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"Awakening" Country and Faith: The Construction of Sino-Muslim Histories and Identities in the Early Twentieth Century

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**“Awakening” Country and Faith: The Construction of Sino-Muslim Histories
and Identities in the Early Twentieth Century**

Mengyu Huang

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Prerequisite for Honors
in East Asian Studies

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Introduction¹

In a 1962 lecture titled “The Historical Tradition of China’s Muslims” (*Zhongguo Musilin de lishi chuantong*), Hui historian Djamal al-Din Bai Shouyi (1909-2000) concluded to a crowd of historians at an international conference in Pakistan: “The historical tradition of China’s Muslims is not isolated, rather, it is an inseparable component of China’s historical tradition. China’s Muslims, together with the peoples of all of China’s nationalities [*minzu*], first among them the Han nationality, jointly create the great Chinese History.”²

Bai’s lecture grounds China’s Muslims firmly within the People’s Republic of China (PRC) *minzu* paradigm as members of the country’s ten distinct Muslim nationalities. His quote also illustrates a curious paradox for the role of China’s Muslims within their country’s historical narrative and national mission. As essential cogs in the multiethnic wheel of the Chinese state, they are ‘inseparable’ and important participants, yet they still remain minority voices within the dominant, leading narrative of the Han Chinese majority.

Official division of China’s Muslims into ten nationalities was a relatively recent phenomenon, the result of the PRC’s Ethnic Classification Project (*minzu shibie*) of the 1950s. While the majority of China’s Muslim nationalities is concentrated in the northwest and speaks Turkic-Altaic dialects, the Hui *minzu*, the most populous Muslim nationality, is distributed widely across the country and speaks mostly Han Chinese dialects. Because of the Hui’s claimed descent from historically-Muslim ancestors who intermarried with Chinese women and their

¹ All primary source translations from Chinese, unless cited, are my own.

² Translated in Zvi Ben-dor Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’: The Origins of Chinese Muslim Nationalist Historiography” in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter 2003/4), 86. The original version came from Bai Shouyi “Zhongguo Musilin de lishi chuantong” in *Beijing shi fan da xue xue bao* Vol. 2, No. 2 (1962). Reprinted in Bai Shouyi ed., *Zhongguo Yisilanshi cankao* (Yinchuan: Ningxia Ren min, 1982), 55.

cultural similarities with Han Chinese, they are also collectively grouped as the “Chinese Muslims.”³

Though Muslims have lived in China since the Tang dynasty (618-907), their place within the Chinese historical narrative and the degrees by which they have been accepted as “Chinese” or stigmatized as “outsiders” are neither timeless nor guaranteed. Historian Jonathan Lipman argues that Chinese Muslims, as “familiar strangers,” were relegated to the margins of the Chinese narrative, whether as the exotic *fanke* (foreign guests) of the Tang and Song dynasties, the Mongol-serving conquerors and officials of the Yuan, or the “sinified barbarians” and rebels of the Ming and Qing. Only since the 1920s, amidst the struggles to define and unify a modern Chinese nation-state, did the concept of a Chinese Muslim *minzu*, or nationality, gradually surface.⁴

Transforming “Hui” from a Religious to an Ethnic Label

Today, ethnic diversity and representation in the People’s Republic of China revolves around the magic number fifty-six. The image of China as a single polity composed of fifty-six, happily-coexisting ethnic nationalities (*minzu*) is reproduced and reinforced through a variety of mediums, from commemorative postcards to school textbooks and official ceremonies. A relatively recent phenomenon of Chinese history, this *minzu* paradigm was created to solve the question of representation within a new, Communist-led regime. When the PRC’s 1953 Election Law guaranteed each minority group, regardless of population, at least one seat within the National People’s Congress, the state had to whittle down the over four hundred groups who applied for recognition to a manageable number. Enlisting teams of researchers to create a

³ Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 109-110.

⁴ Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 212.

taxonomic structure and assess each group's claims, the PRC executed an ambitious Ethnic Classification Project (*minzu shibie*) that eventually led to the winning “fifty-six” formula.⁵

By the time of the 1950s Ethnic Classification Project, the Hui nationality (*Huizu*) already became a predetermined group, one “whose status as full-fledged *minzu* was beyond question and did not require further authentication,” despite the lack of a common language, locality, and other markers used to define the majority of China's ethnic minorities.⁶ Dividing the country's Muslim populations into ten distinct nationalities,⁷ the PRC distinguished between the Hui, who were geographically scattered and spoke mostly Han Chinese dialects, and other Muslim groups who were concentrated in the northwest and spoke Turkic-Altaic dialects. This represented a significant change from the late Qing and Republican era (spanning from the late nineteenth century to 1949), when the term “Hui” and its multiple iterations (*huihui*, *huijiao ren*, *huimin*, *huizu*, etc.) was used not as an exclusive ethnic identity but as a generic term for all Muslims in China and the world. Chinese-speaking or Sino-Muslims living in China proper, the population associated with today's “Huizu,” were simply one subset.⁸ Distinguishing Hui from Han, the PRC also rejected Chiang Kai-shek's organization of Chinese Muslims as a religious group (*Huijiao*) rather than a separate nationality.⁹

⁵ Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 71.

⁶ Thomas S. Mullaney, “Ethnic Classification Writ Large: The 1954 Yunnan Province” in *China Information (Zhongguo qing bao)* 18, No. 2 (July 2004), 213.

⁷ These ten Muslim nationalities include the Hui, Uighur, Kazakh, Dongxiang, Kyrgyz, Salar, Tajik, Uzbeks, Bonan, and Tatar.

⁸ Following in the footsteps of Lipman, I will use the term “Sino-Muslim” rather than “Hui” in pre-PRC contexts to refer to the Chinese-speaking Muslims who today under the PRC *minzu* paradigm would be categorized as “Huizu” and the term “Turkic Muslim” to refer to the other Muslim *minzu* groups in China. See Yufeng Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation: Chinese Pilgrimage Missions to Mecca during World War II” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (May 2011), 373.

⁹ Chiang argued that “the difference between the Hans and Mohammedans [*Huijiao tu*] is only in religion and different habits of life.” See Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1947), 39-40.

Despite this official recognition, the Hui was never simply a state-given category. In addition to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) actions, Sino-Muslims' own active efforts to construct their identity, a contingent process with Hui agency, contributed to the eventual recognition of an autonomous Hui minzu, an identity both separate from the Han Chinese majority and from the "non-Chinese" Muslim minorities. Throughout the late Qing and Republican years, Sino-Muslims held different views about whether all Muslims in China should be one nationality or if they should be considered as racially and ethnically heterogeneous while sharing one common religion. A study of this internal debate is necessary in order to understand how the term "Huizu" underwent the curious transformation from a religious to an ethnic category.

Building on Dru C. Gladney's argument that the construction of ethnic identity is an ongoing dialogical process shaped by negotiations between the state and the ethnic group within changing political, economic, and social contexts,¹⁰ this thesis examines the rhetorical and thematic strategies adopted by urban Sino-Muslim intellectuals and how these strategies shaped the formation of a collective Sino-Muslim identity and historiography. With early twentieth-century Sino-Muslim publications as a foundation for analysis, it highlights the shifting, ambiguous definition of "Huizu" as Sino-Muslims attempted to construct their dual identities to maintain simultaneously a distinction from the Han Chinese majority and inclusion within the dominant national narrative.

The Meaning of "Minzu"

The ambiguity of Sino-Muslim identity resulted in part from the ambiguity of the term "minzu" itself, an imported concept that did not enter mainstream Chinese intellectual discourse

¹⁰ Dru C. Gladney, "Clashed Civilizations? Muslim and Chinese Identities in the PRC" in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 109.

until the turn of the twentieth century. As Pamela Crossley observed in her essay on the historical origins on “ethnicity” discourse in China, “Chinese as yet has no technical term for ethnos, or for nation, and thus *minzu* plays many contradictory roles in academic and popular writing.”¹¹ While glossed over as equivalent to “nationality” and “ethnicity,” the term comes loaded with multiple historical connotations.

“Minzu” was introduced to China through an adaptation of the Japanese term *minzoku* (which was itself an adaptation of the German term *volk*) by the 1880s, but widespread usage among Chinese intellectuals did not occur for another two decades. Used to express the emerging nationalism of the time, it carried the connotation of popular sovereignty and originally was meant to indicate majority rather than minority (*shaoshu minzu*) peoples, an embodiment of the “nation” or nation-state.¹² The term “internally denoted the Han Chinese as a minzu that aimed to topple the Manchu regime and establish a more capable self-government. Externally it denoted China as a minzu aiming at restoring its respectable position in the world if not as the central country.”¹³ Due to its ambiguity, the term could refer to modern, social scientific categories of race, nation, people, ethnic group, or nationality, while also reconfiguring premodern categories of “lineage” (*zu*), “nature” (*xing*), “substance” (*zhi*) and “psycho-physical energy” (*qi*), depending on who was using it. While some intellectuals defined the term and its qualifications, others applied it loosely and synonymously with *zhongzu* (race).¹⁴

¹¹ Pamela Kyle Crossley, “Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” in *Late Imperial China* 11, No. 1 (June 1990), 20.

¹² Charlotte Furth, “The Sage as Rebel: The Inner World of Chang Ping-lin” in *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

¹³ Zhang Haiyang, “Wrestling with the Connotation of Chinese ‘Minzu’” in *Economic and Political Weekly* 32, No. 30 (July 26-Aug. 1, 1997), 74.

¹⁴ James Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu’ Within Sun Yat-sen’s Discourse of Minzuzhuyi,” in *Journal of Asian History* 38, No. 2 (Sep. 9, 2004), 165 and 203-204. “Minzoku” is today defined as “(1) a social group sharing many common characteristics in race, language, culture, religion, etc.; (2) a social group sharing a territory, an economy and a fate and forming a state. A nation.” See Kosaku Yoshino, s.v. “Minzoku,” in *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Ritzer, George ed. (Boston: Blackwell Publishing, 2007),

Historiography

A wealth of historical and anthropological scholarship exists on Sino-Muslims, covering everything from their origins in China to their validity as a separate ethnic category. In *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*, the first attempt by Western scholarship to provide a historical overview of Chinese Muslims, Lipman criticizes the extent to which Chinese and Western scholars have accepted Hui as an unproblematic label for Sino-Muslims by ignoring its anachronism when applied to the pre-PRC era. A diasporic study tracing 1300 years of Muslim acculturation, resistance, and integration in China, the book argues that Muslims played crucial roles in constructing Chinese identity during the Qing and Republican periods through “subverting the dominant definitions of Chineseness” as the eponymous “familiar strangers.”¹⁵

Focusing on Hui in contemporary Chinese society, Gladney categorizes them as subaltern subjects, “the very groups, individuals, and subjectivities that continue to be regarded as somehow less authentic, more peripheral, and farther removed from a core Chinese tradition.” Positioning the subaltern “other” as integral to the construction of modern “nationness” and the collective identity of the majority group, he criticizes their marginalization—a process which downplays the central role minorities play in China’s multicultural history. After extensive fieldwork among different Hui regional groups, Gladney observes a high degree of flexibility and diversity in how contemporary Hui express their ethnic identities.¹⁶

On the development of Sino-Muslim nationalist historiography, Zvi Ben-dor Benite has carefully studied the contributions of Sino-Muslim intellectuals in Ming and Qing China. His scholarship finds that Muslim scholars of the early Qing were the first to write a “communal

http://www.sociologyencyclopedia.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405124331_chunk_g978140512433119_ss1-112 (accessed March 7, 2012).

¹⁵ Chapter two, covering a thousand years of history from the Tang to Ming dynasties, covers the entire cultural area of China, while the rest of the book mainly focuses on northwest China. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*.

¹⁶ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 363.

biography” of Hui origin myths that provided Republican-era Hui intellectuals with a rich tradition to build upon. With the advent of the twentieth century, Sino-Muslim urban intellectuals began linking Islamic revival with the creation of a modern, educated Chinese Muslim citizenry, a trend Benite found through examining publications such as *Xing Hui Pian* (Awakening the Hui), a 1908 journal started by the Islamic Educational Association of [Chinese Foreign Students] in Tokyo, as well as the proliferation of Sino-Muslim journals, books, and school textbooks in China’s major cities.¹⁷

Multiple Chinese scholars, including contemporary Hui historians, have studied Sino-Muslim activism and publication efforts since the late Qing, but their scholarship tends to adhere to the PRC minzu paradigm by presenting the Huizu as a timeless, reified entity while providing politically-orthodox interpretations of these journals as an early establishment of Hui patriotism. By linking religious and educational reform with national strengthening, Sino-Muslims had a “unique role in the course of promoting Chinese revolution” and continue to hold resonance today.¹⁸ The existing scholarship in English, meanwhile, remains thin.¹⁹ Responding to this gap, this thesis builds on the previous work of Benite, Mao Yufeng, and others in highlighting Sino-Muslim intellectuals’ influence in the long process of defining a collective Hui identity and integrating the Muslim population in China into the Chinese nation-state. It attempts to provide a

¹⁷ Zvi Ben-dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) and “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 87-103.

¹⁸ For examples, see Gao Xiaoyan, “Lun Xing Hui Pian de Ai Guo Zhu Yi Si Xiang” (On the Patriotism of Xing Hui Pian), *Xibei di er minzu xueyuan xuebao*, No. 5 (2008), 43-45 and Ma Shouqian, “The Hui People’s Awakening from the End of the 19th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century,” paper presented at the conference “The Legacy of Islam in China: An International Symposium in Memory of Joseph F. Fletcher. Harvard University, 14-16 April, 1989.

¹⁹ Other than Benite and Mao’s work, see Masumoto Masumi, “Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese: The impact of the Middle East on the *Yuehua* journal” and the brief survey in Francoise Aubin, “Islam on the Wings of Nationalism: The case of Muslim intellectuals in Republican China,” in Stâephane A. Dudoignon, Hisao Komatsu, and Yasushi Kosugi ed. *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 117-142 and 241-272, as well as Yufeng Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 373-395 and “Sino-Muslims in Chinese nation-building, 1906-1956” (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 2007).

more comprehensive look into their efforts and strategies through offering original interpretations of early Sino-Muslim publications.

On the broader subject of Chinese nationalism and ethnic formation, Western scholars have established the ongoing efforts of twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals and politicians in constructing and propagating “a myth of national belonging based on the concept of an all-encompassing Chinese nation, or *Zhonghua minzu*.”²⁰ This process resulted in the identification and reification of minorities in order to incorporate them into the nation and supply “racialised Others against whom Chinese-ness could be defined or refined.”²¹ “Peripheral” peoples such as Tibetans, Mongols, Muslims, and Miao, were thought of as “ethnic relics destined for eventual assimilation with a superior ‘Han Chinese’ majority via the dispassionate ‘scientific law’ of ‘natural selection’” in order to create a Han-centered Chinese nation. This type of thinking influenced both CCP and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) approaches to ethnic policy in the twentieth century.²² The majority of this scholarship, however, emphasizes the power of the state and Han intellectuals in shaping minority identities, thereby falling into the same trap as official Chinese historiography in overlooking or minimizing the agency of the minority players. By focusing on the role of Sino-Muslims, a traditionally marginalized group, the thesis contributes

²⁰ Mao Yufeng, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 374 as well as James Leibold, *Reconfiguring the Chinese Nation: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and Xiaoyuan Liu, *Reins of Liberation: An Entangled History of Mongolian Independence, Chinese Territoriality, and Great Power Hegemony, 1911-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

²¹ Jonathan N. Lipman, “How Many Minzu in a Nation? Modern Travellers Meet China’s Frontier Peoples,” in *Inner Asia* 4 (2002), 117-118 and Dru C. Gladney ed. *Making Majorities*. Also reference Gladney’s *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People’s Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) and Stevan Harrell, *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), Katherine Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2000), and Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China’s Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

²² Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 165.

to the small but growing body of work that reevaluates minority agency in the Chinese central nationalist narrative.²³

Layout

My survey of Sino-Muslim intellectual discourse suggests three major turning points in the formation of Sino-Muslim identity, prior to its present definition under the PRC *minzu* paradigm. The first occurred at the dawn of the twentieth century with the rise of Han nationalism in the late Qing, the second during the “Chinese Republic of Five Lineages” (*Zhonghua wuzu gonghe*) of the early Republican years (1912-1928), and the third during the wartime environment of the 1930s. With the exception of the first chapter, which provides background, each chapter covers one of these turning points.

The first chapter, “Contested Belonging and the Emergence of Chinese Nationalism,” supplies a general historical overview of Sino-Muslims from the Tang to the Qing dynasties, highlighting their ambiguous status as familiar and foreign entities, accepted as Chinese while still stigmatized as outsiders by state and society. It also explores the major events and trends of the late Qing that influenced the emergence of Chinese nationalism and new conceptualizations of identity.

Chapter one provides the necessary context for the second chapter, “The Multi-Racial Religious Melting Pot: *Xing Hui Pian* and New Approaches to Hui Identity in the Late Qing,” which functions as the conceptual centerpiece of the thesis. Focusing primarily on an analysis of the first independently Chinese Muslim-run journal *Xing Hui Pian* (Awakening the Hui), chapter two examines Sino-Muslim intellectuals’ response to rising anti-Manchu rhetoric and Han

²³ In addition to the works previously mentioned, including that of Benite, Mao, and Gladney, see examples from Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) and contemporary anthropological studies such as Melissa Brown, *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

nationalism through defining “Hui” as a group composed of multiple races—including Han—a broad religious category encompassing all Muslims in China rather than a distinct minzu or nationality. Clamoring to be included within China’s modernization and nation-building process, they defended their belonging to the Chinese nation through emphasizing the universality of Islam while distinguishing themselves—spatially, culturally, and historically—from the Turkic Muslim groups in the Northwest, laying the foundation for the future ethnic division of China’s Muslims.

The third chapter focuses on the advent of the “Chinese Republic of Five Lineages” (*Zhonghua wuzu gonghe*), the Chinese Muslim Progressive Association (*Zhongguo Huijiao jujin hui*), and the state-sponsored newspaper *Huiwen baihua bao*. Threatened by territorial loss and fragmentation, the nascent republican government downplayed racial and ethnic differences. Echoing the multiethnic hierarchical structure of the Qing empire, the state called for the unity of China’s five major minzu, defined as the Han, the Manchu, the Mongols, the Tibetans, and the Hui or Muslim groups in China. Under the republican system, which afforded greater representation rights to the five major nationalities than to religious groups, Sino-Muslim elites accepted the definition of Huizu under *wuzu gonghe*, taking advantage of their membership within the Hui to augment their political clout. They promoted the vision of Sino-Muslim leadership acting on behalf of all Muslims in China while continuing to underline the subtle differences between Sino and Turkic Muslims as a way to defend their Chineseness. Despite all being “Hui,” the greater levels of acculturation and socioeconomic and intellectual advancements among Sino-Muslims cast them as the proper candidates to help other Muslim groups become incorporated into the new Chinese nation.

Chapter four examines the mounting challenges to the Republic of Five Lineages conception of Hui identity, beginning in the 1930s. These challenges included the Japanese campaign to court support from Hui and other minorities in the buildup to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), the KMT's mono-minzu policy under Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), and the emergence of a competing CCP ethnic policy. Interactions between Sino-Muslim groups, the state, and competing agents highlighted the strategic importance of Sino-Muslim allegiance and the influential part that Republican power politics played in shaping Chinese Muslims' roles within China. The wartime environment also provided the impetus for a new body of scholarship that increasingly presented Sino-Muslims with a separate genealogical and cultural history from the Han Chinese and Turkic Muslims, paving the way for the formation of a distinct Hui minzu.

Chapter 1: Contested Belonging and the Emergence of Chinese Nationalism

China is the China of the Chinese. The government of China should be in the hands of the Chinese.

--“The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmenhui*),” 1905²⁴

The history of Sino-Muslims, from the Tang to the Qing dynasties, is a history of contested belonging. Their ambiguous status as simultaneously “Chinese” and “Muslim,” familiar and foreign entities, despite the frequent treatment of these two categories as mutually exclusive, presented problems for the state in terms of categorization and control. Acculturation did not prevent discrimination. Over the course of their presence in China, Sino-Muslims were, in varying degrees, accepted as Chinese while still stigmatized as outsiders by state and society. In this environment, Sino-Muslim elites actively advocated and justified the compatibility between their dual identities. Their strategies evolved with the shifting contexts of mainstream discourse. Changes in the late Qing set the stage for the emergence of Chinese nationalism and new conceptualizations of what constituted as “Chinese,” threatening to again stigmatize Sino-Muslims as foreign entities while also presenting them with a new framework to assert their membership within the Chinese nation. As a springboard to examining how constructions of Hui identity and history underwent a significant transformation in the 1900s, this chapter focuses on the history of Sino-Muslim identity leading up to this period, as well as the major events and trends influencing Chinese and Sino-Muslim intellectual thought in the late Qing.

Brief History of Chinese Muslims from Tang to Ming

While the exact dates are unknown, modern historians trace Islam’s entrance in China to the Tang dynasty (618-907), decades after Muhammad’s famous flight from Mecca and Medina

²⁴ Formed in 1905 by the group of Chinese revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen to protest against the rule of the Qing imperial government, the Revolutionary Alliance portrayed the Manchus as foreign barbarians who illegally usurped power in China. They must be expelled in order to restore rule back to the “proper” hands of the [Han] Chinese. See “The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmeihui*) (1905)” in Keith R. Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 278.

in 622. As merchants, emissaries, and soldiers, Muslims settled in major northwestern trading centers along the Silk Road or in China's southeastern ports, living in communities known as *fanfang* (foreigners' quarters). The Tang administration granted these communities a level of autonomy, and Muslims were generally free to practice their customs. While some Muslims did intermarry and participate within Chinese society, for the most part the Tang government and the *fanfang* communities themselves practiced a policy of segregation.²⁵ Continuing to be treated as temporary *fanke* (foreign guests) rather than permanent subjects, the Muslim population increased during the Song dynasty (960-1276), but Muslims remained registered as foreign guests or local-born foreigners (*tusheng fanke*), even if they were native-born or had lived in the Chinese empire for generations.²⁶ By the late twelfth century, the Song government granted the native-born and multi-generation *fanke* special status, allowing them to intermarry, buy land for mosques and cemeteries, and become officials. The country's booming participation in international trade created opportunities for Muslim merchants to conduct business and start families with Chinese wives. As the children from these marriages grew up learning the local dialects of their mothers, Muslim settlements gained a greater sense of permanence. Despite a lack of specific legal discrimination, Chinese Muslims nevertheless continued to face the stigma of belonging to the foreign and merchant classes.²⁷

Muslim population and social status increased during the subsequent Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). The Mongol rulers set up an ethnic hierarchy system that placed Muslims and other non-Chinese under the category of *semuren* (literally 'people with colored eyes' but with a meaning closer to 'assorted categories'), in an intermediate rank below the Mongolians but

²⁵ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 25-28.

²⁶ Zhou Chuanbin and Ma Xuefeng, *Development and Decline of Beijing's Hui Muslim Community* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2009), 6.

²⁷ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 30-31.

above the *hanren* (Chinese) and *nanren* (Southern Chinese). Muslims served important roles in the Yuan bureaucracy, dominating fields such as astronomy, medicine, weapons manufacture, and foreign languages. Six became prime minister, and the Yuan government established a Huihui al-Qadi (Islamic Judicial) department to oversee Muslim affairs.²⁸ The department was abolished and revived several times throughout the dynasty, based on the decline and rise of Sino-Muslims' political status within the empire. Though Muslims' positions under the Yuan government still showed signs of insecurity, the overall elevation of status during the Yuan allowed Sino-Muslim populations to continue to gain a sense of belonging and make the transition from being foreign *fanke* to native Muslims. Their favored status within the government, however, came with a price—namely the jealousy, fear, and contempt of the lower-ranked *hanren* and *nanren* elite who perceived *semu* officials as the over-privileged underlings of a barbaric, foreign dynasty—setting up Muslims as “both familiar and antagonistic” entities in Chinese society.²⁹

The trend toward belonging continued in the Ming (1368-1644) as increasing intermarriage, adoption of Chinese children, conversion of Chinese adults to Islam, and Ming government restrictions on contact with foreign communities contributed to both demographic growth and acculturation for Chinese Muslims. Discrimination remained resilient, as non-Muslim officials often meted out harsher punishments for Muslims than for ordinary Chinese. The process of acculturation, especially the adoption of the Chinese language, led Muslims to

²⁸ The term “al-Qadi” or “one who decides” refers to a judge responsible for the application of Islamic law. The term “Huihui,” which referred to China’s Muslims during the Ming and Qing, is believed to have originated from the term Huihe or Huihu for the Uyghur state of the eighth and ninth centuries, though these Uyghurs were not Muslim nor very related to the present-day Uyghur people. During the Yuan, Huihui became a generic term to refer to foreigners of all religions, including the large numbers of Muslims coming from the west. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 161.

²⁹ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 32-38, as well as Zhou Chuanbin and Ma Xuefeng, *Development and Decline of Beijing’s Hui Muslim Community*, 7-9.

worry about losing their Islamic faith and values as their abilities to understand Arabic and Persian Islamic texts declined. The concern led to greater efforts to create a Sino-Muslim tradition. The Sino-Muslim literati, educated in both Confucian and Islamic schools of thought, created a new set of Han kitab (Han book) texts that translated traditional Arabic religious text into Chinese and blended in traditional Chinese texts such as the teachings of Laozi. The Ming literati opened the door to a new line of argument—Islamic tradition could reside alongside with, and even improve, Chinese tradition. The Han kitab canon gained popularity within the Sino-Muslim community, but non-Muslim elites remained dismissive of the texts.³⁰

Ethnicity and the Status of Sino-Muslims in the Qing Empire

The Qing dynasty (1644-1912) left behind a legacy of historical identities that profoundly influenced emerging discourses on nationality and ethnicity in the nineteenth century. In her study of Qing imperial ideology, Pamela Crossley defined the court's pressing need to construct "categories of affiliation that would correspond to multiple, simultaneously expressed codes of legitimacy in the rulership."³¹ As a conquest dynasty ruling over an empire that expanded Ming territorial holdings to include Mongolia, areas of Tibet, and eastern Turkestan (the Tarim Basin in southwestern Xinjiang province), the Qing asserted authority over their diverse subjects through a multiethnic hierarchy that placed the Manchu emperor and his clan, the Aisin Goro, at the center.³² The five distinct linguistic blocs in this hierarchy—understood as “historical peoples”

³⁰ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 45-79.

³¹ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1. For other scholarship arguing that the Manchu Qing state's classification of groups was later incorporated into conceptions of the ethnic makeup of the Chinese nation, see Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of the Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998) and Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

³² Jonathan N. Lipman, “A Fierce and Brutal People: On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law,” in Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton ed. *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 85.

by the court and later reified as national or ethnic identities in the Chinese nation—described the empire’s major constituencies and shared, at least theoretically, parallel importance and power. They included the “Manchu,” “Mongol,” “Tibetan,” “Han” (Chinese), and “Hui” (Muslims, generally in reference to Turkic or Central Asian Muslims).³³ Representation became a form of control, working in tandem with policies designed to decrease the actual power of these constituencies’ elites while augmenting that of the emperorship. In the case of Central Asian Muslims, the Qing acknowledged and praised their culture and history even amidst political maneuvers to instate headmen or *khojas* loyal to the court while eliminating those who were potential threats.³⁴

Under this system of categorization, Sino-Muslims, as sinophones, did not constitute a separate bloc. Qing judges, bureaucrats, and emperors all struggled with the ambiguous nature of Sino-Muslim identity and the problems behind defining and managing people who belonged to two “mutually-exclusive” categories—Chinese and Muslim. By the Qing, Chinese Muslims lived all over the country, from Yunnan in the southwest to Heilongjiang in the northeast, from Gansu in the northwest to Fujian in the southeast. They adapted the languages and local cultures of non-Muslim neighbors while still preserving differences, notably in their religious habits. Theoretically grouped under the Chinese category, Sino-Muslims were forced to adopt the Qing queue, unlike Turkic or non-Chinese-speaking Muslims, and followed state antimiscegenation laws in relations with the latter. The Manchu government described Xinjiang Muslims as *shenghui* (raw Hui) and *yihui* (barbarian Hui) while interior Muslims were *shuhui* (tamed Hui) or

³³ One method by the Qing to demonstrate this parallel power relation between these blocs, with the emperor as a universal and impartial ruler, was to purposefully utilize multiple languages (Manchu and Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Arabic script of the Turkic Muslims) in official edicts, monuments, etc. The Qing also used representations in history, literature, ideology, and architecture. See Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 2-6 and 11.

³⁴ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 107-108.

minhui (subject Hui) due to their different levels of assimilation within the dominant Chinese society.³⁵

However, society and state still distinguished Sino-Muslims from being “fully” Han through labels such as *hanhui* (Han Muslims), *huizi*, and *donggan*. Jurisdiction over their legal affairs fell under regular civil officials rather than the military or Lifan Yuan (which handled the empire’s relations with tributary areas and frontier groups such as Tibetans and Mongolians), a recognition of Sino-Muslims’ status as subjects within China proper, but Chinese officials still harbored age-old, negative Muslim stereotypes, highlighting Sino-Muslims’ “non-Chinese” qualities to explain their legal transgressions, conflicts with non-Muslim neighbors, and oppositions to state authority. The Qing’s attitude toward ethnic relations favored segregation as a way to minimize chances of ethnic conflict. Sino-Muslims provided the administration with a special challenge. They were scattered across the Chinese interior, which meant their leaders did not constitute an easy regional or linguistic, “cultural” bloc for the Qing to co-opt. Despite not being recognized as a separate ethnicity, Sino-Muslims lived in close proximity with non-Muslim Chinese who perceived them as outsiders. Their presence, from the state’s point of view, maximized chances of conflict between the two groups. When violence did break out between Muslims and non-Muslims, the Chinese officials in charge often exaggerated the former’s share of blame in their reports to the court. This wariness in turn served to justify appeals to the Qing government for harsh measures to punish and further “tame” Sino-Muslim populations.³⁶

³⁵ Lipman, “A Fierce and Brutal People,” 87-88 and Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 155.

³⁶ Lipman notes that *hanhui* as a term is in stark contrast to the post-1949 paradigm of the PRC, where Han and Hui act now as mutually exclusive categories. Legal cases involving Sino-Muslims in Xinjiang, Tibet, or Mongolia did fall under the military or Lifan Yuan. Lipman also noted the changes in the imperial court’s treatment of systemic anti-Muslim prejudices, with conditions worsening during Emperor Qianlong’s reign. See “A Fierce and Brutal People,” 87-92.

Despite serious cases of discrimination and tensions between Sino-Muslims and the state, most notably in the Dungan Revolt (1862-1877), Qing imperial ideology offered some advantages to the Sino-Muslim elite. The need to stabilize the frontier and prevent future rebellions meant the state promoted Northwest Muslim local elites as administrators and military officers. Since Manchu emperors needed to project the image of an impartial, universal ruler giving fair treatment to all the peoples of their empire, they preached slogans such as “Equal benevolence toward Chinese and Muslim” (*han hui yishi tongren*) and were willing to support or prevent official suppression of Chinese Islamic publications.³⁷ In this environment, the Qing Muslim literati built on Ming precedents to legitimize their place within the Confucian elite and the Qing multiethnic empire. Portraying Muhammad as a Great Sage akin to Confucius and themselves as scholars of both men’s teachings (as Hui Confucians or *Huiru*), their efforts led to even greater constructions of a distinct Sino-Muslim tradition and of Islam’s compatibility with other schools of thought. Following Chinese notions of identity through genealogy or lineage-based ancestral descent and collective history (which grew in importance to the Qing court in the eighteenth century as it highlighted Manchu traditions and prestige to enhance its own power), Sino-Muslim scholars conceived of themselves as the descendants of a diaspora who occupied both an “imagined spatialized Islam” and China.³⁸

³⁷ Lipman provides a careful analysis of the Qing legal code’s treatment of Sino-Muslims and the major social and ethnic conflicts involving Chinese Muslims in *Familiar Strangers*. For more background on Sino-Muslim revolts, see James A. Millward, *Beyond the pass: economy, ethnicity, and empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759–1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) and David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). The slogan is cited in *ibid*, 88. For support for Chinese Islamic publications, see Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*.

³⁸ Crossley elaborates on the Qing court’s approach to racial (genealogical) descent and the evolution of the Manchu identity in *The Manchus* and “Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” 20. See chapter two of this thesis for an account of the Hui origin myths propagated and recorded by this literati. For a more in-depth account of the impact and efforts of Ming and Qing-era Chinese Muslim literati, refer to Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad* and “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 83-109.

Changes in the Late Qing: An Empire in Decline, A Nation in Development

By the dawn of the twentieth century, China had already descended into a state of crisis. Caught amidst decades of civil unrest and foreign invasions, the country scrambled to strengthen and modernize. Urban intellectuals attempted to unify China's disparate populations and mold them into an active citizenry that would rescue the nation from decline. Meanwhile, the Manchu court's struggles to maintain internal order and concessions to foreign imperialist powers, beginning with the First Opium War (1839-1842), eroded imperial authority and prestige while facilitating the devolution of power and military command to regional leaders. In a precursor to the anti-Qing discourse of the 1890s, leaders of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), a bloody civil war with a death toll of 20 million, attacked the Manchus as Satanic enslavers while aiming to restore Chinese rule. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom also carried out a system of population registration that grouped people under categories such as *hanzu*, *mengzu*, *manzu* (Han Chinese, Mongolian, and Manchu). In the last decade of the Qing, these terms would resurface in the racial rhetoric of Chinese nationalism.³⁹

Responding to the major changes engulfing the late Qing, Muslim literati could no longer rely on their previous Confucian approach for legitimizing their place within China's mainstream culture. Sino-Muslim identity now needed to fit within the new framework of Chinese nationalism, dominated by the racially-charged, anti-Manchu rhetoric and visions of a China ruled by the Han "Chinese." Understanding the new conceptualizations of Sino-Muslim identity that emerged in the 1900s requires an understanding of the environment they were operating under. What major reforms did China undergo in the late Qing? What new discourses on nationalism and race emerged during this period? And how did these factors contribute to the creation of a "Han" majority and the spread of revolutionary, anti-Manchu sentiments?

³⁹ Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 342.

Experimentation and debate over the content and pace of China's modernization, along with greater exposure to foreign technologies and ideas, encouraged the proliferation of new associations and newspapers, giving rise to a public sphere of opinions and activism outside of the Qing state's direct control.⁴⁰ Treaty ports, being relatively immune from Qing jurisdiction, often served as the site for Chinese intellectuals to critique the government, engage in free debate, and mobilize reformist or revolutionary activity.⁴¹ Despite embarking on an ambitious Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895) to "adopt Western ideas and excel in Western methods," in the areas of firearms, military administration, technology, industry, and commerce,⁴² the Qing suffered a humiliating loss in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), defeated by a country historically dismissed as an "inferior" tributary state of the once "mighty" Chinese empire. Three years later, conservative factions successfully squashed the Hundred Day's Reform, a program for greater political and ideological restructuring to complement the shortcomings of Self-Strengthening. Perceptions regarding these "failed" reform efforts further weakened confidence in the government, emboldening calls for deeper, more-radical changes, including the complete overthrow of the dynasty.⁴³

⁴⁰ Some historians have marked these changes as the beginnings of a Chinese "civil society" although the appropriateness of this term is debated. See William T. Rowe, "The Problem of 'Civil Society' in Late Imperial China" in *Modern China* 19, No. 2 (April 1993), 139-157.

⁴¹ John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 262-263.

⁴² Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hungchang, "On Sending Young Men Abroad to Study" (letter to Zongli Yamen in March 1871) in William Theodore de Bary et al., *Sources of Chinese Tradition Volume II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 50.

⁴³ For an overview of this period, see chapter one of Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*. Regarding the Hundred Days' Reform, the hope amongst supporters was that the Guangxu emperor would be like the Meiji emperor Mutsuhito, using the legitimacy he represented to stop corruption and those obstructing reform while still being "self-effacing" enough to let an enlightened group of elites make the main policy decisions. While the conflict is often seen as one between the reformist (represented by Kang Youwei) and conservative factions (represented by Cixi) in the Qing court, tensions also existed within the reformists themselves based on their differing levels of anti-Manchu or "anti-dynastic" sentiments. Manchu reformists supporting constitutionalization were sometimes at odds with Kang Youwei's proposals, such as changing the way years were numbered and changing the state name to *Zhonghua* (racial designation for Chinese) rather than *Da Qing* (Great Qing). They also opposed Kang's associates like Tan Sitong who were vehemently anti-Manchu and in support of ousting them from rule. See Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 166-167.

Anti-Manchu Propaganda and Constructing the Han Majority

Anti-Manchu propaganda rose to prominence after the First Sino-Japanese War. It served multiple functions as a tool to discredit the Qing government and provide a collective target to incite the Chinese people into action. Contrasting Japan's success with their country's decline, intellectuals at home and abroad searched for what held China back from achieving the same success. One answer was the Manchus. As foreign usurpers of Chinese rule and a barbaric, predatory race, the Manchus were incapable of breaking the traditional obstacles and outmoded institutions standing in the way of modernization. In the words of Zou Rong (1885-1905), the Chinese people were "doubly enslaved": "Domestically we are the slaves of the Manchus and we are suffering from their suppression, externally we are suffering from the harassment of the Great Powers...our race is on the verge of extermination. These are the reasons that our sacred Han race, descended from the Yellow Emperor, today calls for revolution and independence."⁴⁴ The Manchus became dehumanized and vilified, described as nothing more than bandit spawn, beasts, and thieves who raped and pillaged their way to power. The Han Chinese became a people united by a shared descent and a collective history of former glory and present victimhood under the Qing. Under this construct, an either/or relationship existed between Manchu and Chinese survival. Before they could break free from their external oppressors, the Chinese people needed to rise together to exterminate their internal oppressors and avenge their nation.

Intense dissatisfaction with the state, coupled with exposure to Western liberal and radical ideas surrounding nationalism, revolution, and republicanism, led intellectuals to form numerous associations with an anti-Qing bias. The most notable was the Revolutionary Alliance

⁴⁴ Zou Rong, "The Revolutionary Army (1903)," in Stephen C. Angle and Marina Svensson ed., *The Chinese Human Rights Reader: Documents and Commentary 1900-2000* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 34. For more examples of anti-Manchu propaganda, see Crossley, *Orphan Warriors*, 180-182 and *The Manchus*, 192.

(*Tongmenhui*) founded in Tokyo on August 20, 1905 by Sun Yatsen (1866-1925), “Father of the [Chinese] Nation.”⁴⁵ Between 1895 and 1912, Chinese nationalists “reclaimed” terms such as *Guoyu* (national language) from meaning Manchu to meaning Chinese, *Hanjian* (Han traitors) from referring to Chinese who betrayed the Qing empire to Chinese who willingly served the Qing empire.⁴⁶ In mounting their offensive against the Manchus, Chinese nationalists harkened back to the earlier discourses of the Taipings and Ming loyalists. Sun, while establishing an anti-Manchu “Revive China Society” (*Xinzhonghui*) in 1894, used a revised Ming slogan in pledging to “drive out the Tatar caitiffs [Manchus] and restore China” (*quchu dalu, huifu Zhongguo*).⁴⁷ Calling for the unity of all Chinese, Sun based his thinking in Confucian ideas of the superiority of Chinese civilization over barbarians, portraying Manchus as the latter by virtue of sharing a different lineage (*yizu*) than *Huaren* (Chinese).⁴⁸

Emergence of Social Darwinism and Minzu Discourse

The creation of a racialized Manchu “Other”—as a toxic, foreign element in need of expulsion—juxtaposed against a native Han “Chinese” majority synonymous with the Chinese nation reflected the influence and emergence of Social Darwinism and minzu discourse. Ethnic nationalism was able to erupt during the late Qing because Chinese intellectuals began seeing China as a nation, a community or people bound by a shared descent, history, and culture, rather than simply a civilization or a culture. No longer could the Manchu rulers claim to be a part of

⁴⁵ Schoppa noted the differences between Chinese students who studied in Japan and Southeast Asia and those who studied in Europe and America: “Those who studied in Japan and Southeast Asia became enamored of Western liberal and radical ideas and returned to China ready to remake the world. Those who studied in Europe and the United States tended to study more technical subjects; while they might not have reentered the Chinese scene with the political commitment that others evidenced, they were still affected by life in more modernized states.” See Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*, 50-52.

⁴⁶ Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 227.

⁴⁷ The original slogan was “expel the northern barbarian and restore China” (*quzhu hulu, fuxing Zhonghua*), credited to Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang in his campaign against the Mongol Yuan dynasty.

⁴⁸ The Xinzhonghui started out as a restoration movement. Only after his abortive coup in Canton in 1895 did Sun switch his position and advocate for a revolution to set up a republican government. See Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 166-168.

China through co-opting Chinese cultural practices such as language, dress, or Confucianism. Anti-Qing revolutionaries would point to the Manchus' "foreign" descent to delegitimize their place within the nation.

As Chinese thinkers encountered the writings of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Thomas Huxley, they applied Social Darwinian principles and language to the context of China through envisioning the Chinese nation and people as being locked in a competition with other nations and races for survival.⁴⁹ This included framing the larger evolutionary struggle between yellow and white races (*renzhong*). In his 1902 essay "New Historiography" (*Xin shixue*), Liang Qichao (1873-1911) coined the term *guozu* (national race or state lineage) to describe the evolution of human struggle from past conflicts between clans (*jiazu*) and tribes (*buzu*) to the "highest stage" of impending battle between fully developed national races, with special reference to the Chinese and Anglo-Saxon *minzu*.⁵⁰

China needed to prepare for surviving such an impending battle. Credited as one of the greatest introducers of Social Darwinism to China, translator Yan Fu (1854-1921) argued in his 1895 essay "Whence Strength?" (*Yu qiang*) that group and biological survival depended on "group solidarity" (*qunzhuyi*).⁵¹ To achieve this solidarity, Chinese nationalists constructed a racial majority, the Han *minzu*, connected through sharing collective blood, genealogy, culture, history, and, most importantly, collective differences from the non-Han.⁵² Liang and Zhang Bingling (1868-1936) explained the term *minzu* as *min* plus *zu*, with *zu* meaning an inherited identity or established, historical peoples (the meaning of which had been institutionalized by the

⁴⁹ James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁵⁰ Leibold, "Positioning 'Minzu'," 170.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 168.

⁵² Recall from the earlier discussion of *minzu* in the introduction that the term *minzu* was imported to China from Japan as an adaptation of *minzoku* in the 1880s although it did not become widely used by Chinese intellectuals for another two decades. See Leibold, "Positioning 'Minzu'," 165 and 203-204.

Qing court in the eighteenth century to establish the ancestry and distinct identity of the Manchus) and *min* meaning civilian.⁵³

Zhang (whose 1903 essay famously called on the Chinese to “Slay the Manchus!”) belonged to the “national essence” (*guocui*) school of scholars. He developed his minzuzhuyi (nationalism) through combining Qing discourse on “distinguished lineages” (*bian zulei*) with the social evolutionist concept of blood (*xue*) to construct the Chinese as a *Hanzu* or Han lineage-race united by their common biological roots, their descent from the Yellow Emperor. Zhang similarly employed studies in fields such as etymology and history to essentialize Chinese culture and civilization. Believing that “nature molds racial identity, racial identity informs culture, and culture defines moral character,” Zhang also tracked Manchu descent in the historical record in order to prove their shared descent from the Donghu or Eastern barbarians of the Jin, a sign of their inherited savage, evil nature.⁵⁴ In the rhetoric of revolutionaries like Zhang, by belonging to a different minzu than the Han, the Manchus were a weak, alien element threatening China’s solidarity and survival. Much like Zou Rong’s argument in *The Revolutionary Army*, the implication was that China would be at a disadvantage in its struggle against the white race if it remained shackled to the Manchus. Evolution and Chinese national solidarity demanded their removal.

The New Systems (Xinzheng) Reforms (1901-1911)

Racial language against the Manchus offered the advantage of being less abstract and easier to grasp for the common people when compared to the concept of nationalism. Calling this strategy “expel the Manchus in order to facilitate a republic” (*paimin yi xing gonghe*), Liang

⁵³ Note that *zu* originally, before the Qing era, did not mean a lineage but rather “a small group of people within a locality or a larger organization, and over time acquired the sense of kinship.” See Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 359 and “Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” 20.

⁵⁴ Crossley, *Orphan Warriors*, 181 and Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 169-170.

highlighted racial hatred as an effective way of generating public outcry and, therefore, a mechanism for instilling nationalism and revolutionary sentiments.⁵⁵ Concerns over the brewing anti-Manchu movement and need to defend China against Western powers propelled the Qing toward enacting more radical reform measures in the 1900s. After the Boxer Rebellion (1898-1901) resulted in another defeat and public-relations nightmare for the Qing government, the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) faced pressure to enact a series of sweeping institutional reforms, known collectively as the “New Systems” or “New Policy” (*Xinzheng gaige*), as damage control. The imperial court requested for proposals from governors and sent officials abroad to study and draw up plans for reforms in law, education, government organization, and social policy that often emulated the model of Meiji Japan. In an effort to bring the professional classes of the new elites under state regulation, the state set up professional associations (*fatuan*) with quasi-administrative functions, including chambers of commerce, educational associations, and agricultural societies.⁵⁶

The New Systems Reforms also officially endorsed and outlined a plan for the Qing’s transition into a constitutional monarchy. This endorsement resulted in part from the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), which the Chinese interpreted as not just the triumph of an Asian country over a European power but also the triumph of a constitutional power over an authoritarian regime. Encouraged by the possibilities that constitutional reform offered, the Qing sent missions abroad in 1906 to study the constitutional systems in Europe, America, and Japan, ultimately favoring the Meiji Japanese model because of its potential to strengthen the imperial court’s power. An edict in September 1907 foreshadowed the creation of the National Assembly

⁵⁵ Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 352-354.

⁵⁶ The years for these professional associations’ establishments in the late Qing and early Republican state are as follows: chambers of commerce in 1904, educational associations in 1906, agricultural societies in 1907, lawyers’ associations in 1912, and bankers’ associations in 1915. See Fairbank, *China: A New History*, 244.

(*Zizheng yuan*) as a temporary organ tasked with the mission of setting up regulations and elections for future assemblies, stating, “A Constitution is necessary for the country. As the two Houses of Parliament cannot at once be inaugurated, it will be necessary at first to establish an Assembly of Ministers to confer on State matters and to prepare the foundations of Constitutional Government.”⁵⁷

In August 1908, Cixi formally announced China’s adaptation of constitutional principles and also released a nine-year calendar for establishing constitutional forms, including provisional provincial assemblies in 1909, followed by a provisional national assembly in 1910, and culminating in a full constitutional system by 1917. Membership in the provincial assemblies was extended to males of at least thirty years of age, who were either natives to the province or residents for a minimum of ten years. As representatives of public opinion, they were to be elected in two rounds, by delegates elected by the people.⁵⁸ With property and education requirements determining electorate eligibility, only about 1.7 million men or 0.4 percent of the population ended up being registered to vote.⁵⁹

Out of all the New Systems policies, the one with the most far-reaching consequences occurred on September 2, 1905, when an imperial decree abolished the thousand-year-old traditional civil service examination and Confucian schooling system. Governors-general and governors were instructed to increase the number of modern schools, from primary to universities, as a replacement channel for obtaining degrees and official posts. In this transitory period, when the new universities being created still lacked adequate capacity to accommodate and graduate large numbers of students, Chinese students faced limited options for social and

⁵⁷ Cited in *ibid*, 52.

⁵⁸ The year for full constitutionalization would be reduced to 1913 after an imperial edict on November 4, 1910. *Ibid*, 52-57 and Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*, 55.

⁵⁹ Fairbank, *China: A New History*, 246.

educational advancement. Some enrolled in military academies while others headed overseas to take advantage of the educational opportunities abroad. The state allowed those educated abroad, for a period of at least three years, to acquire degrees back home, provided that they passed examinations at the Ministry of Education and the imperial palace.⁶⁰ Growing numbers of students went abroad to Europe and America, but the most popular destination remained Japan due to its geographical and cultural proximity, as well as the growing fascination surrounding the country's successful modernization and recent wartime triumphs. The Qing had sent students abroad to Japan since the 1890s, with numbers rising from two hundred in 1899 to thirteen thousand in 1906.⁶¹ Roughly half of the Chinese students heading to Japan in the 1900s were sent by provincial modernists such as Zhang Zhidong, one of the main drafters of the New Systems policies.⁶²

The Revolutionaries Respond

The New Systems Reforms aimed to wrest momentum away from the revolutionaries, quelling some of the violent appetite for institutional change with the alternative of a viable top-down modernization program. Despite its efforts, the late Qing reformation process failed to placate revolutionaries who, newly energized after the humiliation of the Boxer Rebellion and foreign occupation of the capital, remained determined to reject the Manchu government. Reactions to the crackdown of revolutionaries, including the death of Zou Rong while serving a two-year prison sentence for lese-majesty and the suicide of Chen Tianhua (1875-1905) in protest of the Japanese government's intention to restrict the activities of Chinese students abroad, created martyrs to further galvanize the movement. Violent cries for “racial revolution” spread

⁶⁰ For more details on the structure and curriculum of these new schools, see H.S. Brunnert, V. V. Hagelstrom, and N. F. Kolesov, *Present Day Political Organization of China* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1912), trans. Andrei Terent'evich Biel'chenko and Edward Eugene Moran, 220-233, 267 and 279.

⁶¹ Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*, 52.

⁶² Fairbank, *China: A New History*, 241.

amongst the student community. To maintain momentum, Chinese nationalists released another torrent of anti-Manchu propaganda. The goal was to destroy the credibility of the Manchu Qing government through attacking not just the imperial system but the credibility of the Manchu people as a whole.⁶³

Divergent views between “reformist” and “revolutionary” camps, commonly represented by Liang and Sun, also propelled the latter toward sharpening its calls for radical action. Following the Hundred Days Reform and his resulting exile to Japan in 1898, Liang reversed his previous anti-Manchu rhetoric, switching from supporting a racial revolution to a constitutional monarchy and protecting the emperor (*baohuang*). He advocated for a “broad *minzuzhuyi*” that emphasized the mixing of races, rather than preserving one pure bloodline, as the path toward evolutionary “racial improvement,” the real key to survival. Criticizing Zhang’s “narrow or petty *minzuzhuyi*,” which called for a racially-homogeneous Han China, Liang proposed that, rather than expulsion, “inferior” races like the Manchus should mix with the “superior” to unite all Chinese *minzus* into one *guomin* (citizenry) or *guozu*. Unlike Sun, Liang believed the New Systems reforms, especially the lifting of the ban on Han-Manchu intermarriage in 1902, proved the Manchus were already assimilated with the Han or Sinicized (*zhongguohua*).⁶⁴ Liang became more concerned with creating a national empire, following the Qing five-bloc model, made up of multiple “historical” groups such as the Manchus, Mongols, Muslims, Tibetans, and Han.⁶⁵

While not completely opposed to Liang’s non-racial concept of China and its citizens, Sun could not agree with the claims regarding Manchu assimilation since that would hurt his justifications for revolution. Upon discovery after his return to Japan in 1903 that Revive China Society members were siding with Liang’s call for constitutional monarchy and gradual reform,

⁶³ Crossley, *Orphan Warriors*, 178-179 and *The Manchus*, 193 and Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 169-170.

⁶⁴ Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 170-171.

⁶⁵ Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 352-354.

Sun formed the Revolutionary Alliance and began utilizing Zhang's anti-Manchu rhetoric to attack Liang and other reformers' views, stressing the link between anti-Manchuism and patriotism even though he shared Liang's concerns over Zhang's racially-homogenous concept of China. Zhang initially favored granting national determination, including territorial sovereignty, to non-Han minzus such as Northwest Muslims, but this was unacceptable for revolutionaries like Sun who wanted to exclude Manchus from the Chinese minzu to secure Han sovereignty while still retaining the Manchu empire's territorial holdings. The ideological divide between Sun and Zhang remained unresolved, leading to a split in November 1909.⁶⁶

Amongst its goals, the Revolutionary Alliance vowed to uphold nationalism and republicanism. In their manifesto, alliance members portrayed themselves as a "righteous [or patriotic] army" raised by the men of Han (i.e. Chinese) to exterminate the "northern barbarians" (Manchus) and restore China for posterity, declaring, "The Manchus [in the seventeenth century]... conquered China, and enslaved our Chinese people. Those who opposed them were killed by the hundreds of thousands, and our Chinese have been a people without a nation for two hundred and sixty years. The extreme cruelties and tyrannies of the Manchu government have now reached their limit. With the righteous army poised against them, we will overthrow that government, and restore our sovereign rights..."⁶⁷ Refuting Liang's view, Revolutionary Alliance member Wang Jingwei (1883-1944) argued that the Manchus still retained their old culture. Rather than properly assimilating with the Han, they tried to destroy the Han racial consciousness through forcing the Han to assimilate to Manchu practices. Evolutionary evidence pointed to the fact that the most successful states were those with only one minzu. Only in this kind of environment could true equality and freedom flourish, because members of the same

⁶⁶ Leibold, "Positioning 'Minzu'," 169-176.

⁶⁷ "The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmeihui*) (1905)" in Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese*, 278.

minzu possessed “innate” mutual interests and amity while those who “are not of our kin are sure to have different minds” (*feiwo zulei qinxin biyi*).⁶⁸

Statements like the above represented the common employment of racial invectives and historical interpretations by Chinese nationalists to endow Manchus with crimes against China and inherent qualities justifying their overthrow. As one reaction to the announcement of the New Systems Reforms noted, “To this day the Manchus are as cruel and inhuman as in former times. Using the cover of false promises about introducing a constitution they seek to ward off the vengeance of the Han. In order to maintain their foul tribe of five million, 400 million Hans deny themselves bare necessities, and exhaust all their spiritual and physical strength.”⁶⁹ Any Qing-led reforms, no matter how sweeping in its promises, still represented the oppression of the Han majority by a tyrannical Manchu minority. Moreover, they would be meaningless and disingenuous by nature, mere subterfuges to distract the Chinese from the true course. Only revolution could provide national salvation.

Closing Remarks

The tactical use of anti-Manchu propaganda to evoke Han nationalism effectively discredited the Qing government while justifying the revolutionary cause. However, through focusing on Han sovereignty and delineating this imagined Han majority as the timeless embodiment of the Chinese nation, this strategy exacted the cost of rejecting the country’s “non-Han” populations. If the Manchus could be so violently branded as foreign, barbaric, and destructive, what was to stop the Mongols, Tibetans, Muslims, and other perceived “minorities” from sharing a similar fate? Worries over this “narrow” conception of the Chinese nation led

⁶⁸ Wang Jingwei, “Minzu de guomin” (A nation of citizens) in *Xinhai Geming Qianshinian jian Shilunxuan* (Select Works from Ten years Prior to the 1911 Revolution), vol. 2.1, Zhang Xiang and Wang Renzhi comps.(Shanghai: Xinzhi sanlian shudian, 1977), 82-114.

⁶⁹ Cited in Y.A. Belov, “The Xinhai Revolution and the Question of Struggle Against the Manzhou” in S.L. Tikhvinsky ed., *Manzhurskoe vladichestvo v Kitae*. (Moscow, 1983), 332.

intellectuals like Liang to return to the Qing's multicultural, five-bloc corporatist model and argue for the inclusion of "non-Han" groups.

But Han Chinese were not the only participants in this conversation. Influenced by the same kinds of forces and debate over national strengthening as their non-Muslim counterparts, Sino-Muslims, whose membership within the dominant Chinese culture had been historically questioned by state and society, responded to this latest threat of exclusion with a flurry of activism to establish their value and membership in the new national narrative. The tensions behind where Sino-Muslims could fit in within competing visions—from Zhang's racially-homogeneous, Han-centered rhetoric to Liang's heterogeneous, Qing-inspired approach—would continue to play out in the coming decades of the twentieth century.

As the Manchu government became depicted as a failing institution, a number of Sino-Muslim intellectuals disassociated from the dynasty and joined the revolutionary movement. Responding to the anti-Manchu campaigns of the revolutionaries, they would portray Sino-Muslims as Muslim Han, as historically-established, native elements of China. Through an analysis of articles from the first independently Hui-run journal *Xing Hui Pian* (Awakening the Hui), the next chapter will explore how late Qing Muslim intellectuals took advantage of the period's emerging discourses to reconceptualize their identity.

Chapter 2: The Multi-Racial Religious Melting Pot: *Xing Hui Pian* and New Approaches to Hui Identity in the Late Qing

Hui is the name of a religion, not the name of a nationality (*zu*).

--Huang Zhenpan, 1908⁷⁰

The powder-keg climate of the late Qing, with its flood of new ideas and reformist movements, heavily influenced Muslim intellectuals in China. The conceptualizations of nationhood, identity, and civic responsibility that emerged during this period offered Sino-Muslims the opportunity to participate in the ongoing dialogue and to advocate for their own visions of China's future. Sino-Muslim elites participated in the wave of intellectual activism, studying abroad and founding new reform-minded organizations and publications in major cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Nanjing. Through addressing their fellow Muslim countrymen and urging them to "awaken" from their current outdated, insulated ways of thinking, these Sino-Muslim urban intellectuals, like their Han counterparts, attempted to unify their disparate populations into an active citizenry capable of rescuing China from decline. Situating themselves within the histories of Islamic and Chinese civilization, Sino-Muslims held onto their dual identities, defending the compatibility between strengthening their faith and strengthening their nation. Celebrating Islam's historic role in advancing reform and scientific achievements, they argued that Chinese Muslims shared the inherent capacity to lead China toward modernization, countering traditional stereotypes that portrayed the Hui as backwards, savage, and destructively violent.

The shifting discourses on national and racial identity, however, also posed serious challenges to Sino-Muslims. Attacking the legitimacy of the Manchu government,

⁷⁰Huang Zhenpan, "Lun Hui min" (On the Hui people) and "Zong jiao yu jiao yu guan xi" (The relationship between religion and education) in *Xing Hui Pian* (Awakening the Hui). (Dongjing : Liudong qingzhen jiaoyuhui shiwusuo, 1908. Reprint: Vol. 1 of *Zhongguo Yisilan li shi bao kan cui bian*. Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1992), 58.

revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) and Zhang Binglin (1868-1936) had mobilized culture for nationalist goals, inventing a racial and ethnic category—the Han—as the dominant political majority. Positioning the Han as the legitimate descendants of Chinese tradition and the rightful leaders of a new China, their discourse threatened to exclude Muslims and other minority groups from positions of influence in the emerging nation-state. New conceptions of Hui identity arose from this environment of opportunity and danger.

Fearing that they would be linked to non-Han ethnicities and, therefore, targeted for exclusion from the Han Chinese nation, Sino-Muslim intellectuals tended to adopt inclusionary rhetoric, emphasizing the universality of Islam and its unifying power. They portrayed the Hui as a group composed of multiple races—including Han—rather than as a distinct *minzu* or nationality. Under this definition, Sino-Muslims could function as Muslim Han, joining the majority of the Han Chinese nation without sacrificing their Islamic heritage. Despite defending “Hui” as a broad religious, multicultural category encompassing all Muslims in China, Sino-Muslims also adopted, in their quest to authenticate the “Chinese” aspect of their identity, a seemingly contradictory strategy of excluding or distinguishing themselves (as Muslims living in the Chinese interior) from Northwest Turkic Muslim groups. They employed spatial, cultural, and historical barriers to accomplish this differentiation, laying the rhetorical groundwork for the future ethnic division of China’s Muslim groups.

Sino-Muslim Activism in the Late Qing

Since the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), Chinese intellectuals had debated and executed proposals to help the country modernize and gain the capability to defend against foreign imperialist powers. They adopted new technologies and clamored for institutional reforms, founding new schools, publications, and societies to advocate their ideas in the public

sphere. Sino-Muslim participation in the late-Qing modernist movements took on a variety of forms. Aligning with slogans such as “save the country through education” (*jiaoyu jiuguo*), “the educated prosper, the uneducated perish” (*youjiaoyuzhechang, wujiaoyuzhewang*), and “those with old education die while those with new education live” (*jiujiaoyuzhesi, xinjiaoyuzhesheng*),⁷¹ reform of the traditional mosque-style education system was a key priority. Advocates of the “new-style education” (*xinshi jiaoyu*) called for spreading primary education, with the eventual establishment of a national network of Islamic schools. They also called for curriculum updates to improve Sino-Arabic instruction and, increasingly, to introduce “modern” subjects such as arithmetic and science. The “old” Islamic doctrine (*laoliao*) should be reformed to supersede Chinese Muslims’ faith toward the emperor with faith toward the new Chinese state. This could be accomplished through careful study of the Koran and Hadith and the writings of famous Sino-Muslim literati and Han kitab contributors such as Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, and Liu Zhi.⁷² The first new-style mosque school dated back to 1898 in Changde, Hunan province, followed in 1905 by the School of Muslim Sources (*Muyuan xuetang*) in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province. Both accepted Muslim and non-Muslim pupils. In 1907, the ahongs (imams) of Beijing’s Ox Street mosque Wang Haoran (1848-1919) and Da Pusheng (1874-1965) formed the Huijiao Pedagogical Institute (*Huijiao shifan xuetang*) to provide teacher training, with Koran studies in Arabic and lessons on Chinese literary history.⁷³

Sino-Muslim intellectuals also founded their own newspapers, most notably Beijing’s *Zhengzong aiguo bao* (Orthodox Patriot) in 1904 and Tianjin’s *Zhuyuan baihua bao* (Zhuyuan

⁷¹ Huang Zhenpan, “Zongjiao yu jiaoyu zhi guanxi” (The Relationship Between Religion and Education) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 14.

⁷² Masumoto Masumi, “Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese,” 122.

⁷³ For a survey of Sino-Muslim intellectuals’ modernist efforts in the late Qing and Republican China, see Aubin, “Islam on the Wings of Nationalism,” 241-272. Also see Ma Shouqian, “The Hui People’s New Awakening from the end of the 19th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century.”

Vernacular) in 1907 by the brothers Ding Baochen (1875-1914) and Ding Zhuyuan (1869-1935). Together with Shenyang's *Xingshi baihua bao* (founded by Zhang Ziqi in 1909), they were called the "Big Three" of Hui vernacular newspapers (*Huihui san da baihua bao*) by later Chinese historians. Publishing articles on a broad range of topics, they explored potential remedies to China's current problems, from ending political corruption to increasing female education and establishing representative legislatures.⁷⁴

In a 1907 article, Ding Zhuyuan lamented the spirit of disunity, dispassion, and distance that existed between China's government and its people: "China historically has not allowed ordinary citizens (*shimin*) to comment on affairs of state, and citizens observe noninterference in state affairs as their duty. Hence, although our country's people are numerous, those who have ideas on national affairs are few. Over the course of time, this resulted in the dynasty is the dynasty, the state is the state, the official is the official, the [common] people are the people. Each fails to consult the others; each fails to protect the others...The people lack a central brain; the government lacks limbs."⁷⁵ Ding expressed reservation over the Qing court's tepid steps toward constitutionalization. He worried that the promises of a representative national assembly, greater political participation and freedom of speech were only empty gestures. Ding then voiced the mission of *Zhuyuan baihua bao*, arguing that newspapers functioned as public forums and unofficial, miniature legislative assemblies (*yiyuan*), disseminating multiple opinions and ideas and letting them permeate throughout society. Once these opinions were expressed, it would be

⁷⁴ See the bios of Ding Zhuyuan, Ding Baochen, and Zhang Ziqi in Bai Shouyi, et al. (eds.), *Huizu renwu zhi (jindai)* (Yinchuan: Ningxue Renmin Chubanshe, 1997), 249-259,

⁷⁵ Ding Zhuyuan, "Baozhi shi wuxing de yiyuan (zhaichao)" (Newspapers are invisible legislative assemblies, excerpt) *Zhuyuan baihua bao*, Sept. 27, 1907. Reprinted in Bai Shouyi, *Huizu renwu zhi (jindai)*, 301.

hard to contain them. Within the pages of his newspaper, Ding promised to publish articles on all matters relating to society and country and let the readers debate their merits.⁷⁶

Intellectuals like Ding perceived the lack of an organizational structure that could best harness the collective energy of a community, in this case the national population, and lend weight to diverse opinions. The same concern was extended to the widely-dispersed Muslim community in China, as Sino-Muslims began creating new Islamic associations to connect with peers. As in the case with new-style schools, the hope was to expand from local organizations to one with national reach, though this goal proved difficult to achieve given scarce resources.

The Qing government abolished China's thousand-year-old civil service examination and Confucian schooling system in 1905, further driving students and scholars to turn to other channels and set up new networks for social and educational advancement. Zhenjiang resident Tong Cong (1864-1923), a Muslim in his forties who had graduated from the imperial exam system at the *xiuca*i, or county level, only a year before its abolishment, founded in 1906 one of the earliest Chinese Islamic associations, the "General Association for the Education of the Muslim People of Eastern Asia" (*Dongya Mumin jiaoyu zonghui*, later *Dongya Qingzhen jiaoyu zonghui*). Receiving support from local Muslim elites, Tong aimed to improve Sino-Muslim education, opening the School of Muslim Sources along with a publishing house for his journal *Yiwobao* (To Develop Us). Starting in 1908, Tong called his supporters to create branches of his association everywhere, although the actual reach of his association remained limited and provincial.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid, 302.

⁷⁷ For brief biographical details on Tong Cong, see Bai, *Huizu renwu zhi (jindai)*, 234-235 and Aubin, "Islam on the Wings of Nationalism," 243.

The Islamic Educational Association of [Chinese Foreign Students] in Tokyo

Despite the limited reach of his organization, Tong Cong was in touch with Sino-Muslim students studying abroad in Japan and inspired them to model their 1907 Islamic Educational Association of [Chinese Foreign Students] in Tokyo (*Liudong Qingzhen jiaoyu hui*) after his. Thirty-six Muslim students from fourteen Chinese provinces comprised the association, including one woman and one ahong. They studied some of the most advanced subjects of the times—such as engineering, commercial shipping, political economy, railway technology, pedagogy, and medicine—countering Han stereotypes of the backwards, uneducated Hui who only engaged in petty trading.⁷⁸ While in Tokyo, these students' perceptions of being both Chinese and a part of an international Islamic community grew as they encountered Muslims from the Middle East.⁷⁹

In terms of political affiliation, the Islamic Educational Association in Tokyo was representative of the division of affinities within China. Some students maintained ties to the dynasty while others shared sympathies with revolutionary groups. The association enjoyed financial support from the Qing envoy to Japan Yang Shu (1844-1917), a Guangzhou Muslim and uncle to member Yang Dianbiao.⁸⁰ His backing lent the organization legitimacy in the eyes of the government, while the overseas environment granted members more freedom to criticize the Qing institution. Multiple association members belonged to Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary

⁷⁸ Ma Shouqian, "The Hui People's New Awakening from the end of the 19th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century." Also see Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 1999), 84.

⁷⁹ Masumoto Masumi, "Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese," 122. For more on Muslim intellectuals from the Middle East who studied in Japan, see Komatsu Hisao, "Muslim Intellectuals and Japan: A Pan-Islamist mediator, Abdurreshid Ibrahim," in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, transformation, communication*, 273-288.

⁸⁰ A photo of Yang Shu and the association's members, taken outside the Qing embassy on June 1907, is included in the first issue of the association's journal *Xing Hui Pian*, and the visit is recorded in "Liudong Qingzhen jiaoyu hui ji shi" (Chronicles of the Islamic Educational Association of [Chinese Foreign Students] in Tokyo) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 102. Yang is referred to in the article by his other name Yang Xingtian. Also see his biography in Bai, *Huizu renwu zhi (jindai)*, 227.

Alliance (*Tongmenhui*), which promoted reviving China through expelling the Qing government and establishing a republican state. Heavily influenced by the Tongmenhui's racial and nationalist discourse, these members actively sought to legitimize Sino-Muslims as Han Chinese, the population most capable of ushering in this revival.

Revolutionary members included association secretary Huang Zhenpan (1873-1942), cahier Zhao Zhongqi (1878-1970), and Liu Qing'en (1869-1929).⁸¹ Huang, who studied political science and economics at Waseda University, enjoyed a career in law and was elected vice president of the Shanghai Bar Association on May 1914, serving in the post for one year.⁸² Liu and Zhao both entered military careers. Hailing from Sichuan, Tokyo Imperial Academy student Liu Qing'en (T.E. Liu) had participated in an overseas student debate in 1904 where he argued in favor of revolution rather than constitutional monarchy.⁸³ In addition to Japan, he traveled abroad to Germany and the United States, developing an interest in firearms technology and creating the semi-automatic "Chinese Liu rifle," a first for China, in 1915 as head of the Hanyang Arsenal. Graduating from the Imperial Japanese Army Academy in 1909, Zhao became an instructor in the Baoding Military Academy before transferring to Shanghai in 1911, where he participated in the Xinhai Revolution to overthrow the Qing dynasty. In 1914, he returned to his native Yunnan and continued serving in military office.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid. For a full list of all thirty-six members of the Islamic Educational Association in Tokyo, including their native place and areas of study, see *Xing Hui Pian*, 105-108.

⁸² Xu Xiaqun, *Chinese Professionals & the Republican State : The Rise of Professional Associations in Shanghai, 1912-1937* (Port Chester: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 220.

⁸³ Ma Shouqian, "The Hui People's New Awakening from the end of the 19th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century."

⁸⁴ In the modern day Hui historiography within the People's Republic of China, the biographies of all three members have been constructed to tout them as exemplary patriots. For a biography of Zhao Zhongqi, see the governor of Ningxia and vice secretary of the CPC Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region committee Wang Zhengwei's *Zhongguo Huizu Aiguo Yingcai* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2010). For Liu Qing'en, see his entry in the Wikipedia-style Baidu Encyclopedia, <http://baike.baidu.com/view/3001013.htm>. The Chinese Liu rifle is on display in the U.S. National Firearms Museum and earned Liu a mention in the National Rifle Association's website, <http://www.nrapublications.org/index.php/9699/chinese-liu-rifle/>. For Huang, see Huang Chengjun and Dong

Heading the association was Yunnan native Bao Tingliang, a law student at Hosei University who spent seven years abroad in Japan. After returning to China, Bao wrote extensively on Chinese constitutional law, authoring a 1910 book *On the Qing Constitution*. He joined local representatives such as the Zhejiang assembly's Chen Jingdi and Shen Junru in criticizing the Qing court's "Law on Associations and Assembly" (*Jie she ji hui lü*), enacted on March 1908, for its restrictions on the freedom of assembly.⁸⁵ Restrictions were especially heavy for political associations, with those advocating for constitutional monarchy treated more leniently while those arguing for greater reforms faced tighter controls such as a size cap of one hundred members. Bao especially critiqued the restrictions placed against teacher and student groups, writing, "Today those who understand law and politics largely work in education. If this restriction is added, it will be a huge obstacle to the development of political parties."⁸⁶

Awakening the Hui

In 1908, the Islamic Educational Association published the first independently Sino-Muslim-run journal, *Xing Hui Pian* (Awakening the Hui), which featured articles from both the Sino-Muslim population abroad in Japan and back in China.⁸⁷ It also included one article from a non-Muslim Chinese. Addressing predominantly a Chinese Muslim audience, the journal broadcasted the association's goals, which were an amalgam of patriotic ideals popular among

Fengding,, "Tie Gu Zheng Zheng, Ning She Bu Wan—Ji Sun Zhongshan de Fa Lü Gu Wen Huang Zhenpan," Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region Islamic Association (Published April 16, 2010),

<http://www.nxislam.net.cn/nxmsl/html/?97.html>

⁸⁵ The Qing law on associations and assembly prohibited "assembly with the intent of subversive activity against the national polity, the Revolutionary alliance (*Tongmenhui*), giving mass speeches (*li hui yan shuo*)," among others. It also banned all secret societies. Qing historian Zhang Yan has written on the law's stipulations in "Jie she ji hui lü yu da qing bao lü (1)" in *Qing chao de beng kui: 1908 di guo wang shi* (Chongqing: Chongqing chu ban she, 2007), http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/chapter_42407_29091.html Also see Liu Kanglei, "Min jian mi mi she hui yu wan qing jie she fa lü" (Non-governmental Secret Societies and the Late Qing's Freedom of Assembly Laws) in *Zhongnan da xue xue bao* 6 (2010). http://www.txwtwx.cn/Article_Print.asp?ArticleID=835

⁸⁶ Bao Tingliang, *Da Qing Xian Fa Lun* (Shanghai: Shanghai mo fang shu ju, 1910. Reprinted by Shanghai jiang dong shu lin in 1911), 465. Cited in Liu Kanglei, "Min jian mi mi she hui yu wan qing jie she fa lü."

⁸⁷ In a nod to Tong Cong and his influence on the Islamic Educational Association in Tokyo, *Xing Hui Pian* includes two of Tong's articles: "Shuo Tuan" (On Unity) and "Yuan Ke" (Original Lesson), 93-97.

the Chinese student population in Japan and Islamic revivalist thought. Major topics included strategies for strengthening the Chinese nation and people, Islamic reform, and the establishment of a new, universal education system for Hui communities. The pamphlet was distributed free of charge and mailed back to various provinces in China. Despite ending after one issue, *Xing Hui Pian* established several important rhetorical and thematic arguments that would influence later conceptualizations of Hui identity.

Writers in *Xing Hui Pian* maintained that the Muslims in China never consisted of only one minzu, making “Hui” a religious rather than a nationality label.⁸⁸ Even the periodical’s lone non-Muslim contributor, Li Shaoshan, focused more on the religious (*zongjiao*) rather than the ethnic (*minzu*) nature of the Hui through a comparison of Huijiao and Confucianism, though he never directly tackled the debate.⁸⁹ Sino-Muslim intellectuals sought to equate Islam with other universal religions, writing that just as they did not see the Buddhist or Christian populations in China becoming one nationality, Muslims also did not belong to one pure nationality (*fei danchun zhi minzu*), a fact proven by the diversity of Muslims around the world.⁹⁰ It would be a mistake to believe that all Muslims in China belonged to one minzu simply on the basis that Islam has reached the Uighurs (*Huihe*) and Islamic tribes (*Huibu*) in China’s Northwest.⁹¹ Stressing Islam’s power as a religion to unite different races into one group with a common origin and goal, Bao Tingliang wrote:

China’s races (*zhongzu*) can be divided into Manchu, Han, Hui, Mongolian, Tibetan, Yi, Miao, and more. Each has its own complicated relationships. Our religion, other than [the Muslims] in Xinjiang, does not belong to purely one race (*fei chunran weiyi zhongzu*). There are people from the Manchu, Han, Monglian, Tibetan, Yi, Miao, and other groups

⁸⁸ See Huang Zhenpan, “Lun Hui min,” 58-60.

⁸⁹ Also known by the name Li Zhaozhi. See Li Shaoshan, “Huijiao zhen yu ce” (Huijiao Movement and Policy) in *Xing Hui Pian*.

⁹⁰ Zhao Zhongqi, “Zhong guo hui jiao zhi lai li” (The Origin of Islam in China) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 73-74. Buddhism is mentioned in Huang, “Lun Hui min,” 60.

⁹¹ Huang, “Lun Hui min,” 58.

who have adopted our religion. Through deeply engaging in religion, people can forget that originally they were not of one race. Through adopting the same religion, they become the Hui people (*Hui ren*) and share the same origin. Even though our religion and country are made of different races, the most important part is that we face the same external world and our internal differences are but what we have attributed to ourselves. To the outside world, we are viewed the same [as Chinese].⁹²

By emphasizing the “multi-racial” nature of the category Hui and the “multi-racial” nature of China, Bao portrayed the Hui as a microcosm of the country, following a strategy to establish Hui as genealogically and culturally “Chinese.” Yet in trying to subtly highlight the Muslims within the interior as the key embodiment of this advanced multicultural, Chinese ideal, Bao contradicted his argument that all *Hui ren* shared the same origins. By contrasting the “multi-racial” Sino-Muslims with the “mono-racial” Turkic Muslims in the Northwest, namely Xinjiang, Bao worked to distance Sino-Muslims from the country’s other Muslim groups.

Despite fashioning the Hui as a broad category including all Muslims in China, *Xing Hui Pian* intellectuals also sowed the seeds of exclusion, laying the rhetorical groundwork for the future ethnic division of China’s Muslim groups. They argued that Turkic Muslims such as the *Huihe* or present-day Uighurs, while part of the larger community of “*Huijiao*” or Islamic believers, were decidedly non-Han since they (unlike Chinese Muslims) only lived on the outskirts of “China Proper” and spoke a foreign tongue. Huang Zhenpan, who penned the *Xing Hui Pian* editorial, made sure to note that he was addressing the Chinese-speaking Muslims living “within the limits of the Heilung River in the north, the Tianshan mountains in the west, and the seas of the east and the south,”⁹³ leaving other Muslim groups out of the conversation. Another writer, Zhao Zhongqi, distanced these Chinese-interior Muslims from Xinjiang Muslims by categorizing them as vastly outnumbering the latter, with a population of above 80 million (an

⁹² Bao Tingliang, “*Quan tong ren fu yu jiao yu zhi ze ren shuo*” (Encouraging Peers to Take on the Responsibility of Education) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 53.

⁹³ Huang Zhenpan, “*Xing hui pian fa kan xu*” (Foreword) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 7.

overestimate) and with advanced education.⁹⁴ This demarcation and spatial rendering was not limited to *Xing Hui Pian* writers. Other Sino-Muslim intellectuals, such as Tianjin journalist Ding Zhuyuan, reiterated that Islam was undeniably a religion, not a nationality. Muslims living in the interior provinces could not be equated with the Huibu living in China's western border regions.⁹⁵

Defending Sino-Muslim Identity Through Origin Myths

Just as the rise of Chinese nationalism resulted in the propagation of purist myths concerning the Han Chinese's common descent from the Yellow Emperor,⁹⁶ the rise of Chinese Muslim nationalism resulted in a return to Ming and Qing Sino-Muslim origin myths, recalibrated to support a kind of Sino-Muslim purism. Though these origin myths had been in circulation among China's Islamic communities as part of an oral tradition, Sino-Muslim literati during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the first to propagate the myths in written word, incorporating them into the Sino-Muslim historiography.

One popular myth, "Origins of the Hui" (*Huihui yuanlai*), was first recorded in 1712 by Sino-Muslim scholar Liu Sanjie. In the myth, the Tang emperor Taizong (599-649) dreamt one night that the roof of his palace was collapsing. Just as a beam threatened to fall on him, a man in a green robe and white turban appeared and blocked it. When the emperor asked his officials to interpret his dream, the official Xu Mao answered that the dream meant the Tang empire was in danger and in need of Muslims from the Western Islamic lands for defense. Taizong sent envoys to Arabia to ask for a delegation of Muslims to come to China and assist the Tang. A companion of the Prophet Muhammad, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, led a delegation to China. Determining that Islam was compatible with Confucianism, Taizong allowed the delegation to settle down, build

⁹⁴ Zhao Zhongqi, "Zhong guo hui jiao zhi lai li," 71-73.

⁹⁵ Ma Shouqian, "The Hui People's New Awakening," 15-16.

⁹⁶ Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 117.

mosques, and intermarry with Chinese women. The Prophet Muhammad also permitted the delegation to stay in China, instructing members to fulfill their mission in China and to keep alive their Islamic tradition. Later generations of Sino-Muslims were the direct descendants of the delegation members and their Chinese wives.⁹⁷

Crafted as a “communal biography,” *Huihui yuanlai* and similar Chinese Islamic legends propagated during the Qing endowed Sino-Muslims with a timeless mission to protect the great Chinese empire, augmenting their place within the state. By portraying them as descendants of Muslims who came to China not only with the blessing of the Prophet Muhammad but also the express invitation of the Chinese imperial court, the myths validated their dual Chinese and Muslim identities. Furthermore, Sino-Muslim legends drew parallels between Muhammad and Confucius, depicting both as great sages. The integration of Islam and Confucianism positioned the Muslim literati as important members of both the Chinese Confucian literati and Islamic elite.⁹⁸ The myths also borrowed from Buddhist traditions, using the dream motif common in Chinese Buddhist origin myths. An account of the journey of Waqqas, recorded on the plaque in front of a tomb dedicated to him in Guangzhou’s Huaisheng Mosque and in a nineteenth-century travelers’ guide to major Chinese Islamic tomb sites, portrayed him as a figure similar to the Tang monk Xuanzang who traveled to India to bring Buddhist scripture back to Emperor Taizong. Sent on a mission by the Prophet Muhammad to reveal Koranic scripture to China, Waqqas arrived in Chang’an and so impressed Taizong with his “great depth of learning” and moral virtue that the emperor built a Great Mosque for Waqqas and his attendants. Other versions of this story emphasized Waqqas’s allegiance to the Tang court rather than a foreign

⁹⁷ Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 83-84.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 87-88.

power. In these versions, it was Taizong, not Muhammad, who sent Waqqas on his quest to bring Islamic scripture to China.⁹⁹

The writers of *Xing Hui Pian* utilized this origin myth to establish the Sino-Muslims as genealogically and historically “Chinese,” as well as to stress that Muslims entered China and became Chinese through peaceful, legitimate means—namely through government sanction, intermarriage, and a history of gradual conversion. Defining Sino-Muslims based on the *Huihui yuanlai*, Huang presented the myth as if it was fact and even revised the story to imply that the ancestors of Sino-Muslims were fully Han:

Ever since Muhammad, praise be to him [*xuzhi*], sent his envoys to China in the year 628 A.D., the second year of the Tang Zhenguan emperor, there were many people in the Northern provinces and southern provinces that believed in his teaching. By now the Chinese people who entered the Hui teaching [*zhongguo ru Huijiao zhe*] have increased to a multitude. From this we can see that the Teaching [Islam] was not transmitted from the Uyghurs [*Huihe*], and the believers are not merely a part of the various Hui tribes of Xinjiang [*Huibu*].¹⁰⁰

Rather than being members of the foreign Muslim delegation, the ancestors of Sino-Muslims were Han Chinese who came into contact with the delegation and voluntarily converted to Islam, becoming Hui through this process. Stressing that this history of Islam in China proves that the religion did not simply belong to the Huihe and Huibu, Huang employed the myth as a tool to, once again, create a distinction between Sino and Turkic Muslims.

The origin myth made multiple appearances within *Xing Hui Pian*, each time presented as historic truth. Writing on the origins of Chinese Islam, Zhao Zhongqi emphasized that Huijiao

⁹⁹ “Hui Legends of the Companions of the Prophet” in *China Heritage Newsletter*, No. 5 (March 2006), China Heritage Project, The Australian National University, http://www.chinaheritageneewsletter.org/articles.php?searchterm=005_legends.inc&issue=005 (accessed May 16, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Huang Zhenpan, “Lun Hui min,” 58. The translation comes from Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama,’” 91-92, where Benite points out the significance of Huang’s argument and how it sets up the history of the Hui as a history of gradual conversion. There is an amendment to Benite’s translation. In the original quote from *Xing Hui Pian*, Huang uses “zhongguo ru Huijiao zhe” or “those in China who entered the Hui religion.” Benite’s translation is based on a citation of Huang’s passage in Bai Shouyi, *Huizu renwu zhi (jindai)*, 236 that quotes Huang as writing “zhongguoren ru Huijiao zhe” or “the Chinese people who entered the Hui teaching,” making Huang’s suggestion that the Hui are descended from fully Chinese converts to Islam more overt.

entered China “not through war but through peace, not through force but through natural means.” He used the myth to explain the characteristics of modern day Sino-Muslims, such as their diaspora across the Chinese interior, writing, “Taizong sanctioned the construction of a mosque in Xian province and allowed three thousand Hui soldiers to stay in China, who were used in different provinces as soldiers. Thus, today we find Huijiao in several different provinces.” As these soldiers settled among the multiple provinces and married Chinese wives, the Sino-Muslim population grew over the years. Zhao added a linguistic strategy to establish these Muslims’ acculturation and evolution toward “Chineseness,” explaining, “When the Hui first entered China, their last names were different, but today they have regular Chinese surnames.”¹⁰¹ Interested in how Japan’s martial spirit and tradition, in the form of bushido, enabled the island nation to become a modern military power, another writer Wang Tingzhi cited the Tang’s request for an Islamic army to help the dynasty as proof of the Muslim martial tradition, signifying their ability and commitment to protecting the country.¹⁰²

Saving Country, Saving Faith

In order to argue for their inclusion within the Chinese nation, Sino-Muslims worked to demonstrate that they were active citizens contributing to its cause. Ding Zhuyuan urged his fellow Muslims to see themselves as Chinese citizens (*Zhongguo de guomin*) and argued that once their country strengthened, their religion would follow suit. Equating love of country with love of Islam, he proclaimed in 1908 that “to protect the country [*guo*] means precisely to protect the teaching [*jiao*-Islam]; to love the country is to love oneself” and that “in China no matter what teaching [one follows], [all] are Chinese people, [and must] work hard with one heart to preserve the great cause of the nation [*guojia dashi*]. If there is no nation [*mei le guo*], how can

¹⁰¹ Zhao Zhongqi, “Zhong guo hui jiao zhi lai li,” 72-73.

¹⁰² Wang Tingzhi, “Huijiao yu wu shi dao” (Huijiao and Bushido) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 65.

the teaching be preserved?”¹⁰³ In *Xing Hui Pian*, Bao Tingliang warned that the Hui religion was “hanging on by a thread” due to a Chinese Muslim population deficient in its knowledge of how to modernize and protect its race (*jinhua baozhong zhi dao que yan*). He posited the same call to action, asking, “A nation and its people are closely connected...my peers [fellow Hui] are also a part of China, how can you not care about the country and be self-defeating and place yourself on the outside [not be involved]?”¹⁰⁴

The above cries for action linked the fate of China’s Muslims to the fate of the country itself. If China failed to adapt, remaining on its current path toward repeated subjugation by stronger powers, the Hui community within its borders would, by extension, also come under attack. Rather than sit idle, Chinese Muslims had reason to invest themselves in the national mission, to join the charge to become equipped and educated in the necessary skills for survival. Sino-Muslim intellectuals critiqued the current Hui community in China as being too insulated and caught in traditional, outdated modes of thinking. One prime example was the Hui’s “narrow” educational focus on mainly classical religious texts without also incorporating new scholarship and subjects such as science and mathematics.

While critiquing this traditional education for providing only basic knowledge to train ahongs but not a citizen’s education to help Muslims contribute to the nation,¹⁰⁵ Sino-Muslim intellectuals nevertheless refuted the idea that Islam itself was a conservative, backwards practice that would impede modernization. To the contrary, it possessed immense potential to facilitate modernization. China’s Muslims had lost touch with Islam’s original reformist ideals and needed to return to them. Pointing to Islam’s numerous contributions to the world, these intellectuals

¹⁰³ Translated in Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 91. Originally cited in Bai Shouyi, *Huizu renwu zhi (jindai)*, 251.

¹⁰⁴ Bao Tingliang, “Quan tong ren fu yu jiao yu zhi ze ren shuo,” 52 and 54.

¹⁰⁵ Zhao Zhongqi, “Lun zhongguo huijiao zhi guomin jiaoyu” (On China’s Huijiao’s Citizen Education) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 75.

argued that Sino-Muslims, in harnessing this energy, could contribute to China as well. Saving the faith became intimately intertwined with saving the country.

Yet how exactly would Sino-Muslims save the nation while also reviving their religion's capacity for modernity? Wang Tingzhi offered one answer. Using the term "bushido" (*wushidao*) in a more generalized sense, as a system of military discipline, ability, and solidarity, Wang portrayed Muslims (*Huijiao zhe*) as the creators of an Islamic "way of the warrior" stemming back to the time of Muhammad. He mentioned the key battles of Muhammad's campaign against the Banu Quraish merchant tribe of Mecca and his success in unifying the Arabian Peninsula, arguing that Sino-Muslims as the inheritors of Muhammad's teachings possessed the innate qualities to defend China.¹⁰⁶ While Muslims in China were stereotypically perceived as violent and treated with suspicion, Sino-Muslim modernists like Wang adopted a strategy of inverting these old stereotypes and turning them into positive attributes, replacing derogatory terms such as "fierce and brutal" with the concepts of "martial tradition" and "discipline."¹⁰⁷

Working in tandem with this emphasis on their military capabilities, Sino-Muslim intellectuals also depicted Islam as a religion that had encouraged reform and learning since its very inception. They worked to promote the idea "that a good Muslim was intrinsically a perfect citizen,"¹⁰⁸ a valued asset to China's modernization efforts. Ma Zongsui saw Islam as the product of Muhammad's improvements to Jewish and Christian scripture. Its development, therefore, ushered in a "new age of reform and modernization for the religious world." Muhammad changed old prejudices and, under his wisdom and ability, improved people's habits, established a theological-political government, and achieved unification and peaceful governance. Spreading

¹⁰⁶ Muhammad's war with Mecca lasted from 622 to 632 A.D. Wang Tingzhi, "Huijiao yu wu shi dao," 64-65.

¹⁰⁷ Yufeng Mao, "A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation," 377. For more on the stereotypes associated with Chinese Muslims, see Lipman, *Familiar Strangers* and Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*.

¹⁰⁸ Aubin, "Islam on the Wings of Nationalism," 249.

throughout the Middle East to India and the Southeast Asian islands, this transformative power of Islam allowed it to cross borders and assert itself as a true world religion, at its peak even challenging Europe.¹⁰⁹ Islam was not a superstition but a modern religion, with a universal power matching that of Christianity's spread in the West and Buddhism's spread beyond India.¹¹⁰ While superstitious religions deluded believers into worshipping false idols like the sun, moon and stars, the elements, and beasts, leaving the people crude, Muhammad enlightened the people "as both a *jun* [a person of high character, a model of morality] and a *shi* (teacher). He showed that polytheism was false and monotheism true."¹¹¹

Calling Muhammad the foremost of all religious reformers, Huang Zhenpan offered a similar narrative in his brief account of the Prophet's accomplishments, arguing that there was no reason for conservative factions of Muslims to oppose reform when considering the example of Muhammad.¹¹² Noting that European civilization traced its roots to ancient Greece, Huang delved into the history of Islamic civilization, recording the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) and its conquest of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain.¹¹³ The advancement of Islamic and Arabic knowledge in areas such as astronomy, anatomy, medicine, and architecture spread to Europe and influenced Christian academicians, and its reach even led some scholars to acknowledge that "Islamic learning has become the world's teacher." To lend credibility to the stature of Islam, Huang added that in Meiji Japan, books on the history of world civilizations and

¹⁰⁹ Ma Zongsui, "Zongjiao jinhua lun" (On Religious Modernization) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 69-70.

¹¹⁰ Huang Zhenpan, "Lun Hui min," 60.

¹¹¹ Bao Tingliang, "Zongjiao gailiang lun" (On Religious Reform) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 42. For an explanation of the term *jun* or *junzi* and its meaning in a Confucian context, see Qi Sun, "Learning to be Human: the Implications of Confucian Perceptions on Ends and Means for the Practice of Modern Adult Education," a paper presented at the "Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education," Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, 9-11 Oct., 2002.

<https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/410/Qi%20S%20.pdf?sequence=1>

¹¹² Huang Zhenpan, "Zongjiao yu jiaoyu zhi guanxi," 18.

¹¹³ For more information on the Umayyad Caliphate, see Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State, the Reign of Hisham Ibn 'Abd-al Malik and the collapse of the Umayyads*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) and G.R. Hawting, *The first dynasty of Islam: the Umayyad caliphate, AD 661-750* (London: Routledge, 2000).

world literature, on education, religious history, and religious modernization all mention Muhammad and Islam.¹¹⁴

The cover of *Xing Hui Pian* contained an Arabic title for the journal in addition to its Chinese name. The Arabic read *Istiqaz al-Islam* (Awakening of Islam), showing the clear link between the goals to reform not only the Hui people but worldwide Islam.¹¹⁵ For the first two decades of the twentieth century, Turkey was a key source of inspiration for Sino-Muslims as a center of modern Islamic reform and learning.¹¹⁶ The Young Turk movement led by university students, which succeeded in restoring the Ottoman parliament and ushering in the empire's Second Constitutional Era in 1908, presented one possibility of what Sino-Muslim intellectuals could achieve if they were to come together and lead the country's Muslims in a concerted effort for change. Maintaining that "religions have the power to transform society," Mainland contributors Cheng Du and Cai Dayu pointed to Turkey entering its crisis with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the threat of Western imperialism in jumpstarting its own strengthening efforts,¹¹⁷ while Huang Zhenpan wrote approvingly of the Islamic states' establishment of modern educational institutions, counting seventeen universities with thousands of disciples.¹¹⁸

Applying the basic concept of evolution to religion, Huang urged Huijiao in China to enact changes such as easing restrictions on scripture readings, studying foreign languages to translate Turkish, Egyptian, and other academic texts, building libraries, and encouraging physical exercise. China and its Muslims needed to learn from foreign states, where religion and

¹¹⁴ Huang Zhenpan, "Huijiao zhi wenming" (Huijiao's Civilization) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 61-63.

¹¹⁵ Translation of the Arabic title in Benite, "From 'Literati' to 'Ulama'," 90.

¹¹⁶ In the 1930s, Egypt would largely replace Turkey in this role. Yufeng Mao, "Sino-Muslims in Chinese nation-building, 1906-1956," 24.

¹¹⁷ Cheng Du and Cai Dayu, "Liudong Qingzhen jiaoyu hui xu" (Introduction to the Islamic Educational Association of [Chinese Foreign Students] in Tokyo) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 85-87. For more on the Young Turk movement, see Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

¹¹⁸ Huang Zhenpan, "Zongjiao yu jiaoyu zhi guanxi," 21.

the virtues it imparted served to promote learning and science, as well as to arouse the sentiments of the people and give them a spirit of resistance, thus serving to strengthen the state. Achieving this function would cement Islam as a “civilized religion” (*wenming zongjiao*) and propel it to the next stage, as a “spirited religion” (*jingshen zongjiao*).¹¹⁹

Non-Muslim contributor Li Shaoshan described human history as an evolution from archaic times to a nomadic age and, finally, to the modern period of states (*guojia*). His suggestions for Huijiao reform ran along the similar veins of establishing a modern curriculum, forming education associations, and publishing periodicals to disseminate ideas. The most striking part of Li’s article is the connection he tried to make between religion and constitutionalism, based on his interpretation of the West’s experience. He framed it as another evolution, where religious superstition gave way to religious wars, which eventually gave way to constitutionalism. Li believed that “China did not enjoy religion’s benefits but also avoided religion’s disasters,” with monarchical power (*junquan*) established early and facing less challenges. This led to the present disadvantage of strong state resistance to constitutionalism.¹²⁰

Lamenting that “Our country’s people lost what can be counted as their religion—as Confucianism lost its true principles and as Huijiao lost its original spirit, the Chinese people did not enjoy the power of constitutional rule,” Li saw Confucianism and Islam as both integral parts of China’s religious tradition, but both had strayed from their true purposes. He advocated for promoting religion’s “spirit” in tangent with enlightening China’s thought in areas such as ethics, science, inventions, and law. Reforming Huijiao became one of the first phases in setting up a constitutional people.¹²¹ In other words, the Hui reform movement impacted more than just

¹¹⁹ Huang Zhenpan, “Zongjiao yu jiaoyu zhi guanxi,” 17 and 21-25.

¹²⁰ Li Shaoshan, “Huijiao zhen yu ce,” 90.

¹²¹ Ibid, 90-91. Note that writers like Li Shaoshan, Cheng Du, and Cai Dayu in *Xing Hui Pian* treated Confucianism as a religion, but this question was heavily debated in China. By the 1920s, those who argued that Confucianism was

religion. It would have positive spillover effects for China. One needed to look no further than the constitutionalist efforts being brought to Turkey by young Muslims.

While the use of origin myths tied Sino-Muslims to the history of Chinese civilization, the accounts of Muhammad, the spread of Islam, and the Islamist modernist movement in the Middle East also connected Sino-Muslims to the history of Islamic and Arabic civilization. Sino-Muslim intellectuals carefully crafted this historiography so that the Islamic empire's accomplishments became their accomplishments, with a tradition of learning and a reform-minded outlook that made them valuable as citizens to China. Similar to the Muslim Confucian literati who created the Han kitab texts and argued that Islamic tradition could reside along with and even improve Chinese tradition, these late-Qing modernists argued that Islamic and Hui "awakening" could reside along with and even improve China's "awakening." Their identity and role as citizens entailed participating in both.

Closing Remarks

Chinese Hui historian Ma Shouqian called the early group of Sino-Muslim reformers "a group of vanguard Hui intellectuals" who worked toward the general awakening of the Hui people.¹²² Responding to the sociopolitical climate of the late Qing, they grappled with what it meant to be a Muslim citizen in an emerging Chinese nation and how to define and shape their racial and religious identities. While Sun and Chinese revolutionaries marketed themselves as a kind of vanguard to lead all of China into enlightenment and modernization, Sino-Muslim elites attempted to carve a similar kind of leadership role within the Muslim population. Their strategies centered on selectively highlighting the traits that made them, as Sino-Muslims,

not a religion but more of a moral philosophy gained an upper hand. Vincent Goossaert, "Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Associations in 1912 China" in Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui ed. *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 209-211.

¹²² Ma Shouqian. "The Hui People's Awakening from the End of the 19th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century," 2.

uniquely suitable for strengthening the nation. They also legitimized Sino-Muslims within the broad histories of Islam and China. The carrier of two traditions, they would be active participants in reforming both religion and nation.

Hui referred to a universal religion (Islam) made up of a racially-diverse population of believers, not to a nationality. Through emphasizing the universality of Hui and refusing to associate it with one particular race or country, Sino-Muslims established that being Hui did not negate being Chinese. This universality also connected Sino-Muslims to the larger Islamic community, both at home and abroad. In order to bolster their own “Chinese” credentials, however, Sino-Muslim intellectuals juxtaposed themselves against an “other,” with a discourse that focused on distancing Sino-Muslims residing in China Proper from the Turkic Muslims in the Northwest, namely the Uighurs or Huihe, who were racially “less Chinese.” They maintained that Turkic Muslims were one separate race while Sino-Muslims dispersed across the interior shared both foreign Muslim and Han Chinese ancestry. Citing their origin myth as proof, they identified Sino-Muslims as the descendants of either Chinese converts or the Islamic soldiers who came to defend China in the Tang dynasty and later intermarried with Chinese women. What resulted was an ambiguous definition of Sino-Muslims that presented them, on the one hand, as Muslim Han and, on the other hand, as the embodiment of the Hui multicultural minzu ideal.

In 1911, a series of grievances, revolts, and uprisings against the Qing snowballed out of the government’s control. Known collectively as the Xinhai Revolution, these events ushered in the fall of China’s last dynasty and the rise of a new republican government led by Yuan Shikai (1859-1916).¹²³ Throughout the coming Republican era, Sino-Muslims continued to debate

¹²³ Sun Yat-sen was elected the first provisional president of the Republic of China on December 29, 1911, followed by Yuan Shikai who was sworn in as the second provisional president on March 10, 1912. Setting up an autocratic

whether all Muslims in China should be defined as one unique nationality or if they should be considered as racially different while sharing one common religion. The *Xing Hui Pian* representation of Hui, with its emphasis on a racial difference but a religious commonality between Turkic and Sino-Muslims, would be tested in this new political environment.

The next chapter will explore how the construction of Hui identity and history progressed in the Republican period, from the beginnings of the Yuan government to the war-torn years of the 1930s Nationalist regime. Where there was change, there was also continuity. Just as late-Qing Sino-Muslim intellectuals were influenced by their predecessors in the Confucian literati, their own conceptualizations and strategies would influence Republican-era thinkers.

Even as Huizu became a nationality encompassing all Muslims in China, cleavages remained. Sino-Muslims still saw themselves as more acculturated, more socioeconomically and intellectually advanced than Turkic Muslims. Through the essays in *Xing Hui Pian*, Sino-Muslim intellectuals tried to link themselves with the larger history of Muslim and Arabic civilization. This universal aspect of Islam, mixed with a territorially-bound identity and loyalty to China, continued to hold resonance as Sino-Muslims sought to play a crucial role in Republican China's domestic and foreign affairs. By the 1930s, when Sino-Muslim delegations traveled to Middle Eastern countries to solicit support for China's war effort amidst the Second Sino-Japanese War, Sino-Muslim intellectuals were actively using their universal link with the worldwide Muslim population to become a "bridge" between China and Islamic nations.¹²⁴

government, Yuan served under this title until December 22, 1915 and again, after an unsuccessful attempt to reinstate the monarchy and declare himself "Grand Constitutional Emperor," from March 22 to June 6, 1916.

¹²⁴ Mao, "A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation," 73-377 and 388.

Chapter 3: Leaders of China's Muslim Nationality—Sino-Muslim Identity in the Early Republican Era

Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans cannot leave the Republic of China (*Zhonghua Minguo*)...Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans will share equal power with Manchus and Han pertaining to elections and qualifications to run for office. Everyone has the power to elect the president and everyone has the power to be elected as president. There is no discrimination against the frontier (*bianchui qishi*) or absurd racial theories (*zhongzu miushuo*).

--Huiwen baihua bao, 1913¹²⁵

Following the Wuchang uprising and the end of the Qing dynasty, the ethnic minority-heavy areas of Tibet and Outer Mongolia, as well as several Chinese interior provinces, declared their independence. China's frontier territories, including the Muslim-populated Northwest, faced the threat of foreign annexation from imperial powers. The newly-founded Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo*) was heading for disintegration even as it was being created. Addressing the threat of territorial loss and political fragmentation, the Republican government downplayed racial and ethnic differences, dialing back the anti-Manchu, pro-Han rhetoric in favor of calls for the unity and equality of rights amongst China's major nationalities. It turned to a modified version of the five-bloc, multiethnic Qing hierarchical structure, officially becoming the "Chinese Republic of Five Lineages" (*Zhonghua wuzu gonghe*).

For the next two decades following *Xing Hui Pian*, political pressure and competition, compounded with the complex questions surrounding legitimacy and representation, influenced Sino-Muslim intellectuals and the early Republican state to include Sino-Muslims under the "Huizu" label, treating Huizu as one ethnic group encompassing all Muslims in China and a key component of *Zhonghua wuzu gonghe*. Official publications and national Hui associations worked to reinforce this politically-expedient construct and secure Muslim loyalty to the republic. Realizing that they would receive greater prominence and political representation as leaders of the Huizu than as Muslim Han, Sino-Muslim elites took full advantage of their membership

¹²⁵"Fa Kan Ci" (Foreword), *Huiwen baihua bao* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1913), 1.

within the Huizu. At the same time, they continued to differentiate between Sino and Turkic Muslims, highlighting the former as a more acculturated, socioeconomically and intellectually advanced group, to promote the vision of a Sino-Muslim leadership that could act on behalf of all Muslims in China and incorporate them into the new Chinese nation.

A Republic is Born: the Xinhai Revolution and its Aftermath

In its final years, the Qing struggled to preserve power and prestige against mounting criticism. The imperial court had to demonstrate willingness to fulfill its promise of constitutionalization even while moderating the reform's pace and scope. Empress Dowager Cixi's death in November 1908 removed a key emblem of Qing authority and left the arduous task of governance to the regents of the three-year-old Xuantong emperor (Puyi, 1906-1967). Following the nine-year calendar established by Cixi a month before her death, provisional provincial and national assemblies convened, respectively, in 1909 and 1910. In a show of dissatisfaction with Qing policy and the court's increasing loss of control over the situation, the assemblies successfully pressured the imperial court to shorten the timeline to full constitutionalization by four years, from 1917 to 1913. Miscalculations by the regents, including the assignment of a predominantly-Manchu cabinet in 1911, only further fomented suspicion among the Chinese regarding Qing commitment to reform. The Railway Protection Movement in 1911, centered in Sichuan, protested against the nationalization of two major railways and pitted local elites against the central government over ownership and control of profits. Organizations like the Revolutionary Alliance remained active and eager to oust the dynasty.

Amidst this tense environment, the 1911 Xinhai Revolution started by accident in the city of Wuchang on October 10, when a gunpowder explosion alerted Qing authorities to the presence of local revolutionary groups. Facing arrest and execution, the rebels acted out of

desperation and succeeded in overpowering the local garrison. The imperial New Army troops, infiltrated by the Revolutionary Alliance and stationed in Wuchang and nearby cities in response to the railway crisis, staged a mutiny in support of the rebels. Following the success in Wuchang, uprisings launched in other cities and multiple provinces declared independence from the Qing.

The nature of the revolution varied from locality to locality, with most in the form of coups d'état as local elites or military units established temporary military governments. Some involved the participation of secret societies and revolutionary organizations while others descended into disorder or commemorations of the Ming dynasty and the “restoration” from Manchu to Chinese rule. Away in the United States at the revolution’s outbreak, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) returned to China in Christmas to lead the movement, but it was Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), as the founder of the New Army and a leading military figure, who became a crucial power broker between the Qing military and the revolutionary forces. Striking a compromise with Yuan to prevent a protracted civil war and foreign intervention, the revolutionaries agreed to give Yuan the presidency in exchange for his help in securing the emperor’s abdication. With Puyi’s abdication on February 12, 1912, China entered the process of establishing a new state and, for the first time, a republic.¹²⁶

Muslim troops played important roles in the New Army units of Sichuan, Henan, and Shaanxi, one of the earliest provinces to declare secession from the Qing.¹²⁷ Like the rest of the country, Sino-Muslim leaders found their loyalties divided, with some fighting to protect the dynasty and others fighting on the side of the revolutionary armies. Some switched allegiance during the course of the revolution in order to protect their own interests. In Shaanxi, General Ma Anliang (1855-1918) commanded Muslim battalions to strike against the revolutionary army of

¹²⁶ For a brief account of the Xinhai Revolution and the events leading up to the creation of the Republic of China, see Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*, 55-57 and Fairbank, *China: A New History*, 250.

¹²⁷ Dillon, *China’s Muslim Hui community: migration, settlement, sects*, 81.

Zhang Fenghui but declared his allegiance to the Republic of China upon learning of Puyi's abdication, convinced he was fighting for a lost cause. Serving as a mediator for Shaanxi communities and the new republican government, Ma worked to consolidate his power and helped other Muslims to provincial and local offices. Fellow Sino-Muslim general Ma Fuxiang (1876-1932), who had served the Qing as military governor to Xining and Altay, joined local allies, including non-Muslim elites, to declare independence for the province of Gansu. Yuan Shikai rewarded his allegiance by appointing Ma Fuxiang as vice-commander of Ningxia, where Ma expanded his power into Inner Mongolia.¹²⁸ The presence of these Sino-Muslim local elites in the Northwest, equipped with their own sizeable armies, encouraged the Republican government to develop strategies to secure Muslim allegiance. It also provided Sino-Muslim communities with influential future patrons to fund and advance their cause.

The Republican Era and *Wuzu Gonghe*

The fledgling republic had to contend with the large degree of political and social fragmentation in China, exacerbated by the uneven pace of modernization between rural and urban, core and peripheral areas. It grappled with questions of what republicanism meant and how to transition from the post-Qing political vacuum to a new government capable of preserving territorial sovereignty and uniting its citizens under common interests.¹²⁹ In order to establish itself as a legitimate republic, the state had to define and create identities for the constituents it claimed to represent in order to incorporate them into the nation. The crisis of fragmentation influenced the republican government to downplay racial and ethnic differences. They emphasized instead the unity of China's five major minzu—the Han, the Manchu, the Mongols, the Tibetans, and the Hui or Muslims—symbolized by the new five-colored national

¹²⁸ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 170-171.

¹²⁹ Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*, 58.

flag. Even Zhang Binglin (1868-1936) and other previous advocates for an “ethnically pure” Han state reversed their rhetoric and promoted the new multi-ethnic “Zhonghua Republic of Five Lineages.” Opponents of this new system, including Sun Yat-sen, accepted it out of pressure from government officials who wanted a quick end to the racial violence and chaos of the post-Qing political vacuum.¹³⁰

Under the republican system of representation, Sino-Muslim elites were incentivized to accept the definition of Huizu under *wuzu gonghe*, taking advantage of their status as a prominent and indispensable member of China’s five major nationalities to augment their political clout. This status provided them with an advantage and extra layer of protection at a time when China’s religions faced the threat of losing influence under the new regime. Placing religious affairs under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, the Republican state was confiscating multiple temples to convert into schools. Eager to protect their property and interests, all the major religions initiated efforts to redefine their roles and relations with the state. They formed centralized associations to represent believers and negotiate with the government, endowing themselves with the crucial mission of repairing their religion’s current weakness and disunity.

As part of the broad wave of religious reform sweeping the country, Sino-Muslims were one of the many religious groups trying to position themselves as important members of the new modern nation and complete an institutional process of secularization, with a central strategy of forming national religious associations advocating goals of educational reform. In his study of Republican religious associations, Vincent Goossaert singled out the Sino-Muslim community’s efforts. He credited their ability to succeed where other religious groups failed, despite sharing similar aims, tools, and general rhetoric, to the fact that Muslims were the only group to combine

¹³⁰ Leibold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 179-180.

a reinvention of religion with an argument for ethnic nationality status.¹³¹ Republican state policy explicitly promised to safeguard the rights of its officially-recognized nationality, including the Huizu, in areas such as freedom of religion, property rights, representation in the national legislature, and upholding the status of local elites.¹³²

The Chinese Muslim Progressive Association and *Huiwen baihua bao*

Focused on building a sizeable, united Muslim front to increase their political voice, organizations such as the Chinese Muslim Progressive Association (*Zhongguo Huijiao jujin hui* or CMPA, est. 1912)—the first centralized, nationwide Muslim association in China—attempted to act as a centralized organ for China’s scattered Muslim communities, inviting communities in Xinjiang to join while accepting a Sino-Muslim leadership headquartered in Beijing. The CMPA charter listed its goals to include the publication of journals and Chinese translations of Islamic texts, the establishment of schools and vocational training programs, the completion of surveys on the current social conditions of Chinese Muslims, and the advancement of virtues such as frugality, hygiene, and nationalism.¹³³ With Ministry of Education official Ma Linyi as president, the association was able to successfully expand its influence and enjoy official support. Led by reformist alongs with experience abroad in the Middle East, the CMPA reached out to Muslim communities throughout the country to encourage the creation of local branches. Their subsidiary groups existed in every province and, beginning in 1934, also formed in individual mosques. From 1912 to the 1930s, the CMPA published materials to be distributed in Xinjiang to educate their Huihe peers on nationalism, citizenship, and republicanism,¹³⁴ drawing a distinction

¹³¹ Goossaert, “Republican Church Engineering,” 209-232.

¹³² “Linshi da zongtong ling” (Order from the Provisional President) in “Fa Ling,” *Huiwen baihua bao* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1913), 3.

¹³³ Goossaert, “Republican Church Engineering,” 221.

¹³⁴ Yufeng Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 376-377 and Aubin, “Islam on the Wings of Nationalism,” 243.

between the loyal, acculturated Sino-Muslim leadership and the Turkic Muslims in need of its guidance.

Sino-Muslims were actively involved in the editorial board of the *Huiwen baihua bao* (Hui vernacular), an Arabic-Chinese publication of the Mongolian-Tibetan Affairs Committee (MTAC, est. 1912) that ran from January 1913 to May 1915, when the committee became overwhelmed by its multiple responsibilities and decided to end all three of its bilingual publications (Hui, Mongolian, and Tibetan). CMPA leaders and imams Wang Haoran (1848-1918) and Zhang Ziwen served as chief editors. Announcing China's unification and the establishment of the "Republic of Five Lineages," the MTAC periodicals served as a propaganda tool for the newly-founded Republic of China, targeting audiences in China's "frontier" regions that threatened to establish themselves as independent states. *Huiwen baihua bao* was mainly aimed at promoting republicanism and patriotism amongst Muslims in Xinjiang.

An interplay existed between the republican government, which desired to secure the allegiance and borders of China's Muslim populations to the republic, and the Sino-Muslim intellectuals spearheading propaganda efforts such as the *Huiwen baihua bao*. These leaders held influential positions within the new republican government apparatus and desired to achieve their ideal of representing all Hui while emphasizing their loyalty to the state. The state, in turn, derived legitimacy from their acknowledgment. Throughout its first issue, the *Huiwen baihua bao* repeated the themes of unity and defined *Zhonghua minguo* as all the territories belonging to the five main nationalities (Hui, Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchu, and Han).¹³⁵ The editors' opening statement began with the declaration, "Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans, along with Han and Manchus, are all descendants of the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi zisun*) and are all of excellent

¹³⁵ "Da wen" (Q&A), *Huiwen baihua bao* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1913), 1.

nobility (*youxiu guizu*).”¹³⁶ In an attempt to placate these strategically important minority groups and promise them equal rights as citizens, as well as representation, statements like the above departed from the earlier rhetoric adopted by Sun and others that emphasized the Han as the descendants of the Yellow Emperor and therefore more legitimately Chinese. Stating that “Under the old Manchu Qing system, the Hanzu was completely under their control, not to mention the state of Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan and other zu,”¹³⁷ the Republican regime placed the blame for ethnic tensions and prejudices on the late Qing government. They focused on constructing a shared plight between China’s five nationalities while implying that the solution was for these groups to unite and work collectively under a new, reformed administration.

The foreword pointedly dismissed “discrimination against the frontier (*bianchui qishi*) or absurd racial theories (*zhongzu miushuo*).” It went on to acknowledge the proud traditions of all five minzu and the great historical figures each has produced, from Genghis Khan for the Mongols to Muhammad for the Hui. Lamenting the infighting between nationalities who all share a common descent, the editors stressed internal unity in order to combat China’s growing susceptibility to external threats and argued that the new republic had the interests of the Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans at heart, noting “If the *zu* is weak then the home[land] dies (*zu ruo jia wang*)... To protect Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans is to protect the Republic of China. To protect the Republic of China is to protect Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans.”¹³⁸ Just as in the late Qing, Chinese Muslims were urged to see their fates as being irrevocably intertwined with that of

¹³⁶ “Fa Kan Ci” 1.

¹³⁷ “Meng zang shi wu ju yan ge ji shang, fa duan” (Records of MTAC Reforms, Making a Start) in “Yao wen,” *Huiwen baihua bao* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1913), 3-4.

¹³⁸ “Fa Kan Ci,” 2. Similar ideas were repeated in the issue in articles such as “Buling: Nei wu bu gao di yi hao” (Departmental order: Internal Affairs Department No. 1) released on December 3, 1912 by the head of the Internal Affairs department Zhao Dongjun, where he described China as now united with the wuzu and encouraged all Chinese to love each other (*xiang qin xiang ai*) and together govern the country.

the state, only this time the state has been reworked to refer to the newly-formed Zhonghua minguo.

To court the allegiance of these ethnic minorities, the MTAC published numerous statements and edicts from the central government that guaranteed minority rights. In an October 23, 1912 “Order from the Provisional President,” Yuan established seven points in the policy toward Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans, including safeguarding their freedom of religion, property rights, representation in the national legislature, right to preserving a nomadic lifestyle, the status of local elites, and the promise that the government will not treat them as colonized subjects (*zhimin*).¹³⁹ An earlier order on April 13 critiqued the restrictions placed on Manchu-Han and Mongolian-Han marriages under the Qing regime, neglecting to mention the lifting of the ban on Han-Manchu marriage by the Qing court in February 1902. Noting also the rarity of Han-Hui and Han-Tibetan marriages, the edict called on people to move beyond past restrictions and habits and to encourage more intermarriages and relationships between the five nationalities.¹⁴⁰

Articles also explained the concepts of a constitutional republic and why it was a superior form of government compared to monarchism and constitutional monarchism, emphasizing that a republic is grounded in the people’s sovereignty through the election of representatives.¹⁴¹ The power of representation resonated throughout the publication, as it repeatedly mentioned how members of all five nationalities were present during the vote to set up the MTAC and to instate the provisional government. Electoral laws for the new republic and for Mongolia, Tibet, and

¹³⁹ “Linshi da zongtong ling” (Order from the Provisional President) in “Fa Ling,” *Huiwen baihua bao* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1913), 3.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 24-25.

¹⁴¹ For one example of where this occurred, see “Da wen,” 1-5.

Qinghai populations, outlined in an October 5, 1912 statement, stipulated that ballots and laws must be issued in both Hanzi (Chinese) and the local area script.¹⁴²

All this served to build legitimacy for the new central government and firmly positioned groups such as the Mongolians and Hui (and their territorial holdings) under the jurisdiction of the Republican regime. To lend further legitimacy, *Huiwen baihua bao* worked to distance the new government from the Qing empire and the MTAC from the Lifan Yuan, the Qing agency that handled the empire's relations with tributary areas and foreign groups such as the Russians, Tibetans, and Mongolians. Before the establishment of the Zongli Yamen, it was the closest Qing equivalent to a foreign policy department. *Huiwen baihua bao* portrayed the Lifan Yuan as an old, outdated system belonging to the era of monarchism to deal with external affairs and outer areas of the empire, while the MTAC represented the republican government's commitment to treating these outer border areas as equals to the interior provinces. Originally, Yuan had stipulated that Mongolian, Hui, and Tibetan affairs should fall under the jurisdiction of the internal affairs department. Once the internal affairs department became too large and unwieldy, overwhelmed by its tasks, the legislature voted to set up MTAC.¹⁴³

In order to explain the need to set up a special committee to address Mongolian, Tibetan, and Hui affairs when the republic already declared that all five nationalities were equal and would no longer have any differences amongst them, the MTAC argued that the Mongolian and Tibetan culture, economy, and education was not the same as the interior's. In other words, they were less advanced. Therefore, greater action needed to be taken to develop Mongolian and Tibetan affairs and bring their development up to speed with the rest of China. The MTAC stated:

¹⁴² "Linshi da zongtong ling," 28-30.

¹⁴³ "Meng zang shi wu ju yan ge ji shang, fa duan," 1-10.

As for Huizu, the circumstances are different. Xinjiang and other areas under the Qing already changed into local supreme administrative divisions (*xingsheng*) with an organizational model of provincial government, so there is no need to set up another system. Plus, in the Gansu belt, Hui and Han have long lived with each other as neighbors with mutual communication and friendship, with a strong atmosphere of assimilation (*hen you tong hua qi xiang*). In the process of creating the republic, the Huizu were the first to approve and even contributed to the effort. However, their religion has multiple matters that can be incorporated into the MTAC.¹⁴⁴

The MTAC made a special distinction for the Hui, noting that Muslim groups (especially in the areas populated by Sino-Muslims, “the Gansu belt”) already possessed a greater degree of assimilation relative to other minority groups but still fell under the MTAC because, like Mongolians and Tibetans, they had a separate religion. Therefore, the MTAC could help Hui address special matters and concerns that arose from their religious differences. The article subtly singled out Sino-Muslims as especially assimilated. While in official communications with the government, both Muslims in Xinjiang and in the Chinese interior referred to themselves as Huizu, terminology to distinguish between the two remained during the early years of the republic. The former were the *chanhui* (turbaned Hui) while the latter were the *Hanhui* (Chinese Hui).¹⁴⁵ The existence of “Hanhui” as a description for Sino-Muslims indicates that their identity remained ambiguous and flexible. They could still be viewed as Muslim Han even as official policy and communications grouped them with Xinjiang Muslims under the umbrella term of Huizu. The perception of backwardness for the Mongolians, Tibetans, Turkic Muslims meant that the “advanced” Sino-Muslim leadership within the Chinese interior stood out as exceptions to the rule. Its role within the MTAC, therefore, was to help guide fellow Muslims toward modernization.

The MTAC returned to the portrayal of the Hui by Sino-Muslim intellectuals and reformers of the *Xing Hui Pian* era, depicting the historically friendly relations between Hui and

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 2-3.

¹⁴⁵ Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages*, 155.

Han while downplaying the hostile tensions that existed between the two. Portraying the Huizu as among the first to approve of the new republic, “Document from all Huizu to President Yuan” from February 27, 1912 credited the Hui among those who organized provisional collective assemblies to form the national legislature and recognize Yuan as provisional president, stating that “The national body (*guoti*) has already stabilized the Huizu’s patriotism and achieved its objective.”¹⁴⁶ The “Huimin” leadership that first recognized the Republic largely consisted of the Sino-Muslim urban intellectuals who would go on to lead national associations such as the CMPA, as well as generals like Ma Anliang who pledged their troops to the new government. Their official membership as Huizu, rather than simply Muslim Han, allowed the state to extend their allegiance as representative of all Muslims in China.

The Warlord Era

Without the Muslims living in China’s contested Northwest, including both Sino and Turkic populations, the importance of Sino-Muslims based in the Chinese interior to the Republican government would have been greatly reduced. Without Sino-Muslims in the interior acting as the representatives of these frontier populations and spearheading efforts to incorporate them in the new nation, the Republican government would have had a harder time in consolidating power over its Muslim communities. In later years, the CMPA continued to posture itself as a promoter of Hui allegiance. Wang Haoran, expressing nationalist sentiments on behalf of the organization in January 1914, argued that civil discord between China’s nationalities only obstructed national pacification and progress, writing “My dear Muslims, listen! Goodwill between Hui and Han is more than golden, yet now relations are in a time of turmoil, with poisoned feelings, and are especially veering off the principle of ‘Five

¹⁴⁶ “Quan ti Huizu shang Yuan da zongtong cheng” (Document from all Huizu to President Yuan) in “Zhang Du,” *Huiwen baihua bao* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1913), 1-2.

Nationalities, One Family' (*'Wuzu yi jia' zhi dao*). Han, Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan are like our brothers. Our infighting will turn us into laughingstocks for foreigners."¹⁴⁷

Yet the early republic was unable to overcome infighting between political and military factions. From the years 1916 to 1928, China's Warlord era, competing military cliques ruled a fragmented country, exercising power within their respective fiefs. A group of Muslim warlords (*Huimin junfa*) emerged from the local elite to establish power over strategic areas such as Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai, building political leverage for Sino-Muslims.¹⁴⁸ In a twist of irony, Sino-Muslims, who had been fighting to strengthen their force as a constituency in the early Republican state, found their leverage increasing at the very moment when the unity of China and its Republican system was breaking down.

By the end of the tumultuous Warlord Era, Sino-Muslims were a group of increasing strategic importance to the state. Non-Muslim warlords such as the "Christian general" Feng Yuxiang (1882-1948) found it advantageous to team up with local Sino-Muslim leaders, appointing Ma Fuxiang in 1925 as his codirector to defend the northwestern borders. Ma used his rapport with Feng to obtain national-level civil and military office, including the post of national aviation commander. Sino-Muslims were gaining political leverage, but the battle environment of the Warlord Era also exposed those in the Northwest to exploitation by armies eager to wrest revenue and manpower for campaigns. Sino-Muslim generals like Ma Zhongying and Ma

¹⁴⁷ In the same announcement, Wang also said, "Turkey and us [China] are the same type of country [*tong zhong zhi guo*]. The Turkish are the most welcoming toward Chinese products. If China and Turkey could form an alliance and commercial relationship, our republics would dominate in Asia and expand our global power," a sign Sino-Muslim intellectuals continued to look upon Turkey as a model in framing Middle East and Islamic countries as valuable allies to China. See Wang Kuan, "Zhongguo Huijiao ju jin hui ben bu tong gao xu" (Preface to the Chinese Muslim Progressive Association Main Headquarters' Announcement) in Bai Shouyi ed. *Zhongguo Yisilan shi cun gao* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chu ban she, 1982), 383-384.

¹⁴⁸ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 166. This group included the "Ma family warlords," three Gansu Muslim lineages with Ma Fuxiang's family dominating Ningxia, Ma Qi's family dominating Xining, and Ma Anliang's dominating Hezhou and the Gansu corridor. See chapter five where Lipman studies the different strategies used by four Gansu Sino-Muslims to develop a closer relationship to New China while defending the position of Sino-Muslims.

Tingrang redirected public anger over this exploitation to their advantage in order to oust Feng and other rivals. By the time of the Nationalists' Northern Expedition (1926-1928) campaign to end warlord rule, the KMT needed to negotiate with the Muslim warlords in order to secure the northwestern frontier and realize its goals for reunification. The influence of these Sino-Muslim leaders would last beyond the Warlord Era, as they served in prominent posts in the 1930s Nationalist-led regime, often extending their reach by working with reformist intellectuals and ahongs in urban centers to fund new-style schools and publications.¹⁴⁹

Closing Remarks

The new Republican regime established by Chiang Kai-shek in 1928 began deemphasizing its predecessor's Republic of Five Lineages, promoting instead a mono-minzu policy that mirrored late Qing Hui intellectuals' defense of Sino-Muslims as Muslim Han. After experiencing the political fragmentation of the Warlord Era, the Republican government wanted to solidify the concept of one united "Zhonghua minzu" to consolidate its control over China and counter Japanese efforts to create division amongst the country's minority groups. In some ways, Chiang's mono-minzu policy returned to the Han nationalism of Sun Yatsen. Before passing the office to Yuan in March, Sun stressed the link between ethnic and territorial unity in his January 1912 inaugural speech as provisional president: "The uniting of the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui and Tibetan territories into a single country also means the uniting of the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, Tibetan and other lineages (*zu*) into a single people (*yiren*). This you could say is *minzu* unity."¹⁵⁰ The goal, in Sun's view, was to achieve homogeneity not through forced assimilation (*qiangxing tonghua*) but through a gradual, natural melding (*ronghe*). The Han-led government

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, as well as Matsumoto, "Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese," 124-125 on the warlord Ma Fuxiang's role in backing the Cheng Da Normal School (est. 1925) and the *Yuehua* journal (est. 1929).

¹⁵⁰ Sun Yat-sen, "Linshi Dazongtong Xuanyanshu," (Proclamation of the Provisional President) in *Sun Zhongshan Quanji* (Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981) 2, 2.

should enlighten minority groups through *ganhua* or “reforming through examples of moral superiority,” in the form of improving economic development and education in frontier regions such as Tibet and Mongolia.¹⁵¹

Sun’s vision was not wholly incompatible with Sino-Muslim intellectuals’ own constructions of Hui identity. Sino-Muslim origin myths and writings by *Xing Hui Pian* scholars long espoused the history and evolution of Muslims in China from “foreign” to “Chinese” as a peaceful, gradual melding process. Perceiving themselves as more acculturated and socioeconomically and intellectually more advanced than Turkic Muslims, Sino-Muslim elites acted as “natural” leaders of the Huizu and felt it was their responsibility to help enlighten and incorporate fellow Muslims into the nation.¹⁵² At the same time, the vision of China’s minorities eventually yielding and becoming subsumed into the evolutionally “superior” Hanzu presented a threat to Sino-Muslims who feared that it would lead to a loss of their distinct identities and ways of life. The early Republican government of the 1910s toned down this threat, returning to the Qing’s corporatist model through the Republic of Five Lineages, but it kept the concept of “reforming through examples of moral superiority” in its relationships with Tibetans, Mongolians, and the Hui. Given the different benefits and disadvantages of the two ethnic policies, some Sino-Muslim intellectuals accepted Chiang’s mono-minzu system while others preferred their distinctive national identity and opposed KMT efforts to ban Chinese Muslims from calling themselves “Huizu.”¹⁵³ The next chapter will explore how this difference of opinion and the climate of Republican power politics contributed to new strategies for Sino-Muslim identity construction in the 1930s.

¹⁵¹ Liebold, “Positioning ‘Minzu,’” 184-185.

¹⁵² Chinese Muslim intellectuals saw themselves as *xianzhi xianjuezhe* or “those qualified to enlighten the ‘backward’ peoples of the tutelage period, in accordance with Sun Yatsen’s theory of the three steps of social evolution.” See Matsumoto Masumi, “Rationalizing Patriotism,” 123.

¹⁵³ Yufeng Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 382.

Chapter 4: Challenges to the “Republic of Five Lineages” and the Birth of an Independent

Modern Sino-Muslim Historiography

A man [*geren*] has his own record of conduct [*fuli*], a family [*jia*] has its genealogy [*zupu*], a nation [*guo*] has its national history [*guoshi*]. Chinese Islam has a multitude, [an] infinite number [*wuqian wan*] of people [*min*] and one thousand years of experience [*jingli*]. It is impossible that it [this multitude] does not have a history.

--Jin Jitang, 1937¹⁵⁴

Since the onset of Republican China, the strategic importance of Muslim populations along border regions allowed for the inclusion of a collective Muslim nationality within the “Republic of Five Lineages” (*wuzu gonghe*). Starting in the 1930s, competition for Hui allegiance intensified, propelled along by two key conflicts—the internal power struggle between the KMT and its main political rival the CCP and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Amidst this competition, Sino-Muslims gained a greater strategic role and set of alternatives to the early republic’s conception of Hui identity. Under the KMT, the Republican state recognized Sino-Muslims as Muslim Han. Hui functioned simply as a religious marker. Under the Japanese, China’s Muslims collectively formed a Hui nationality in need of emancipation from its Han oppressors. Under the CCP, Sino-Muslims gradually became their own separate “Huizu” nationality, one oppressed not by the Han but the “Han chauvinism” (*Hanzu zhuyi*) of the KMT.

This chapter will examine these competing conceptions of Hui identity and the ongoing efforts by Sino-Muslims to develop their identity and historiography during the power politics of the later Republican era. It will analyze the new body of Sino-Muslim scholarship that emerged during this period. The wartime environment provided the impetus for a prolific outpouring of

¹⁵⁴In his 1937 lecture “Zhongguo Huijiao lishi wenti” (Problems in the History of Chinese Islam) to commemorate the reopening of the Chinese Muslim journal *Yuehua* after a hiatus following the Japanese invasion, Hui historian Jin Jitang called on Chinese Muslims to investigate their own history as one way of nurturing their “national consciousness.” Reprinted in Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, *Zhongguo Yisilan jiaoshi cankao ziliao xuanbian (1911-1949)* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1985), Vol 1., 270-271. The translation comes from Benite, “From Literati to ‘Ulama’,” 102.

scholarship that systematically reexamined Sino-Muslim origins, genealogy, history, and culture in order to reaffirm their membership within the Chinese nation-state. Marking the emergence of a modern historiography, these reexaminations provided ample fodder for Sino-Muslims to construct a collective narrative and distinctive identity. Through increasingly giving Sino-Muslims a separate genealogical and cultural history from the Han Chinese and Turkic Muslims, they paved the way for the formation of a separate Hui minzu.

Huijiao Not Huizu: KMT Mono-minzu Policy

Even after the KMT ended the Warlord era and reunified China in 1928, the party's position remained tenuous and dependent on the allegiance of regional warlords. Foreign powers and rival political factions also competed and negotiated for power with the Republican regime, whose political and military capabilities remained too weak to consolidate rule with pure, brute shows of force.¹⁵⁵ In its inaugural year, the Nationalist-led regime, based in the newly-established capital of Nanjing, replaced the Five-colored Flag of the Republic with the party's "Blue Sky, White Sun, and a Wholly Red Earth" as both a symbol of China's reunification and an assertion of its authority. The changing of the flag also marked a shift for state ethnopolicy. Its centerpiece would no longer be the "Republic of Five Lineages." Instead, the KMT promoted a mono-minzu policy that openly challenged the early Republican conception of Huizu. Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) moved toward organizing all Muslims as *Huijiao*, a religious group rather than a nationality, arguing that "the difference between the Hans and Mohammedans [*Huijiao tu*] is only in religion and different habits of life."¹⁵⁶ The idea was to firmly root Hui identity and loyalties to the Chinese Republic, while deemphasizing conflicts between Hui and Han Chinese,

¹⁵⁵ James Leibold, "Un-mapping Republic China's Tibetan Frontier: Politics, Warlordism and Ethnicity along the Kham/Xikang Borderland" in *The Chinese Historical Review* 12, No. 2 (Fall 2005), 171-172 and Matsumoto, "Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese," 124-125.

¹⁵⁶ Chiang Kai-shek. *China's Destiny*, 39-40.

by presenting the two groups as essentially one Chinese nationality. In later years, as Japan tried to separate Hui allegiance from the KMT state by portraying the Han Chinese as oppressors of China's ethnic minorities, Chiang's mono-minzu policy acted as a counterargument to the Japanese campaign.

By maintaining that Hui referred to a religion, not a nationality, the KMT policy showed the influence of late Qing Sino-Muslim intellectuals, echoing the opening statement of *Xing Hui Pian* editor Huang Zhenpan (1873-1942) from his essay "On the Hui People."¹⁵⁷ If the early years of the republic marked a departure from this concept of Hui with the implementation of the five-lineage system, Chiang's ethnopolitics marked a return. Sino-Muslims were not Huizu but Han who followed Islam.

While some Sino-Muslims accepted this mono-minzu policy and their inclusion within the Han Chinese majority, others worried over being reduced to a religious minority and wanted to protect the political rights they had gained in leading one of the five recognized lineages. Preferring to preserve this distinctive national identity, they opposed KMT efforts to ban Chinese Muslims from calling themselves Huizu. Xue Wenbo, a teacher at the reformist Beijing Cheng Da School and founder of the Beiping Muslim Student Organization, deliberately changed the name of his organization to the "Chinese Huizu Youth Organization" in response and became an editor to the *Huizu Youth* journal.¹⁵⁸ Other intellectuals expressed their opposition to KMT ethnopolitics through studies that sought to prove, with historical and genealogical evidence, the differences in nationality between Hui and Han.

¹⁵⁷ Huang's opening is quoted in chapter two of the thesis. Huang Zhenpan, "Lun Hui min," 58.

¹⁵⁸ Yufeng Mao, "A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation," 382.

The Development of CCP Hui Ethnopolitics

Sino-Muslim opposition to the mono-minzu policy paved the way for competing parties to offer alternative visions of Hui identity. In their struggle to gain control over China, both the KMT and CCP wanted to preserve the Qing empire boundaries. Since this empire was multiethnic, with non-Chinese ethnic minorities making up the majority populations in key frontier regions, preserving these territories meant winning the support of regional minorities and leaders. Through the party's increased interactions with minority populations, CCP ethnopolitics matured over the course of the Chinese Civil War (1927-1950).

Breaking off the tenuous alliance between the KMT and CCP in 1927, Chiang Kai-shek ordered a purge targeting the Communists on April 12. As the civil war escalated, CCP forces retreated to the countryside and, over the course of the Long March (1934-1935), traveled through highly-concentrated minority areas in Northwest China to relocate their base to Yan'an, Shaanxi province.¹⁵⁹ The Northwest appealed to the CCP due to its distance from the KMT base in the capital Nanjing and its proximity to Soviet Russia and Outer Mongolia. Relocation shifted the party's focus to these minority-heavy areas and provided a chance to align with the local population. Rather than strictly adhering to a general theory (e.g. Marxist-Leninist doctrine), CCP ethnopolitics development chose a pragmatic approach, adapting to the current conditions and needs of local Muslim groups.¹⁶⁰ It adopted a "dialectical view of Islam" as both a "dark influence" that stymied the Hui's "national and class awakening" to join the socialist revolution

¹⁵⁹ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 11.

¹⁶⁰ Even though CCP directives advocated for the application of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theories for nationality work, in practice it continued to enact wartime pragmatism. Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages*, 155. According to Soviet ethnopolitics, "Ethnoses were considered to come about 'naturally,' through the course of history. The conjunction of a language community and contiguous territory was a key factor in defining an ethnos, and ethnogenesis was usually understood as the result of some sort of assimilation of distinct groups or the divergence of a previously homogeneous group." For more background, see Alexander King, "A Sketch of Soviet Culture Theory," <http://www.koryaks.net/SovCultTheory.html> (March 27, 2002).

and “a sacred banner” to unify the Hui in struggles against “tyrannical suppression” (e.g. the KMT and Japan).¹⁶¹ Originally, the CCP focused on gaining support through amending its stance toward religion, promising to protect the Hui’s freedom of worship. The party also promised to uphold the principle of self-determination for minority nationalities, establishing in 1936 the first Hui autonomous region in Tongxin, Southern Ningxia.¹⁶²

Denouncing the KMT mono-minzu policy as oppressively assimilative and dismissive in its treatment of minority nationalities, the embodiment of “Han chauvinism” (*Hanzu zhuyi*), the Communist leadership recognized the existence of a collective Muslim nationality in China, essentially maintaining the early Republic’s definition of Huizu. Party documents from the 1920s and 1930s (including a 1936 proclamation to the Hui issued under Mao Zedong’s name) revealed that, until 1940, the CCP leadership and the Comintern did not distinguish between the Muslims living in China proper from those in Xinjiang.¹⁶³

Impact of the Second Sino-Japanese War

The buildup and outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) elevated the competition for Chinese Muslim allegiance, providing additional impetus for the KMT and CCP to launch aggressive and increasingly sophisticated propaganda efforts directed at the Hui population. Not only did the invasion threaten China’s national and territorial unity, it also adopted a racial and ethnic element, as the Japanese offered yet another interpretation of Hui identity. Two lines of arguments regarding Chinese Muslims’ relation to the Chinese state

¹⁶¹ Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages*, 154.

¹⁶² The CCP, especially after 1940, tempered its promises of self-determination by refusing to equate it with the right to secede, instead setting up its system of autonomous administrative regions. Minority nationalities could only claim a “right of equality with the Han” within the Chinese republic. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 11 and *ibid*, 152-153.

¹⁶³ Toward the end of the Long March, in August 1935, the standing committee of the CCP politburo established a “minority nationality committee” directed by He Kaifeng (a.k.a. Kai Feng and He Kequan), though it ended after less than a year and did not leave any significant accomplishments. Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages*, 151 and 155.

dominated the debate among the Japanese. One extreme sought to establish a Hui separatist state similar to the puppet state of Manchukuo. The other followed the Republic of Five Lineages inclusion of Huizu into China, arguing that the Hui were the “best part” of the Chinese Republic and thus a key to “reviving” the country and incorporating it under Japanese rule. Variations between the two extremes also existed, adding to the ambiguity of Hui identity, with proposals dividing China’s Muslims into three categories: Hui in the eastern provinces, Hui in the Northwest, and Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. The latter two groups tended to be treated more as candidates for separatist Hui states while the former was incorporated within the Chinese state.¹⁶⁴

While Japanese pan-Asianists had exhibited interest in Chinese Muslims since the early 1900s, launching individual attempts to encourage Hui secession, Japan did not enact any official Hui Muslim campaigns until after gaining Manchuria in 1931. In order to strengthen their hold on Manchuria, Japan had to secure the borders near eastern Inner Mongolia, where Hui warlords resided, while also managing a Muslim population numbering more than 300 thousand in the Northeast provinces (*dong san sheng*).¹⁶⁵ The Japanese tried to recruit China’s minorities by highlighting their differences from the Han Chinese and emphasizing their disenfranchised, oppressed existence under Han rule, creating an Islamic league in 1932 in the capital of Manchuria as a vehicle to propagate anti-Chinese propaganda. Though Japanese authorities disagreed over whether to treat the Hui as a religious or ethnic group, a reorganization of the Manchurian Islamic Society (*Manzhou Yisilan xiehui*) converted it into an official ethnic

¹⁶⁴ Junichiro Ando, “Japan’s Hui-Muslim Campaigns in China from the 1910’s to 1945: An Introductory Survey” in *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies*, No.18-2 (2003), 26-28.

¹⁶⁵ See the background on Yamaoka Kotaro, Tanaka Ippei, and Fukuda Kikuo, among others, in *ibid*, 23-28. In addition to Japanese intellectuals, other Muslim pan-Asianists such as the Russian-born Abdurreshid Ibrahim (1857-1944) also called on Japan to unite with the Islamic world and draw attention toward Chinese Muslims. Ibrahim felt that Chinese Muslims would be the best partners for Japanese plans to expand to China. See Komatsu Hisao, “Muslims Intellectuals and Japan: A Pan-Islamist mediator, Abdurreshid Ibrahim” in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World*, 273-288.

organization. In Inner Mongolia (*Mokyo* or *Mengjiang*), the Northwest Islamic Union (*Xibei Huijiao lianhe hui*) run by Japanese Muslims sought to establish itself as the “autonomous authority” (*zizhi jiguan*) for the Hui and co-opt the region’s Muslim warlords. It likely intended on advocating for an independent Hui state (*Huijiao guo*).

To gain the allegiance of Chinese Muslims beyond the Northwest, Japan switched tactics, following the Republic of Five Lineages concept of a “trans-regional” Huizu tied to the national borders of China. It created an even larger organization, the All China Muslim League (ACML, *Zhongguo Huijiao zonglianhe hui*), in 1938 to promote Muslim collaboration with Japan.¹⁶⁶ Defining the “whole Muslim population of China” as a Hui minzu “inseparable from its religion,” the ACML attacked the CCP as a threat to Chinese Muslim identity due to the party’s antagonism toward religion. The organization also attempted to stir up suspicion against the KMT by pointing to its alliance with the Communists, discrediting the Nationalists by association. Portraying the Hui as “a firm brick in the wall of the Republic of China” entrusted with the duty to unite with Japan against the Communist threat, organizations like the ACML “co-opted the existing mainstream discourse of Muslim intellectuals into their strategic narrative and imposed it on the local Muslim societies once again,” adopting similar rhetoric as that of Sino-Muslims before the war.¹⁶⁷

Responding to Japan’s efforts, Han Chinese intellectuals in the early 1930s oriented their focus toward frontier history and the study of ethnic minorities. Establishing closer ties to Sino-Muslim intellectuals, they encouraged the proliferation of a Chinese Muslim historiography as a way to cement Muslim ties and loyalties to the Chinese nation. They also propagated familiar

¹⁶⁶ Ando, “Japan’s Hui-Muslim Campaigns,” 28-34. Also see Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 98-99. Ando translated the All China Muslim League as the China Islamic Union (CIU).

¹⁶⁷ Ando, “Japan’s Hui-Muslim Campaigns,” 32, citing materials in the archive of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2.1.0.2.5, vol. 2), the *Huijiao* journal, and Mita Ryoichi, *Shina ni okeru Waga Kaikyo Taisaku ni tuite* (China Islamic Union) (1941).

rhetoric on the “inherent qualities” of Hui that made them natural, productive citizens.¹⁶⁸

Historian Gu Jiegang (1893-1980), a leading advocate of Chinese frontier studies, followed a similar line of argument as the KMT mono-minzu policy.¹⁶⁹ Stressing that Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese “had no real racial differences (*meiyou zhenzheng de zhongzu qubie*),” Gu dedicated a special issue of the Yugong Institute journal to Chinese Muslims where he professed, “I am not a Muslim. Before 1931, I never paid attention to Islam...Until the four eastern provinces (*dong si sheng*) were lost and Japan’s Mainland policy imposed on us the greatest oppression, then I finally paid attention to our borderland (*bianjiang*).” He went on to state that his studies of the Northwest sparked his interest in the Hui and his admiration for “their belief’s loyalty, strength, and of their unity and courage in their endeavors.” This alerted him to the realization that the Chinese nation’s revival (*Zhonghua minzu de fuxing*) depended on Chinese Muslims’ ability to fulfill their national duty. In order to achieve this, however, non-Muslims must give their all (*jinliang*) to understand Islam, build their compassion, and establish cooperation.¹⁷⁰

Saving Country, Saving Faith Redux

Sino-Muslim political mobilization heightened after full war broke out in 1937. Once Japanese attacks forced the KMT to relocate inland from Nanjing to Chongqing, cutting off supply lines in the east, the Nationalists began focusing more on securing the Northwest and its

¹⁶⁸ Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 99 and Yufeng Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 377.

¹⁶⁹ Gu was a leading member of the Doubting Antiquity school (*Yigupai*). It was initiated by Hu Shih, Gu Jiegang’s mentor, although earlier scholars like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were also seen as proponents. Members of this school of thought questioned the authenticity and accuracy of classical Chinese texts, using textual criticism to analyze and challenge traditional Chinese historiography. Historians who have studied Gu and his work acknowledge his ambiguous nature as being scientific and antitraditional while also seeking to preserve elements of traditional Chinese culture. See Tze-Ki Hon, “Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism: Gu Jiegang’s Vision of a New China in His Studies of Ancient History” in *Modern China* 22, No. 3 (July 1996), 315–339 and Laurence A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China’s New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

¹⁷⁰ Gu Jiegang, “Huijiao wenhua yundong” (Huijiao Cultural Movement) in *Yugong* 7, No. 4 (Nov. 20, 1936). Reprinted in Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, *Zhongguo Yisilan jiaoshi cankao ziliao xuanbian*, vol. 2, 912.

Muslim populations, offering financial assistance to the Sino-Muslim warlords of the region in return for their allegiance and access to the region's crucial supply lines and raw materials. The KMT also focused on bolstering its image among both domestic and international Muslim communities, sponsoring Muslim journals and supporting Sino-Muslim leaders' plans for voluntary anti-Japanese associations and diplomatic missions to the Middle East. Between 1938 and 1939, Sino-Muslim delegations embarked on two hajj trips to drum up support for the KMT war cause.¹⁷¹

Declaring their aims "to reveal the brutal Japanese invasion of China, the insult Japan has inflicted upon Chinese Muslims, as well as the determination of all Chinese people to resist Japan,"¹⁷² the Hui diplomatic trips abroad on behalf of the KMT government augmented the role of Sino-Muslims in domestic and foreign affairs. They were but one example of Sino-Muslim intellectuals' efforts throughout the Republican era to mobilize fellow Muslims and highlight their importance as participants in the grand mission of national salvation. Leaders within the Hui community, as part of the wave of Sino-Muslims who returned in the 1920s and 1930s from studies abroad in the Middle East, combined concepts from Islamic teachings and Chinese nationalism to reinforce the "mutually informing" facets of their dual loyalties toward faith and nation.¹⁷³ In the years following the Manchurian Incident, a sense of crisis permeated throughout

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 373-375 and Hsiao-Ting Lin, "War, Leadership and Ethnopolitics: Chiang Kai-shek and China's Frontiers, 1941-1945" in *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, No. 59 (March 2009), 214. Attesting to the spike in Hui activism during the war effort, out of a total of 133 registered Muslim periodicals between 1904 and 1949, forty-nine alone were founded from 1938-1949. See Aubin, "The case of Muslim intellectuals in Republican China," 245-246, 263.

¹⁷² As stated by the first five-person Chinese Muslim Delegation to the Near East (whose members included Xue Wenbo) in *Zhongguo huijiao jindong fangwentuan riji* (Diary of the Chinese Muslim Delegation to the Near East) (Chongqing: Zhongguo wenhua fuwushe, 1943), 5. Cited in Yufeng Mao, "A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation," 375. The second hajj delegation sent by the KMT consisted of twenty-eight Sino-Muslim students who had been studying at Egypt's al-Azhar University and was a counter to a delegation sent by Japan's puppet Beijing government.

¹⁷³ Benite, "From Literati to 'Ulama'," 95-96.

the pages of Sino-Muslim publications, reflecting the larger mood of the country.¹⁷⁴ Faced with another humiliating example of China's failure to maintain territorial sovereignty, as well as the need to "awaken" fellow Muslims and prevent them from being "anesthetized" or lulled astray by the Japanese campaign, Sino-Muslims returned to the mantra made famous by Ding Zhuyuan: "To save our faith is to save our country, to save our country is to save our faith" (*jiu jiao jiu shi jiu guo, jiu guo jiu shi jiu jiao*).¹⁷⁵

Beginning and ending his essay on Muslim unity with the Republican government directive "The Huizu is an essential part of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua Minzu*)," *Yisilan* contributor Ibrahim, a Sino-Muslim, reinforced Hui inclusion within the Chinese nation-state and their resistance to Japan. He argued that, until now, the Sino-Muslim populated regions of Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, and Shaanxi, as well as "the Turkic Muslim-populated borders of Xinjiang, have never been misled by the various propaganda [against China]." Their loyalty could still be counted on.¹⁷⁶ Another contributor Ding Shaoyun corrected the misconception that Islam's universality "as a religion that does not distinguish between state boundaries or racial (*zhongzu*) boundaries meant it does not care about the death of the state and only concerns itself with religion," challenging fellow Hui with the question, "If China were to die, will imperialist countries [i.e. Japan] let us [Muslims] live?"¹⁷⁷ Clearly rooting Hui identity within the state boundaries, Beijing's *Yuehua* journal (1929-1948), the most widely-circulated Sino-Muslim publication at the time, declared in 1932: "We are Muslims in China, not Muslims in Turkey nor

¹⁷⁴ For an example, see Wen Qi, "The Crisis Facing Islam in China, Part II" (*Zhongguo huijiao zhi wei ji, er: Zhongguo huijiao zhi wei ji*) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 2, 140.

¹⁷⁵ This version of Ding's slogan comes from Zi Qing, "Fu yu Zhongguo ji Yisilan qingnian zhi zeren," 171. The use of "anesthetize" to describe the Japanese Hui-Muslim campaign comes from a news article "Wei Manzhou Yisilan xiehui—riben ren mazui wo Dongbei jiaobao zhi celue" False Manchurian Islamic Association—Japanese Prepare Policies to Anaesthetize/Lull Our Fellow Muslims in the Northeast" in *Yisilan* 1, No. 4, 202.

¹⁷⁶ Ibrahim, "Yisilan xintu tuanjie qi lai" (Muslims Unite) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 1, 117-118.

¹⁷⁷ Ding Shaoyun, "Yisilan yu xiandai shehui," 187.

Muslims in Persia. We are not Muslims from Muslim states. We have to demand a status of nationality (*minzu*) as an integral part of the Chinese nation.”¹⁷⁸ The statements of Ding and *Yuehua* implied that Sino-Muslims’ survival was intertwined and inseparable from that of China. Despite practicing a universal religion that connected them with the worldwide Islamic community, they still shared a national, distinctly “Chinese” identity that granted them a stake in China’s welfare. Just as in the late Qing, China’s Muslims could not only save their religion while letting their country perish.

Sino-Muslim intellectuals expanded the work of Wang Haoran and the ahongs of the early Republican era to find a “concrete basis” for Hui patriotism within the Koran and Hadith. In a 1930 article entitled “Protection of Islam and Love of the State,” Tianjin ahong and KMT member Wang Jingzhai (1879-1949) first introduced to China the now-contested hadith phrase “love of the fatherland is an article of faith” (*hub al-watan min al-iman*).¹⁷⁹ First hearing “watan” during his studies at al-Azhar University in Egypt, Wang cited an Egyptian religious leader’s interpretation of the term: “*Watan* in Arabic means the place where you live. Modern scholars of Islamic jurisprudence call *watan* the land where people’s rights, duties, lives and fortunes are entrusted. That is to say, there is no contradiction between people’s freedom and statehood.”¹⁸⁰ While Egyptian Muslim reformers saw watan as connotating a state with a Muslim majority, Sino-Muslim reformers saw watan as a Chinese state where, despite the presence of a non-Muslim majority, Muslims still participated as integral members of the nation while Islamic culture served as part of a “multifaceted” Chinese culture. This interpretation was supposed to

¹⁷⁸ Xue Wenbo, “Zhongguo Huizu de diwei he bensheng yingyou de renshi” (The Status of the Hui Nationality and the Required Consciousness) in *Yuehua* 4, No. 10 (April 5, 1932). Translation from Matsumoto, “Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese,” 129.

¹⁷⁹ Modern Islamic scholars argue that this phrase cannot be found in actual Hadith, and there is no mention of the term “watan” in the Koran, but the phrase was coined and spread by Muslim nationalists in the Middle East during the nineteenth century. See Matsumoto, “Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese,” 128.

¹⁸⁰ Wang Jingzhai, “Jingshou Huijiao yu aihu guojia.” The translation is from *ibid*, 128.

guide the Hui population away from tensions with Han Chinese while also signaling to the state that the Hui were supporters, rather than threats, to China.¹⁸¹ In Wang's opinion, Hui historico-cultural investigations should look for evidence to justify this connection.

Traditionally negative stereotypes of the Hui's "courageous, fierce, and warlike nature" were once again inverted to be positive attributes and backed up with historical evidence.¹⁸² Drawing a parallel between Sino-Muslims' ability to survive and resist a foreign invader (the Mongols) during the Yuan dynasty and their ability to survive and resist the current foreign invader (Japan), scholar Jin Jitang (1908-1978) claimed that during the beginning of Mongol rule in China, there were Buddhists and Christians as well as Muslims in the country, but by the end, the Muslims resisted assimilation and became a *minzu* while Buddhists and Christians disappeared.¹⁸³ Appropriating the broad history of Islamic civilization as a demonstration of Islam's potential to rescue China from its current state of disorder and war, Ding Shaoyun wrote, "The past track record of Islam proves its power. Within a short twenty-three years, [Islam] united Europe, Asia, and Africa and accomplished many exceptional achievements."¹⁸⁴ Even the idea of Islamic "martyrdom" became incorporated into the discourse surrounding Hui resistance efforts, exemplified in Xue Wenbo's "Song of the Hui with an anti-Japanese determination" for the September 1939 issue of *Yuehua*:

The enemies have made their horses drink water from the Yellow River
The sacred war for national protection has begun
Muslims have a real spirit, feel ashamed to indulge in living
But we feel proud to participate in the battle

¹⁸¹ Matsumoto, "Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese," 133.

¹⁸² One "evidence" offered was Mo'asen's study's observation that the majority of Muslims who were in politics were in military affairs, with less in civilian affairs. See Mo'asen, "Huijiao ru Zhongguo kao," 244-245. Also see Ma Songting's mention of Hui "patriotic" activities in the Ming and Qing dynasties in "Huijiao yu rensheng" (Islam and Life) in *Yuehua* 5, no. 35 (December 15, 1933).

¹⁸³ Jin, "Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu," 249.

¹⁸⁴ Ding Shaoyun, "Yisilan yu xiandai shehui" (Islam and Modern Society) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 4, 187.

Mosques have been burned down to ruins
Innocent women and children are shedding blood
Alas, in China we fifty million Muslims
Are in disgrace

Religion shows us the way of martyrdom
Do we feel reluctant to bleed for justice?
At the defeat of Japan, we yell out and rejoice
Then Muslim men will undress their military uniform¹⁸⁵

While highlighting the threat Chinese Muslims posed to the foreign enemy, Xue was careful to end on the image of the Hui “undressing their military uniform” once peace was restored and celebrating with their fellow countrymen. This served the purpose of stressing the common goal between Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese. Their “violence” would be against the Japanese, not against the Han or China.

Debunking *Huihui Yuanlai* and the Birth of an Independent Modern Hui Historiography

Competition for Hui allegiance thus led to increasing interest amongst Sino-Muslim scholars to develop new scholarship linking Hui identity to the Chinese nation. In addition to political motivations, the intellectual trends of the 1930s impacted the strategies employed by Sino-Muslim intellectuals to establish their communal identity. Building on the New Culture Movement (mid-1910s to mid-1920s), which had galvanized the popularization of disciplines such as anthropology, ethnology, and sociology while stimulating interest in systematic examinations of China’s past, courses on these disciplines were offered at major universities in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai by the mid-1930s.¹⁸⁶ Peking University president Cai Yuanpei

¹⁸⁵ Xue Wenbo, “Zhongguo Huizu kangzhan ge” in *Yuehua* 11, No. 18 (September 25, 1939).

¹⁸⁶ While anthropology was introduced to China through Japan at the turn of the twentieth century, universities did not begin developing stronger anthropology programs until the 1920s. “Renleixue” was coined by Sun Xuewu in a paper titled “On Anthropology” (*Renleixue gailun*), published in *Science (Kexue)* 4, vol. 2. The “Anthropology and Raciology” course was taught by Chen Yinghuang, the author of the 1918 *Renleixue*, credited as the first Chinese book dealing explicitly with anthropology. The introduction of ethnology in China began with Wei Yi and famous classical Chinese scholar Lin Shu’s 1903 “Minzhongxue,” a joint translation of an English article, in the Beijing Imperial Academy Press. The term “minzuxue” was not coined until December 1924, when Cai Yuanpei, credited by modern Chinese ethnologists as the founder of their field, published his article “On Ethnology” (*Shuo*

(1868-1940), one of the first scholars to direct Chinese ethnology toward non-Han minorities, established the Academia Sinica (*Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan*) under the KMT government in 1928 as a leading institute for the study of natural and social sciences.¹⁸⁷ The academy included an ethnology unit (*zu*) within its Institute of Social Research (*Shehui Yanjiusuo*). As director, Cai dispatched scholars on annual trips to conduct fieldwork on minorities such as the Miao, She, Yao, Hezhe, and Taiwanese aborigines. Research on non-Han minorities increased once Chinese universities and scholars were forced to relocate inland during the conflict with Japan.¹⁸⁸

The traditional body of knowledge on Hui history fell under scrutiny. While Sino-Muslims faced new scholarship challenging their authenticity, they also contributed to this modern scholarship, utilizing the tools available to build a new definitive and “scientifically-researched” historiography. One example concerned the challenge to Sino-Muslim origin myths. As China transitioned from the late Qing to the Republican era, *Huihui yuanlai* (The Origin of the Hui) continued to influence the development of Chinese Muslim historiography. Even when ethnographer Chen Yuan debunked the myth in his 1928 “A Historical Outline of Islam’s Entrance to China” (*Huihuijiao ru Zhongguo silue*), Sino-Muslim intellectuals, though agreeing with Chen’s conclusions, still tried to prove that Muslims first arrived in China around the time mentioned in the myth.

Minzuxue) in the Shanghai journal *Yi Ban*. Only a year earlier, Li Ji, a doctoral student at Harvard University and future head of the Academia Sinica’s Archaeology Section, completed a dissertation on China’s nationalities that utilized actual field observations at a time when previous studies on the subject relied only on abstract and theoretical discussions. As the head of Peking University and a widely influential Chinese scholar, Cai’s article further helped to legitimize and advocate for ethnology as a field of study deserving of attention. See Gregory Eliyu Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropology in China: From Malinowski to Moscow to Mao* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 23-30. Guldin’s book provides a detailed account of the history of Chinese anthropology and related social sciences from the late Qing to the 1980s. For further reference see Shinji Yamashita, Joseph Bosco, and J.S. Eades ed. *The Making of Anthropology in East and Southeast Asia* (New York: Bergahn Books, 2004).

¹⁸⁷ Following the CCP victory in the civil war, the KMT government reestablished the Academia Sinica as the national academy of Taiwan while the institution became the Chinese Academy of Sciences (*Zhongguo Kexueyuan*) in the PRC.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 30-33.

Recognized as the first “Han” position on Hui origins and the first approach by a professional modern historian, Chen’s article belonged to a larger series of studies on the assimilation (*tonghua*) and sinicization (*hanhua*) of non-Chinese peoples under Mongol rule. Chen compared the historical claims within *Huihui yuanlai* to official records from the Tang dynasty, outlining discrepancies, and also systematically examined later Chinese sources on the Hui. He argued that Muslims in China mostly originated from Central Asia and went through a long and gradual assimilation and sinicization process, adopting all the major traits of the Chinese while still preserving their religion. Islam survived this assimilation because Muslims did not proselytize in China and the religion did not oppose (*gongji*) Confucianism, protecting it from the hostility of the people and the state.¹⁸⁹

“A Historical Outline of Islam’s Entrance to China” elicited strong responses from Chinese Muslim intellectuals since it challenged the previous dominant Sino-Muslim historiography on Islam’s entrance and development in China. It also distinguished between Chinese and Muslim identities, emphasizing the Hui’s “non-Chinese” and Central Asian backgrounds while rooting their assimilation into China in a Mongol, foreign-led dynasty rather than the Chinese-led Tang. As a systemic historical study of Muslim and Chinese histories, Chen’s article presented itself as a more scientifically-sound counterweight to popular myths and, therefore, could become accepted as the definitive account of Chinese Muslim history.

In order to challenge Chen’s interpretation, Sino-Muslim intellectuals established systematic studies of their own, creating a new proliferation of “Chinese Muslim historiography

¹⁸⁹Chen Yuan is also known by the name Chen Bo’an. His 1928 article was based off of a 1927 lecture that he gave at Peking University. See Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’,” 94-97 and “Zhongguo Huijiao shi liao zhi jilü” (The Compilation of Chinese Islamic Historical Data) in *Yisilan* 4, No. 4 (April 25, 1935). Reprint: Vol. 1 of *Zhongguo Yisilan li shi bao kan cui bian* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1992), 183.

written by Chinese Muslims for Chinese Muslims.”¹⁹⁰ Within a year of Chen’s article, three other articles on the origin of Islam in China were published in Sino-Muslim magazines, followed by more in the subsequent decade. These articles all quoted Chen’s study and, while conceding that myths like *Huihui yuanlai* were simply a “tradition” (*chuanshuo*) and not historical fact, set about gathering historical fact to prove that Islam entered China during the Tang. Their methods grew increasingly sophisticated, incorporating not just Chinese sources but also Western and Arabic scholarship, all to establish the Sino-Muslim’s legitimate claim to Chinese history.¹⁹¹

Sino-Muslim periodicals published foreign scholarship that supported Hui intellectuals’ claims, such as Lu Yuansan’s “Study on Islam’s Entrance into China,” a 1935 translation of the work of an American scholar (known in transliteration as Mo’asen). This study endowed Islam with a 1300-year-old history in China and, similar to Chen Yuan’s article, worked to debunk or point out the fallacies in some of the existing Hui records. In one example, an Islamic plaque in Xi’an stated that “Islam first came from the west, and entered China during the time of the founding emperor (581 to 601),” yet Muhammad’s famous flight to Medina, marking the start of the Islamic calendar, did not occur until 622. It was highly unlikely for Islam to have reached China during the years stated on the plaque, although the years on the plaque also would not match the Western calendar. Another plaque, in Guangzhou, commemorating the 1351

¹⁹⁰ Benite, “From Literati to ‘Ulama,’” 95.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 94-97. Hui responses to Chen Yuan’s article include Xihaluding, “Huijiao lai Hua de yanjiu” (*Yuehua* 3, 1929), 88-90; Liu Fengwu, “Huijiao zhuanru Zhongguo de shiqi,” 91-111; Ma Zishi “Zhongguo Huijiao gaiguan,” 50-76; and Sun Mei, “Huijiao zhuanru Zhongguo ge shou shuping,” 112-117 reprinted in Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, *Zhongguo Yisilan jiaoshi cankao ziliao xuanbian*.

renovation of the mosque mentioned Muslims who on Muhammad's command came east to spread the religion 800 years ago.¹⁹²

Given the above discrepancies, "Study on Islam's Entrance into China" went on to cite a variety of Chinese and Arabic sources, tracing the long trajectory of Islamic history in China. In a departure from Chen's focus on the Hui's Central Asian and Mongol influences, Mo'asen's examples supported the Islamic presence in China during the Tang dynasty and specially mentioned the early Muslim populations who settled in China's interior provinces and who came from the sea. Studies from the Arabic scholar Kehe'er in 846 recorded Muslims entering China by land and by water, with more crossing by water. Another Arabic writer, Abu Zhe'eryiya mentioned evidence that the first Muslims in China were merchants and calculated that Islam entered China after 800, still within the timeframe of the Tang. Examining the official records from the Tang dynasty, Mo'asen found documentation of an ambassador arriving from the west (Western Asia, or the Middle East) in 780, suggesting that Muslims could have settled in the country within proximity of this date.

Mo'asen's research provided Sino-Muslim intellectuals with another example of how to approach Hui history and ground it within Chinese history from a variety of different angles, including studies of the geographical distribution, demography, and social status of Muslims over time. The study observed that Muslims arriving by sea tended to live in coastal areas, with Hangzhou as one of the first to have Islamic settlement. Those who came by land mostly lived in the interior, with areas like Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan, and Henan having the most Muslims. In 1271, Beijing had a special surveying department for Muslims. By 1289, Henan province had established an Islamic university. From a cultural and genealogical perspective, the study

¹⁹² Mo'asen, "Huijiao ru Zhongguo kao" (Study on Islam's Entrance into China), translated by Lu Yuansan in *Yisilan* 1, No. 5 (May 25, 1935), 224.

observed that due to “intermarriage between the Hui and Han, the two mutually assimilated (*liangxiang tonghua*),” resulting in similar physical attributes and living habits between the two groups, though some Hui showed clearer signs of their Arabic ancestry with “sharper noses, flatter cheekbones, bigger builds, and beards.” Calculating the Sino-Muslim population at around five to ten million, Mo’asen also argued that “in society and under the law, Huijiao and Han share equal status and power,” with Muslims building on their early merchant roots to hold positions in other sectors, including political and military office.¹⁹³

Though the debunking of origin myths threatened to delegitimize previous Sino-Muslim historiography, it also, in some ways, liberated Chinese Muslims as Sino-Muslim intellectuals seized the opportunity to fashion a new, “scientific” historiography of Islam in China. In an April 1935 article on “The Compilation of Chinese Islamic Historical Data,” Bai Shouyi (1909-2000), who in later years became one of the most influential Sino-Muslim historians and ethnologists, advocated for greater Hui historical scholarship. Born in Kaifeng, Henan Province to a merchant family, Bai entered a local religious school at the age of twelve and completed undergraduate studies in Henan. After obtaining a graduate degree in Chinese philosophical history from Yenching University in 1932, Bai went on to have a distinguished career, joining the capital’s geographical and historical research societies, including the Yugong Institute (*Yugong xuehui*) and Beiping Research Institute (*Beiping yanjiushuo*), before becoming a professor in the 1940s. He also served as editor-in-chief to prominent Sino-Muslim publications such as *Yuehua* and *Yunnan Qingzhen Duobao* and a member of the 1937 surveying team to the Northwest organized by Gu Jiegang. After the establishment of the PRC, Bai co-founded the New China Historical

¹⁹³ Mo’asen, “Huijiao ru Zhongguo kao” in *Yisilan*, 224-225.

Society (*Xin Zhongguo shi xuehui*) and joined the CCP in 1956 as a representative to the National People's Congress.¹⁹⁴

In his 1935 article, Bai expressed discontent that, despite Islam's more than a thousand year-long presence in China, few books focused on the religion's national history. Documenting a list of previously published works, Bai critiqued their short length and asked for more in-depth studies, especially from Chinese Islamic authors. Noting that China's Huimin "recite *Huihui yuanlai*, even though it is a fabrication, as if it is common sense and pass it down through oral tradition as the story of Islam entering China," Bai expanded the historical and geographic scope of Chinese Islam's origins, writing that "Islam did not enter China through simply one path. It arrived to the east through Mount Tai, it came across the seas, it reached poor and remote regions." The rest of the article raised examples of various materials that Sino-Muslim historians could excavate and collect, from engraved messages on mosque plaques to photos and both Muslim and non-Muslim sources.¹⁹⁵

Yisilan

The theme of Bai's article reflected the larger mission of its publication, *Yisilan* (Islam), a 1935 Hui journal started in Kaifeng by the Henan Islamic Association. Running a total of five issues from January to May, *Yisilan* printed articles on a variety of topics, from analyses of religion, history, and the Hui's situation in China to publication reviews, translations, and Islamic news. News articles raised awareness of the problems and organizational changes facing the Chinese Muslim community. Samples include a report on robberies and violence against

¹⁹⁴ For more information on Bai Shouyi, see Beijing Shifan Daxue Shixue yanjiusuo, *Lishi kexue yu lishi qiantu: zhuhe Bai Shouyi jiaoshou bashi nian huadan* (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1994) and Li Songmiao, "Bai Shouyi yu Huijiao yanjiu" (Bai Shouyi and Hui Studies) in *Zhongguo minzu bao* (China Ethnic News), May 15, 2009, 7.

¹⁹⁵ "Zhongguo Huijiao shi liao zhi jilü" in *Yisilan*, 183-184. Though no specific author is listed in the byline, it is an editorial note and therefore attributed to Bai Shouyi, who strongly advocated for Hui historiography and was the chief editor of *Yisilan*.

Sino-Muslims in Hebei province, calling on all Hui to lend support to the families affected, and the opening of a Kaifeng mosque propaganda office to address the misunderstandings amongst local Muslims regarding their religion.¹⁹⁶ At a time when Muslims continued to face discrimination by non-Muslim Chinese, including offensive remarks in Han publications attacking “strange” Muslim religious practices and insults such as “Little Pigsy” (*xiao Zhubajie*, after the half-man, half-pig disciple in the classical Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, known for his gullibility, laziness, greed, and unattractiveness),¹⁹⁷ Sino-Muslims found extra imperatives to emphasize themselves as familiar entities in China’s grand history, with equal status to the Han.

In its first issue, the *Yisilan* editors addressed both Muslims and non-Muslims at home and overseas, asking for their support and feedback while declaring the journal’s mission to foster research and discussion over Hui affairs, including a focus on local history and six key questions:

We are a small group of Hui youth who share one reality: we feel that we know too little regarding Huijiao and Huijiaoren’s affairs and have long held a strong interest in them. We will explore both broad and narrow questions, including the following: First, our original upbringing and education, what was it really like? Do they resemble today’s habits in their various implementations? What were their philosophical underpinnings and theoretical roots? Second, in terms of our religion’s literature, we have many beautiful poems, fables, and stories...what value and significance do they have? Third, Western history tells us that the European civilization’s golden age was heavily influenced and helped by Islamic civilization. What constituted the special nature of Islamic civilization and how did it promote European modern civilization? Fourth, Islam entered China a long time ago. What did Islam contribute to China, whether in racial or cultural aspects? What did the native Chinese inhabitants give to the Hui? Fifth, it is said that there is a significant number of Muslims in Kaifeng. Just what are the demographics

¹⁹⁶ “Nanpi Jiao’an” (The Nanpi Religious Case) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 2 (Feb. 1935), 152-153 and “Beiping Cheng Da yingyin Gulan jing, Kaifeng Dong shi chuangshe xuanchuansuo” (Beijing Cheng Da Prints Koran, Kaifeng East Mosque Establishes Propaganda Office) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 5 (May 25, 1935), 226.

¹⁹⁷ Rudolf Lowenthal in his study of the Mohammedan press in China recorded twenty-four slander cases in the 1920s and 1930s. See Rudolf Lowenthal, *The Religious Press in China* (Peking: Synodal Committee on China, 1940), 243-245. For a mention of the common insults thrown at Chinese Muslims, see Zi Qing, “Fu yu Zhongguo ji Yisilan qingnian zhi zeren” (Reviving China and the Responsibility of Islamic Youth) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 3, 171.

of Muslims in Kaifeng? What is the male-female ratio? Sixth, what is the state of Kaifeng mosques in terms of their administrative habits and economic conditions?¹⁹⁸

Through posing these six questions, the editors established a framework to assess and document Chinese Muslim culture and history. The contents of *Yisilan* attempted to strike a balance between local, national, and international topics, such as serial translations of an Egyptian scholar's biography of Muhammad and a series on the development of Kaifeng Juazheng Elementary School, fostering a sense of shared history and knowledge on both a micro and macro scale while connecting the city's Muslims to the larger network of Islamic associations in the country. Similar to Bai's April article, the March 10 issue's editorial note "Small-scale Investigations" called on "enthusiastic fellow Muslims" to take responsibility and pay greater attention to their own histories. Suggesting that Hui "start with small scale investigations, with what is familiar, and work our way up," the editors provide examples such as having members of the Dong Da mosque begin to examine the mosque's economic situation, current reforms, and religious staffer biographies. From these small-scale investigations, Sino-Muslims intellectuals hoped to gather enough sources to determine which ones should become the foundational, authoritative reference materials on Chinese Muslims.¹⁹⁹

Made in China: Jin Jitang and Defining Huizu

Published in the same year as *Yisilan*, a study by Sino-Muslim scholar Jin Jitang reflected a turning point for the development of Sino-Muslim identity. The debate between the Republic of Five Lineages and KMT mono-minzu policy's definition of Huizu provided the stimulus for scholarship like Jin's to tackle the subject of Hui identity. However, Jin did not directly take sides in this contest. Instead, he constructed an academic argument that refuted both policies, defining "Huizu" as a nationality separate from both Hanzu and Turkic Muslims.

¹⁹⁸ "Wo men de zi bai" (Our Position) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1, 1935), 115.

¹⁹⁹ "Xiao guimo de diaocha" (Small-scale Investigations) in *Yisilan* 1, No. 3 (March 10, 1935), 159-160.

A native of Shandong, Jin had been active in the Hui reformist movement since the late 1920s, teaching in new-style Muslim seminaries and contributing to Sino-Muslim journals. His *Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu* (Studies in the history of Chinese Islam), a study tracing Chinese Islam from the Tang to the Qing dynasty, took a step toward teasing out the differences that set Sino-Muslims apart from their Turkic and Han counterparts. It separated the criteria for Hui minzu status from their ties to Islam, distinguishing between Islam's religious and cultural forms. While Jin recognized Sino-Muslims' foreign Islamic roots and acknowledged the religion's role in unifying their heterogeneous ancestors, he nevertheless downplayed the religion as a necessary characteristic for Sino-Muslims' nationality status. Jin instead justified the existence of a distinct Huizu, one equal to the Hanzu in terms of legitimacy and status, based on their position as a "homegrown" nationality created within the boundaries of China. The phenomenon of their evolution from a *Huijiao* (Islamic religious group) to a *Huizu* (race) only occurred after the diverse ancestors of the Hui, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, met and merged within China's borders. It was Islam's cultural forms, rather than purely its religious aspect, that unified the Sino-Muslims into a distinct Chinese nationality separate from the Han.²⁰⁰ Other teachings, including Buddhism and Christianity, Jin posited, lacked Islam's unifying power (*zonghe zhi nengli*) and thus failed to create distinct Buddhist and Christian nationalities.²⁰¹ Divided into seven parts, Jin's study opened by laying out the debate:

Within the territory of the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo*), there are fifty million people who practice Huijiao. Within these fifty million Huijiao followers, other than

²⁰⁰ In his 1930 article "Jingshou Huijiao yu aihu guojia" (Protecting Islam and the Love of State), the reformist along Wang Jingzhai was the first to use the term "Huijiao wenhua" or Chinese Islamic culture, writing, "From the moment that China had Islam, it also had Islamic culture" (*Zhongguo zi you Huijiao, ji you Huijiao wenhua*) where "Hui culture" was both an inseparable and different entity from the religion of Islam itself. Wang also portrayed this culture as an inseparable part of the Hui people, with its origins firmly in China. Originally from *Yuehua* 2, No. 3 (Jan. 25, 1930) (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, reprint 1993). Translation from Benite, "From Literati to 'Ulama'," 97-98.

²⁰¹ Benite, "From Literati to 'Ulama,'" 99-100.

those who live in the Northwest Hui borders (*Huijiang*) who can easily be seen as different from Hanzu people, the others who are mostly scattered throughout the interior provinces—if they are not examined closely—would be difficult to distinguish between Hui and Han. Thus, in the recent twenty-plus years, studies on the Huizu category hold different opinions. Most non-Muslims and a portion of Huijiao believers think that those in Huijiang also belong to Huizu. If so, then are not those [Muslims] who live in the interior migrants from the Northwest and the descendants of Huihe? And still another portion of co-religionist intellectuals believe that we, in terms of *zu*, are the same as Hanren and, in terms of religion, belong to those who believe in Huijiao.²⁰²

Jin argued against both camps. Refuting the notion of shared descent between Turkic and Chinese Muslims, Jin saw the Huizu as mixed. They were descendants of migrants who came to China from a variety of countries, lands, and ethnic backgrounds—with different appearances, habits, languages, and skin colors—from Mongolian and Jurchen settlers to Muslim migrants from Persia, Iraq, Turkey, and Central Asia. Only within China, within the country's borders, did they merge together into one nationality. He offered Muslim surnames' evolution and transliteration from Arabic to Chinese, Chinese historical sources, and Hui habits and language as proof that Sino-Muslims had a long presence in China and were descended mostly from foreigners (*wailai ren*).²⁰³

Echoing the words of *Xing Hui Pian* writer Bao Tingliang two decades earlier, Jin vouched for the unifying power of Islam, declaring, “Because they [the migrants] shared a common goal, they all came to China to reside. Because they shared a common religion, a common set of beliefs...through time they combined, assimilated, multiplied and grew, and became Huizu.”²⁰⁴ Unlike Bao and the late Qing Muslim intellectuals who used their mixed descent to prove that Hui was a religious rather than ethnic marker and open the possibility of

²⁰² The citations used here come from an abridged version of Jin's book, an article of the same name published in *Yugong banyue kan* 5, no. 11. See Jin Jitang, “Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu” (Studies in the history of Chinese Islam) reprinted in Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, *Zhongguo Yisilan jiaoshi cankao ziliao xuanbian*, 247.

²⁰³ Ibid, 253-260.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 248. For Bao's quote, refer back to chapter two and Bao Tingliang, “Quan tong ren fu yu jiao yu zhi ze ren shuo” (Encouraging Peers to Take on the Responsibility of Education) in *Xing Hui Pian*, 53.

Sino-Muslims being Muslim Han, Jin cited evidence in support of the latter category. He argued that the Huizu or Sino-Muslims fulfilled Sun Yatsen's Three Principles of the People's five requirements for minzu formation: blood, livelihood, language, religion, and customs and habits. He purposefully created a Hui identity that was non-Han and Chinese. Sino-Muslims were not simply members of the Hanzu who happened to practice Huijiao. After setting out to prove that Hui came from different foreign ancestors, Jin attempted to balance this argument by arguing that the fusion of these disparate elements created a common blood, livelihood, language, religion, and customs and habits. Huizu blood (*xuetong*) was kept "whole" (*zhengge*) through strict marriage customs requiring Muslims to marry someone of the same faith. Non-Muslim partners had to convert, and any offspring from the marriage would follow Huijiao. With such a practice in place, Jin noted that two Muslims, though they may live far apart, could marry due to their shared religion while Hui and Han, despite living in the same area for five hundred years, could never become related [by blood].²⁰⁵

Furthering the genetic argument, Jin's article, similar to "Study on Islam's Entrance into China" in *Yisilan*, highlighted the physical differences between the Hui and Han peoples (*Hui ren* and *Han ren*) despite years of assimilation. Jin cited a passage from his friend Xue Jinzhang's "Zhongguo Huizu yundong" (China's Huizu Movement): "Northwest Huizu mostly have tall bodies, prominent noses, deep-set eyes, and trimmed beards. Interior Huizu [physical attributes] seem to be diminished, but compared to Hanzu, their bodies are somewhat larger, the bridge of their noses are somewhat higher, their eyes somewhat deeper-set, and their beards more grown. They are still different from the Hanren. Based on my personal experience, when Hui ren and Hanren are out on the street, I can tell which is Hui and which is Hanren." Jin followed the

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 250.

passage with a quote from a fortune teller who read people's faces: "Nanren [Southern Han] have different foreheads, Hui have different noses..."²⁰⁶

For livelihood, customs, and habits, Jin described differences in clothing (especially the white hats worn by Sino-Muslim men), diet (with the additional note that dietary differences also explained the difference in physical development between Hui and Han), and residential areas (the segregation between Hui and Han in cities such as Tianjin, Jining, Jinan, Tongzhou, and Beijing). Asserting the strength and wisdom behind Sino-Muslim practices, Jin even claimed that today travelers in the Northwest could distinguish that the people they encountered with thick beards, white hats, and tall statures were Huimin while those with weak bodies and spirits were Hanren, because Huiren, due to their religious rules, did not smoke opium like the Han. For language, Jin mentioned that, though in interactions with Hanren and others, Sino-Muslims would speak in Hanyu and use Han script, but within their Hui community they often used Persian and Arabic. Even when both Han and Sino-Muslims spoke Hanyu, a careful study of pronunciation revealed differences between the two groups, including examples from the Ox Street community in Beijing and the Mujiashuang community in Tianjin, as well as communities in Gansu, Qinghai, and other provinces.²⁰⁷

The monikers Sino-Muslims used to refer to fellow Hui and Han revealed the consciousness amongst Hui regarding their differences from the Han. The Hui called the Han "Han'er ren" and frequented sayings such as, "If I did such a thing, I would be a Han'er ren." Terms also existed to distinguish the Huizu from religious, non-minzu groups such as Buddhists and Christians. Jin emphasized the fact that the Hui were called "Huimin" just as the Han were called "Hanmin," but people did not refer to Buddhists as "Fomin" or Protestants as "Jidumin."

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 251.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 251-260.

While two followers of the same religion may greet each other as “jiaoyou” or “daoyou” (friends), Hui referred to co-religionists as “jiaobao” or “jiaoqin” (blood relative).²⁰⁸ In other words, Hui and Han were on equal footing as distinct nationalities, but members of other religions could not make the same claim.

Closing Remarks

Operating within a wartime environment where competing parties articulated different visions of Hui identity in a bid to gain Hui allegiance, Sino-Muslim intellectuals used their leverage to negotiate a concept of Huizu that would best protect their Chinese-Islamic identities and agency. Responding to the Japanese Hui campaign, they led efforts to mobilize their fellow Muslims, Turkic and Sino, to maintain loyalty to the Chinese nation and save it from this latest crisis. They developed elaborate studies detailing Sino-Muslim origins, genealogy, history, and culture in order to affirm their status as a “homegrown” nationality. As “Muslims in China, not Muslims in Turkey nor Muslims in Persia,” Sino-Muslims increasingly differentiated between their religious and ethnic identities, between their ties to the universal Islamic religion and their ties to the territorially-bound Chinese nation where they developed their unique Huizu identity and culture. Their lines of argument could be created and employed by others as well. By virtue of being a universal religion not tied to one nation or ethnicity, Islam could not be a criterion for defining a Hui minzu. But through establishing a communal genealogical and cultural history for Sino-Muslims, grounded by “scientific” evidence and distinct from that of Han Chinese and Turkic Muslims, Sino-Muslim scholarship offered a host of other criteria to evaluate Huizu status.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 261.

Conclusion

[The Hui minzu] is not one of those native peoples that has always lived on the ancient soil of China (like the Han, Miao, or Qiang), nor one of those purely immigrant groups that came to China from abroad (like the Koreans or Russians), nor one of the peoples of a border region who have long lived in contact (like the Kazaks or the Dai). Rather, it relied upon the tremendous unifying power of Islamic culture, which concentrates Muslims of different countries and different languages into a single entity, causing a *minzu* to form from a blend of foreign elements and partially domestic inhabitants, creating a new species. On the vast, broad land of China it planted roots, sprouted, bloomed, and produced fruit, becoming an important component of the indivisible, great *minzu* family of China.

-Lin Song and He Yan, 1992²⁰⁹

Through increasingly endowing Sino-Muslims with a separate genealogical and cultural history from the Han Chinese and Turkic Muslims, Sino-Muslim intellectuals in the 1930s paved the way for a redefinition of Huizu. Previous debate concerning Sino-Muslim identity, from the late Qing to the Republican years, mainly revolved around two possibilities. Sino-Muslims could be a religious subset of Han Chinese, or they could be members of a broad nationality that encompassed all Muslims in China, whether Sino or Turkic. The fact that Sino-Muslims shared some characteristics, such as language and geographic distribution, with Han Chinese and yet shared other characteristics such as religion with Turkic Muslims meant that they were a difficult category to pin down. They could be grouped with Han Chinese or Turkic Muslims. This ambiguity proved to be both a benefit and detriment. On the one hand, it provided Sino-Muslims with the flexibility to switch between arguing for inclusion as Muslim Han or a broad Hui nationality, depending on which best protected their leverage and interests. On the other hand, the contested nature of their identity also provided Sino-Muslims with serious challenges. Whether categorized with Han Chinese or Turkic Muslims, they were never fully comfortable. As a religious subset of Han Chinese, their Islamic identities appeared to be overshadowed. Lumped together with Turkic Muslims their similarities to Han Chinese were deemphasized.

²⁰⁹ Translated and cited in Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 212. Originally from Lin Song and He Yan, *Huihui lishi yu Yisilan wenhua* (History of the Hui people and Islamic culture) (Beijing: Jinri Zhongguo, 1992), 1.

New arguments put forth by the 1930s scholarship opened up a third possibility, one that reflected a rising demand among Sino-Muslims for status as an exclusive ethnic nationality that recognized both their Chinese and Islamic identities. As the CCP encountered this demand, its Hui ethnopolitics would undergo a major transformation toward the recognition of a Sino-Muslim “Huizu.”

CCP Hui Ethnopolitics Revisited

By 1940, the CCP began moving toward dividing China’s Muslims into separate minority minzu as a way to gain their support. The idea gained traction as the CCP faced Muslim opposition to its original definition of Huizu as inclusive of all Muslims in China. In his analysis of CCP policy, historian John Lindbeck argued that its effectiveness would necessarily “depend on its recognition of two essential features of China’s Moslem population: their religious and communal particularism and their racial and cultural diversity.” The local Sino-Muslim elites that the Communists encountered in the Northwest wanted Islam to be recognized as a universal religion rather than a ‘folk’ religion specific to only one ethnic group. They wanted to protect their religious identities as members of a worldwide Islamic community while also maintaining their separate genealogical and cultural histories as Sino-Muslims.²¹⁰

In response, the CCP continued to gather more fieldwork research and experiment with its categorization of China’s ethnic nationalities. It published multiple treatises offering greater representation to non-Han nationalities. The most influential, *The Question of the Huihui Nationality* (1941), argued that Sino-Muslims, as Huizu, comprised a distinct minzu and were

²¹⁰ In the early 1930s, the CCP still focused on class-based revolutionary ideology and rhetoric, calling on the mobilization of the peasants and lower classes in the Northwest. Some Muslims were recruited. However, after this method failed to convert the local population into “Chinese Soviets,” the party had to turn to other methods, including a shift in 1936 to promising freedom of religion and further emphasizing CCP recognition of a collective Muslim “Huizu” nationality. John M.H. Lindbeck, “Communism, Islam and Nationalism in China,” in *The Review of Politics* 12, No. 4 (Oct. 1950), 473-478.

not just a religious subset of the Han. Li Weihan (1896-1984), secretary-general of the central committee, even wrote an article arguing that Marxist-Stalinist definitions for nationalities, which required ethnic groups to demonstrate a “common language, locality, economy, or psychological makeup [culture],” would not provide grounds for denial of Sino-Muslims and other minorities as nationalities.²¹¹ Though the 1930s KMT mono-minzu policy avoided the problem of labeling Islam as a racial marker, it also provided an opening for the CCP to differentiate itself by promising to protect both the religious unity and cultural and racial diversity of Muslim groups in China. In other words, Muslims in China were to have both religious freedom and recognition as separate nationalities.²¹² Pointing to the lack of Sino-Muslim representation in the National Assembly and other Republican legislative bodies, the Communists argued that Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT glossed over the ethnic differences between Hui and Han in order to “sidestep the issue of political representation and equality.” Decrying KMT ethnic policies as a form of paralysis, an obstacle to national awakening, the CCP attempted to articulate an alternative system that would allow China’s minority groups to be “Chinese” while still preserving their “unique” ethnic identities.²¹³

²¹¹ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 151 and Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages*, 155-156.

²¹² Lindbeck, “Communism, Islam and Nationalism in China,” 486.

²¹³ Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*, 29. To execute and reinforce its vision, the party set up organizational structures that offered channels for minority representation. In Xinjiang, for example, the CCP set up separate culture promotion associations (*wenhua cujin hui*) for each minzu that then sent representatives to a larger umbrella organization, the Xinjiang Cultural Association (*Xinjiang Wenhua Xiehui*). Claiming to combat Han chauvinism, these associations had a duty to preserve each nationality’s distinct culture and to bring it in alignment with CCP principles. The six principles (*liu da zhengce*) were “anti-imperialism, pro-Soviet, minzu equality, peace, edification, honesty and uprightness.” See Mao Dun, “Tan Huijiao minzu de wenhua gongzuo” (Discussing the cultural work of the Muslim nationalities) in *Huijiao wenhua* 1, No. 1 (Feb. 13, 1948). Reprint: Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiaoshi cankao ziliao xuanbian 1911-1949* (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), 909-910. The Han writer Mao Dun (1896–1981) Han, real name Shen Dehong, was a famous twentieth century culture critic, novelist, and journalist. He served as the PRC’s Minister of Culture from 1949 to 1965.

Sino-Muslim Agency in Huizu Identity Formation

In reevaluating Sino-Muslim agency, this thesis argues that the CCP was not solely responsible for the shift toward the modern PRC definition of Huizu, as a separate ethnic category from Turkic Muslims and Han Chinese. The trajectory and arguments behind the party's ethnopolicy did not occur in isolation. Nor was the Huizu a timeless, reified entity. Rather, the transformation of "Huizu" from a religious to an ethnic marker was a result of decades of Hui activism from the late Qing to the Republican period, reflecting the shift amongst Sino-Muslim intellectuals' conceptions of Hui identity in an era of emerging Chinese nationalism.

Though by no means a definitive study, the Sino-Muslim publications surveyed in this thesis suggest that the groundwork for the ethnic division of China's Muslims can be traced to the late Qing. Adapting to changing contexts, Sino-Muslims reconfigured their concepts of Huizu based on what could best protect their dual Chinese-Islamic identities and agency within the Chinese nation. Within the rhetoric of the 1908 Sino-Muslim journal *Xing Hui Pian*, one could already see the underpinnings of a spatially, historically, and genealogically-charged distinction between Sino-Muslims (modern day Huizu) and Turkic Muslims such as the Huihe (modern day Uighurs). Late Qing Sino-Muslims maintained that Xinjiang Turkic Muslims were one separate race while the Sino-Muslims dispersed across the Chinese interior shared both foreign Muslim and Han Chinese ancestry, citing Sino-Muslim origin myths as evidence. Responding to the rise of Han nationalism, they defined "Hui" as a religious category made up of multiple races "unified" under the power of Islam in order to construct themselves as Muslim Han. Their concept of a communal descent and history for Sino-Muslims, however, became a

key marker in later years to distinguish Sino-Muslims from not only Turkic Muslims but also Han Chinese.

During the early years of the Chinese Republic (1912-1938), as the state promised representation to its “Republic of Five Lineages,” including its categorization of China’s Muslims under a collective Huizu, Sino-Muslim elites accepted their membership within this Muslim nationality but, as articulated in the sentiments of *Xing Hui Pian* writers only four years before the republic’s founding, Sino-Muslims were not entirely comfortable with being grouped with other Muslims under one nationality. In the early Republic, they maintained a level of distance between themselves and Turkic Muslims, continuing the pattern of highlighting their higher levels of acculturation and socioeconomic advancement. Sino-Muslims would be the “leaders” to reform Turkic Muslims’ “backward” ways.

In the 1930s, the competition for Hui allegiance among the KMT, CCP, and Japan facilitated the breakdown of the Republic of Five Lineages concept of Huizu through intensifying interest in Sino-Muslim scholarship and historiography written by Sino-Muslims as tools to reaffirm their membership within the Chinese nation-state. The studies that emerged during this period relied once again on the idea of Sino-Muslim mixed descent propagated by Qing origin myths to craft a communal identity for Sino-Muslims, with the addendum of historical records and other “scientific” proof to strengthen this narrative. Unlike Qing predecessors, however, Republican scholars like Jin Jitang (1908-1978) introduced and defended the idea of an exclusively Sino-Muslim “Huizu” nationality separate from both Hanzu and Turkic Muslims. Jin aimed to create a Huizu equal in legitimacy and status, rather than simply a subset, to the Hanzu by purposefully crafting a Hui identity that was non-Han and yet fully Chinese. The “fusion” of Sino-Muslims’ foreign and Chinese ancestors under Islam’s unifying

power created a new people with common blood, livelihood, language, religion, customs and habits. The fact that this phenomenon occurred exclusively on Chinese soil meant that Sino-Muslims, like the Han, were firmly rooted within the Chinese nation.²¹⁴

Negotiating Sino-Muslim Identity in Modern Day: Old Strategies in New Contexts

The rhetorical strategies and historiography conceived by Sino-Muslims during the Qing and Republican eras still hold resonance today. The extent of this influence, while outside of the scope of this thesis, deserves further study. Sino-Muslims in China and Taiwan continue to negotiate their roles within an ever-changing socioeconomic and political environment—an environment shaped by both domestic and international developments. The economic liberalization of the PRC since 1978, with its drive toward a more capitalist market, allowed the state to encourage entrepreneurship among the Hui as a national characteristic of the Hui *minzu*. Traditional Hui trade specializations that had been repressed after the CCP's 1955 collectivization reforms returned quickly after 1978. For the CCP, emphasizing entrepreneurship allowed the party to continue to separate religion from the Hui's ethnic identity, replacing it with a secularist approach. The Huizu have embraced this as not only a way to benefit financially, but also as a way to secure a position within the new dominant narrative of China since its economic liberalization.²¹⁵ This attempt to define a common Hui culture rather than a common Hui religion returned to the kind of logic first introduced during the Republican era by Sino-Muslim intellectuals such as Jin, where Islamic culture became a separable entity from Islamic religion. Adapted to the PRC *minzu* paradigm, this logic now meant that Huizu identity, defined based on 'cultural' rather than religious markers, similarly became a separate entity from Islamic religion.

²¹⁴ Jin Jitang, "Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu," 250-260.

²¹⁵ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 283-287.

In general, the increased diplomatic and commercial relations with Islamic states in the Middle East and Southeast Asia for both the PRC and Taiwan in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries mean Sino-Muslims are occupying an important position for the state. In order to promote goodwill with Islamic nations, the state has to prove that it is protecting its domestic Muslim population. Through increased study abroad opportunities and pilgrimages to Muslim sites, more Sino-Muslims are participating within the international Islamic community. Calling for greater Muslim activism and education “to promote the modernization of worldwide Islam,” Salahuding Ma Chao-yen, imam of the Taipei Grand Mosque, echoes both Qing Sino-Muslim literati’s efforts to connect Islam and Confucianism and Republican Sino-Muslim intellectuals’ efforts to connect Islam and modernity. Ma writes, “As Muslim in Taiwan, we wish to become the bridge between Islam and Chinese culture. By working together Confucius’ belief in world peace with Islam’s belief in social equality and justice, Islam will be the foundation for human civilization and peaceful society.”²¹⁶

Islam’s compatibility with Chinese culture remains an important framework for Sino-Muslims as they maintain dual Chinese and Muslim identities and market themselves as an important “bridge” between the two worlds. Though Sino-Muslims faced repeated struggles to invent and reinvent their roles within China’s national narrative, their history of negotiations provides them with a rich foundation of rhetorical and thematic strategies to build upon.

²¹⁶ Salahuding Ma Chao-Yen, “Taiwan Muslims’ Struggle to Survive,” Center for the Study of Islamic Civilization and Thoughts, http://www.csict.nccu.edu.tw/active/Ma_Cao-yen_paper.doc (accessed April 20, 2010).

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