clashes between local authorities and Sufi orders.
- d) Enlarged scope and capacity: Since the 1980s many Sufi orders have organized large scale activities, including tomb (*mazar*) veneration by Sufi orders in Xinjiang and *amal* (Arabic: charitable deeds, especially in the memory of deceased Sufi leaders) service by Sufi orders in Hui and Dongxiang Muslim communities. In the late 1980s, for example, at the Odam Mazar in the southern part of Kashgar, Xinjiang, an annual *mazar* veneration ceremony attracted 100,000 to 200,000 ethnic Sufis and other Muslims of Uighur and other ethnicities.⁷³ Such *mazar* veneration activities usually last several days and have become a most prominent event in Uighur society. *Amal* services among the Sufi orders of Hui communities have also expanded

⁷³ This reserved figure is based on my investigation in Yarkand (Shache), Xinjiang in August of 2001. According to Wang Shouli 1983, Yarkand had a population of 400,000, 90% of which participated in veneration to about twenty prominent *mazars*; see also Dawut 2002, p. 44.

in scope and importance. In Linxia about 200,000 Muslims, most of them the Sufis, attended the funeral service of Yang Shijun 杨士骏, the Sufi leader of the Qadiriyya order.⁷⁴ The Jahriyya order has also held large-scale *amal* for its deceased Sufi leaders; they can be large rallies attracting more than ten or a hundred thousand Sufis from different parts of China.

The External Relations of Muslim Communities in China

I. Relations with Han Chinese

Muslims make up only 2% of China's population, and Han Chinese make up more than 93%. In a non-Muslim majority society, China's Muslims usually keep a low profile. There are several factors that account for their seeming invisibility. One is that Islam, as a religion with non-local origins, is not part of the mainstream culture of the socialist state; another is that most Muslims live in marginalized regions, especially in northwest China, where deserts, barren hills, and mountains dominate the landscape, and economic resources are limited.

Although Chinese Muslims have tended towards caution in dealing with the Han majority, they have also enjoyed some advantages in establishing a foothold in society. In particular, Muslim communities have to some degree benefited from the favorable ethnic minority policies implemented by the Communist Party. The national minority policies introduced by Chinese government in the 1950s were modeled on Stalin's policies in the Soviet Union. Under them, Muslim peoples in China have enjoyed the several advantages:

- a) Disproportionately high representation in political bodies such as People's Congress and Political Consultative Committee, Communist Party Congress and organizations, the United Frontier Department (Tongzhanbu 统战部), and government organs such as the State Bureau of Religious Affairs (Guojia Zongjiao Shiwuju 国家宗教事务局) and State National Minorities Committee (Guojia Shaoshuminzu Weiyuanhui 国家少数民族委员会). This "special status" is particularly reflected in system of autonomous regions, prefectures, and

⁷⁴ *Zhongguo musulin* reports this event, also confirmed by my fieldwork in February 2001.

counties that grants some self-governance to Muslim and other minorities.⁷⁵

- b) To a lesser or greater degree, most Muslims in China are enjoying a loose restriction in the family-planning program that nearly all Han Chinese must abide by: one family and one child. Urban Muslim families, and other ethnic minority families, can usually have two children, and rural Muslim families can have three children. (Normally, an urban Han Chinese family can only have one child is allowed, and a rural Han Chinese family can have two children if the first is a female.)
- c) Ethnic minority groups can send their children to schools, colleges and universities with considerably lower entrance scores than Han Chinese students.
- d) In government departments, institutions and the state-owned enterprises, Muslims and other ethnic minorities enjoy more favorable treatment than their Han Chinese counterparts in the allocation of living allowances, job promotions and housing.
- e) In civil legal disputes and even crime cases, if a case involves two different ethnicities, often the party who is an ethnic minority receives favorable consideration.⁷⁶ Of course, this is not absolute; as in many countries, China's ethnic minorities also suffer racial and religious discrimination. And unfortunately, the preferential policies granted to minority nationalities have also generated backlashes. They have reinforced the ethnic identity of Muslim peoples and also provoked antagonism against Muslim and other minorities.

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, as in other countries in Europe and North America, many Muslims in China felt tremendous pressure and suspicion from the mass media that often gave the misleading impres-

⁷⁵ In the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, for example, the Hui only occupy one third of Ningxia's population. The regional governor, however, should be a Hui and the main posts of the government usually are taken by Hui cadres. This is also similar to Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolian etc regions and prefectures.

⁷⁶ Many Han Chinese in Xinjiang complain that they are actually discriminated by the law in the civil cases such as traffic accident, economic dispute and others if they have arguments with the ethnic minority groups. This is one of the main reasons for them wanting to emigrate back to Inland China. I personally encountered not a few complains from Han Chinese during my traveling in south Xinjiang in the summer of 2001.

sion that Islam is equivalent to fundamentalism, terrorism and extremism.⁷⁷ Many Muslims, including young people and clerics, complained in interviews and conversation that they felt discriminated against by the press and television. Many Muslims became fearful their relations with Han Chinese could be seriously damaged by negative media coverage.

In this hostile atmosphere of ignorance and misunderstanding, which to some extent predated September 11, many Muslims in China have begun to turn to their religious traditions for consolation.⁷⁸ Some of them have become more isolated and radical. This is especially true of Uighur Muslims, and is reflected in their attitudes towards non-Muslims and Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics. Many of them refuse to discuss their views about these issues.⁷⁹

II. Relations with the State

Chinese Muslims have a complex relationship with their government, controlled by professed atheists who disavow all religions. Many Muslims take a pragmatic approach towards the Communist Party-run government; they believe the Chinese government is a so powerful they must accommodate its demands and strive to survive under it while also enjoying the government's preferential minorities program. The relationship between Muslim peoples and the state is often a bargaining process, or game of cat and mouse, that has evolved over recent decades.

China's Muslims are officially classified as ethnic minorities and therefore enjoy some privileges in political, economic and cultural status, so to some extent they benefit from the status quo. Moreover, Muslim communities are organized in combining religious activities with economic, social, cultural and educational functions. The Chinese government has sought to use these two factors to contain nationalist-religious ferment in Muslim communities and restrain radical Islam. It has

⁷⁷ For instance, an article published by the *Qunyan* 群言 ("People's Voice") magazine recently labeled Islam as backward, anti-reform and anti-modernity. The tone of this paper was so offensive that the Islamic Association of China appealed to the central government and requested for a formal apology by the author (Zhou 2002).

⁷⁸ Ma Lizun 2000.

⁷⁹ Not a few times did the author have such experiences in his fieldwork in Xinjiang, particularly when talking to Uighur intellectuals and governmental officials. Only some young college students and grassroots level cadres in the Uighur society expressed their feelings and opinions more freely.

also made great efforts to implement constitutional and legal goals to assimilate ethnic minorities, including Muslim peoples, into a harmonious national family committed to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Guided by this two-pronged strategy of containment and absorption, the Chinese government has unhesitatingly cracked down on any ethnic separatist movements and religious extremist activities, but has also taken a lenient attitude towards the law-abiding social, economic and cultural activities of Muslim peoples. Taking advantage of these policies, most Muslims, particularly Hui Muslims, have been generally "Chinese law-abiding" while also exercising their legal rights and political influence to assert their rights and obtain better treatment. Thus, when incidents involving the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims occur, such as the pork contamination riot described above, Muslims communities throughout the region affected mobilize to protect their rights and demand compensation or concessions from Non-Muslims and the local government. Usually, in the wake of the incident it is the Han Chinese who make concessions under official arbitration, and the Muslims press forward towards their goals.

Muslim communities have adopted these tactics to protect their officially-endorsed rights, but their efforts have the paradoxical effect of encouraging growing of nationalism, strengthening ethnic identity boundaries, and fuelling Islamic sentiment. Communities can deploy these forces in confrontations with non-Muslims and the government. The state, in turn, fears potentially larger challenges from Muslim groups and generally attempts to devise solutions that minimize nationalism and Islamism while appeasing Muslim elites. This often involves a combination of state supervision and 'soft' incentives in the form of special treatment and status.

China's Muslim elites have proven skilled at exploiting their relationship with the state. They can bargain with the government by appealing to the potential force of the Muslim communities under their authority, thus pressuring local Chinese authorities to provide better treatment for themselves and their peoples. Here the lessons of Chinese history have considerable influence; in the past, when the central government was weak, China's Muslim elites developed into semi-independent forces or warlords dominating large tracts of territory.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ See Xu 2001.

In modern times China has still not overcome the cycle of control and resistance that results from these contending state, elite and popular forces, with periods of (unsustainable) control and repression giving way to disorder and instability. The Chinese government thinks that its implementing the preferential minorities program could strengthen its central power and better control the minorities' inhabited frontier land. Eventually, it does not expect that its policy to appease the Muslim minority peoples only stimulate their nationalism and religious sentiment. The inflexibility the Chinese central government's policies toward ethnic minorities and Muslim believers cannot remain stable in the long term. They are short-sighted and full of pitfalls, and in the future may give way to riots and chaos.

III. Relations with the Islamic World

Within the framework of *umma* all Muslims are brothers and sisters. These fraternal ties transcend national borders, ethnicity, language and social status. Even in the past, before modern transportation by ship and plane made the Middle East much more accessible to Chinese Muslims, many of them made the *hajj* journey to Mecca by traversing the Euro-Asian continent or taking a sea route across the South China Sea and Indian Ocean.⁸¹ Returning from the *hajj*, Chinese Muslims also brought back Islamic texts for their home communities, and so their access to the Islamic tradition was constantly refreshed.

Today, China has re-opened its doors to the rest of the world, and as a leading developing country it wants to develop friendly relations with Muslim countries and official organizations in Asia and Africa, including the League of Arab States, the Muslim World League, and the Islamic Summit Organization. The Chinese government cannot easily afford to damage links with these countries and international bodies, and this makes it difficult for the government to stifle the ties between Chinese Muslims and their fellow believers in the Islamic world.

Compared with the past Chinese Muslims now have more advantages for fostering relations with Muslim countries. First, there are strengthened economic ties. Many Chinese Muslim entrepreneurs do business in western, central, and southeastern Asia and African countries, and much of their business is, of course, done with fellow believ-

⁸¹ Ma Dexin 1988, pp. 55–63.

ers. Chinese Muslims even do business with the Muslims in European and North American countries.

Beside this economic relationship, many Muslims – irrespective of whether they are Hui, Uighur and another ethnic group – participate in the annual *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca. More and more young Chinese Muslim students are studying Arabic and Islam in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, the Gulf States, Libya, Syria, Jordan, Pakistan, Malaysia, the Central Asian republics and other Islamic countries. Every year, the Islamic Association of China sends scholars and learned men to attend religious conferences and symposia, competitions in Arabic Quranic recitation and Arabic calligraphy, and other religiously-oriented activities with Muslims abroad. The Chinese government, represented by Islamic Association of China, also maintains regular contacts with international Islamic organizations.

These economic, cultural and scholarly contacts with Muslims abroad also allow for a great deal of informal interaction. They make it possible for many Chinese Muslims to bring back materials such as religious literature, cassettes and videos, and to spread information about China's Muslim communities to Muslims abroad. These exchanges have also exposed Chinese Muslims to new ideas about Islam from abroad, including Islamic fundamentalism and radical political Islam. In this way, the seeds have been sown in China for the spread of many of the ideas that have galvanized other Muslim populations in recent decades.

Chinese government is, however, highly vigilant against religious extremism from abroad. In 1996 China expelled an Iranian diplomat for improper conduct in spreading revolutionary Islamic ideas among Muslim communities in Northwest China.⁸² In quite a few cases Islamic missionaries from Pakistan have been expelled for disseminating Islamic fundamentalism in China.⁸³ In Xinjiang the custom officials and border guard posts are particularly watchful for possible entry of radical Islamic materials from the Central Asian republics. Local authorities there have confiscated and destroyed large numbers of books, cassettes, and videos promoting dangerous religiously-inspired ideol-

⁸² The author heard these news at the Second International Conference of Iranology in Beijing, October 1998.

⁸³ Lu 2002, pp. 14–16; also see reports in Hong Kong based newspapers, such as the *South China Morning Post* and the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, between 2000 and 2001

ogies and advocating national separatism among Uighur communities in southern Xinjiang.⁸⁴

Conclusion

Muslim society is quite different from other parts of Chinese society in its beliefs, ways of life, cultural traditions and social organization. It is miraculous that China's Muslim communities have preserved their own identity and avoided assimilation or destruction by the authoritarian Chinese state. In two decades of resurgence since the 1980s the Muslim peoples of China have developed their own semi-independent economy, production and market structures, social and cultural networks, education system, press and mass media.

This Islamic revival has gained impetus from China's progress towards modernity and globalization: as China has developed a market economy and become more integrated in international commerce and affairs, Chinese Muslim communities have accumulated more resources to organize and assert themselves. China is constantly vigilant against any internal or external challenges to Marxist ideology and the socialist regime, and the state has been on the offensive against religious fundamentalism and the radical Islamic movement, but Muslim society has evolved a strong fabric of religious tradition and social exclusivity, and over time China's Muslim communities have increasingly departed from mainstream Chinese society and culture.

These communities have, to varying degrees, resisted the general consequences of modernization. While the communal structure of the majority Han Chinese has been drastically eroded by commercialism, materialism and individualism, the communal ties of Muslims have steadily strengthened over last two decades, particularly with the Islamic revival movement and the spread of Islamic education. After entry into WTO, China will become an increasingly unbalanced, contradiction-filled society – an increasingly liberal market economy under a Marxist socialist regime. In these circumstances, the state will certainly find it increasingly difficult to deal with Islam, especially spreading radicalism and nationalism, merely by offering economic and social privileges on the one hand, and threatening to apply force and coer-

⁸⁴ See *Turkistan Newsletter*, an Internet website information based in Netherlands edited by Sato, May 24, 2002.

tion for suppressing the national separatism and religious extremism on the other hand.

China's authorities feel growing uncertainty about the increasing influence and organization of Muslim society in China. During the past decade the Islamic revival movement in China has developed particular momentum in two regions: in Turkic Muslim society it has expressed itself through a nationalist independence movement; in Hui Muslim society it has expressed itself through confrontations with majority Han Chinese over incidents of pork contamination or religious defilement.

The revival of Islam and Muslim society in China may potentially pose a serious challenge to China during the country's historic transition. If China were to fail to renovate its political apparatus, which gives so much power to a highly centralized government, it will experience increasingly tense relations with its Muslim peoples. A direct conflict with religious ethnic minorities would cost China precious resources and damage its modernization program, as well as risk its denunciation by Western countries and the Islamic world. However, if the central government makes too many concessions to Muslim communities, its capacity to control these communities will erode. Whether the revival of Islam truly becomes a major source of instability in China will depend on whether the next generation of leaders of the Communist Party can navigate between these two possibilities.

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Islam in China

Accommodation or Separation?

Dru C. Gladney

China's Muslims face their second millennium under Chinese rule. Many of the challenges they confront remain the same as they have for the last 1,400 years of continuous interaction with Chinese society, but many are new as a result of China's transformed and increasingly globalized society, and especially the watershed events of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent "war on terrorism." Muslims in China live as minority communities amid a sea of people who, in their view, are largely pork-eating, polytheist, secularist, and *kafir* (heathen). Nevertheless, many of their small and isolated communities have survived in rather inhospitable circumstances for over a millennium. Though small in population percentage (about 2% in China, 1% in Japan, and less than 1% in Korea), their numbers are nevertheless large in comparison with other Muslim states. For example, there are more Muslims in China than in Malaysia, and more than in every Middle Eastern Muslim nation except Iran, Turkey, and Egypt. East Asia is also increasingly depending on mainly Muslim nations for energy and cheap labor, thus raising the importance of its Muslim diasporic communities for international and domestic relations. Japan has a rather small resident Muslim community, estimated to be less than 10,000, however, recent waves of Middle Eastern and South Asian migrant laborers to Japan's large industrial cities suggest that the total Muslim population in Japan could be nearing the one million mark. Though these communities are temporary in terms of residency, they have as strong an impact on Japan's rather insular society as the Turkish and Kurdish populations in the Scandinavian heartlands (which now have surpassed 10 percent). As Lipman¹ insightfully noted, these long-term Muslim communities have often been

¹ Lipman 1997, p. 2.

the “familiar strangers” found in small enclaves throughout Asia. And if Kosovo and Bosnia are to serve as lessons, failure to accommodate Muslim minorities can lead to national dismemberment and international intervention. Indeed, China’s primary objection to NATO involvement in Kosovo centered on its fear that this might encourage the aiding and abetting of separatists, with independence groups in Xinjiang 新疆, Tibet, and perhaps Taiwan, clearly a major Chinese concern.

This paper will seek to examine Muslim minority identity in Asia with specific reference to China, not only because it is where this author has conducted most of his research, but also because with the largest Muslim minority in East Asia, China’s Muslims are clearly the most threatened in terms of self-preservation and Islamic identity. However, it is hoped that lessons gleaned from the Chinese case might be useful for other Muslim communities in East Asia, and perhaps elsewhere in Asia as well. Most relevant is the thesis put forth that successful Muslim accommodation to minority status in Asia can be seen to be a measure of the extent to which Muslim groups allow the reconciliation of the dictates of Islamic culture to their host culture, be it Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or other. This goes against the opposite view that can be found in the writings of some analysts of Islam in China, such as Raphael Israeli and Michael Dillon, that Islam in the region is inherently rebellious and that Muslims as minorities are always problematic to the security of a non-Muslim state.²

Islam in China

Islam in China has primarily been propagated over the last 1,300 years among the people now known as “Hui” 回, but many of the issues confronting them are relevant to the Turkic and Indo-European Muslims on China’s Inner Asian frontier. “Hui teaching” (Huijiao 回教) was the term once used in Chinese to indicate “Islam” in general, and probably derives from an early Chinese rendering of the term for the modern Uighur people. According to the reasonably accurate 1990 national census of China, the total Muslim population is 17.6 million, including: Hui (8,602,978); Uighur (7,214,431); Kazakh (1,111,718); Dongxiang 东乡 (373,872); Kyrgyz (141,549); Salar (87,697); Tajik (33,538); Uzbek (14,502); Bonan (12,212); and Tatar (4,873). The Hui speak mainly Si-

² Israeli 1978; Dillon 1997.

no-Tibetan languages; Turkic-language speakers include the Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tatar; combined Turkic-Mongolian speakers include the Dongxiang, Salar, and Bonan (Bao'an 保安), concentrated in Gansu's 甘肃 mountainous Hexi 河西 corridor; and the Tajik speak a variety of Indo-Persian dialects. It is important to note, however, that the Chinese census registered people by nationality, not religious affiliation, so the actual number of Muslims is still unknown, and that all population figures are influenced by politics in their use and interpretation.

While the Hui have been labeled the "Chinese-speaking Muslims", "Chinese Muslims", and most recently, as "Sino-Muslims",³ this is misleading since by law all Muslims living in China are "Chinese" by citizenship, and many Hui speak many of the non-Chinese languages where they live, such as the Tibetan, Mongolian, Thai, and Hainan 海南 Muslims, who are also classified by the state as Hui. Yet most Hui are closer to the Han Chinese than the other Muslim nationalities in terms of demographic proximity and cultural accommodation, adapting many of their Islamic practices to Han ways of life, which has often become the source for many of the criticisms of Muslim reformers. In the past, this was not as great a problem for the Turkish and Indo-European Muslim groups, as they were traditionally more isolated from the Han and their identities not as threatened, though this has begun to change in the last forty years. As a result of state-sponsored nationality identification campaigns over the course of the last thirty years, these groups have begun to think of themselves more as ethnic nationalities, something more than just "Muslims". The Hui are unique among the fifty-five identified nationalities in China in that they are the only nationality for whom religion (Islam) is the only unifying category of identity, even though many members of the Hui nationality may not practice Islam.

Resulting from a succession of Islamic reform movements that swept across China over the last 600 years, one finds among the Muslims in China today a wide spectrum of Islamic belief. Archaeological discoveries of large collections of Islamic artifacts and epigraphy on the southeast coast suggest that the earliest Muslim communities in China were descended from Arab, Persian, Central Asian, and Mongolian Muslim merchants, militia, and officials who settled first along China's

³ For the debate over the definition of Hui and reference to them as "Sino-Muslims", see Lipman 1997, p. xxiv.

southeast coast from the seventh to tenth centuries, and then in larger migrations to the north from Central Asia under the Mongol Yuan dynasty in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, gradually intermarrying with the local Chinese populations, and raising their children as Muslims. Practicing Sunni, Hanafi Islam, residing in independent small communities clustered around a central mosque, these communities were characterized by relatively isolated, independent Islamic villages and urban enclaves that related with each other via trading networks and recognition of belonging to the wider Islamic *umma*, headed by an *ahong* 阿訇 (also written 阿洪, or *aheng* 阿衡, from the Persian, *akhond* = preacher) who was invited to teach on a more or less temporary basis.

Sufism began to make a substantial impact in China proper in the late seventeenth century, arriving mainly along the Central Asian trade routes with saintly *shaykhs*, both Chinese and foreign, who brought new teachings from the pilgrimage cities. These charismatic teachers and tradesmen established widespread networks and brotherhood associations, including most prominently the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Kubrawiyya. The hierarchical organization of these Sufi networks helped in the mobilization of large numbers of Hui during economic and political crises in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, assisting widespread Muslim-led rebellions and resistance movements against late Ming and Qing imperial rule in Yunnan 云南, Shanxi 山西, Gansu, and Xinjiang. The 1912 nationalist revolution allowed further autonomy in Muslim concentrated regions of the northwest, and wide areas came under virtual Muslim warlord control, leading to frequent intra-Muslim and Muslim-Han conflicts until the eventual communist victory led to the reassertion of central control. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Wahhabi-inspired reform movements, known as the Yiheiwani 依黑瓦尼 (also written 伊黑瓦尼, or Yihewani 伊赫瓦尼, from the Arabic *Ikhwan* = brethren, viz. *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* = Muslim brothers), rose to popularity under nationalist and warlord sponsorship, and were noted for their critical stance toward traditionalist Islam as too acculturated to Chinese practices, and Sufism as too attached to saint and tomb veneration. These movements of Islam influenced all Muslim nationalities in China today; however, they found their most political expression among the Hui who were faced with the task of accommodating each new Islamic movement with Chinese culture. Among the northwestern Muslim communities, especially the Uighur, their more recent integration into Chinese society as a result of Mongo-

lian and Manchu expansion into Central Asian has forced them to reach social and political accommodations that have challenged their identity. In terms of integration, the Uighur as a people represent perhaps the least integrated into Chinese society, while the Hui are at the other end of the spectrum, due to several historical and social factors that I will discuss below.

Uighur Indigeneity and the Challenge to Chinese Sovereignty

In 1997, bombs exploded in a city park in Beijing on 13 May (killing one) and on two buses on 7 March (killing two), as well as in the north-western border city of Urumqi (Wulumuqi 乌鲁木齐), the capital of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, on 25 February (killing nine), with over thirty other bombings in 1996, six in Tibet alone. Most of these are thought to have been related to demands by Muslim and Tibetan separatists. Eight members of the Uighur Muslim minority were executed on 29 May 1997 for alleged bombings in northwest China, with hundreds arrested on suspicion of taking part in ethnic riots and engaging in separatist activities. Though sporadically reported since the early 1980s, such incidents have been increasingly common since 1997 and are documented in a recent scathing report of Chinese government policy in the region by Amnesty International.⁴ A very recent report in the *Wall Street Journal* of the arrest on 11 August 1999 of Rebiya Kadeer, a well-known Uighur business woman, during a visit by the United States Congressional Research Service delegation to the region, indicates China's random arrests have not diminished since the report, nor is China concerned with Western criticism.⁵

As we consider the interaction of Uighur Muslims with Chinese society, we must examine three interrelated aspects of regional history, economy, and politics. First, Chinese histories notwithstanding, every Uighur firmly believes that his ancestors were the indigenous people of the Tarim basin, which did not become known in Chinese as Xinjiang ("new dominion") until the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, I have argued elsewhere that the constructed "ethnogenesis" of the Uighur, the current national identity of the people today known as the Uighur, is a rather recent phenomenon related to Great Game rivalries, Sino-So-

⁴ AI 1999.

⁵ *WSJ* 1999.

viet geopolitical maneuverings, and Chinese nation-building.⁶ While a collection of nomadic steppe peoples known as the “Uighur” existed from before the eighth century, this identity was lost from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries. It was not until the fall of the Turkish Khanate (552–744 C.E.) to a people reported by the Chinese historians as Huihe 回纥 or Huihu 回鹘 that we find the beginnings of the Uighur Empire. At this time the Uighur were but one collection of nine nomadic tribes, who, initially in confederation with other Basmil and Karlukh nomads, defeated the Second Turkish Khanate and then dominated the federation under the leadership of Koli Beile in 742.

Gradual sedentarization of the Uighur, and their defeat of the Turkish Khanate, occurred precisely as trade with the unified Tang state became especially lucrative. Sedentarization and interaction with the Chinese state was accompanied by socio-religious change: the traditional shamanistic Turkic-speaking Uighur came increasingly under the influence of Persian Manichaeism, Buddhism, and eventually, Nestorian Christianity. Extensive trade and military alliances along the old Silk Road with the Chinese state developed to the extent that the Uighur gradually adopted cultural, dress and even agricultural practices of the Chinese. Conquest of the Uighur capital of Karabalghasun in Mongolia by the nomadic Kyrgyz in 840, without rescue from the Tang who may have become by then intimidated by the wealthy Uighur empire, led to further sedentarization and crystallization of Uighur identity. One branch that ended up in what is now Turfan took advantage of the unique socioecology of the glacier-fed oases surrounding the Taklamakan and were able to preserve their merchant and limited agrarian practices, gradually establishing Khocho or Gaochang 高昌, the great Uighur city-state based in Turfan for four centuries (850–1250).

The Islamicization of the Uighur from the tenth to as late as the seventeenth centuries, while displacing their Buddhist religion, did little to bridge these oases-based loyalties. From that time on, the people of “Uighuristan” centered in Turfan who resisted Islamic conversion until the seventeenth century were the last to be known as Uighur. The others were known only by their oasis or by the generic term of “Turki.” With the arrival of Islam, the ethnonym “Uighur” fades from the historical record. It was not until 1760 that the Manchu Qing dynasty exerted full and formal control over the region, establishing it as their “new do-

⁶ Gladney 1990, p. 3.

minions" (Xinjiang), an administration that lasted barely one hundred years when it fell to the Yakub Beg rebellion (1864-1877) and expanding Russian influence.⁷ The end of the Qing dynasty and the rise of Great Game rivalries between China, Russia, and Britain saw the region torn by competing loyalties and marked by two short-lived and drastically different attempts at independence: the short-lived proclamations of an "East Turkestan Republic" in Kashgar in 1933 and another in Yining 伊宁 (Ghulje) in 1944.⁸ As Andrew Forbes has noted, these rebellions and attempts at self-rule did little to bridge competing political, religious, and regional differences within the Turkic people who became known as the Uighur in 1934 under successive Chinese Kuomintang 国民党 (KMT) warlord administrations.⁹ Justin Rudelson's¹⁰ recent work suggests there is persistent regional diversity along three, and perhaps four macro-regions: the northwestern Zungaria plateau, the southern Tarim basin, the southwest Pamir region, and the eastern Kumul-Turfan-Hami corridor. The recognition of the Uighur as an official Chinese "nationality" (*minzu* 民族) in the 1930s in Xinjiang under a Soviet-influenced policy of nationality recognition contributed to the widespread acceptance today of continuity with the ancient Uighur kingdom and their eventual "ethnogenesis" as a bona fide nationality. The "nationality" policy under the KMT identified five peoples of China, with the Han in the majority. This policy was continued under the Communists, they eventually recognizing fifty-six nationalities, with the Han occupying a 91 percent majority in 1990.

The "peaceful liberation" by the Chinese Communists of Xinjiang in 1949, and its subsequent establishment of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region on 1 October 1955, perpetuated the Nationalist policy of recognizing the Uighur as a minority nationality under Chinese rule.¹¹ This nationality designation not only masks tremendous regional and linguistic diversity, it also includes groups such as the Loplyk and Dolans that have very little to do with the oasis-based Turkic Muslims who became known as the Uighur. At the same time, contemporary Uighur separatists look back to the brief periods of independent self-rule under Yakub Beg and the Eastern Turkestan Republics, in addition to

⁷ For the best treatment of the Yakub Beg rebellion, see Kim 1986.

⁸ Benson 1990.

⁹ Forbes 1986, p. 29.

¹⁰ Rudelson 1997.

¹¹ Shahidi 1984, p. 244.

the earlier glories of the Uighur kingdoms in Turfan and Karabalghasun, as evidence of their rightful claims to the region. Contemporary Uighur separatist organizations based in Istanbul, Ankara, Almaty, Munich, Amsterdam, Melbourne, and Washington, D.C., may differ on their political goals and strategies for the region, but they all share a common vision of a unilineal Uighur claim on the region, disrupted by Chinese and Soviet intervention. The independence of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics in 1991 has done much to encourage these Uighur organizations in their hopes for an independent “Turkestan”, despite the fact the new, mainly Muslim Central Asian governments have all signed protocols with China in the spring of 1996 that they would not harbor or support separatist groups.

Within the region, though many portray the Uighur as united around separatist or Islamist causes, Uighur continue to be divided from within by religious conflicts, in this case competing Sufi and non-Sufi factions, territorial loyalties (whether they be oases or places of origin), linguistic discrepancies, commoner-elite alienation, and competing political loyalties. These divided loyalties were evidenced by the attack in May 1996 on the *imam* of the Idgah Mosque in Kashgar by other Uighurs, as well as the assassination of at least six Uighur officials in September 1996. It is also important to note that Islam was only one of several unifying markers for Uighur identity, depending on those with whom they were in cooperation at the time. For example, to the Hui Muslim Chinese, the Uighur distinguish themselves as the legitimate autochthonous minority, since both share a belief in Sunni Islam. In contrast to the nomadic Muslim peoples (Kazakh or Kyrgyz), Uighur stress their attachment to the land and oasis of origin. In opposition to the Han Chinese, the Uighur will generally emphasize their long history in the region. This suggests that Islamic fundamentalist groups such as that of Taliban in Afghanistan (often glossed as “Wahhabiyya” in the region) will have only limited appeal among the Uighur. It is this contested understanding of history that continues to influence much of the current debate over separatist and Chinese claims to the region.

Amnesty International has claimed that the round-ups of so-called terrorists and separatists have led to hurried public trials and immediate, summary executions of possibly thousands of locals. One Amnesty International estimate suggested that in a country known for its frequent executions, Xinjiang had the highest number, averaging 1.8 per week, most of them Uighur. Troop movements to the area, related to the

nationwide campaign against crime known as “Strike Hard” launched in 1998 that includes the call to erect a “great wall of steel” against separatists in Xinjiang, have reportedly been the largest since the suppression of the large Akto insurrection in April 1990 (the first major uprising in Xinjiang that took place in the Southern Tarim region near Baren Township, which initiated a series of unrelated and sporadic protests). Alleged incursions of Taliban fighters through the Wakhan corridor into China where Xinjiang shares a narrow border with Afghanistan have led to the area being swamped with Chinese security forces and large military exercises, beginning at least one month prior to the September 11th attack. These military exercises suggest that there was growing government concern about these border areas even before the September 11th attack. Recently, under US and Chinese pressure, Pakistan returned one Uighur activist to China, apprehended among hundreds of Taliban detainees, which follows a pattern of repatriations of suspected Uighur separatists in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

International campaigns for Uighur rights and possible independence have become increasingly vocal and well organized, especially on the internet. Repeated public appeals have been made to Abdulahat Abdurixit, the Uighur People’s Government Chairman of Xinjiang in Urumqi. Notably, the elected chair of the Unrepresented Nations and People’s Organization (UNPO) based in The Hague is a Uighur, Erkin Alptekin, son of the separatist leader, Isa Yusuf Alptekin, who is buried in Istanbul where there is a park dedicated to his memory. Supporting primarily an audience of approximately one million expatriate Uighurs (yet few Uighurs in Central Asia and China have access to these internet sites) there are at least twenty-five international organizations and web sites working for the independence of “Eastern Turkestan” based in Amsterdam, Munich, Istanbul, Melbourne, Washington, D.C. and New York. Since September 11th, each of these organizations has disclaimed any support for violence or terrorism, pressing for a peaceful resolution of on-going conflicts in the region. The growing influence of “cyber-separatism” and international popularization of the Uighur cause concerns Chinese authorities, who hope to convince the world that the Uighurs do pose a real domestic and international terrorist threat.

The second pressing issue is economic. Since 1991, China has been a net oil importer. It also has 20 million Muslims. Mishandling of its Muslim problems will alienate trading partners in the Middle East, who

are primarily Muslims. Already, after an ethnic riot on 5 February 1997 in the northwestern Xinjiang city of Yining, which left at least nine Uighur Muslims dead and several hundreds arrested, the Saudi Arabian official newspaper *al-Bilad* warned China about the “suffering of [its] Muslims whose human rights are violated”. Turkey’s Defense Minister Turhan Tayan officially condemned China’s handling of the issue, and China responded by telling Turkey to not interfere in China’s internal affairs. Muslim nations on China’s borders, including the new Central Asian states, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, though officially unsupportive of Uighur separatists, may be increasingly critical of harsh treatment extended to fellow Turkic and/or Muslim co-religionists in China.

Unrest in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region may lead to a decline in outside oil investment and revenues, that are already operating at a loss. Recently, Exxon reported that its two wells came up dry in China’s supposedly oil-rich Tarim basin of southern Xinjiang, with the entire region yielding only 3.15 million metric tons of crude oil, much less than China’s overall output of 156 million tons. The World Bank loans over US\$3 billion a year to China, investing over US\$780.5 million in fifteen projects in the Xinjiang Region alone, with some of that money allegedly going to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) that human rights activist Harry Wu has claimed employs prison (*laogai* 劳改) labor. International companies and organizations, from the World Bank to Exxon may not wish to subject its employees and investors to social and political upheavals.

Most China-Central Asia trade is between Xinjiang and Kazakhstan (Xinjiang’s largest trading partner by far). From 1990 to 1992, Kazakhstan’s imports from China rose from just under 4 percent to 44 percent of its total. About half of China-Kazakh trade is on a barter basis. Through 1995, China was Kazakhstan’s fifth largest trade partner, behind Russia, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. By 2000, China was only eclipsed by Russia in trade with Kazakhstan. By 2001, Kazakh exports to China reached US\$ 1 billion, and occupies 77 percent of all Central Asia-China trade. In 2002, China imported nearly 19,600 barrels per day of crude oil from Kazakhstan by rail, representing 1.4 percent of its total imports. Just as Kazakhstan seeks other outlets for its oil besides Russia, China seeks other import sources besides a few countries in the Middle East, where Oman is the source of 70 percent of China’s Middle East oil. In June 2003, Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 signaled the importance of the relationship by making Kazakhstan his third foreign trip as the

new President of China. Interestingly, although there are over 1.3 million Kazakhs in northwestern Xinjiang, there has been no separatist incidents among the Kazakhs or efforts to unite with Kazakhstan, despite the fact that in 1962 Kazakhs outnumbered the Uighur when a large population fled to the USSR during the Sino-Soviet split.

China's trade with Kyrgyzstan has also increased rapidly, though pales in comparison to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Through 1995, Kyrgyzstan was Xinjiang's third largest trading partner, after Kazakhstan and Hong Kong, but it has declined in recent years. Nevertheless, the strategic importance of the Kyrgyz-China relationship has increased due to China's concerns over the development of US and Russian airbases near Bishkek, in Manas and Kant. The SCO anti-terrorism office is headquartered in Bishkek, and the Kyrgyz ambassador to China, Muratbek Imanaliev, who speaks fluent Chinese, has worked hard to build a close relationship.

As early as 1992, China ranked as Uzbekistan's leading non-CIS trading partner. Since then, bilateral trade has increased by as much as 127 percent per year, making Uzbekistan China's second largest Central Asian trading partner. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan does not share a border with China and they were the last country invited to join the SCO, this may be one of the most promising economic relationships developing in Central Asia. The large and relatively affluent Uzbek population will eagerly purchase Chinese goods once remaining border restrictions are relaxed and better transportation is built. In addition, China's Uzbeks, though numbering only 14,000, are extremely affluent and well-educated. They have begun to play an important role in building cross-border ties.

Bilateral trade with Tajikistan increased nearly ninefold from 1992 to 1995. However, with much of Tajikistan still embroiled in the Afghan conflict, and the country suffering from a deteriorating standard of living, trade dropped by half in 1996. Though US investment has increased due to the Afghan war, its "gas-n-go" military relationship with the country may be transitory. China is clearly the only major country in the region that is poised to bring significant investment, particularly with Tajikistan's vast water and mineral resources. Trade between China and Turkmenistan has also risen rapidly. Due to its "positive neutrality" policy, Turkmenistan is not a member of the SCO, though energy trade with China will grow considerably in the near future. China is expected to eventually import Turkmen gas to satisfy the growing

energy requirements in the northwest corner of the country. The sale of natural gas accounts for 60.3 percent of the total volume of Turkmen exports. The ambitious 8,000 km Trans-Asian Turkmenistan-China-Japan gas pipeline suggests that China's ties to the country will increase dramatically in the next decade. This Turkmenistan-China-Japan natural gas pipeline, part of the envisaged "Energy Silk Route" which would connect Central Asia's rich gas fields with northeast Asian users, demonstrates the potential for cooperation among countries. But it also highlights the growing importance of international companies – in this case Mitsubishi and Exxon – in financing and influencing the course of oil and gas development in the region. With a potential price tag of US\$22.6 billion, this pipeline – as well as many smaller and less costly ones – would not be possible without foreign participation. Hence, the "new Great Game" between China and Central Asia involves many more players than the largely three-way Great Game of the nineteenth century. Yet these new international corporate forces do not supersede local ethnic ties and connections that extend back for centuries.

While the increasing trade between Central Asia and China is noteworthy, it reflects China's rapidly growing trade with the entire world: trade with Central Asia increased by 25 percent from 1992 to 1994, and by 35 percent from 1995–2000; during the same period total Chinese trade increased almost twice as fast. In fact, during 1995, only 0.28 percent of China's US\$ 280.8 billion overseas trade involved the five Central Asian republics, about the same as with Austria or Denmark.¹² Despite the small trade values China is clearly a giant in the region, investing nearly US\$1 billion last year, and it will continue to play a major role in Central Asia's foreign economic relations. For example, China's two-way trade with Kazakhstan is greater than Turkey's trade with all five Central Asian republics. This is so even though predominantly Muslim Central Asia is of a much higher priority for Turkey than for China.

It is clear that Uighur separatism or Muslim complaints regarding Chinese policy will have important consequences for China's economic development of the region. Tourists and foreign businessmen will certainly avoid areas with ethnic strife and terrorist activities. China will continue to use its economic leverage with its Central Asian neighbors and Russia to prevent such disruptions.

¹² See Dorian/Wigdortz/Gladney 1997.

The third aspect is political. China's international relations with its bordering nations and internal regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet have become increasingly important not only for the economic reasons discussed above, but also for China's desire to participate in international organizations such as the World Trade Organization and Asia-Pacific Economic Council. Though Tibet is no longer of any real strategic or substantial economic value to China, it is politically important to China's current leadership to indicate that they will not submit to foreign pressure and withdraw its iron hand from Tibet. Uighurs have begun to work closely with Tibetans internationally to put political pressure on China in international fora. In an interview held in Istanbul on 7 April 1997 by this author with Ahmet Türköz, vice-director of the Eastern Turkestan Foundation that works for an independent Uighur homeland, he noted that since 1981, meetings had been taking place between the Dalai Lama and Uighur leaders, initiated by the deceased Uighur nationalist Isa Yusuf Alptekin. These international fora cannot force China to change its policy, any more than the annual debate in the U.S. over the renewal of China's Most-Favored Nation status can. Nevertheless, they continue to influence China's ability to cooperate internationally. As a result, China has sought to respond rapidly, and often militarily, to domestic ethnic affairs that might have international implications.

As China has gone through the process since 1997 of reintegrating Hong Kong, harboring the hope of eventually reuniting with Taiwan, residents of Hong Kong and Taiwan will be watching how China deals with other problems of national integration. During the Dalai Lama's March 1998 visit to Taiwan, he again renounced Tibet's independence, calling for China to consider Tibet under the same "two systems, one country" policy as Hong Kong, yet the People's Daily continued to call him a "separatist". Taiwan will certainly be watching how well Hong Kong is integrated into China as a "Special Administrative Region" with a true separate system of government, as opposed to Tibet and Xinjiang, which as so-called "Autonomous Regions" have very little actual autonomy from decision-makers in Beijing. China's handling of ethnic and integrationist issues in Xinjiang and Hong Kong will have a direct bearing on its possible reunification with Taiwan.

In addition, outside of the official minorities, China possesses tremendous ethnic, linguistic, and regional diversity. Intolerance toward difference in Xinjiang might be extended to limiting cultural pluralism in Guangdong 广东, where at least fifteen dialects of Cantonese are

spoken and folk religious practice is rampant. Memories are strong of the repressions of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), when all forms of diversity, political or cultural, were severely curtailed. If rising Chinese nationalism entails reducing ethnic and cultural difference, then anyone who is regarded as “other” in China will suffer, not just the Uighurs.

Hui Muslims and Islamic Accommodation to Chinese Society

As a result of the history of Islamic reform movements that have swept across China, the Hui continue to subscribe to a wide spectrum of Islamic belief. The variety of religious orders within Hui Islam represent a long history of reforms and Islamic movements that resulted from interaction with the Islamic world. The late Joseph Fletcher¹³ was the first to suggest that the nature of China’s present-day Islamic communities and orders can be traced to successive “tides” of influence and individuals who entered China during critical periods of exchange with the outside world. Like a swelling and ebbing tide, the influence of these movements grew or diminished with the interaction of China’s Muslims and the Islamic world. This influence was not based on population migrations as much as gradual and profound exchange between the two regions. While this study does not begin to address Islam’s complex history in China, an introduction to the context of Islamic reforms is necessary for an understanding of the rise of fundamentalism in China. Each of these tides can be considered successive reform movements in that they all seek to transform Islam in China, accommodating Chinese culture with Islamic requirements, in reference to textual and discursive standards in the Middle East as discovered by Muslims from China on the *hajj* or preached by peripatetic Middle Eastern representatives of these movements in China. What many of the Muslims in China did not recognize, however, was that just as Islam in China had shifted over time on the periphery, so had the so-called “center” in the Middle East. The somewhat quixotic quest of these Muslims at the distant edge of Islamic influence for the fundamentals of their faith, and the dialectic interaction between periphery and center, engendered the rise of a series of reformist tides that washed across the China Islamic hinterland. This is parallel to similar reform movements among all Muslims in Asia

¹³ Fletcher 1988.

that are on its periphery in relation to the Meccan heartlands. Just as Muslims in the Middle East “peripheralize” those in the wider diaspora as not “truly Muslims” (especially those not conversant in Arabic), Muslims in Asia often homogenize all Middle Eastern Muslims as Arabs and Sunni. This reflects a kind of “oriental orientalism”, a rather facetious term I employed in an earlier article¹⁴, to describe the process whereby Muslims and minorities exoticize their own communities for purposes of pride and sometimes profit.

The First Tide: Gedimu Traditional Chinese Islam

The earliest Muslim communities were descended from the Arab, Persian, Central Asian, and Mongolian Muslim merchants, militia and officials who settled along China’s southeast coast and in the northwest in large and small numbers from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries. Generally residing in independent small communities clustered around a central mosque, they became known as the Gedimu 格迪目 (from the Arabic *qadim*, “old”). For these communities, it was Sunni, Hanafi Islam that became so standard that few Hui with whom I spoke in the northwest had even heard of Shi’ism, even though the Iran/Iraq war was at its height during my fieldwork and in the daily news.

These “old” Islamic communities established an early Hui pattern of zealously preserving and protecting their identity as enclaves enconced in the dominant Han society. Each village was centered upon a single mosque headed by an *ahong* who was invited to teach on a more or less temporary basis. These *ahongs* generally moved on an average of every three years from one mosque to another. A council of senior local elders and *ahongs* were responsible for the affairs of each village and the inviting of the itinerant *imam*. Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century travelers noted the maintenance of these isolated communities. “I know of no strictly farming village where there is an equal mixture of the two groups [Han and Hui];” Ekvall¹⁵ observed, “in every case the village is predominantly one or the other. In some instances, the population is composed almost entirely of one group, with only a few hangers-on of the other.” He goes on to suggest that due to different cultural, ritual, and dietary preferences that sometimes led to

¹⁴ Gladney 1994a, pp. 113–114.

¹⁵ Ekvall 1939, p. 19.

open conflict, the communities preferred physical separation. Another frequent northwest traveler noted:

In some districts throughout the province [Gansu] the Moslems are found in such numbers as to outnumber the Chinese in the proportion of seven to one. Again, in other districts it is possible to travel for days without coming across one Moslem family, and in such districts it would be next to impossible for a Moslem family to settle. ...To find Chinese and Moslems living harmoniously intermingled is but on the rarest occasion.¹⁶

This isolation was mitigated somewhat during the collectivization campaigns in the 1950s, when Han and Hui villages were often administered as clusters by a single commune. They have also been brought closer together through national telecommunications and transportation networks established by the state, including such umbrella organizations as the Chinese Islamic Organization, established in 1955, which seeks to coordinate religious affairs among all Muslim groups. With the recent dismantling of the commune in many areas, however, these homogeneous Hui communities are once again becoming more segregated. While these disparate communities among the Gedimu were generally linked only by trade and a sense of a common religious heritage, an attachment to the basic Islamic beliefs as handed down to them by their ancestors, it was the entry of the Sufi brotherhoods into China that eventually began to link many of these isolated communities together through extensive socio-religious networks.

The Second Tide: Sufi Communities and National Networks

Sufism did not begin to make a substantial impact in China until the late seventeenth century, during the “second tide” of Islam’s entrance into China. Like Sufi centers that proliferated after the thirteenth century in other countries,¹⁷ many of these Sufi movements in China developed socio-economic and religio-political institutions built around the schools established by descendants of early Sufi saintly leaders. The institutions became known in Chinese as the *menhuan* 门宦, the “leading” or “saintly” descent groups.

¹⁶ Andrew 1921, p. 10.

¹⁷ Trimmingham 1971, p. 10.

The important contribution that Sufism made to religious organization in China was that the leaders of mosques throughout their order owed their allegiance to their *shaykh*, the founder of the order who appointed them. These designated followers were loyal to the leader of their order and remained in the community for long periods of time, unlike the Gedimu *ahongs* who were generally itinerant, not well connected to the community, and less imbued with appointed authority. Gedimu mosque elders were loyal to their village first, and connected only by trade to other communities. While it is beyond this paper to delineate the history and distribution of these Sufi *menhuan*, Joseph Fletcher's cogent introductory discussion of their development is worth citing:

Over the course of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries a considerable number of these "saintly lineages" came into being in northwest China, most of them within the Naqshbandi "path". Typically, each saint's tomb had a shrine, or *qubba* (Chinese *gongbai* or *gongbei* 拱北), and the main shrines became centers of devotional activity. The "saintly lineages" obtained contributions from their followers and amassed substantial amounts of property. The growth in the number and importance of the *menhuan* represented an important change, because they gradually replaced the "old" (Gedimu) pattern by linking together the *menhuan* adherents all over the northwest. The widening compass of social integration that resulted made it easier for the "saintly lineages" and other leaders to harness the Muslims' political and economic potential, facilitating the rise of Muslim warlordism in that region in the twentieth century.¹⁸

Many Sufi reforms spread throughout northwest China during the early decades of the Qing dynasty (mid-seventeenth to the early eighteenth centuries). Increased travel and communication between Muslims, both east and west, during what Fletcher terms the "general orthodox revival" of the eighteenth century, had great influence on Muslims from West Africa to Indonesia, and not least of all, on China's Hui Muslims.¹⁹ Exposure to these new ideas led to a reformulation of traditional Islamic concepts that rendered them more meaningful and practical for the Hui Muslims of that time. While it is socio-economic organization that was perhaps Sufism's most lasting contribution to Islam in China, the original contest between Sufis and non-Sufis was over much more prac-

¹⁸ Fletcher 1988, p. 15.

¹⁹ See Voll 1982, pp. 33–86.

tical turf. Sufis criticized traditional Muslims as being too materialistic, bound to their mosques, criticized the burning of incense to ancestors, and their lack of proficiency in the original texts. They condemned the non-Sufis for their use of Chinese in worship, adorning their mosques with Quranic quotations and *hadith* on colorful banners and flags. They condemned the Muslims for wearing traditional Chinese white funeral dress and sullyng Islam with many other Chinese cultural practices, calling for a purified return to the ascetic ideals of the Prophet and his Sufi followers. They also offered a more immediate experience of Islam through the rituals of remembrance and meditation, and the efficacy of the saint, instead of the daunting memorization and recitation of Quranic texts. While theirs was a reformist movement, it was less textual than experiential, revealing the power of Allah and his saints to transform one's life through miracles, healings, and other transformative acts.

Sufi orders were gradually institutionalized into such forms as the *menhuan*. Only four orders maintain significant influence among the Hui today, as Claude Pickens²⁰, a Protestant missionary in northwest China, first discovered as the four *menhuan* of China: the Qadiriyya, Khufiyya, Jahriyya, and Kubrawiyya. While these are the four main *menhuan*, they are subdivided into a myriad of smaller branch solidarities, divided along ideological, political, geographical and historical lines. A detailed history of these divisions and alliances would reveal the tensions and new meanings created by Hui communities as they attempted to reconcile perceived disparities between the indigenous practice of Islam in China with the Islamic ideals as represented by returned *hajji* or itinerant foreign preachers who maintained, in their eyes, more "orthodox" interpretations of Islam.

It is unfortunate, but perhaps quite natural that Western scholarship has prolonged the confusion of early Chinese writers over the rise of Sufism and later Islamic orders in China. As each Islamic reformer established a new following in China, often in conflict with other older Islamic orders, these "new" arrivals replaced or converted the "old" traditional Islamic communities. Chinese officials during the Ming and the Qing naturally referred to these communities with their new teachings as *xinjiao* 新教 (lit., "new religion" or "teaching", not "new sect" as it has been erroneously translated). As each new arrival replaced

²⁰ Pickens 1942.

the older, they became known as the “new”, or even “new new” teachings (*xinxinjiao* 新新教), as in the case of the arrival of the Ikhwan in China. Traditional Islam among the Hui generally was referred to as *laojiao* 老教, the old teaching(s), and even some orders that were new at one time, when others arrived were gradually classed as old, *laojiao*, which is the case with the Khufiyya, an early Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, which itself is now classified as an “old teaching” (see below). It was often the case that those who regarded themselves as maintaining the established traditional beliefs of Islam in China represented the reformers as “new”, and thus, suspect, whereas they saw themselves as “old”, or more true to their traditions. The reformers, on the other hand, generally thought of themselves as the more orthodox, based on their more informed, sometimes esoteric, interpretations of Islam due to their recent contact with movements in the Muslim heartlands. They thus resented the title of “new teachings”, or the even more derisive “new new teachings”, calling themselves by the more exact names of their orders, Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, Wahhabi, Ikhwan, etc., but the names “new teaching” or “new sect” stuck as it was applied by their critics who supported the state. Even the name Gedimu, depicting the “older” Islamic communities in China, is a not-so-subtle jibe at the other Islamic orders as being *newer*, and thus removed from the traditional fundamentals of Islam in China.

These designations became important politically as well as theologically in that during the mid-nineteenth century northwest rebellions, some of which were led by Sufi leaders, the Chinese state proscribed all of those movements that had become known as “new teachings” in order to root out the more rebellious Hui communities. This is precisely the rationale whereby all Buddhist sectarian movements were proscribed under the general rubric of the “White Lotus” rebellion in China, although recent scholarship has revealed that only a few Buddhist movements fell under the shadow of that stem.²¹ Unfortunately, Chinese and Western scholars perpetuated these designations and until recently there were no accurate descriptions of Hui Islamic orders in China.²² The post-1979 opening of China to the West has allowed the appearance of Chinese publications on these groups as well as Western

²¹ Harrell/Perry 1982, pp. 283–305; Naquin 1976.

²² See Israeli 1978, pp. 155–180.

fieldwork for the first time, giving us a better glimpse into their origins and socio-religious complexity.

The Qadiriyya

While there is some dispute among the Sufis themselves as to which order was the earliest to enter China proper, as there had been regular contacts on an individual basis with the Sufi orders of Central Asia that had already begun to proliferate in Xinjiang in the early part of the fifteenth century, it is generally agreed that one of the earliest to be established firmly on Chinese soil was the Qadiri *tariqa* (“path”, or Islamic “order”). The founder of the Qadiriyya *menhuan* in China is Qi Jingyi 祁静一 (Hilal ad-Din, 1656–1719). Known among the Hui as Qi Daozu 祁道祖 (Grand Master Qi), he was buried in Linxia’s 临夏 “great tomb” (*da gongbei* 大拱北) shrine complex, which became the center of Qadiriyya Sufism in China.²³ One of the reasons that Grand Master Qi continues to be greatly revered among all Sufis in China is that the tradition suggests he received his early training under two of the most famous Central Asian Sufi teachers, Khoja Afaq and Khoja Abd Alla. Qi Jingyi supposedly met with the revered Naqshbandi leader Khoja Afaq (see below) in Xining 西宁 in 1672, where according to Qadiriyya records the master sent the sixteen year old acolyte home, saying “I am not your teacher (*yu er fei shi* 余尔非师), my ancient teaching is not to be passed on to you, your teacher has already crossed the Eastern Sea and arrived in the Eastern Land. You must therefore return home quickly, and you will become a famous teacher in the land.”²⁴ Qadiriyya followers today feel that their saint received the blessing of the great Naqshbandi Khoja Afaq, while their order was formally founded by his second teacher, Khoja Abd Alla, a twenty-ninth generation descendant of Muhammad.²⁵ Chinese Sufi records state that he entered China in 1674 and preached in Guangdong, Guangxi 广东, Yunnan, Guizhou 贵州 and Linxia, Gansu, before his eventual death in Guizhou in 1689. While Abd al-Kadir al-Jilani is the reputed founder of the Qadiri *tariqa*, it is not surprising to find that Abd Alla perhaps studied in Medina under the renowned Kurdish mystic, Ibrahim b. Hasan al-Kurani (1616–1690),

²³ Gladney 1987, pp. 507–508.

²⁴ Ma Tong 1983, p. 330.

²⁵ Tringham 1971, pp. 40–44.

who was initiated into both the Naqshbandi and Qadiri *tariqas*, as well as several other Sufi orders (see below).

The appeal of Qadiriyya Sufism as a renewal movement among the Hui is related to its combining ascetic mysticism with a non-institutionalized form of worship that centers around the tomb complex of deceased saints rather than the mosque.²⁶ The early Qadiriyya advocated long-term isolated meditation, poverty, and vows of celibacy. The head of the order did not marry and eschewed family life, a radical departure from other Islamic traditions in China. Qadiriyya Sufi continue to attend the Gedimu mosques in the local communities in which they live, gathering at the tombs for holidays and individual worship. Qi Jingyi was known for his emphasis upon ascetic withdrawal from society, poverty and self-cultivation, which involves meditation, fasting, prayer, and other contemplative practices. Formalized Islamic ritual as represented by the “five pillars” (fasting, pilgrimage, prayer, almsgiving, and recitation of the *shahadah*) was deemphasized by Qi Jingyi in favor of private meditation. Qadiriyya maintain: “Those who know themselves clearly will know Allah” and “The Saints help us to know ourselves first before knowing Allah”. Union with the divine is accomplished through meditation and self-cultivation, rather than formalized public ritual. “The moment of thinking about Allah”, they maintain, “is superior to worshiping him for a thousand years”. Sufi mysticism in China combines many of the similar themes of the Daoist tradition, and draws heavily on its metaphysical vocabulary.²⁷

A Chinese inscription above the entrance to a Qadiriyya branch tomb complex in Beishan Hui 北山会 cemetery, Linxia, reads: “The Dao is Unceasing” (*ti dao wu she* 體道無舍). Through religious terminology familiar to the Hui in China, Confucian moral tenets, Daoist mystical concepts, and Buddhist folk rituals infused with new Islamic content pervade Qadiriyya Sufism.²⁸ Although the Qadiriyya *menhuan* has al-

²⁶ Forbes (1986, p. 75) regards the popularity of tombs among the Hui as “probably due to isolation from the Islamic mainstream.” On the other hand, Joseph Trippner argued that these “grave-worshipping cults” give evidence of the pervasive influence of Shi’ism among the Hui (Trippner 1961, p. 145). Alternatively, I suggest that the tombs reveal a wide variety of Hui religious meaning, serving as important charters that link different Hui communities to their foreign Muslim heritage (Gladney 1987, pp. 501–517).

²⁷ See Izutsu 1983.

²⁸ Ma Tong 1983, pp. 328–354.

ways been less influential than other Sufi orders in China due to its rejection of “worldly” political involvement, it set the stage for many Sufi orders to follow. By stressing the intimate experience of Allah through the power of his appointed *shaykh*, Sufism in China became a force for renewal and transformation exemplified by a return to the pure ascetic ideals of Islam, as well as initiating a new sociopolitical Islamic order. At once reformist and transformative, it initiated a new tide of reform that swept across China.

The Naqshbandiyya

The Naqshbandi *tariqa* became most rooted in Chinese soil through the establishment of two *menhuan*, the Khufiyya and Jahriyya, that were to exercise tremendous influence on the history of Islam in China and the northwest. As Joseph Fletcher argued, “the history of the Naqshbandiyya is the history of Islam” from eighteenth to nineteenth century China. Fletcher goes on to explain that the reform movement emphasized “...a shar’ist orthopraxy, political activism, propagation of the religion, and a strong Sunni orientation [which] came to mark the Naqshbandiyya in a way that proved definitive in the mystical path’s subsequent history. ... Two other general characteristics of popular mysticism, namely the veneration of saints (misleadingly called ‘saint worship’ by non-Muslim writers) and the seeking of inspiration by visiting and meditating at the saints’ tombs (misleadingly referred to as ‘tomb worship’), were also prominent features of the Altishahr Naqshbandiyya.”²⁹

Founded by Baha’ ad-Din Naqshband (d. 1389), who lived in Transoxania, the Naqshbandiyya order gradually spread east across the trade routes, and by the middle of the fifteenth century gained ascendancy over other Central Asian Sufi orders in the oasis cities of Altishahr, the area surrounding the Tarim river basin in what is now southern Xinjiang. The Naqshbandi order that gained the most prominence in the Tarim basin and played an important role in later eighteenth and nineteenth century politics in Xinjiang was the Makhdumzada, established by Makhdum-i A’zam (also known as Ahmad Kasani, 1461-1542). It was his great-grandson Khoja Afaq (d. 1694), known in the Chinese sources as Hidayat Allah, who was the saint most responsible for establishing

²⁹ Fletcher 1994, p. 11.

the Naqshbandiyya among the Hui in northwest China.³⁰ Khoja Afaq (Khwaja-yi Afaq, 1626–1694, “the Master of the Horizons”) founded the Afaqiyya in Xinjiang, and from 1671–1672 visited Gansu, where his father Muhammad Yusuf had previously visited and preached, reportedly converting a few Hui and a substantial number of the Salars to Naqshbandi Sufism. During this influential tour, Khoja Afaq visited the northwest cities of Xining, Lintao 临洮 and Hezhou 河州 (now Linxia, China’s “Little Mecca”), preaching to Hui, Salar, and Northeastern Tibetan Muslims. Two of these early Hui Gansu Muslims became his disciples and went to Central Asia and the pilgrimage cities to become further trained in the order. When they returned to China, they established the two most important Naqshbandi brotherhoods among the Hui in the northwest, the Khufiyya and the Jahriyya.

Throughout its history, the Naqshbandiyya has stressed an active participation in worldly affairs.³¹ Their *shaykhs* worked wonders, chanted the powerful *mathnawi* texts of the Turkish mystic Jalal ad-Din Rumi (d. 1273), and advocated scriptural reforms. They emphasized both self-cultivation and formal ritual, both withdrawal from and involvement in society. Unlike the Qadiriyya, their leaders enjoyed families and the material wealth accrued from the donations of their followers. They also became committed to political involvement and social change based on the principles of Islam. Some of the Naqshbandiyya orders in China, advocated, I argue, more of a “transformationist” perspective, in which they sought to change the social order in accord with their own visions of propriety and morality. This inevitably led to conflicts with Chinese rule and local governments, causing some orders of the Naqshbandiyya, especially the Jahriyya, to be singled out for suppression and persecution. By contrast, the Khufiyya tended to seek more conformist solutions to local conflicts, stressing personal internal reform over political change. The different stance that the Naqshbandiyya orders took in China with regard to the state and Chinese culture reflects their dialectical interaction with local interpretations of identity and changing sociopolitical realities in the northwest: Under one Sufi tradition there are two movements and two interpretations of fundamental reform. A brief introduction to these two movements is necessary for our understanding of the later challenges to the move-

³⁰ See Trippner 1961, pp. 142–171.

³¹ Schimmel 1975, p. 367.

ments by the Muslim Brotherhood as a means of accommodating their interpretations of Islam to a changing Chinese political culture.

The Naqshbandi Khufiyya

During his 1672 visit to Hezhou, Khoja Afaq played an important role in the life of a certain Ma Laichi 马来迟 (1673–1753), a Hezhou Hui of extraordinary talent who went on to found one of the earliest and most influential Naqshbandiyya orders in China, the Khufiyya *menhuan*. According to Sufi tradition, Ma Laichi was born to a childless couple after they received Khoja Afaq's blessing, and was later raised and trained by one of his disciples, Ma Tai Baba 马太爸爸 ("Great Father"), who later gave him his daughter in marriage and passed on to him the leadership of the mystical path that he had received from Khoja Afaq.³² From 1728–1734, Ma Laichi went on the pilgrimage to Mecca, Yemen and Bukhara where he studied several Sufi orders, and became particularly influenced by Mawlana Makhdum, a man of uncertain origin who Fletcher hypothesizes may have been Indian. When he returned from his pilgrimage, Ma Laichi established the most powerful of the Khufiyya *menhuan*, the Huasi 花寺 ("flowery mosque") branch, propagating the order for thirty-two years among the Hui and Salar in Gansu and Qinghai 青海, before his death. The *menhuan* is still quite active and centered in Linxia Hui Autonomous Region, Gansu, at the tomb of Ma Laichi, which was restored in 1986.

Originating in an earlier Central Asian and Yemeni Naqshbandi Sufism, the Khufiyya order was permeated with an emphasis on a more passive participation in society, the veneration of saints, the seeking of inspiration at tombs and the silent *dhikr* ("remembrance", properly *khufiyya*, the "silent" ones³³). There are now over twenty sub-branch *menhuan* throughout China, with mosques in Yunnan, Xinjiang, and Beijing. Most Khufiyya orders are concentrated in Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia 宁夏, and Xinjiang with several of the original Khufiyya practices in some outlying areas such as northern Ningxia beginning to lose their distinctiveness over time.

³² Ma Tong 1983, pp. 223–247.

³³ Fletcher 1978, 38; Schimmel 1975, 172, 366.

The Naqshbandi Jahriyya

The second Naqshbandi *tariqa*, the Jahriyya order, was founded in China under the dynamic leadership of Ma Mingxin 马明心 (1719–1781). One of the most fascinating detective stories in historical discovery is the tracing of Ma Mingxin's spiritual lineage to Mizjaja, a village on the outskirts of Zabid in Northern Yemen, by Joseph Fletcher.³⁴ While Chinese Sufis have known for generations that their saint Ma Mingxin studied in the Middle East, it was never clear whom he received his "New Teaching" from or where he studied. Middle Eastern Sufi accounts recorded the presence of Chinese Muslims studying in certain Sufi areas, but only Fletcher was able to put the two together. This was an important discovery, as Ma Mingxin's Sufi practice was thought to be novel, even heterodox, and the subject of many conflicts in northwest China. This controversy is mainly over Ma Mingxin's use of the *jahr* in remembrance ("vocal *dhikr*", from whence comes the name *Jahriyya*, the "vocal" ones), which he openly advocated in opposition to the Khufiyya's silent remembrance, the more standard Naqshbandi practice. After an extensive search through arcane Sufi documents in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Chinese, and a final personal trip to Yemen, Fletcher discovered that the name of the anonymous Sufi saint under whom Chinese Muslim records indicate Ma Mingxin was a Naqshbandi Sufi was az-Zayn b. Muhammad Abd al-Baqi al-Mizjaji (1643/4–1725), whose family home was in Mizjaja, the Zabid. Chinese Sufi records only indicate that Ma Mingxin studied in Yemen in a Sufi order known as the Shazilinye, whose *shaykh* was Muhammad Bulu Seni, but did not know the full ancestry and origins of the order. Most Jahriyya only say: "The root of our order is Arabia, the branches and leaves are in China."³⁵ This discovery is extremely significant in the history of ideas, as it is known that az-Zayn had studied in Medina under the famous Kurdish mystic, Ibrahim b. Hasan al-Kurani (1616–1690), who also advocated the use of vocal formulae in the remembrance of Allah (*al-jahr bi-dh-dhikr*). Al-Kurani's students were at the forefront of Islamic reform and revolutionary movements throughout the Islamic world.

Under al-Kurani's student's direction, it is not surprising that Ma Mingxin returned to China, in 1744 after sixteen years of study in Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, with more activist and radical reforms

³⁴ See Ford 1974, pp. 153–155 and Fletcher 1975.

³⁵ Ma Tong 1983, p. 365.

on his mind. While advocating the use of the vocal *dhikr*, he generally opposed the heavy emphasis upon the veneration of Islamic saints which had become popular in China. He also disputed the timing of the breaking of the fast at the beginning of the Ramadan feast with the Khufiyya: he maintained it was to be after the prayer, whereas the Khufiyya allowed for feasting before going to the mosque for prayer. This dispute led to bloody conflicts well into the early twentieth century. As the disputes grew worse and conflicts erupted, Qing troops, fresh from the conquest of Xinjiang in 1759, did not wish to have any more trouble among Muslims in Gansu. They arrested Ma Mingxin in 1781 and executed him as his followers attempted to free him. Three years later they crushed another uprising led by a Jahriyya Sufi, Tian Wu 田五. From this point on, the Qing sought to limit the spread of the movements, outlawing many of the so-called “New Teachings”, primarily the Jahriyya. The great Northwest Hui rebellion (1862–1876) was led by Ma Hualong 马化龙, another Jahriyya Sufi *murshid* (spiritual leader) and fifth generation descendant of Ma Mingxin. His rebellion was responsible for cutting the Qing state off from the northwest, making way for the great 1864–1877 Uighur-led rebellion in Xinjiang under Yakub Beg. In 1871 Ma Hualong was captured and executed, supposedly with his entire family. His body is entombed in Dongta 东塔 Township, Jinji 金积, just east of the Yellow River in Ningxia, while his head is reported to have been buried in Xuanhuagang 宣化岗, a Jahriyya center, north of Zhangjiachuan 张家川 in south Gansu. There is also evidence that suggests Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 (1823–1872), leader of the Panthay Hui Muslim rebellion in Yunnan (1855–1873), was also influenced by Jahriyya. Following the failure of these uprisings, the Jahriyya became much more secretive and dispersed, leading to the establishment of five main Jahriyya branch orders, all named after their ritual and historical centers: Shagou 沙沟, Beishan 北山, Xindianzi 新店子, Banqiao 板桥, and Nanchuan 南川.

The Kubrawiyya

Of minor influence in China is the fourth main Sufi order, the Kubrawiyya.³⁶ An Arab, Muhi ad-Din, is said to have first introduced the order

³⁶ For the origins of the Kubrawiyya, see Trimingham 1971, pp. 55–58.

to China in the 1600s.³⁷ He taught in He'nan, Qinghai, Gansu, and died in the Dawantou 大湾头, Dongxiang 东乡 prefecture, Gansu province. Presently, many of the Dongxiang Muslim minority concentrated in that area are members of the Kubrawiyya *menhuan*.

Sufi Networks and Islamic Resurgence

The importance and extensiveness of these Sufi orders for uniting disparate Hui communities across China cannot be underestimated. Gellner's suggestion that "Sufism provides a theory, terminology, and technique of leadership..."³⁸ seems applicable to understanding the rapid proliferation of various orders during the turmoil of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when China was faced with widespread domestic social unrest and the advancing encroachment of Western imperialist powers. Unlike the isolated "patchwork" Gedimu communities that had been the norm until that time, Sufi orders provided the leadership and organization that could help Hui survive politically and economically.³⁹ During the fragmented Republican period (1911–1949), extensive Sufi networks proved helpful to some Hui warlords in the northwest and disruptive to others.

At the 1985 commemoration ceremony (*ermaili* 尔麦力) of the death of the Jahriyya order's founder, Ma Mingxin, over 20,000 adherents gathered for three days at the site of his original tomb outside Lanzhou. The local municipality had intended originally to refrain from participation in the ceremony, but owing to the unexpected number of participants, the city eventually supplied sanitation facilities and food. The Provincial Islamic Society subsequently agreed to allow Ma Mingxin's tomb to be rebuilt. Two months earlier, a similar *ermaili* was held in remembrance of Ma Hualong, the Jahriyya rebellion leader. A crowd of over 10,000 followers from as far away as Urumqi, Kunming 昆明 and Harbin arrived at his grave in Lingwu 灵武 County, Dongta Township, demonstrating the extensive influence of this order and the important focus the Sufi leader's tomb provides for galvanizing collective action.

³⁷ Ma Tong suggests the Kubrawiyya may have come to China as early as 1370. See Ma Tong 1983, pp. 451–455.

³⁸ Gellner 1981, p. 103.

³⁹ See Lipman 1984.

Membership in various Islamic orders often significantly influences social interaction, especially among the Sufi orders who sometimes distinguish themselves by dress. Unlike the rounded white hat worn by most Hui men, Sufi followers often wear a six-cornered hat, sometimes black. Many Jahriyya Hui shave the sides of their beards to commemorate their founder, Ma Mingxin, whose beard is said to have been shorn by Qing soldiers before his execution in 1781. While these markers are almost universally unnoticed by the Han majority – for whom a Hui is a Hui – in the marketplace northwest Hui can easily identify members of the various orders that divide them internally. The exclusivity of Sufi orders in China illustrates the importance of the question of identity and authority for Sufi Hui. Hui can enter these orders through ritual vow or by birth, but seldom maintain allegiance to two *menhuan* at once. This is unlike Sufi orders in other parts of the world that tend to be less exclusive and allow simultaneous membership in several orders.⁴⁰ In China, membership in these orders is exclusive; changing to a new order is tantamount to a conversion experience for Chinese Muslims, perhaps the only one they will ever have, since most Muslims in China entered Islam by birth or marriage.

The Third Tide: Scripturalist Concerns and Modernist Reforms

The third tide in Chinese Islam began at the end of the Qing dynasty, a period of accelerated exchange between China and the outside world, when many Muslims began traveling to and returning from the Middle East. In the early decades of the twentieth century, China was exposed to many new foreign ideas and in the face of Japanese and Western imperialist encroachment sought a Chinese approach to governance. Intellectual and organizational activity by Chinese Muslims during this period was also intense. Increased contact with the Middle East led Chinese Muslims to reevaluate their traditional notions of Islam. Pickens records that from 1923 to 1934 there were 834 known Hui Muslims who made the *hajj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca.⁴¹ In 1937, according to one observer, over 170 Hui pilgrims boarded a steamer in Shanghai bound for Mecca.⁴² By 1939, at least thirty-three Hui Muslims had studied at

⁴⁰ Trimmingham 1971, p. 11.

⁴¹ Pickens 1937, pp. 231–235.

⁴² Anonymous 1944, p. 127.

Cairo's prestigious al-Azhar University. While these numbers are not significant when compared with pilgrims on the *hajj* from other South-east Asian Muslim areas, the influence and prestige attached to these returning Hui *hajji* was profound, particularly in isolated communities. "In this respect," Fletcher observed, "the more secluded and remote a Muslim community was from the main centers of Islamic cultural life in the Middle East, the more susceptible it was to those centers' most recent trends."⁴³

As a result of political events and the influence of foreign Muslim ideas, numerous new Hui organizations emerged. In 1912, one year after Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan 孫中山, 1866–1925) was inaugurated provisional president of the Chinese Republic in Nanjing 南京, the Chinese Muslim Federation was also formed in that city. This was followed by the establishment of other Hui Muslim associations: the Chinese Muslim Mutual Progress Association (Beijing, 1912), the Chinese Muslim Educational Association (Shanghai, 1925), the Chinese Muslim Association (1925), the Chinese Muslim Young Students Association (Nanjing, 1931), the Society for the Promotion of Education Among Muslims (Nanjing, 1931), and the Chinese Muslim General Association (Jinan 濟南, 1934).

The Muslim periodical press flourished as never before. Although Löwenthal reports that circulation was low, there were over one hundred known Muslim periodicals produced before the out-break of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937.⁴⁴ Thirty journals were published between 1911 and 1937 in Beijing alone, prompting one author to suggest that while Chinese Islam's traditional religious center was still Linxia (Hezhou), its cultural center had shifted to Beijing.⁴⁵ This took place when many Hui intellectuals traveled to Japan, the Middle East and the West. Caught up in the nationalist fervor of the first half of this century, they published magazines and founded organizations, questioning their identity as never before in a process that one Hui historian, Ma Shouqian 馬壽千, has recently termed "The New Awakening of the Hui at the end of nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries".⁴⁶ As many of these Hui *hajji* returned from their pilgrimages to the Middle East,

⁴³ Fletcher 1994, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Löwenthal 1940, pp. 211–250.

⁴⁵ Anonymous 1944, p. 27.

⁴⁶ Ma Shouqian 1989.

they initiated several reforms, engaging themselves once again in the contested space between Islamic ideals and Chinese culture.

The Wahhabi Muslim Brotherhood

Influenced by Wahhabi ideals in the Arabian Peninsula, returning Hui reformers introduced the Ikhwan Muslim Brotherhood to China – a religious movement in tune, in some cases, with China’s nationalist concerns, and in others, with warlord politics. While the Muslim Brotherhood elsewhere in the Islamic world has been depicted as anti-modernist and fundamentalist, this is not true of the movement in China. “There a fundamentalist, revivalist impulse among returned pilgrims influenced by Wahhabi notions” Lipman suggests, “was transformed into a nationalist, modernist, anti-Sufi solidarity group which advocated not only Muslim unity but Chinese national strength and consciousness.”⁴⁷

The beginnings of the Ikhwan movement in China can be traced to Ma Wanfu 马万福 (1849–1934), who returned from the *hajj* in 1892 to teach in the Linxia, Dongxiang area. Eventually known as the Yihei-wani, the initial reformers were primarily concerned with religious scripturalist orthodoxy – so much so that they are still known as the “venerate the scriptures faction” (*zunjing pai* 尊经派). Seeking perhaps to replace “Islamic theater” with scripture,⁴⁸ they proscribed the veneration of saints, their tombs and shrines, and sought to stem the growing influence of well-known individual *ahongs* and Sufi *menhuan* leaders. Advocating a purified, “non-Chinese” Islam, they criticized such cultural accretions as the wearing of white mourning dress (*daixiao* 戴孝) and the decoration of mosques with Chinese or Arabic texts. At one point, Ma Wanfu even proposed the exclusive use of Arabic and Persian instead of Chinese in all education. Following strict Wahhabi practice, Yihei-wani mosques are distinguished by their almost complete lack of adornment on the inside, with white walls and no inscriptions, as well as a preference for Arabian-style mosque architecture. This contrasts sharply with other more Chinese-style mosques in China, typical of the “old” Gedimu, whose architecture resemble Confucian temples in their sweeping roofs and symmetrical courtyards (with the Huajue

⁴⁷ Lipman 1986, p. 21.

⁴⁸ The phrase is from Eaton 1984, pp. 334–335.

化觉 Great Mosque in Xi'an 西安 as the best example). The Yiheiwani also proscribed the adornment of their mosques with Quranic texts and banners, whether in Arabic or Chinese, whereas this is the most striking marker of Sufi mosques and worship centers in the northwest, whose walls are often layered with calligraphy and unique Hui-style art.

Many Muslims supported the earliest communist call for equity, autonomy, freedom of religion and recognized nationality status, and were active in the early establishment of the People's Republic, but became disenchanted by growing critiques of religious practice during several radical periods in the PRC beginning in 1957. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Muslims became the focus for both anti-religious and anti-ethnic nationalism critiques, leading to widespread persecutions, mosque-closings, and at least one large massacre of 1,000 Hui following a 1975 uprising in Yunnan province. Since Deng Xiaoping's 邓小平 post-1978 reforms, Muslims have sought to take advantage of liberalized economic and religious policies, while keeping a watchful eye on the ever-swinging pendulum of Chinese radical politics. There are now more mosques open in China than there were prior to 1949, and Muslims travel freely on the *hajj* to Mecca, as well as engaging in cross-border trade with co-religionists in Central Asia, the Middle East, and increasingly, Southeast Asia. It should be noted here that increasing Muslim activism in China does not necessarily entail increasing religious conservatism, or the rise of a "Wahhabi"-inspired Muslim tide of fundamentalism. Indeed, like the term *xinjiao* (New Teaching) which was a euphemism in the last century to refer to any new Islamic teaching that made its way into China, the term Wahhabi today in China, especially in Xinjiang, is often merely a general term to refer to Muslims who are more conservative, and not necessarily organized into any school or sect.

Increasing Muslim political activism on a national scale and rapid state response indicates the growing importance Beijing places upon Muslim-related issues. In 1986 Uighurs in Xinjiang marched through the streets of Urumqi protesting against a wide range of issues, including the environmental degradation of the Zungharian plain, nuclear testing in the Taklamakan, increased Han immigration to Xinjiang, and ethnic insults at Xinjiang University. Muslims throughout China protested the publication of a Chinese book, *Sexual Customs*, in May 1989, and a children's book in October 1993 that portrayed Muslims, particularly their restriction against pork (which Mao once called "China's

greatest national treasure”), in a derogatory fashion. In each case, the government quickly responded, meeting most of the Muslim’s demands, condemning the publications, arresting the authors, and closing down the printing houses.⁴⁹

Islamic factional struggles continue to divide China’s Muslims internally, especially as increased travel to the Middle East prompts criticism of Muslim practice at home and exposes China’s Muslims to new, often politically radical, Islamic ideals. In February 1994, four Naqshbandi Sufi leaders were sentenced to long-term imprisonments for their support of internal factional disputes in the southern Ningxia Region, that had led to at least sixty deaths on both sides and People’s Liberation Army intervention. As noted above, throughout the 1990s there was increasing Uighur activism in Xinjiang, declining substantially in the early part of the new millennium, and the government’s Strike Hard campaign has curtailed any organized Uighur efforts.

Beijing has responded with increased military presence, particularly in Kashgar and Urumqi, as well as diplomatic efforts in the Central Asian states and Turkey to discourage foreign support for separatist movements. It is important to note that in general Hui, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and other Muslim minorities are not necessarily sympathetic to any of these separatist actions among the Uighur, and it is not yet clear how much support even among the Uighur there is for violent acts, especially the 1996 attempt to assassinate a “collaborating” *imam* in Kashgar. At the same time, cross-border trade between Xinjiang and Central Asia has grown tremendously, especially due to the reopening in 1991 of the Eurasian Railroad, linking Urumqi and Alma Ata with markets in China and Eastern Europe. Overland travel between Xinjiang and Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan has also increased dramatically with the relaxation of travel restrictions based on Deng Xiaoping’s prioritization of trade over security interests in the area. The government’s policy of seeking to buy support through stimulating the local economy seems to be working at the present, as income levels in Xinjiang are often far higher than those across the border, yet increased Han migration to participate in the region’s lucrative oil and mining industries continues to exacerbate ethnic tension. Muslim areas in northern and central China, however, continue to be left behind as Chi-

⁴⁹ Gladney 1994b, p. 268.

na's rapid economic growth expands unevenly, enriching the southern coastal areas far beyond the interior.

While further restricting Islamic freedoms in the border regions, at the same time the state has become more keenly aware of the importance foreign Muslim governments place on China's treatment of its Muslim minorities as a factor in China's lucrative trade and military agreements. The establishment of full diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia in 1991 and increasing military and technical trade with Middle Eastern Muslim states enhances the economic and political salience of China's treatment of its internal Muslim minority population. The increased trans-nationalism of China's Muslims will be an important factor in their ethnic expression as well as practiced accommodation to Chinese culture and state authority.

Internal Conversion

While these various Chinese Islamic associations are as confusing to the non-initiate as the numerous schools of Buddhist thought in China, what is striking about them is their exclusivity of membership. Unlike Middle Eastern or Central Asian Islamic orders, where one might belong to two or even three brotherhoods at once, the Hui belong to only one. Among the Hui, one is generally born into one's Islamic order, or converts dramatically to another. In fact, this is the only instance of conversion I encountered among my sojourn among the Hui. I never met a Han who had converted to Islam in China without having been married to a Hui or adopted into a Hui family, though I heard of a few isolated instances. Fletcher records the conversion of twenty-eight Tibetan tribes as well as their "Living Buddha" by Ma Laichi in Xunhua 循化, Qinghai in the mid-eighteenth century.⁵⁰ After the 1784 Ma Mingxin uprising, the Qing government forbade non-Muslims from converting to Islam, and this may have had some influence on the few Han conversions recorded in history. This goes against the common assumption that Islam in China was spread through proselytization and conversion. Islamic preachers in China, including Ma Laichi, Ma Mingxin, Qi Jingyi, and Ma Qixi 马启西, spent most of their time trying to convert other Muslims. Islam in China for the most part has grown biologically through birth and intermarriage.

⁵⁰ See also Trippner 1961, pp. 154-155.

Hui Islamic Orders and Chinese Culture

The tensions and conflicts that led to the rise and divisions of the Sufi *menhuan* in northwest China, and subsequent non-Sufi reforms, are impossible to enumerate in their complexity. They give evidence, however, of the ongoing struggles that continue to make Islam meaningful to Hui Muslims. These tensions between Islamic ideals and social realities are often left unresolved. Their very dynamism derives from the questions they raise and the doubts they engender among people struggling with traditional meanings in the midst of changing social contexts. The questions of purity and legitimacy become paramount when the Hui are faced with radical internal socioeconomic and political change, and exposed to different interpretations of Islam from the outside Muslim world. These conflicts and reforms reflect an ongoing debate in China over Islamic orthodoxy, revealing an important disjunction between “scripturalist” and “mystical” interpretations.

In a similar fashion, the study of Southeast Asian Islam has often centered on the contradiction and compromise between the native culture of the indigenous Muslims and the *shari'a* of orthodox Islam, the mystical and scriptural, the real and the ideal.⁵¹ The supposed accommodation of orthodox Islamic tenets to local cultural practices has led scholars to dismiss or explain such compromise as syncretism, assimilation and “sinification”, as has been described among the Hui. An alternative approach, and one perhaps more in tune with the interests of Hui themselves, sees this incongruence as the basis for on-going dialectical tensions that have often led to reform movements and conflicts within Muslim communities.⁵² Following Max Weber,⁵³ one can see the wide variety of Islamic expression as reflecting processes of local world construction and programs for social conduct whereby a major religious tradition becomes meaningful to an indigenous society.

In the competition for scarce resources, these conflicts are also prompted by and expressed in economic concerns, such as we saw above in the defeat of the Xidaotang 西道堂 by the Khufiyya Ma Anliang 马安良 (1855–1919) – clearly a case of coveting his Muslim brother’s wealth. Fletcher notes that one of the criticisms of the Khufiyya was that their recitation of the *Ming sha le* 明沙勒 took less time than

⁵¹ This distinction was most fully articulated by William Roff (Roff 1985, pp. 8–10).

⁵² See Eickelman 1976, pp. 10–13.

⁵³ Weber 1978.

the normal Quranic suras by non-Sufi clergy, and therefore their imams were cheaper to hire at ritual ceremonies. He suggests that this assisted their rise in popularity and provoked criticism by the Gedimu religious leaders.⁵⁴ The Yiheiwani criticized both the Gedimus and Sufis for only performing rituals in believer's homes for profit, and advocated the practice, "If you recite, do not eat; if you eat, do not recite" (*nian jing bu chi, chi by nian jing* 念经不吃、吃不念经). The Chinese state has generally found economic reasons for criticizing certain Islamic orders among the Hui. During the Land Reform campaigns of the 1950s, which appropriate mosque and *waqf* (Islamic endowment) holdings, they met with great resistance from the Sufi *menhuan*, which had accumulated a great deal due to their hierarchical centralized leadership. In a 1958 document criticizing Ma Zhenwu 马振武, the Jahriyya Sufi *shaykh*, the following accusations are quite revealing:

According to these representatives, Ma Chen-wu instituted many "A-mai-lis," or festival days to commemorate the dead ancestors to which the A-hungs must be invited to chant the scriptures and be treated with big feasts, thereby squeezing money out of the living for the dead. For example, he has kept a record of the days of birth and death of all the family members of this followers and has seen to it that religious services be held on such days. These include "Grandmother's Day," "Wife's Day," "Aunt's Day," and others, sixty-five of such "A-mai-lis" in a year. On the average, one of such "A-mai-lis" is held every six or seven days, among which are seven occasions of big festival.... All the A-hungs of the Islamic mosques have been appointed by Ma Chen-wu. Through the appointment of A-hungs he has squeezed a big sum of money.... Ma has regularly, in the name of repairing the "kung-peis" [i.e., tombs], squeezed the Hui people for money.⁵⁵

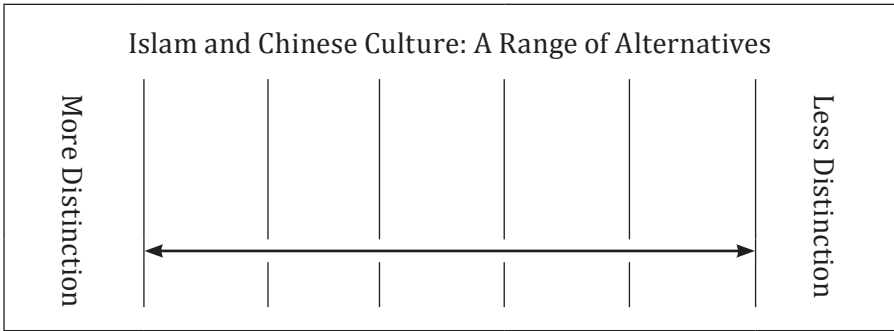
The tensions arising from the conflict of Chinese cultural practices and Islamic ideals have led to the rise and powerful appeal of Islamic movements among Hui Muslims. I explored one way of looking at this tension between cultural practice and Islamic ideals in an earlier work (Figure 1).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Fletcher 1994, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Quoted in MacInnis 1972, pp. 171–172.

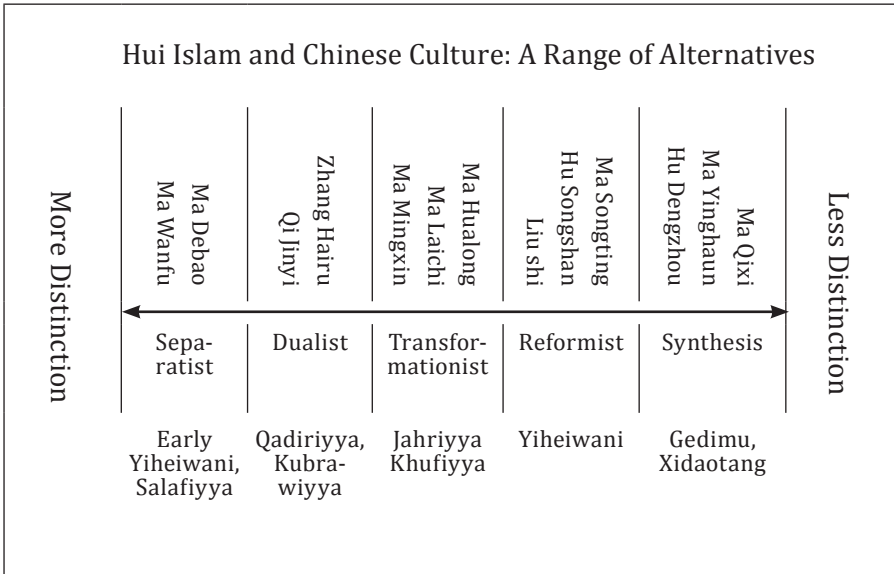
⁵⁶ Gladney 1996, p. 75. This interpretive scheme is influenced by H. Richard Niebuhr's (Niebuhr 1951) analysis of Christian social ethics.

Figure 1



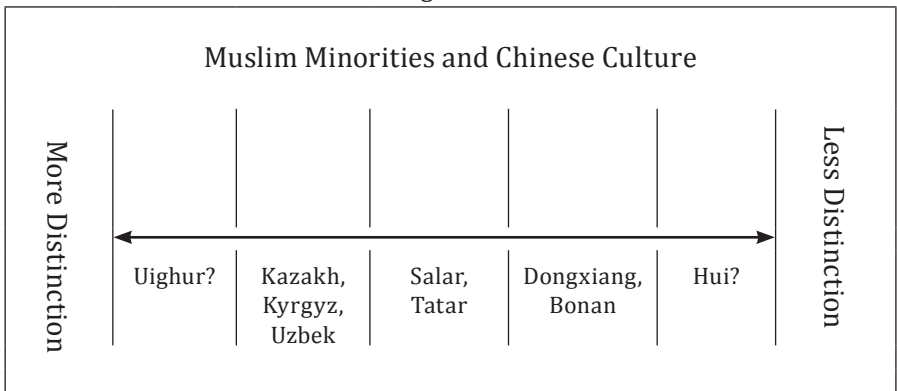
In China there were many attempts to reconcile Chinese culture with Islam, leading to a range of alternatives (see Figure 2). At one extreme there are those who reject any integration of Islam with Chinese culture, such as Ma Wanfu’s return to an Arabicized “pure” Islam. Conversely, at the other extreme, there are those leaders of the Gedimu, such as Hu Dengzhou 胡登州, who accepted more of an integration with traditional Chinese society. Likewise, Ma Qixi’s Xidaotang stressed the complete compatibility of Chinese and Islamic culture, the importance of Chinese Islamic Confucian texts, the harmony of the two systems, and the reading of the Quran in Chinese.

Figure 2



In between, one finds various attempts at changing Chinese society to “fit” a Muslim world, through transformationist or militant Islam, as illustrated by the largely Naqshbandiyya-led nineteenth-century Hui uprisings. The Jahriyya sought to implement an alternative vision of the world in their society, and this posed a threat to the Qing, as well as other Hui Muslims, earning them the label of “heterodox” (*xiejiao* 邪教) and persecution by the Chinese state. By contrast, other Hui reformers have attempted throughout history to make Islam “fit” Chinese society, such as Liu Zhi’s 刘智 monumental effort to demonstrate the Confucian morality of Islam. The Qadiriyya alternative represents resolution of this tension through ascetic withdrawal from the world. Qi Jingyi advocated an inner mystical journey where the dualism of Islam and the Chinese world is absolved through grasping the oneness of Allah found inside every believer. These various approaches in Chinese Islam represent sociohistorical attempts to deal with the relationship of relating the world religion of Islam with the local Chinese realm.

Figure 3



Another way to examine this range of alternatives is to generalize about the Muslim nationalities themselves (Figure 3). In this scheme, the Uighur can be seen to be much more resistant to accepting integration into Chinese society than other Muslims groups, in that they are the only Muslim minority in China expressing strong desires for a separate state (Uighuristan) – although it is not at all clear that all Uighur desire independence. At the other extreme, it could be argued that of all the Muslim minorities the Hui are the most integrated into Chinese society and culture. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage in that they often have greater access to power and resources within Chinese

society, but at the same time risk either the loss of their identity or the rejection of other Muslim groups in China as being too assimilated into Chinese society to the detriment of Islam. In between there are a range of Muslim nationalities who are closer to the Uighur in terms of resisting Chinese culture and maintaining a distinct language and identity (Uzbeks, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks) and those who are much closer to the Hui in terms of accommodation to Chinese culture (Dongxiang, Bonan). While much of this is due to historical interaction and locale, it can be a heuristic way of examining the challenges faced by each Muslim minority in their daily expression of identity and Islam in Chinese society. Here it must be clearly noted, however, that there are many exceptions to this overly generalized pattern, e.g., Uighur (such as Party officials and secularists) who are quite integrated into Chinese society and Hui (such as religious imams and rebellious youths) who live their lives in strident resistance to Chinese culture.

The Fourth Tide: Ethnic Nationalism in an Age of Globalization

China is not immune from the new tide of ethnic nationalism and “primordial politics” sweeping Europe, Africa and Asia in the post-Cold War period. Much of this is clearly due to a response to globalization in terms of localization: increasing nationalism arising from the organization of the world into nation-states. No longer content to sit on the sidelines, the nations within these states are playing a greater role in the public sphere, which Jürgen Habermas suggests is the defining characteristic of civil society in the modern nation-state.⁵⁷ In most of these nationalist movements, religion, culture, and racialization play a privileged role in defining the boundaries of the nation. In China, and perhaps much of Muslim Asia, Islam will continue to play an important role in defining the nation, especially in countries where nationality is defined by a mix of religion and ethnicity (i.e., China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines). A fourth tide of Muslim activism in China cannot but be nationalistic, but a nationalism that may often transcend the boundaries of the contemporary nation-state via mass communications, increased travel, and the internet.

The three previous “tides” of Islam in China, according to Fletcher, were precipitated by China’s opening to the outside world. A new tide

⁵⁷ Habermas 1989.

is now washing across China's terrain. No matter what conservative leaders in the government might wish, China's Muslim politics have reached a new stage of openness. If China wants to participate in the international political sphere of the nation-states, this is unavoidable. With the opening to the West in recent years, travel to and from the Islamic heartlands has dramatically increased in China. In 1984, over 1,400 Muslims left China to go on the *hajj*. This number increased to over 2,000 in 1987, representing a return to pre-1949 levels. Several Hui students are presently enrolled in Islamic and Arabic studies at the al-Azhar University in Egypt. In September 1987, I visited the home of a Hui elder in Xi'an who had just returned from the *hajj*. He was escorted home from the airport in a procession of over a hundred taxis, all owned and operated privately by Hui. His trip was financed by local Hui, who turned over 10,000 yuan (ten years wages for an average northwest Hui farmer) to the Chinese Islamic Society in Beijing. The Islamic Society arranged his travel to Pakistan, where his visa was arranged at the Saudi Embassy (at the time of his trip China had no formal diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia), and supplied him with \$80 US for use on the trip, since the local currency was nonconvertible. Upon his return he traveled throughout the northwest, preaching and lecturing about his pilgrimage experiences and the need to reform Islam along Middle Eastern lines. I met him again in November 1998 and he had since returned three times on the *hajj* and engaged in frequent business-related travel to the Middle East. His trips to the Middle East were often sponsored by local and national government organizations.

Encouraged by the Chinese state, relations between Muslims in China and the Middle East are becoming stronger and more frequent, partly from a desire to establish trading partners for arms, commodities, and currency exchanges, and partly by China's traditional view of itself as a leader of the Third World. Delegations of foreign Muslims regularly travel to prominent Islamic sites in China, in a kind of state-sponsored religious tourism, and donations are encouraged. While the state hopes that private Islamic investment will assist economic development, the vast majority of grants by visiting foreign Muslims have been donated to the rebuilding of Islamic mosques, schools, and hospitals. As Hui in China are further exposed to Islamic internationalism, and as they return from studies and pilgrimages abroad, traditional Hui identities will once again be reshaped and called into question, giving rise to a fourth tide of Islam in China. Global Islam is thus localized into Hui Is-

lam, finding its expression as a range of accommodations between Chinese-ness and Muslim-ness as defined in each local community.

These accommodations of China's Muslims are not unlike those made on a daily basis among other Muslim minorities in Asia. The only difference may be the increasingly post-modern contraction of time and space: accommodations that took over a millennia in China are now being required of Muslim diasporic communities in a matter of hours or days. For Hui in China, Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers in Tokyo and Seoul, and the other wider diaspora, Muslims may be becoming increasingly "unfamiliar" strangers. This does not bode well for the future integration of Muslims into the Chinese leviathan.

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