

## The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: The Case of Chinese Muslims

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### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

My topic today is the integration of religious minorities in China, in particular of the Hui Muslims. It is worth pointing out that George Morrison, who gave us so much valuable first-hand information about China and Chinese politics at the end of the 19th and early 20th century, also gave a sympathetic picture of Yunnan after the so-called Muslim rebellion of the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> I am happy that my talk thus fits in with this series devoted to his memory. I would add that I myself have benefited by the use of the fine George Ernest Morrison Collection in the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo.

### Part I. Pre-Islam

A Hadith (traditional saying of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam) says “Seek knowledge even unto China [Sin]”. It is thus reasonable to assume some slight contact between China and the Arabs before the 7th century C.E.

Were there in fact relations between pre-Islamic Arabia and China?

Several scholars have tried to identify Jerusalem and Damascus, and also Petra and Alexandria, in Chinese sources of the 1st to 3rd century C.E., but none of these identifications is established.<sup>3</sup> We do know that the *Shiji* by Sima Qian (1st century B.C.E.), describes Parthia (Anxi) and the Seleucid Empire (Ligan/tiaozhi); and that Antioch and probably Seleucia are mentioned in the 3rd century C.E.<sup>4</sup>

However, not one of these is truly Arabia.

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<sup>1</sup> For greater detail and full references, see D.D. Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800*, Canberra College of Advanced Education, Canberra, 1986 (hereafter, Leslie, *Islam*), and “Living with the Chinese: The Muslim Experience in China, T’ang to Ming”, pp. 175-193 in *Chinese Ideas about Nature and Society: Studies in Honour of Derk Bodde*, edited by Charles Le Blanc and Susan Blader, Hong Kong, 1987 (hereafter, Leslie, “Living”).

<sup>2</sup> See G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, London, 1902, p. 145. Cf. Tien Ju-kang, *Moslem Rebellion in China*, the 41st Morrison lecture, Canberra, 1981, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., D.D. Leslie and K.H.J. Gardiner, *The Roman Empire in Chinese Sources*, Rome, 1996, pp. 317-320.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181-184, 194.

We also have suggestions of trade between China and West Asia, with lists of products imported into China, most being labelled as from Daqin (the Roman Empire), and these would include some items from Roman Syria and Egypt, and also some that may well have originated in Arabia.<sup>5</sup> Visits from Daqin to China, in 166, 226 and 285, are recorded in Chinese sources, and may well have included Egyptians and Syrians and even Jews and Arabs.<sup>6</sup> A specific claim of Arabs in Guangzhou (Canton) in the 3rd century is not entirely convincing. Similarly, the suggestion, by Tabarî and Mas'ûdî (10th century C.E.), that Chinese ships had reached Obolla in the 5th century is also not convincing. Most scholars suggest “ships from China” or “ships with Chinese goods”, rather than “Chinese ships”.<sup>7</sup> It is, in fact, only with Islamic and Arab dominance that trade expanded enormously, especially by sea, and a real Chinese knowledge of the Near East developed. Chinese sources do in fact make clear that Islam was known to the Chinese as early as the 7th or 8th century, not long after the death of Muhammad in 632 C.E.<sup>8</sup>

Before this, however, other religious minorities from the West had reached China, and their relationship with the Chinese authorities and Chinese Han people is of interest for understanding the problems of Islam in China.

We know from Chinese sources that pre-Islamic Sassanid Persia was in close contact with China, with over thirty embassies from Persia noted in Chinese sources from 455 to 651 (and to 771) C.E.<sup>9</sup> Both trade and diplomacy flourished. The Chinese Standard Histories, Weishu, Zhoushu and Beishi, give reasonably accurate accounts of pre-Islamic Persian customs and religion.<sup>10</sup> These descriptions are far superior to those of the Han dynasty describing the Parthian and Seleucid Empires. Clearly a real communication was now taking place. The last Sassanid king Pêrôz, attacked by the rising Arab Islamic power, fled to China with his son Narsêh in ca 652, and was given asylum with thousands of followers.<sup>11</sup> These pre-Muslim Persian (Bosi) people living in China are mentioned in various Chinese sources as magicians, astrologers, jewellers, teahouse owners and dancing girls.<sup>12</sup>

In the early 6th century, Mazdeism (Zoroastrianism) had already entered China from Sassanid Persia, and, it is thought, found favour in the eyes of the Empress Dowager Ling. From 621, at the beginning of the Tang dynasty, Chinese sources<sup>13</sup> mention

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 16, pp. 199-220.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-160.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., G.F. Hourani, “Direct Sailing between the Persian Gulf and China in pre-Islamic times”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1947, pp. 157-160, and *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Mediaeval Times*, Princeton, 1951, pp. 46-50, 75-76. See also Leslie/Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., the Buddhist traveller Hui-chao (ca 727), who wrote that the Arabs worshipped Tian (Heaven), and did not know the Buddha; and Du Huan (captured at the battle of Talas in 751 and taken to Baghdad), who gave a short account of Islam, ‘the Arab doctrine’. See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>9</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 16, for primary sources, including Standard Histories (Zhoushu, etc.), and Cefu Yuangui.

<sup>10</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 10-12. When we compare the descriptions of Iran by Xuanzang (ca 629), and Hui-chao, we are struck by the change in religion from the ‘Tinabo heresy’ (probably Manichaeism) and Hinayana Buddhism to the worship of Tian, i.e. Islam.

<sup>11</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 15-17, based on the Tang Histories.

<sup>12</sup> See esp. E. H. Schafer, “Iranian Merchants in T’ang Dynasty Tales”, pp. 403-422 in *Semitic and Oriental Studies Presented to William Popper*, edited by W. J. Fischel, Berkeley, 1951.

<sup>13</sup> See D.D. Leslie, “Persian Temples in T’ang China”, *Monumenta Serica* 35 (1981-83), pp. 275-303 (hereafter “Persian Temples”), for full details of primary and secondary sources (Chen Yuan, Drake,

Mazdean shrines in Chang'an (modern Xi'an), Luoyang, Kaifeng, and several other cities. Soon after this, by 638, Nestorian Christian temples, called initially Bosi si (Persian temples) but later Daqin si (Roman temples), are also mentioned for most of the same cities. A further western religion, Manichaeism, also had temples throughout China from ca 771 or earlier.

Rather surprisingly, neither Jewish nor Islamic temples are mentioned together with those of these other religions in Tang sources, even though we have good evidence from Arabic sources of their presence in China during the Tang. It may be that this lack of mention is because neither Judaism nor Islam (at least in China at this time) attempted to proselytise non-believers. But also because they came as traders rather than as refugees.

Besides references to these religious minorities, we read not only of Persians but of other foreign settlers in Chang'an and Luoyang, from Korea, and even the Roman Empire, from the 6th century or earlier.<sup>14</sup>

A foreign religion or minority is inevitably faced with the problem of accommodation with the native customs and beliefs. Not quite so obvious is the need in a supposedly despotic Chinese Empire for the authorities to deal wisely with this foreign influence.

Special regulations are found for these minorities, in particular for the religious ones. Already in the 6th century (Sui dynasty or even earlier), a tent leader (Sabao) was appointed from among the Mazdean believers in Chang'an to rule over them. He was appointed with dictatorial power over his flock, responsible for their good behaviour, and granted a kind of miniature extraterritoriality.<sup>15</sup> *Laws of the Tang* (618-907), state that when legal disputes occur within a religious or ethnic group the laws of that group should be followed. However, if disputes arise between different minorities they should be resolved by Chinese laws.<sup>16</sup> This extraterritoriality was of course granted or imposed by the Chinese authorities and not, as happened in the 19th century, forced upon the Chinese by the foreigners.

Imperial edicts, from 628 on, demonstrate the worry of the authorities about relations with Chinese women.<sup>17</sup>

“Any foreign envoy merchant may marry a Chinese woman. He shall not, however, take her away to his own country.”

“[For 779] Uighurs and other foreigners in the capital should wear their own costume and not copy Chinese men. Formerly, Uighurs in the capital, about a thousand men...wore Chinese costume and enticed [Chinese women] to obtain wives and concubines. This is forbidden.”

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Chavannes, Pelliot, etc.). Cf. summary in Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 17-19. See also Antonino Forte, Appendix to Paul Pelliot, *L'Inscription nestorienne de Si-ngan-fou*, edited by A. Forte, Kyoto/Paris, 1996.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., W.J.F. Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the lost capital (493-534)*, Oxford and New York, 1981, pp. 100, 110, 220, 249-50.

<sup>15</sup> See Paul Pelliot, “Le Sa-pao”, *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient* 3 (1903), pp. 665-703. This Chinese policy was adopted from the Sui dynasty until modern times. This is seen from various sources. Compare “Sulaiman” (translated from the Arabic by Jean Sauvaget, “?hbâr as-Sin wa l-Hind: Relations de la Chine et de l'Inde rédigée en 851”, Paris, 1948); Matteo Ricci (partial English translation by Rudolf Loewenthal, 1946, in Michael Pollak, *The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Loewenthal*, Cincinnati/Palo Alto, 1988), see later. See also Leslie, “Living”, pp. 175-179.

<sup>16</sup> Tang lu shuyi, Tang Huiyao. See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 34; Leslie, “Living”, pp. 176-7. This is confirmed by “Sulaiman” for the Muslims in China (see later).

<sup>17</sup> See Leslie, “Living”, p. 177.

A stronger edict in 836 forbade such marriages in Guangzhou and prohibited ownership of houses and land by aliens, and tried to enforce segregation.<sup>18</sup>

A limited freedom of religion existed, but Chinese not belonging to these religious groups were forbidden to take part in their ceremonies and festivals.<sup>19</sup> An edict of 732 states: “The Mo-mo-ni [Manichaeans] are heretical, falsely calling themselves Buddhist, misleading the people, this must be strictly suppressed. Since they are native Xihu [Western] religions, [the followers] should be allowed personally to carry out their religion without punishment”.<sup>20</sup>

The authorities were wary of attempts at proselytising (by the Nestorians and Manichaeans). Nevertheless, it seems to have been feasible for a Chinese to accept the Persian religions as further cults alongside the native ones. The status of the non-proselytising Mazdean (Xian) religion is unclear. Arthur Waley even writes: “The *hsien* cult was not a private affair of Iranian settlers in China, but was also patronised by the Chinese at large, whatever their nominal religion”.<sup>21</sup> One might suggest that the authorities wanted to “hedge their bets” and allowed the foreign religions to carry on, just in case their magical power was real, but attempted to suppress any political influences.

This seems to explain the many references to Persian temples and religions, as opposed to the almost total lack of references to Islam in China in Chinese sources of the Tang. The Muslims were foreigners, their religion only for foreigners. A key statement is found in “Sulaiman”: “I know no one of these two peoples [Chinese and Indian] who is Muslim or who speaks Arabic”.<sup>22</sup>

This Chinese policy has existed for over a thousand years: multicultural tolerance, so long as there is no threat to the stability of the realm or rulers. Foreign religions, especially if they minded their own business, were largely tolerated by the authorities so long as they stayed obedient and did not go against Confucian family morality. It was partly because of the attempted proselytisation, but admittedly also because of a decline in Uighur power and an anti-Buddhist Chinese government, that Manichaeism and Nestorianism (and the innocent Mazdaism which did not look for converts) were persecuted (together with Buddhism) and largely eliminated from China in 843–845.<sup>23</sup>

The suppression of the Persian religions may have been a political decision rather than a popular xenophobic reaction. However, the laws regarding Chinese women surely reflected popular feelings. The ethnic antagonism is confirmed by the slaughter of Persians and Arabs by Chinese in 760 in Yangzhou.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 178-9, for the comparison with Marvazî (*ca* 1182) trans. from Persian by Vladimir Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamân Tahir Marvazî on China, the Turks and India*, London, 1942.

<sup>19</sup> Leslie, “Persian Temples”, p. 295.

<sup>20</sup> Tongdian, etc. See Leslie, “Persian Temples”, p. 284.

<sup>21</sup> A. Waley, “Some References to Iranian Temples in the Tun-huang Region”, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, Academia Sinica, 28 (1956), pp. 123-8, see esp. p. 126. See also Leslie, “Persian Temples”, p. 295, for confirmation in Chinese sources.

<sup>22</sup> “Sulaiman” in Sauvaget, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 35, and “Persian Temples”, p. 285. The 9th century Japanese traveller Ennin also mentions the suppression of the Manichaeans.

<sup>24</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 36, and note 14 on p. 150; and “Living”, p. 177, for references in the Tang Histories and the *Zizhi tongjian*.

Muslims were less affected by this, I suggest, because, unlike the Manichaeans and Nestorians (although not necessarily the Mazdeans), they kept themselves separate and did not attempt to proselytise, and had so far had little impact on Chinese society and were thus not considered dangerous by the authorities.

## Part II. The Origin of Islam in China

Arab–Chinese contacts started around 651 C.E. with an embassy sent by Amîr al-Mu'minîn, the Caliph 'Uthmân, followed by a stream of embassies, including ones sent by al-Mansur (753-6) and Harûn al-Rashîd (798).<sup>25</sup> In about 713-717, the general Ibn Qutaiba, under the Umayyad caliph Walîd, reached the borders of China, but no further. This event is recorded in both Chinese and Arabic sources, the Tang histories and Tabarî.<sup>26</sup> The sources disagree as to whether the envoys sent by Qutaiba did or did not perform the kowtow to the Emperor.<sup>27</sup>

Mas'ûdî (and see also Ya'qûbî, d. 897), describes the Chinese rulers and Chinese religion, but it is difficult to reconcile with the reality as seen in Chinese sources.<sup>28</sup> However, with “Sulaiman” and Abu Zaid (9th and 10th centuries), based on an actual visit to China, we find the first really valuable descriptions of Chinese customs by any Westerners.<sup>29</sup>

Let us turn now to the knowledge of the Arabs by the Chinese.

In the *Tongdian* (801 C.E.), based on the report of Du Huan, taken to Baghdad after the battle of Talas in 751, won by the Arabs, we read:<sup>30</sup>

Arabia [*Dashi*] was originally part of Persia. The men have high noses, are dark, and bearded. The women are very fair [white] and when they go out they veil the face. Five times daily they worship God [*Tianshen*]. They wear silver girdles, with silver knives suspended. They do not drink wine, nor use music... Every seventh day the king sits on high, and speaks to those below saying: “Those who are killed by the enemy will be reborn in Heaven above; those who slay the enemy will receive happiness.”

The Arabs (*Dashi*) are given a special section for the first time in the Standard Histories of the Tang, from the 10th century but based on earlier sources.<sup>31</sup> They give a remarkably accurate listing of the ‘Abbâsid rulers (though not the earlier

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<sup>25</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 31, and note 36 on p. 148 for sources.

<sup>26</sup> Tabarî, *Ta'rikh*, ch. 8, pp. 190-1 (Hermann Zotenberg, *Chronique de Tabari* (from Persian translation by Bal'âmî), 1867-74, vol.4, pp. 198-201), quoted by Wilson B. Bishai, *Islamic History of the Middle East: Backgrounds, Development, and Fall of the Arab Empire*, Boston, 1968, pp. 184-5. Cf. Kim Jong-Wee, *Untersuchungen zum China-Bild der Muslime in der frühislamischen Literatur*, PhD thesis, Bochum, 1975, p. 132.

<sup>27</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 27-9.

<sup>28</sup> See C. Barbier de Meynard and R.J. Pavet de Courteille, *Maçoudi: Les prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861-1877, 9 vols., vol. I, pp. 290-3, 218-9 (and C. Pellat, *Les prairies d'or*, Paris, 1962, p. 123). See also G. Ferrand, “Les relations de la Chine avec le golfe persique avant l'Hégire”, pp. 131-140 in *Mélanges Gaudefroy-Demombynes*, Paris, 1935-45, esp. pp. 132-5; Kim Jong-Wee, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 24, 76-84, 122, 135-8; and Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>29</sup> For “Sulaiman” and Abu Zaid, see also D.D. Leslie, *Survival of the Chinese Jews*, Leiden, 1972, p. 167, for references to translations by Sauvaget, Reinaud, Ferrand, Renaudot and others.

<sup>30</sup> *Tongdian*, ch. 193, p. 1044. See Leslie, “Living”, pp. 186-8; and *Islam*, pp. 21-23, and note 3 on p. 146.

<sup>31</sup> *Jiutangshu* 198 (Liezhuàn 148), pp. 16b-18a; *Xintangshu* 221B (Liezhuàn 146B), pp. 11b-12b. See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 24-25, and note 17 on p. 147.

Umayyads), and a short description of Islam as a religion, though less of Muhammad its Prophet.

What is the evidence for Muslims living in China during the Tang?

Firstly, the standard histories of the Tang have Persians (men of Bosi, mainly non-Muslims) and Muslim Arabs (men of Dashi) slaughtered in Yangzhou in 760; and, less significant, Arab as well as Persian pirates attacked Guangzhou in 758.<sup>32</sup>

It is best to assume that Bosi (Persia) refers to non-Muslims, Dashi (Arabs, the Islamic Empire) to Muslims. Though some of the Persians might have been Muslims, we should note that many Iranians (and Uighurs) were not converted to Islam overnight, some remaining Mazdean, Nestorian or Manichaean. An interesting problem is whether the Chinese authorities and scholars distinguished between Persians and Arabs because of their language or their religion.

Secondly, the fine description of China in the year 851, in the *Ahbâr as-Sîn wa l-Hind*, attributed to a merchant "Sulaiman" and found in Abu-Zaid's *Silsilat at-Tawârîh*, dated towards 916, has a flourishing Islamic community in the main Chinese port Guangzhou.<sup>33</sup> It is implied that Muslims lived elsewhere too, in particular in Chang'an, for crimes committed by Muslims in Chang'an and elsewhere were to be judged in Guangzhou.

Thirdly, Islamic inscriptions from the 14th century, and books in Chinese from the 17th, claim a presence in China as early as 628 (because of the lunar Islamic calendar, we need to convert to 651, incidentally the date of the first Arab embassy to Chang'an).<sup>34</sup> Certainly, we should be sympathetic to a Tang time entrance, though perhaps the 8th century rather than 7th, even though the earliest certain dates are Song (1127-1368), with historical evidence for Muslims in Guangzhou in the 11th century, Quanzhou in 1009, Chang'an in 1127, Hangzhou in 1281.

Chinese Muslim tradition, with sources from the 14th century and later, has the *Sahâba Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs*, maternal cousin of the Prophet, conqueror of Persia and founder of Kufâh, sent with other envoys in 628, but it is highly unlikely that envoys were actually sent to China during the Prophet's lifetime. Tabarî writes of envoys to Persia, Ethiopia and elsewhere, but does not mention China. We should note that besides the famous Guangzhou tomb for Waqqâs in China, there is one also in Medina, far more convincing.<sup>35</sup>

Fourthly, one further legend, this one from Persian and Arabic sources (Marvazî, 12th century, and 'Aufi, 13th century),<sup>36</sup> has Zaidis, descendants of 'Ali, fleeing the Umayyads into China in the 8th century, not entirely unreasonable, for (according to

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<sup>32</sup> See note 24 above.

<sup>33</sup> See esp. Sauvaget, *op. cit.* Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>34</sup> As pointed out by Devéria, Chen Yuan, Mason, Tasaka, and many others. See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 70, 76; and D.D. Leslie, "Muslims in Early China, the First Phase", *Hemisphere* (Melbourne), 25.6 (May/June 1981), p. 345.

<sup>35</sup> See D.D. Leslie, "The Sahaba Sa'd ibn abi Waqqâs in China", in *The Legacy of Islam in China*, papers edited by Dru Gladney, Harvard, 1989. See also Leslie, *Islam*, ch. 8, pp. 69-78; Leslie, "Muslims in Early China", p. 345; and Tasaka (Tazaka) Kôdo, *Chûgoku ni okeru Kaikyô no denrai to sono gutsû*, Tokyo, 1964, 2 vols., and "Chûgoku Kaikyô shijô ni okeru Waqqas denkyô no densetsu ni tsuite", pp. 391-406 in *Wada Festschrift*, 1951.

<sup>36</sup> See Minorsky, Marvazî, p. 17, and Charles Schefer, "Notice sur les relations des peuples musulmans avec la Chine", *Centenaire de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales*, Paris, 1895, pp. 3-4. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, p. 39.

Minorsky) “Alids played for Islam a role similar to that of the Nestorians for Christianity”.

In about 756-62, Manichaean Uighurs and some Arab troops helped the Emperor Suzong and his son (later the Emperor Daizong) to suppress the An Lushan rebellion. Muslim sources claim this as the main origin of Muslim residents in China.<sup>37</sup> Muslim sources have 4000 soldiers settled in north China, marrying Chinese women.

Did any of these Arabs living in China become Chinese? I would answer “no”. Most of them were traders in Guangzhou (and later in Quanzhou), speaking Arabic (or Persian, the *lingua franca* of the time), not Chinese. Though some must have taken Chinese wives, they remained foreigners, sojourners in a foreign land, allowed to stay for trade and diplomacy (tribute in Chinese eyes), keeping their distinctive Western customs and religion.

We do have some evidence to the contrary: One foreigner, possibly Muslim, Li Yansheng, obtained the prestigious *jinshi* degree in 848, but so far as we know one only.<sup>38</sup> We also have the two references to Arabs in Yangzhou and Guangzhou. I am inclined to look on these as exceptions which prove the rule.

We have good evidence that the attitude to and laws for the earlier foreign religions were applied to the Muslims too. (“Sulaiman” in) Abu Zaid<sup>39</sup> writes: “the merchant Sulaiman reports that at Guangzhou which is the meeting place of traders, there is a Muslim appointed by the Chinese [authorities] with the power to decide conflicts between Muslims who come here, and this in accord with the particular wish of the Chinese sovereign. During festivals, he leads the Muslim prayers, delivers sermons, and expresses their good wishes for the local authority which rules the Muslims”.

The Muslims lived in separate quarters outside of Chinese society. Buying of land and intermarriage were frowned upon, sometimes forbidden by law.<sup>40</sup> Though these laws largely failed, anti-foreignism prevailed. Nevertheless, foreigners who settled in China increasingly adopted Chinese customs, married Chinese women, adopted Chinese surnames, and became sinicized. This seems to be somewhat less true for the Muslim Arabs in Guangzhou in the Tang compared to the Persian settlers. But a large measure of integration for the Muslims too was inevitable, and already apparent by the Tang and Song.

By the late Tang and early Song,<sup>41</sup> we do have non-Muslim Chinese descriptions of Muslims living in China, though they do not name them as Muslims. Chinese sources are aware of the Islamic eating laws,<sup>42</sup> though circumcision is not mentioned in Chinese sources of this time or even later. The descriptions of Islam in the early Song based on descriptions of Muslims living in Guangzhou are, however, generally inferior to the description of Islam in foreign countries by Du Huan based on his stay in Baghdad.

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<sup>37</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 30, 54.

<sup>38</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, p. 36.

<sup>39</sup> Sauvaget, 1948, pp. 6-7, 18, 19, 26, 27. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, p. 37; “Living”, p. 177.

<sup>40</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, p. 34.

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., Zhu Yu (*ca* 1111-7), quoted by Leslie, “Living”, p. 178.

<sup>42</sup> For Chinese knowledge of Muslim dietary laws (by Du Huan and Zhu Yu, see Kuwabara Jitsuzô, in *Shirin* 8 (1923), p. 189, also in his *Zenshû* (and translated into Chinese by An Motao in *Yugong: Huijiao zhuanhao*, Taipei, 1970).

By this time, they are clearly established as a minority living in China. Abu Zaid<sup>43</sup> writes of 120,000 Muslims, Christians, Jews and Magians (Mazdeans) slaughtered by the Chinese rebel Huang Chao in Khânfû (Guangzhou) in 878 (or 879, following Chinese sources). Though the numbers are presumably exaggerated, a solid Islamic presence is demonstrated.

Mosques were built in Guangzhou (Canton, Khânfû), Quanzhou (Zaitun), Chang'an (Xi'an, Anjû), and Hangzhou (Khânsa), and communities established in many other cities. Chinese Muslim claims go back to the Tang, and some may be justified.<sup>44</sup>

Arabic sources, in particular Abu Zaid, towards 916, strongly support claims for a Muslim presence in Guangzhou and Chang'an. Arabic geographers, in particular Ibn Khurdadhbih (ca 848), mention the ports of Hanoi (Lûqîn, i.e. Longbian), Guangzhou (Khânfû, i.e. Guangfu), (Fuzhou or) Quanzhou (Djanfû, i.e. Quanfu) and Yangzhou (Kantou, i.e. Jiangdu), and also Chang'an (Anjû, i.e. Yongzhou).<sup>45</sup>

However, we can authenticate these claims in Chinese non-Muslim sources only for the Song, no earlier. The claim for the earliest community with the first mosque is difficult to adjudicate. The evidence is strongest for Quanzhou and Guangzhou. However, in spite of the general acceptance by scholars that the famous Xi'an stele of 742 of the Great Eastern Mosque is a forgery,<sup>46</sup> one cannot dismiss the claims of Chang'an. An undated inscription in the Great Western Mosque, discovered by Pickens, refers to a permit of 705 to build the mosque.<sup>47</sup>

### Part III. Muslim Settlers in the Song

Trade between China and south-east Asia, in all sorts of commodities, increased enormously during the Song.<sup>48</sup> Arab embassies continued steadily from 954 to 1205.<sup>49</sup>

Zhao Rugua in ca 1225 (expanding on Zhou Qufei, 1178), gave remarkable descriptions of West Asia and the Arab Muslim Empire, including Egypt and Iraq, Mecca and Baghdad, based (it is believed) on Arab informants in Quanzhou or Guangzhou.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See G. Ferrand, *Voyage du marchand arabe Sulaymân en Inde et en Chine* (rédigé en 851, suivi de remarques par Abû Zayd Hasan, vers 916), Paris, 1922, pp. 75-78. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, ch. 6, pp. 40-57.

<sup>45</sup> See C. Barbier de Meynard, "Le livre des routes et des provinces par Ibn-Khordadhbeh", *Journal Asiatique* 1865, pp. 5-127, 227-296, 466-532, esp. p. 292. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, p.41, and note 7 on p. 152; and D.D. Leslie, "The Identification of Chinese Cities in Arabic and Persian Sources", *Papers on Far Eastern History* 26 (Sept. 1982), pp. 7-8.

<sup>46</sup> For references to Kuwabara, Chen Yuan, Pelliot and Tasaka, see Leslie, *Islam*, p. 47, and note 45 on p. 154.

<sup>47</sup> Claude L. Pickens, "The Great West Mosque of Ch'ang An (Sian)", *Friends of Moslems* 9.3 (July 1935), p. 44. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 46, 154.

<sup>48</sup> See esp. Bai Shouyi, *Zhongguo Yisilan shi gangyao cankao ziliao*, Shanghai, 1948, see ch. 5, pp. 133-194. This 1948 collection is the basic work written by Bai Shouyi. Much of it can be found in his later works of 1982 and 1992.

<sup>49</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, p. 62-63.

<sup>50</sup> See F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St. Petersburg, 1911, 2 vols (reprinted New York, 1966). Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 58-60.



Bible stories of Joseph and Abraham, and of Ishmael, clearly taken from Muslim rather than Jewish sources, are found in Chinese literature of the Song.<sup>51</sup>

We have not got a great deal more information about Islam or Islam in China from Song sources, though it is clear that Muslims were spreading throughout China and some individuals were integrating well. The Muslims in China wrote a few short inscriptions in Arabic, but we must wait till the Mongol period with inscriptions in Chinese for a real contribution in this regard and a change of status.

We have no evidence of any further *jinshi* degree holders at this time, though some trading or customs officials (established in 998, etc.) were probably Muslim. One in particular, Pu Shougeng, was important in Quanzhou, ca 1250-1280.<sup>52</sup>

Du Huan in the Tang, and Zhou Qufei and Zhao Rugua in the Song, give quite a lot of information about Islam as seen in Islamic lands. However, the Islamic religion and practices as associated with the Muslim communities in China itself are rarely noted in Chinese sources before the Ming.

Zhu Yu and Yue Ke (ca 1217), referring to 1192, both describe foreigners (*fanren*) living in Guangzhou who have Muslim customs, but neither actually specifies the foreigners there as Muslims.

Zhu Yu writes:

In the foreign quarter in Guangzhou reside all the people from beyond the seas. A foreign headman [*fanzhang*] is appointed over them and he has charge of all public matters connected with the quarter. He makes it his special duty to urge the foreign traders to send tribute. When a foreigner commits an offence anywhere, he is sent to Guangzhou, and if the charge is proved he is sent to the foreign quarter [and whipped].

Zhu Yu also writes:

Even now foreigners are not just forbidden from eating pork... Even now, foreigners will not eat any of the six domestic animals not slaughtered by their own hand. As for fish and turtles, they eat all.<sup>53</sup>

Yue Ke, writing from memory of what he saw in Guangzhou when ten years old, is less accurate:

The sea barbarians [*hailiao*] are by nature superstitious [honour devils] and love cleanliness. Every day, they prostrate themselves and pray for blessing. They have a hall there where they worship, just like the Buddhists of China, except that they do not set up images... When they meet in the morning to eat, they do not use chopsticks or spoon...All the diners put their right [a mistake for left] hand

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<sup>51</sup> See D.D. Leslie, "The Old Testament and Biblical Figures in Chinese Sources", *Sino-Judaica* 1 (1991), pp. 37-46. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 59-60. In the Ming, the story of Moses and the Golden Calf is found, based on a Muslim version; see J.V.G. Mills, *Ma Huan, Ying-yai sheng-lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores' (1433)*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 139-140.

<sup>52</sup> See esp. Kuwabara Jitsuzô, "On P'u Shou-keng", *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tôyô Bunko* 2 (1928), pp. 1-79, 7 (1935), pp. 1-104; and Luo Xianglin, *Pu Shougeng yanjiu*, Hong Kong, 1959. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 65-66. Some scholars have linked him with other foreigners named Pu in Guangzhou and Hainan. However, it is possible that the name Pu stems from Arabic Abu. In which case, no family relationship is established by the name Pu. We should watch out for the "kidnapping" of a famous man as a lineage ancestor, a common phenomenon. Jiapu (family records) are sometimes reconstructed much later.

<sup>53</sup> Zhu Yu, see Leslie, "Living", p. 178; *Islam*, p. 37. Note the similarity to the description by Sulaiman.

under the cushion and do not use it for eating, saying it is only for use in the privy. All use the left [a mistake for right] hand to pick up the food, and when the meal is over, they wash with water.<sup>54</sup>

Fang Xinru (ca 1206), mentions the Guangzhou mosque and writes:

In the Foreign Pagoda [*Fanta*], every year in the 5th or 6th month, barbarians [*yiren*] climb at daybreak to its peak and call the buddha's name, praying for a response.<sup>55</sup>

The *Songshi*<sup>56</sup> quotes the Governor of Quanzhou: "When a foreigner chances to be within our borders, he should be tried according to our laws".

Clearly, the situation for foreigners, in particular the Muslims, had hardly changed since the Tang. But by now they were clearly settlers, not aliens but Chinese citizens. They had mosques in most of the big cities, certainly in Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Xi'an, Hangzhou, Yangzhou; and almost certainly in Kaifeng, Beijing, Ningbo, Dingzhou and elsewhere. Communities in Kaifeng and Hangzhou, the two capitals of the Song, are referred to. There were special Muslim cemeteries in Guangzhou, Quanzhou and Hangzhou.<sup>57</sup>

We read in the *Song huiyao* and other Song sources of "five generation foreign guests"; and that a few rich Muslims, e.g. Pu Ali (ca 1137), preferred to stay and die in China.<sup>58</sup>

Should we now talk of "Chinese Muslims" or "Muslim Chinese"? I prefer the description "Muslim settlers in China". It may well be that a few individual Muslims had begun to be acculturated or integrated into Chinese society during the Song, but surely not many.

However, the whole position of the Muslims changed dramatically with the Yuan period.

#### **Part IV. The Mongol Period<sup>59</sup>**

It is with the Mongols and the Yuan period, 1279–1368, that we find a new status for the Muslim minority. The Mongols transported thousands or tens of thousands of Western artisans and technicians of various kinds from Persia and Central Asia all the way to Qaraqorum in Mongolia and Beijing in north China. Many Muslims were amongst them. Muslim soldiers also became an important part of the Mongol armies.

It was in the Mongol Yuan period that the largest influx of Muslims occurred. In addition to the transfer of artisans and soldiers mentioned above, the Muslim population was augmented in the north in Gansu by a Mongol prince Ananda who converted to Islam, together with thousands or tens of thousands in the area, and in

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<sup>54</sup> Yue Ke, see Leslie, "Living", pp. 178-9, 190; and *Islam*, 1986, pp. 67-8. Marvazî, ca 1182, also uses the term *fanzhang* and stresses the separate quarter of the Muslims, and mentions special laws for foreigners. See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 61.

<sup>55</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 42.

<sup>56</sup> *Songshi* 400 (*Liezhuàn* 159), pp. 4b-7a, see Leslie, "Living", p. 179; *Islam*, p. 68, and note 37 on p. 159. This is supported by Marvazî, see Leslie, "Living", pp. 178-9.

<sup>57</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 183-4.

<sup>58</sup> See Tasaka, 1964, pp. 428, 445-7; Kuwabara, 1935, pp. 46-8; and Leslie, "Living", p. 183.

<sup>59</sup> For Muslims in the Mongol Yuan period, see Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 79-103; and also M. Rossabi, "The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty", pp. 275-295 in *China under Mongol Rule*, edited by J.D. Langlois, Princeton, 1981.

the south in Yunnan when the Muslim Sayyid Adjall conquered and Confucianised Yunnan on behalf of the Mongols. Many Muslims, it is thought, accompanied him there at this time.<sup>60</sup> In addition, there was a continuation of the spread of Muslim traders from the eastern ports Quanzhou (Zaitun) and Guangzhou (Khânfû, Sinkalan) to the capitals of the Song, Kaifeng and Hangzhou (Khânsa), and of the Yuan, Beijing (Khanbaliq).

The Mongols organized society into four main classes: Mongols, Semuren (people of various categories, often mistranslated as “men of coloured eyes”, including Muslims now called Huihui and other foreigners), Hanren (North Chinese) and Nanren (South Chinese). The Muslims were ranked above the Chinese, second in status only to the Mongol overlords themselves. Muslims became *shiboshi* (trade commissioners in the ports), and they were also allowed to be *darughaci* (commissioner or local governor), a post theoretically denied to Chinese. Several individuals reached high ranks in the Mongol government and army, notably Ahmad (mentioned by Marco Polo), and Sayyid Adjall and his son Nasr al-Dîn (also mentioned by Marco Polo).<sup>61</sup> We cannot always be sure of a particular man that he was a Muslim, but the number of Muslim-sounding names recorded in the Standard History, the *Yuanshi*, and in Chinese local histories, mainly officials of medium rank, reached ten thousand. Muslims were officials, military officers, financial advisers, engineers, cartographers and architects, astronomers and diviners, physicians and pharmacists, tax collectors, customs officers and trading middlemen.

The Chinese hated them for their support of the Mongols, and for their financial role as tax collectors and trading agents of the Mongols. They were the main section of the *wotuo* (traders working in collaboration with the Mongol princes).<sup>62</sup> Some scholars have noted the resemblance to the role of Jews in Mediaeval Europe.<sup>63</sup> We find too that some Chinese texts of the Yuan and early Ming indulge in what I call anti-semitic descriptions.

Zheng Sixiao, writing in 1282 (at the beginning of the Yuan, though some scholars believe this is a forgery written later) writes: “The Huihui [Muslims] do not eat pork. It is popularly related that this is because the ancestors of the Huihui are descended from pigs ... Even when they bathe the Huihui still stink”.<sup>64</sup>

Tao Zongyi writes, ca 1366 (at the end of the Yuan):

[At a Muslim wedding, the building collapsed.] Their [Muslim] clothes and headgear are covered with dust, their elephant noses are now flat, their cat’s eyes no longer shining...The cry “Allah” is not to be heard any more. Alas! The tree has fallen, and the monkey grandchildren of the monkey *hu* [i.e., foreigners] are dispersed.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 79-85, with references to work by d’Ollone, Vissière, etc.

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 96-103, 163. Recent short biographies of Ahmad (by H. Franke) and Adjall (by P.D. Buell) are found in *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, edited by Igor de Rachewiltz et al., Wiesbaden, 1993.

<sup>62</sup> The *wotuo* were mistakenly identified as Jews by Hong Jun, in the 19th century, and by several recent Chinese scholars. See Leslie, “Living”, p. 180; Rossabi, pp. 278-283.

<sup>63</sup> See, e.g., Rossabi, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

<sup>64</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>65</sup> See Herbert Franke, “Eine mittelalterliche chinesische Satire auf die Mohammedaner”, pp. 202-8 in *Der Orient in der Forschung: Festschrift für Otto Spies zum 5 April 1966*, Wiesbaden, 1967; and cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 92-3, and notes 57-63 on pp. 166-7. We should note that Zhou Mi, 1291, gave truly objective descriptions, see Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 67-8.

So far as I know, the above libels are not found in Tang or Song sources, and it is fair to suggest that they are the result of the Chinese hatred of their subjection by the Mongols with Muslim assistance in the Yuan. It has been argued that the Muslims were used as scapegoats by the Mongols—to let Chinese hatred be directed against them.<sup>66</sup>

The Mongols were not always friendly to the Muslims. As Olschki writes: “The Tartar (Mongol) rulers granted a sort of monopoly to foreigners whom at one and the same time they despised, exploited and protected”.<sup>67</sup>

Qubilai Qan in fact did for a short time (in 1280 until 1287) forbid ritual slaughter for food and also circumcision (*suna, sunnah*)—both *Musuluman huihui* (Muslim) and *Zhuhu huihui* (Jews) are mentioned.

Among all the [subject] alien peoples only the Hui-hui say “we do not eat Mongol food”. [Cinggis Qa’an replied:] “By the aid of heaven we have pacified you; you are our slaves. Yet you do not eat our food or drink. How can this be right?” He thereupon made them eat. “If you slaughter sheep, you will be considered guilty of a crime.” He issued a regulation to that effect ... [In 1279/1280 under Qubilai] all the Muslims say: “if someone else slaughters [the animal] we do not eat”. Because the poor people are upset by this, from now on, Musuluman [Muslim] Huihui and Zhuhu [Jewish] Huihui, no matter who kills [the animal] will eat [it] and must cease slaughtering sheep themselves, and cease the rite of circumcision.<sup>68</sup>

However, because of the damage to trade this produced, Qubilai had to cancel this oppression. Towards the end of the Mongol Yuan period, from ca 1311, more restrictions were placed on the Muslims, possibly in order to woo the native Chinese. Some marriages, considered incestuous by the Chinese, were forbidden.<sup>69</sup> This may be why the Muslims supported the Ming.

As Dardess writes:

Since the officially protected commercial operations and other privileges of the Moslems had long provoked Confucian enmity, their special privileges were canceled, and imperial favor was henceforth bestowed upon their commercial competitors, the Buddhist monasteries. It would appear that the entire recent past was being surreptitiously marked with the stigma of Islam.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Leslie, “Living”, p. 180. See also Rossabi, *op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup> Leonardo Olschki, *Marco Polo’s Asia: An Introduction to his “Description of the World” Called “Il Milione”*, Berkeley, 1960 (trans. from Italian by John A. Scott), p. 234. Cf. Rossabi, pp. 267-8; and Leslie, “Living”, p. 181. For the Mongol attitude to religions, including Islam, see also D.D. Leslie, “The Mongol Attitude to Jews in China”, *Central Asiatic Journal* 39 (1995), pp. 234-245, esp. 237-241.

<sup>68</sup> See *Yuanshi* 10.26a; and *Yuandianzhang* 57.16a-17a (pp. 617-8). Cf. Leslie, “Living”, pp. 181-2; “Mongol Attitude”, pp. 235-6; and *Islam*, pp. 88-91, 165. Rashîd al-Dîn also states that circumcision and ritual slaughter for food were forbidden for several years. See Leslie, “Mongol Attitude”, p. 239; and John Boyle, *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (translated from the Persian of Rashîd al-Dîn), New York, 1971, pp. 219-220, 293-294.

<sup>69</sup> However, the marriage to the widow of one’s older brother (the levirate), whilst forbidden to North and South Chinese, was not forbidden for Muslims or Jews. See Leslie, “Living”, p. 183; *Islam*, p. 165; and *Survival*, pp. 12, 201, with reference to works by Ratchnevsky.

<sup>70</sup> See John W. Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians: Aspects of Political Change in late Yuan China*, New York and London, 1973, p. 51; cf. Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China: Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty*, Cambridge, Mass., 1989; and Leslie, *Islam*, 1986, pp. 88-91; “Mongol Attitude”, p. 242; and “Living”, p. 182.

From the Tang until the Ming, the Muslims, Jews and other religious minorities tended to live in segregated or part-segregated ghettos. This is evidenced by the special power held by the rabbi or *ahung* (see, e.g., Ricci<sup>71</sup>), and also by Ibn Battûta, who noted a separate Muslim quarter alongside a mixed quarter, and writes: “we entered the second city (township) through a gate called the Jews’ Gate. In this city live the Jews, Christians and sun-worshipping Turks (Mazdeans, Parsees?), a large number in all”.<sup>72</sup>

The segregated ghetto of Jews, Muslims, etc., is the result of two complementary factors: the internal wish of the minority to live near the synagogue, mosque, church or temple, and to be with their own kind; and the external pressure of the host government, Chinese or whatever, sometimes linked to a popular xenophobia, to keep the minorities under observation. With social integration over the generations or centuries, this segregation becomes less accepted.

One should note the comparatively liberal attitude to religions during the Mongol period. Marco Polo mentions the reverence shown by Qubilai to the Jewish, Muslim and Christian and other festivals.<sup>73</sup>

There is some evidence of sinification in the Yuan, for the Muslims wrote long mosque inscriptions in Chinese, in Dingzhou (1348), Quanzhou (1350), and Guangzhou (1350).<sup>74</sup> A few Muslims were integrated into Chinese Confucian society as scholars, painters, writers, poets.<sup>75</sup>

Muslims were important in the Mongol government and army and in the ports and in transport throughout China. We should note that Muslim successes are mainly found in the military and trade, and crafts, not in education. Upward social mobility for Muslims was not the result of passing the public service exams, the main method for most Chinese, but of tying themselves to the Mongol overlords.

As we have seen, this comparative success story was marred by the hatred directed against them by some Chinese writers who considered them as agents of the Mongols and exploiters of the Chinese people.

It is clear that this period was not a true integrative period of Muslims in China. Muslims were one largely separate strand in a truly multicultural Empire. Not a Chinese Empire, but a Mongol one. One cannot call them Chinese. If they had started to integrate in the Tang and Song, this process must surely have ceased or slowed under the Mongols.

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<sup>71</sup> See Loewenthal, 1946, pp. 395 (in Pollak, p. 205).

<sup>72</sup> See *The Travels of Ibn Battûta, A.D. 1325-1354*, translated with revisions and notes from the Arabic text by Hamilton A.R. Gibb, Cambridge, 1958-1994, 4 vols (vol.4 completed by C.F. Beckingham), see vol.4, pp. 900-902; or H.A.R. Gibb, *Ibn Battûta: Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*, London, 1962 (from 1929), p. 293.

<sup>73</sup> For the history of Christianity in China at this period, see the masterly work by A.C. Moule, *Christians in China Before the Year 1550*, New York and Toronto, 1930. During the Mongol period, there were Nestorians in China, but also Franciscans and other Catholics.

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<sup>75</sup> See Chen Yuan, *Western and Central Asians in China under the Mongols* (translated by Ch’ien Hsing-hai and L. Carrington Goodrich from the Chinese, 1935), Los Angeles, 1966. Only one Muslim *jinshi* has been noted, though there may have been others.

Bai Shouyi, doyen of the Muslims in China, suggests that the Muslims of the Yuan who had been settled in China for some time considered themselves as Chinese.<sup>76</sup> This is of course only partly true. Chinese, maybe, but Han Chinese definitely not!

## Part V. Integration in the Ming

It is only with the Ming (1369-1644), that we can talk confidently of integration into Chinese society and use the term “Chinese Muslims” or “Muslim Chinese” rather than “Muslims in China”.

The early Ming Emperors were well disposed towards the Muslims, possibly because they had the support of Muslims in their rebellion against the Mongols, possibly because the first Ming Hongwu Emperor had some Muslim connections and possibly a Muslim wife. Three early Ming generals, Chang Yuchun, Tie Xuan and Mu Ying, are claimed as Muslims, though this is not certain.<sup>77</sup> The second Ming Emperor, the Yongle Emperor, had a Muslim, Zheng He, as his chief Admiral. Zheng He, a Muslim and a eunuch, voyaged several times with an enormous fleet in 1405-1433 as far as Ceylon, Africa and Arabia. Ma Huan, a Muslim who travelled with him, has given the best account of west Asia in Chinese, describing Mecca, Medina and other Islamic cities.<sup>78</sup> The Great Ming Geography, *Da Ming Yitongzhi*, of 1461, and the standard history of the Ming, *Mingshi*, both give reasonably accurate and objective descriptions of Islam in the West, and also mention Muslims in China.<sup>79</sup> Local histories such as the *Minshu* for Yunnan<sup>80</sup> also mention Muslims in China. These descriptions are taken mainly from Ma Huan’s account but also from the Muslim inscriptions in Chinese.

More significant for our purposes is that Chinese-style stelae with Chinese inscriptions were set up in various mosques, and it is claimed that the first Ming Hongwu Emperor Taizu had written one of them in 1368, set up in Nanjing, and copied in Wuchang and elsewhere.<sup>81</sup> We have no confirmation of this in non-Muslim sources, but one must assume the Muslims had permission to erect this inscription. In 1405 and 1407, other favourable inscriptions are found. An inscription in the Fuzhou and Quanzhou mosques writes: “I hereby give you my imperial decree in order to guard your residence. Officials, civil or military, or anyone, are not to offend or insult you. Anyone who offends or insults you against my imperial order will be punished as a criminal”.<sup>82</sup>

These Chinese-style inscriptions served four main purposes: to record the history of the community; to explain Islamic ideas to the Muslims themselves and to non-Muslim Chinese; to demonstrate Confucian attitudes; and to protect the community. Not only would they have been a valuable boost to morale, but they also would have served as a protective device against popular anti-semitic behaviour.

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<sup>76</sup> Bai Shouyi, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>77</sup> Leslie, “Living”, p. 185; *Islam*, p. 105. See also Ma Mingdao, *Mingchao huangjia xinyang kao chugao*, Taipei, Preface date 1984.

<sup>78</sup> See J.V.G. Mills, *op. cit.* For Chinese knowledge of Islam in West Asia, see also Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 107-112; “Living”, pp. 186-8. For inscriptions linked to Zheng He, see Leslie, *Islam*, p. 108.

<sup>79</sup> For references, see Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 11-2, and note 17 on p. 160; “Living”, pp. 188-9.

<sup>80</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 72, and note 9 on p. 160.

<sup>81</sup> Translated by P.C. Low, “100-Character Psalm on Islam by the First Ming Emperor”, *Friends of Moslems* 11.2 (April 1937), p. 39. See also Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 105-7.

<sup>82</sup> See Leslie, *Islam*, p. 107, and references in note 14, p. 170.

One must add that in the Ming there were a number of objective accounts of Islam and its adherents. I can just mention the names of scholars, Tian Rucheng (ca 1547), Lang Ying (16th century), Yan Congjian (early 17th century), and there are others.<sup>83</sup>

During the Ming, mosques were built all over China, communities with Ahung (Mullah or Imam) leaders flourished. Muslims were able to win degrees, including the *juren* and *jinshi* degrees, to become magistrates, education officials. They still kept their special trades as beef and mutton growers, importers and transporters.

At the beginning of the Ming, the new nationalist regime encouraged integration and assimilation, and there was an attempt to force foreign men to marry Chinese women. A somewhat ambivalent attitude is found with edicts attempting to prevent aliens from taking on Chinese surnames, and Chinese taking foreign (hu) surnames.<sup>84</sup> These regulations, like earlier ones in the Tang and Song, were soon abrogated or ignored. One should stress that, whereas Manichaeism (like Christianity) was considered a heterodox religion to be destroyed, Islam (like Judaism) was considered amenable and willing to accommodate to Confucianism.

Islamic medicine and astronomy were now influential in China, with large books written or translated into Chinese from Islamic works.<sup>85</sup> We can now say that the Islamic religion as such was known to Chinese scholars, though clearly not well known. But certainly a true integration of Muslims occurred during the Ming, to justify the term “Chinese Muslims” or “Muslim Chinese”.

## Part VI. A Chinese Islam

In the 17th century, towards the end of the Ming and early Qing, we have some rebellions led or supported by Muslims, but individual Muslims are now obtaining high degrees, and official positions. We should mention here the claim that Ma Shijun who came first in the *jinshi* examination in the capital in 1661 and had an interview with the Emperor, was a Muslim. A further story is that a special banquet without pork was given to a Muslim general. Neither of these claims has as yet been authenticated from non-Muslim sources.<sup>86</sup>

The Muslims of the Yuan had foreign names, but in the Ming, Muslims began to adopt Chinese surnames and personal names, with a Muslim personal name only for home and mosque use. At this time also, Muslims began writing Islamic works in Chinese, some translations from Arabic or Persian, others original creative works. The first full length book was the *Zhengjiao zhenquan* by Wang Daiyu in 1642. This was followed by the *Qingzhen zhinan*, “The Compass of Islam”, by Ma Zhu, in 8 volumes, in 1683. Even more significant are the books by Liu Zhi, who wrote key works on Islamic philosophy and cosmology, ritual and law.<sup>87</sup> With these began the amalgam of Chinese Confucian ideas with Islamic religious ideas. His biography of the Prophet Muhammad, *Tianfang zhisheng shilu*, when published in 1782, was

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<sup>83</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 112-3. See also “Living”, pp. 188-191.

<sup>84</sup> Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo huijiao shi yanjiu*, Beijing, 1935, pp. 35-6; Tasaka, 1964, pp. 864-6.

<sup>85</sup> Four volumes of the *Huihui yaofang* are extant, preserved in the *Yongle dadian*. For Islamic astronomy in China, see, e.g., Tasaka Kôdô, “An Aspect of Islam Culture Introduced into China”, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 16 (1957), pp. 75-160. There were bureaus for Islamic medicine and astronomy established in Beijing.

<sup>86</sup> For Muslim successes in Chinese society, see Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 120-1. We should note that one Jew only, Zhao Yingcheng, obtained the *jinshi* degree in 1646; see Leslie, “Survival”, pp. 44-47.

<sup>87</sup> See D.D. Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese, Late Ming and Early Ch'ing: Books, Authors and Associates*, Canberra, 1981. See also Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 117-9.

prefixed by the term *Yulan* “inspected by the [Qianlong] Emperor”. Moreover, his *Tianfang dianli*, 1710, was actually accepted into the prestigious *Siku Quanshu*, though given a lukewarm criticism.

Just as Christianity, Judaism and Islam in the mediaeval west adopted and adapted Aristotelean philosophy as the basis of their religious philosophy, so did Liu Zhi adopt Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy as the basis for his (Chinese) analysis of Islam. Though the Muslim writers in Chinese avoided Buddhist or religious Taoist influences, they undoubtedly attempted an accommodation with Confucianism.

The term “Chinese Islam” implies two things: writings on Islam in literary Chinese, accepted by the Chinese literati; and a separate attitude or content, distinct from Islam elsewhere. Our first criterion for a Chinese Islam was clearly met by Liu Zhi. I myself am not qualified to distinguish how different this formulation is from other Islamic formulations, but the powerful influence of Confucianism and the large use of Confucian classical texts, by Confucius and Mencius, and of Confucian and Taoist terms, must surely separate it out as “Chinese Islam”.

A modern scholar of Islam in China, Wang Jianping, writes: “There is, in fact, a Hui form of Islam”.<sup>88</sup> Françoise Aubin writes of “la version chinoise de l’Islam”.<sup>89</sup> We must qualify this by pointing out with Joseph Fletcher that the development of Islam in China is a result of “successive ‘tides’ of influence and individuals who entered China during critical periods of exchange with the outside world”. Fletcher also writes that “Islam in China is widely viewed as essentially ‘Chinese’, decadent and out of touch with the ‘real’ Islam. The reputation of China’s Islamic history is that it was isolated from the main currents of events in the rest of the world. The history of the *turuq* in China shows that this reputation is ill deserved”.<sup>90</sup> Liu Zhi, in particular, was clearly influenced by the Hanafite school of law of the Sunni sect, and by Sufism, in particular the Kubrâwiyya order, and the Persian Naqshbandiyya Sufi poet Gâmî. Chinese Islam, however distinctive, was never isolated from western Islam.

It is worthwhile to compare this attitude with that of the small Kaifeng Jewish community whose main inscriptions in Chinese date from 1489 to 1663, and that of the Jesuit missionaries, Ricci and others, of the 17th and 18th century.<sup>91</sup>

The Kaifeng Jews also adopted Confucian ideas in their inscriptions, and compromised with the so-called Chinese ancestor worship. They quote Confucian

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<sup>88</sup> Wang Jianping, *Concord and Conflict: The Hui Communities of Yunnan Society in a Historical Perspective*, Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions, no.11, Lund, 1996, p. 20.

<sup>89</sup> In *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XXX (1989), pp. 197-220.

<sup>90</sup> J. Fletcher, “The Sufi Paths (*turuq*) in China”, *Etudes Orientales* 13/14 (1994), edited by F. Aubin, cited by Deborah Pfeifer Li in her talk in Ningxia, 1998. See also J. Fletcher, *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, edited by Beatrice Forbes Manz, Aldershot, 1995.

<sup>91</sup> The literature on Ricci’s “accommodation” and the Rites Controversy is immense. See, e.g., the bibliography, pp. 325-345, in George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from its Beginning to Modern Times*, Chicago, 1985; Paul Rule, “K’ung-tzu and Confucius: The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism”, PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1972 (a revised and shortened version was printed in Wellington, 1986); David E. Mungello (ed.), *Chinese Rites Controversy: Its Meaning and its History*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series no. 33, Nettetal, 1994.



classics as much as the Jewish ones. Their festivals were gradually infiltrated by Chinese ones, notably the Spring Festival for the Dead.<sup>92</sup>

Many of the Jesuits too, notably Ricci, were prepared to accommodate to Confucianism (though not Buddhism or religious Taoism) and to accept Confucius as a great man. Ricci argued—as surely did the Muslim and Jewish apologists in China—that the so-called ancestor worship was merely an extension of the natural (Christian, Jewish and Muslim) attitude of reverence for the dead and the legitimate honouring of the dead parents and ancestors. Jews and Muslims kept tablets, avoiding statues or images, an aspect of worship that did not worry the Christians.

This Christian approach was destroyed around the 1720s when the Pope in Rome finally rejected the policy of accommodation and the Kangxi Emperor who had previously been very friendly to the missionaries decided that he, not the Pope, made China's religious policy. Soon after this, his successor expelled all the missionaries except those in Canton and Peking.

There were other issues in the Catholic Rites controversy.

How should one translate the word for God (or Allah) into Chinese? Could one use the Chinese term Tian “Heaven”, or even the possibly anthropomorphic Shangdi “Emperor on High”? The Jewish inscriptions used mainly Tian, surely unobjectionable, though it avoids any sharp controversy or confrontation. The Catholics settled for Tianzhu “Lord of Heaven”. Somewhat surprisingly the Protestants of the 19th century reverted to the highly debatable term Shangdi. The Muslims used mainly another coined term Zhenzhu “The True Lord”. I have looked for the name Allah transcribed into Chinese in Muslim and non-Muslim sources. It seems to be rarely found.

Other problems were:

1. polygamy, no problem for Muslims (or Asian Jews incidentally), but a thorn in the side for the Jesuit missionaries;
2. circumcision, no problem for Christians, but of possible embarrassment for Jews and Muslims, for the Chinese looked on it as a mutilation (very cruel according to their gentile wives and relatives, Ricci writes), contrary to Confucian morality;
3. the non-eating of pork and other non-Kosher or non-Hallal meat, also no problem for the Christians. Muslims ran the beef and mutton trade, and had (and still have) special *qingzhen* restaurants throughout China. This encourages separation and hinders integration, but aids ethnic survival;
4. the status of Confucius. Christians debated whether he would have gone to Hell or Limbo;
5. the question as to whether the ancient Chinese were monotheists, as believed by some Christian scholars.

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<sup>92</sup> For primary and secondary sources on the history of the Jews in China, see D.D. Leslie, *Jews and Judaism in Traditional China: A Comprehensive Bibliography*, Monumenta Serica Monograph 44, Nettetal, 1998. For a much fuller analysis of the integration and assimilation of the Kaifeng Jewish community, see D.D. Leslie, “Integration, Assimilation and Survival of Minorities in China: The Case of the Kaifeng Jews”, to be published by *Monumenta Serica*.

I believe that Jewish or Islamic monotheism can accommodate with Confucianism, though not with religious Taoism or Buddhism. But certainly, there would have been problems for Muslim or Jewish officials who would have had to conduct Confucian ceremonies as part of their duties, and might have difficulties when faced with popular religious customs.

The possibility of social upward mobility due to the freedom for the minorities to take part in the exam system was very favourable to integration of minorities, but also led to the danger of a complete assimilation—the cream might be skimmed off the top. As Ricci writes: “He [the Jew Ai Tian ] would readily abandon this creed [Judaism] if he could obtain the doctor’s degree, as was done by the Saracens, who, once they have received their doctor’s degree, were no longer afraid of their mullah and gave up their faith”.<sup>93</sup> Though some Muslim degree holders did remain loyal to their religion, surely some did not and assimilated.<sup>94</sup>

The Muslims avoided two of the Catholic weaknesses or dangers. They did not actively attempt to obtain converts, and also had no external central authority which had to be obeyed. One might point out that this is still a problem for Roman Catholics in China. The Chinese authorities do allow freedom of worship—but only if it does not involve outside influence and allegiances. It is arguable that the Muslims (and Kaifeng Jews too for a long time) survived in China, whereas the Christians of the Ming and early Qing did not, because the former followed through with their accommodation policy, which had to be abandoned by the Catholic missionaries who were subject to the Pope in Rome.

## Part VII. Rebellion

The political situation in the early Qing from 1644 was favourable, with several Muslim *jinshi*, *juren* and *gongsheng* degree holders, and a large number of high military officers (brigadiers and generals).<sup>95</sup> Though individuals were certainly integrating into Chinese society, we should note that many of those successful remained faithful to Islam. It is not clear to what extent Muslims were treated as a group. Their role as astronomers had been destroyed by the superior Jesuit knowledge. The Islamic medicine seems to have been absorbed into Chinese medicine.

The Muslims in China ran into their own problems in the 18th and 19th century. As we have seen, there had always been some tension between Hui Muslims and Han Chinese. However, it was only in the latter half of the Qianlong period, towards 1780, that this tension exploded.

Raphael Israeli in books and articles has argued strongly that Islam by its very nature demands a *jihād* and *dâr-al-Islâm*, and cannot adapt to the Chinese environment and must rebel.<sup>96</sup> This seems to me too sweeping, but we do find that even in comparatively tolerant China a militant movement developed leading to a conflict towards the end of the 18th century. The revivalist, perhaps fundamentalist, New

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<sup>93</sup> Ricci, see Loewenthal’s 1946 translation in M. Pollak, *The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies*, p. 205.

<sup>94</sup> For a fuller analysis of the Muslim integration in the Ming, see D.D. Leslie, “Assimilation and Survival of Muslims in China”, pp. 107-129 in *Actes du IIIe Colloque International de Sinologie*, Paris, 1983, esp. pp. 117-126. See also Leslie, *Islam*, ch. 16, pp. 134-9.

<sup>95</sup> Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 120-1.

<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., Raphael Israeli, *Muslims in China, A Study in Cultural Confrontation*, Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, No. 29, London/Malmö, 1980. He repeated this theme in several articles. Cf. Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 138-9.

Teaching (*Xinjiao*), led by Ma Mingxin, returning from West Asia, who complained about the lax ways of his Chinese coreligionists, split the Muslims into those who rejected compromise with the Chinese authorities and those who wished to continue their integration into Chinese society and accommodation with Confucian ways. The conflict was not only a religious one but linked to economics. Ma Mingxin received the support of the poor and dissatisfied, but several of the more established Muslims supported the Chinese authorities. Ma Mingxin and his main supporters who rebelled were captured and executed in 1784. The Manchu Emperors insisted on obedience, but the Qianlong Emperor notably reprimanded some of his ministers for their overzealous, possibly racist attitude: “The Hui of the Old Teaching are numerous...their prayers follow tradition and have nothing seditious in them...Those responsible for seditious writings should be punished severely, according to the law, but this is not the case with these Muslim books, which have been inadequately interpreted. I see no excess in them ... Muslims of the Old Teaching helped the Government to defeat and catch the rebels ... I look on the Hui people as my children”.<sup>97</sup> The Emperor clearly distinguished between rebels and loyal subjects, rejecting any suggestion of lumping all Muslims together as enemies of the state. He firmly rejected an attempt to ban Islamic books. One of the striking features of the Qianlong period, as seen in memorials and edicts, is the clear identification of the Hui Muslims as a specific group, with special laws referring to them as such. If it had been possible earlier to imagine the Muslims integrating fully into Chinese society, this was no longer so. Alienation and rebellion were almost inevitable.

This story is repeated in the 1850s on a massive scale. Attempts at secession in Gansu and in Yunnan were suppressed with millions killed, Muslim and non-Muslim. Some Muslims supported the government, others the rebels. But this time there was less attempt to distinguish loyal Muslims from rebellious ones. It is not part of my expertise to discuss these massive revolts, but I would suggest that two separate issues were involved. Firstly, the attempts, by Du Wenxiu and Ma Dexin (Ma Fuchu) in Yunnan, and Ma Hualong in Gansu, to set up independent Islamic states; and secondly the renewal of the opposition to accommodation with Confucianism. One might add that revolution was in the air, the Manchus were beset by external foes as well as internal ones, and Western imperialism was also involved.

Muslims were involved in most Chinese activities by this time, but they still had a special role as herdsmen of cattle and sheep, and in transportation and importation in general. Special qingzhen restaurants were and are found all over China. There was a separation or segregation caused by the push of anti-Muslim sentiment and the pull of special Muslim needs and customs.

The Christian attempt to convert the Chinese en masse was aborted with the expulsion of most missionaries around 1725. We cannot talk of a Muslim attempt to take over China, even though some Western missionaries and politicians were worried about this. Certainly, the Muslim presence had grown enormously, and some claimed tens of millions or more. With the slaughter of millions in the 1850s and 1860s, any possibility of a Muslim takeover was gone; and any real hope of a secession was gone or postponed for a long time.

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<sup>97</sup> I owe a great debt to Joseph F. Ford, for his unpublished manuscript “The Chinese Muslims under Manchu Rule: Some Key Documents”, quoted by Leslie, *Islam*, pp. 123-128. See also Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*, Seattle and London, 1997.

## Part VIII. The Present Day

A renaissance of Islam in China did occur after Sun Yat-sen's 1911 rebellion against the Manchus. The Muslims (not merely the Hui) were officially considered a strand in the new multicultural Republic of China, with the Han Chinese, Mongols, Manchus and Tibetans. Islamic education and Islamic scholarship flourished in China. It is interesting to see the debate in the 1930s between Gu Jiegang the great Chinese historian and Muslim scholars as to "what is a Hui?"<sup>98</sup> This debate has continued for many years. It reminds me to some extent of the Israeli debate "Who is a Jew?"

This debate has continued into the People's Republican period. The communist leaders in the early period of the People's Republic had an ambivalent attitude to minorities in general, including religious minorities, in particular the Hui Muslim minority. One of the pointers to the political situation in China was and perhaps still is the attitude to minorities. Both views were found in communist writings: minorities need to develop their own cultures, minorities need to integrate into a common communist society. The communist attitude has fluctuated and has largely been dependent on the internal struggle within the party of Maoists and non-Maoists.<sup>99</sup> This ambivalence was temporarily resolved during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Mosques were shut down, Arabic forbidden, scholarship neglected. The stress was (and still is) on the Hui as an ethnic minority and Islam as a religion downplayed. Until recently, Pan-Islamic movements were strongly opposed.

Since 1976, there has been a further renaissance of Islam in China, with mosques reopened and freedom to worship as a Muslim, a new study of Islam and of Islam in China.<sup>100</sup> I do not accept the thesis of Israeli that Muslims can never accommodate, at least as far as the Hui Muslims are concerned.

It is true that the Chinese government has rejected any specific Muslim minority, insisting on ethnic distinctions. The Hui are one minority, the Khazaks another, the Uighurs a third one. Interestingly enough, members of the Hui minority, speaking Chinese, wearing standard clothing, with many of them racially similar to the Han Chinese, are hardly distinguishable from the mass of Chinese, apart from their religious customs.

Whether this will mean an increase in the number of Muslims in China, or an assimilation to become Han Chinese like other Han Chinese remains to be seen. What is clear is that we do not have a Han-Hui conflict or even Hui Muslims as opposed to Han Chinese. I believe the present day Hui Muslims, post-Mao, look on themselves as totally Chinese, as a strand within the Han. Am I wrong to call these totally integrated Chinese Muslims or Muslim Chinese Hui Han or Han Hui ?

If the Hui Muslims are now totally integrated into Chinese society, is there a danger of a total assimilation? I myself do not see this as likely, for Chinese attitudes, which stress ancestry, lineage and origins, actually encourage the survival of minorities rather than their absorption.<sup>101</sup> In China, as no doubt elsewhere, labels are more

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<sup>98</sup> See *Yugong: Huijiao zhuanhao*, 1970 (from 1935, 1937).

<sup>99</sup> See Leslie, "Assimilation", p. 128.

<sup>100</sup> See, e.g., Yu Zhengui and Yang Huaizhong, *Zhongguo yisilan wenxian zhuyi tiyao*, Yinchuan, 1993. They give reviews of over 200 books in Chinese on Islam, and list a further 200.

<sup>101</sup> Leslie, "Assimilation"; and *Islam*, ch. 16, pp. 134-139. See also D.D. Leslie, "Integration, Assimilation and Survival of the Kaifeng Jews", forthcoming.

important than reality.<sup>102</sup> Even with hardly a shred of Judaism or Jewishness, descendants of the Kaifeng Jews are still labelled as Jews. This also applies to the Hui, many of whom are almost indistinguishable from the non-Hui Han. A remarkable instance of this was noted by Gladney and Harrell: “in the Southeast, no such consciousness existed until certain groups remembered their Islamic ancestors and applied for Hui minority status on that basis. When the status was conferred, they had to become Muslims, so they began giving up pork, Chinese temple worship, and other non-Islamic customs (Gladney, 1991). Here is a case where a local ethnic consciousness was created virtually ex nihilo by the Communist project”.<sup>103</sup>

George Moseley has pointed out a similar story: “They (certain minorities in South China) have been to varying extents acculturated to Chinese ways—to the point that, in some cases, they had no awareness of being different, of being a ‘minority’, until they were informed of the fact by workers from the Chinese Academy of Science after 1949”.<sup>104</sup>

In my opinion, this is not a question of tolerance or persecution, but of the inherent inertia of the Chinese family system and bureaucracy, even today. Islam in China will continue to survive for a long time, partly because of its inherent strengths, but also because of the external forces of Chinese bureaucracy and stress on ancestry. As Wang Jianping writes: “Hui acculturation reduces their ‘cultural distance’ from the Chinese without sacrificing their ethno-religious identity”.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Gladney writes of “the social life of labels”. See his *Muslim Chinese*, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, pp. 299-300; and “The Making of a Muslim Minority Nationality in China: Dialogue and Contestation”, *Etudes Orientales* 13/14 (1994), ed. by F. Aubin, pp. 113-142, esp. 127-8.

<sup>103</sup> Stevan Harrell (ed.), *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, Seattle and London, 1995, pp. 32-34.

<sup>104</sup> George Moseley, *The Party and the National Question in China*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, pp. 8-9, cited by Israeli, *Muslims in China*, p. 72.

<sup>105</sup> Wang Jianping, p. 86. Israeli has also stressed that the Islamic core remains intact.

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Besides Han Chinese, who make up over 90% of China's population, there are officially 55 minority ethnic groups living in China. Their costumes, festivals, and customs can be unique and colorful and are some of China's unique attractions. China's Han (Mandarin) Dialect and Minority Language Areas. The map below shows China's minority ethnicities mainly live in border regions and mountainous areas of the north, south, and west. Refer to and click this map of China's provinces/regions for more about the areas where China's ethnic minorities live. The following five regions are designated minority areas: Tibet or Xizang (Tibetan), Xinjiang (Uyghur), Inner Mongolia (Mongol), Ningxia (Hui), and Guangxi (Zhuang). The 10 Most Popular Minorities with Tourists.