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## Chinese Islam: Unity and Fragmentation\*

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Signs of Islam are present throughout China, from the main urban centres down to many of the villages, in the form of pagoda-shaped mosques, mosques built in the 'international Islamic' style, and numerous catering establishments (ranging from small eating houses to larger restaurants) advertising 'pure' (*qingzhen*) Islamic cuisine.

Islam is long established in China, having built up a presence under successive imperial dynasties (and maintained its position after the transition to a republic) by virtue of a process of continual adaptation to prevailing conditions.

What is now referred to as the 'black decade' of the Cultural Revolution (the notoriously turbulent period from 1966 to 1976) was preceded by a socialist education campaign during which closures of places of worship occurred from 1958 onwards. Overall, there were about 20 years of destruction, repression and enforced silence, affecting every religion in China. In the aftermath of this persecution, Chinese Islam sought to secure its future through a forceful demonstration of the fact that it had never ceased to exist.

What were the characteristics of the 1980s revival of religious activity in a society which remained under the firm control of a communist regime? What was the basis for the opening up of relations with the wider Muslim world? How effectively is the constantly repeated idea of the unity of all Muslims within Islam going to prevail in the face of a diverse array of initiatives by individuals and unofficial groupings during the 1990s?

These questions will be addressed in the course of this survey of recent developments in Chinese Islam.

The 9,000,000 Hui, who form the bulk of the Chinese-speaking Muslim population,<sup>1</sup> are found throughout China, with major concentrations of nearly 2,000,000 in the Hui Autonomous Region of Ningxia and of more than 1,000,000 in the province of Gansu. With the exception of an Ismaili minority among the Tajiks of Xinjiang, China's Muslims are Sunnis of the Hanifite rite. Although Islam first came to China in the seventh century, it did not become firmly rooted until the thirteenth century, with the establishment of a Mongol dynasty. The main branch of Chinese Islam is the

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traditionalist *Laojiao* ('old teaching'), also known as *Gedimu* from the Arabic *qadim* ('old'). The Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya and Kubrawiyya orders of Sufism, and numerous related sub-branches, first arrived in China in the sixteenth century. The reforming fundamentalist tendency in Chinese Islam, dating from the late nineteenth century, is known as the *Xinjiao* ('new teaching') or *Yihewani*, from the Arabic *Ikhwan* ('brothers').

After a period of calm following the repression of the Muslim revolts of the mid- and late nineteenth century, some members of the Hui community (acting out of personal conviction) were active in the republican movement and joined the *Tongmenhui* (Alliance Society) founded by Sun Yatsen. Although there was no formal Islamic involvement in the republican movement (least of all by the traditionalist *Laojiao* tendency), the inception of the republic in 1911 marked the point at which the idea of a unified Islamic representative body took shape. In 1912 the Association for the Advancement of Islam in China (*Zhongguo Huijiao Jujinhui*) was founded in Beijing, subsequently forming provincial branches throughout China. Islam was well represented in a concomitant growth of periodical publishing, which saw the launch of around a hundred titles between 1913 and 1940.<sup>2</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s there were important changes in the situation of China's Muslims, with the growth of the *Ikhwan* movement and the decision of that movement's adherents to play an active part in the anti-Japanese resistance.

The *Ikhwan* movement, founded at the end of the nineteenth century by Ma Wanfu (1853–1934), a Dongxiang then based at Linxia in Gansu province, promotes a Wahhabi-inspired scripturalist interpretation of Islam. It stands opposed to Sufism and to traditionalist Islam on matters of respect for scripture and the reform of customary practices. Caught up in northwest China's complex politics of shifting warlord rivalries and alliances, the *Ikhwan* movement came close to extinction before being taken under the protection of Ma Qi (1869–1931), a warlord based in Xining (Qinghai province), where Ma Wanfu ended his days. With encouragement from Ma Qi and other Muslim leaders, the *Ikhwan* movement began to modify its stance. Originally a radical fundamentalist group, shunning contacts with non-Muslims, it was to evolve into a reformist nationalist movement, willing to engage in Chinese issues (Lipman, 1997, p. 207). The changing positions adopted by Hu Songshan (1880–1956) illustrate this process. A native of Ningxia, he was one of that province's best-known *Ikhwan* imams when he set out at the age of 45 to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. En route, he suffered disrespectful and humiliating treatment, not because he was a Muslim but because he was Chinese. He came to the conclusion that it was only as citizens of a strong China that Chinese Muslims would be able to secure their freedom to practise their religion (individually and collectively) and would ensure respect for their status beyond China's borders. He became a fervent Chinese patriot (Lipman, 1997, p. 210).

Many *Ikhwan* became actively involved in the Chinese patriotic movement during the war with Japan.

Members of the wider Muslim community were to be found in every camp during the war years: some aligned with Chiang Kaishek's nationalists, others with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)<sup>3</sup> and others with the Japanese. In the event, it was the links established between the *Ikhwan* and the CCP during the anti-Japanese struggle which were to prove significant in the organisation of Islam in China after 1949. The experience of one of the founders of the Chinese Islamic Association (CIA), Pang Shiqian (1902–58), is instructive in this context. An *Ikhwan* imam (*ahong*), he was responsible at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1937 for

organising a Muslim corps which became part of the Chinese army. After leaving China to study law at al-Azhar in Egypt, he mounted an important anti-Japanese propaganda operation. One factor which undoubtedly hastened Pang Shiqian's move towards cooperation with the CCP was the Guomindang leadership's failure to punish Guomindang elements responsible for mass killings of Hui. One such massacre took place in 1943 in Pang's home village in Henan province (Allès, 2000).

Despite the difficulties of these turbulent years, the Muslim community played an active part in China's vibrant intellectual life, publishing numerous religious works, including many translations. A notable innovation was the development of teaching materials covering not only religious topics but also such subjects as Chinese language, history, mathematics, etc. This initiative had the support both of Ikhwan members and of Muslim intellectuals from eastern China, influenced by the *Nahda*.<sup>4</sup>

The inauguration of the People's Republic of China in 1949 provoked several revolts in the northwestern provinces, while the imams (*ahong*) of the central Chinese plain called on Muslims to mobilise in defence of their faith – more a gesture of defiance than a serious opposition movement. The years 1949–78 can be divided into two periods. The first, covering the beginning of the regime, started with a degree of openness, religious freedom being guaranteed under the 1954 constitution for religions administered by state-approved organisations. In 1958 most religious activities were curtailed as part of a socialist education initiative and the launching of the 'Great Leap Forward', which ended in 1961. The second period, from 1961 to 1978, was characterised by a lack of religious activity and by the general situation which prevailed in China during the decade of the Cultural Revolution.

Following the Soviet model, the CCP set up national religious associations, starting in 1953 with the Chinese Islamic Association (CIA, covering all the country's Muslims) and the Chinese Buddhist Association. The Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches of China was formed a year later, and in 1957 the China Daoist Association and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association were established. Representatives of these associations (especially those of the CIA) were to travel to many international meetings (such as the 1955 Bandung conference) where their presence gave China a democratic image and facilitated its relations with Arab states. During this period, mosque building continued throughout China.

However, the government harshly suppressed outbreaks of trouble which occurred in the northwest in 1954, when it was made clear that there were limits to the Muslim community's freedom of action. In 1958 religious activities were restricted and such figures as Pang Shiqian were denounced as rightists, arrested and dismissed from their posts. Many mosques were closed, including all of China's women's mosques (the largest number of which are found in central China), and were turned into workshops or living quarters.

The worst repression occurred during the Cultural Revolution and the 'struggle against the four olds' (old culture, old ideas, old customs and old habits). Mosques which had stayed open after 1958 were now closed, and many were damaged. Like many other Chinese, Muslim leaders were subject to regular public criticism sessions, to insults and to beatings. Muslims were forced to become pig farmers and some were even forced to eat pork. The worst incidents took place in the small town of Shadian in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan. After months of conflict between local revolutionary factions, punctuated by brief truces, Shadian's Muslims asserted their constitutional right to freedom of religion, a move which the authorities interpreted as a secessionist gesture. The Hui suffered over 1,600 casualties when the

army intervened violently in July 1975, demolishing local houses (Gladney, 1991, pp. 137–40).

## **The 1980s: Regaining Ground and Opening up to the Muslim World**

### *Reclaiming Lost Ground in China*

By the start of the 1980s China had embarked on a period of reforms, with Muslims (in common with other Chinese citizens) regaining the right to lead a normal religious life. The end of the decade was marked by nationwide Muslim demonstrations in spring 1989, coinciding with the student protests in Tiananmen Square. The anger of the Muslims was directed towards a book judged to have defamed Islam.

China's amended 1982 constitution reaffirmed the freedom to hold or not to hold religious beliefs and the freedom to practise one's religion, opening the way for a resumption of many religious activities. Initially cautious, the religious revival soon gathered momentum. Mosques which had been closed, destroyed or given over to other activities were reopened, new places of worship were built and there was a resumption of religious teaching under the direction of imams. Better still, private faith schools were established on the model of the schools which had been introduced in the first half of the twentieth century. The printing of Muslim texts (other than the Quran itself) resumed, as did the publication of private Muslim periodicals. Government involvement in the reorganisation of Muslim institutions ensured a leading role for the Hui, to the detriment of their Turkic-speaking coreligionists in Xinjiang. The Chinese government made use of Islam to foster China's official relations with Arab states and other Muslim countries. In addition, it established links with international Islamic bodies, making the point that China (with 20,000,000 adherents) could be said to be the world's twelfth-largest Muslim country.

### *The Chinese Islamic Association (CIA)*

After two decades of dormancy, the Chinese Islamic Association resumed its activities within the framework of national guidelines drawn up by the Communist Party and the government. The CIA had been formally inaugurated in May 1953 following a preliminary meeting in 1952 attended by the politicians Burhan Shahidi (1894–1989, a Tatar member of the Communist Party), Liu Gepin (1903–92), Saifuddin (a Uighur, born around 1915), Ma Yugui (1917–?) and Yang Jingren (1918–2001) and the religious scholars (all trained at al-Azhar) Ma Jian (1906–78),<sup>5</sup> Pang Shiqian (1902–58) and Da Pusheng (1874–1965). The CIA's principal office-holders are appointed at each session of its General Assembly, which met in December 1956, October 1963, April 1980, March 1987 and December 1993. The CIA is headed by a president, several vicepresidents and a secretary-general. There is some overrepresentation of Hui within the CIA leadership, on the basis that the Hui (numbering 9,000,000) are China's largest single Muslim minority (ahead of the 8,500,000 Uighurs), whereas in fact the Hui are outnumbered by all the Turkic-speaking Xinjiang Muslims (including non-Uighurs).<sup>6</sup>

The CIA is made up of Muslim laypeople, politicians and distinguished academics – including Bai Shouyi (1909–2000), historian and member of the CCP, Hu Zhenhua (born 1931) and Lin Song (born 1930) – and of clergy, including important principal imams from each region and heads of brotherhoods; names of note include Ma Zhenwu, who disappeared from the political scene in 1958 and was executed in

1961, and Ma Teng'ai (1919–92). The various Islamic sects in China (Qadim, Sufi brotherhoods, Ikhwan, Salafiyya) are all represented at the national level, although relative strengths cannot be precisely assessed because sectarian allegiances are rarely mentioned (most of the exceptions being references to the leaders of brotherhoods). It is nevertheless known that the CIA, as the beneficiary of unification efforts during the early republican and Guomindang periods, is dominated by the fundamentalist Ikhwan school of Islam associated with eastern reformism.

The CIA has a provincial branch network, much of which was developed during the 1980s. The major Muslim regions, including the autonomous areas, set up CIA branches in the 1950s (Xinjiang in 1956, Gansu in 1957 and Ningxia in 1959), while eastern provinces with smaller Muslim populations began to form branches in the early 1960s (Shanghai in 1962, Liaoning in 1963, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia in 1964) (Zhu, 1994, pp. 176–86). However, the expansion of the CIA branch network to all parts of China did not get under way until the 1980s and is still proceeding on an increasingly localised basis with the creation of 422 branches representing districts and large towns (Ma Yunfu, 1995, p. 13). This expansion has brought about active CIA involvement in Muslim community affairs at all levels, including functions such as endorsing the selection of imams, sending CIA representatives to local ceremonies, distributing funds and drawing up lists of pilgrims.

The CIA is responsible for the training of 'patriotic clergy', drawn from several minority nationalities, at the Islamic Institute of China, which first operated from 1955 to 1965. After its reopening in 1980 it revised the balance of its curriculum to provide a postsecondary education comprising two-thirds theology and one-third other studies, including politics, history and law. The Institute has a relatively small number of alumni (in all, some 444 graduates from its foundation up to 1995) compared with China's 42,000 imams (*ahong*) and their 26,000 students,<sup>7</sup> indicating the limited role of a state institution in the training of clergy. Moreover, not all of the Institute's graduates become imams; far from it, because such appointments are in the gift of the mosques. Only 11 out of 24 new graduates were invited to become imams in 1994, a year which was officially described as one of great progress (Yang, 1995, pp. 25–26). On the other hand, the Institute runs refresher courses for practising imams, with an intake of several dozen per session. Eight regional Islamic institutes have been set up since 1980 on the same model (in Beijing, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Henan and Liaoning).

The CIA is the interface between the Muslims and the secular authorities. It has a duty to ensure respect for official policy on religion, insisting ad nauseam on the formula *aiguo aijiao* (love one's country, love one's religion) and on the duty of Muslims to uphold social stability – i.e. to obey the secular authorities and avoid confrontation in order to benefit from freedom of belief. In return the authorities have the reassurance that self-regulation will limit the impact of potentially troublesome religious activities, such as the establishment of faith schools, inflammatory preaching, the publication of unofficial periodicals and the organisation of visits by foreign preachers. Made up of eminent figures, the CIA occupies a key position in Chinese Islamic affairs, although it is sometimes mistrusted by believers who see it as an instrument of state power.

### *The Restoration of Religious Buildings*

The Muslims have been renewing their places of worship. The mosques which were closed and confiscated by the authorities have been reinstated and rebuilt. Some of

the rebuilding projects have been partly financed (or, in the case of such well known buildings as Beijing's Niujie mosque, rebuilt in 1979, wholly financed) by aid from central government, local authorities and (via CIA-administered funds) from other Muslim countries. But the majority of the 40,000 refurbished mosques in today's China were restored with funding from the faithful. The main work was carried out very rapidly between 1980 and 1985, although improvements sometimes had to be deferred for some years, involving the rebuilding or addition of annexes housing classrooms, student dormitories and imams' lodgings. It was a considerable effort on the part of often poor communities. Appeals were often made to neighbouring communities and to national authorities. Funding shortfalls were sometimes made up through appeals to Hui living abroad, a strategy which was to become more widely used in the following decade. The authorities, mindful of the burden placed on the faithful as providers of funds for the repair and running of mosques, have a policy of encouraging mosques to become self-sufficient (Zhang, Ma and Liu, 1994; Ma Yunfu, 1995, pp. 13–18).

We have noted the role of state funding and of CIA-administered external resources in the financing of mosque reconstruction work. Such funding is often inadequate, because there is a need not only to rebuild but to maintain the places of worship and the lodgings of the clergy, who receive no payments (in the form of salary or pension) from the state. It should be mentioned here that the *waqfs* (religious property endowments), abolished when China became a People's Republic, have been only partially revived. Land in China remains state property. Local management committees are therefore under constant pressure to adopt imaginative and innovative strategies to cover the recurrent expenditure of each mosque with its school and other facilities. Critical factors in the efficient running of a religious community (a task beyond the capacities of the imam of the moment) are the size and economic status of the congregation and the personal qualities and contacts of the members of the management committee. With the reforms of the 1980s, different income-generating opportunities have arisen in villages and towns of various sizes. They include the hiring out of tools and equipment, the supply of halal (*qingzhen*) products from small shops adjoining the mosque, the sale of cultural artefacts and books, and the manufacture of biscuits or other products for sale to individual Muslims or to bathing establishments. A significant portion of the budget is always met by the gifts of the faithful, detailed records of which are kept on public display.

In all, this first decade of renewed activity saw the reestablishment of all the religious, administrative and property structures of Chinese Islam: the mosque buildings (comprising prayer areas, bathing areas, imams' lodgings, reception areas, classrooms and students' lodgings), the clergy headed by the imam, and the management committees responsible for the finances of individual mosques. The process was rapid, with Chinese Muslims pointing out that the hiatus of their 'ten black years' had been less damaging than the travails of Islam in the former Soviet Union. In many rural communities, Islamic learning had continued in the homes of incumbent imams who lived in their existing lodgings throughout the period of the closure of the mosques.

For the reconstruction work, the adherents of the Ikhwan movement have favoured an 'international Islamic' style of architecture, with cupolas and slim minarets, as a replacement for traditionally-styled mosques which strongly resemble temples, having curving rooflines, lateral pavilions and pagoda-like minarets enclosed within courtyards. The traditionally-minded Qadim have opted to rebuild their mosques in the established Chinese style. In Yunnan, for example, some quite large buildings

have been painstakingly reconstructed, complete with recreations of traditional Chinese decorations showing landscapes and animal subjects (which are considered unislamic by the Ikhwan) including the dragon and the phoenix. As a concession to the times, confessional schools built within the compounds of mosques (often facing the prayer chamber) have tended to feature cupolas and turrets. The most striking example of the so-called 'Arabic' building style is the Great Xiguan Mosque at Lanzhou in Gansu, belonging to the Ikhwan sect. Built as a single structure, to make best use of scarce land, its large circular exterior, topped by a cupola, is finished throughout in coloured glass. The first, tentative, criticisms have begun to appear of damaging architectural schemes which have entailed the demolition of old buildings of great merit (Yao, 1994). The oldest mosques of all are likely to be officially classified as historic monuments and thus entitled to public funding for their upkeep.

Large-scale mosque building has been undertaken by all the sects of Islam. Nearly one-third of the mosques in the Hui Autonomous Region of Ningxia were built between 1979 and 1992 (He, 1992). In the autonomous Hui prefecture of Changji in Xinjiang, there were 75 Hui mosques (out of a total of 108) in 1949; the corresponding statistic for 1996 was 225 out of a total of 367 (Changji, 1998, pp. 342–43). Four of the seven mosques in the town of Shadian in Yunnan have been built since 1980 (Shadian, 1996, pp. 104–10). The authorities have denounced wasteful building schemes, with particular reference to new mosques erected not to meet real needs but to enhance the standing of particular sects (Gao, 1992, p. 44). The growth in the number of mosques appears to have been slower in the urbanised north and east than in the northwest. Of the 19 mosques in the Huhehot region, only three were built after 1980 (Huhehaote, 1994, pp. 239–64), while there appears to have been no post-1980 mosque building in Beijing apart from two added in the suburbs in 1990 for the benefit of Muslim athletes participating in that year's Asian Games (FBIS, 1990b). In 1995 the CIA gave the total number of mosques in China as 33,300, compared with 24,000 in 1986.<sup>8</sup> In 2000 there were 35,000 (Maimaiti, 2000, p. 41).

### *The Transmission of Learning*

The building or rebuilding of mosques has been accompanied by a revival of their educational role. Religious education is one of the responsibilities of the principal imam. The aim of the 'teaching of the hall of classics' (*jingtang jiaoyu*) is to educate one or more disciples, the number of pupils varying according to the reputation of the imam and the resources of the mosque. The costs of the pupils' board and lodging are met by the community (a tradition which goes back to the sixteenth century). When the imam judges that his pupils have gained a sufficient mastery of the canonical books, there is a robing ceremony at which they are recognised as qualified imams. It is then their responsibility to seek out a community willing to invite them to practise. This method of education is based on the study of the traditional *Thirteen Classics* in Arabic and in Persian, in order to acquire mastery of these two languages through the study of philosophical and juridical works and scriptural exegeses. The apprenticeship is long, lasting a dozen years, and may be completed with several masters. It is difficult because it requires a knowledge of at least one foreign language – now normally Arabic. Since the great majority of the students and teachers are more or less proficient in reading and writing Chinese, a phonetic system (*xiaoerjin* – 'small sacred text') has been devised for transcribing Chinese into Arabic script, which makes it easier for students to take accurate notes and to add glosses and commentaries. This was probably one of the first systems for the alphabetic representa-



tion of Chinese in its various regional dialects. Although its use is declining in today's educational environment, books in *xiaoerjin* continue to be reprinted, while a translation of the Quran into Chinese and *xiaoerjin* was published in 1995 (Ma Zhenwu, 1995). Since the early 1980s imams have concentrated on teaching young people who intend to pursue religious careers and who have in theory already completed the first stage of their secondary education (the substitution of religious studies for general education being against Chinese law).

Instruction in the basic religious texts and practices is given to young children through evening classes. There are also classes for adult women, who are supposedly less well educated than their husbands. The traditions of women's education vary from place to place. In parts of central China (principally Henan province) religious instruction is available in autonomous women's mosques, run by female *ahong* (*nü ahong*).<sup>9</sup> In Yunnan an equally well-developed system of female education, sometimes in separate locations, comes under the control of the (male) chief imam. The teachers in the latter system therefore have the title *shimu* (mother teacher) rather than *nü ahong*. In the northwest, the education of women (previously almost non-existent) was undergoing rapid development in the latter part of the 1980s, influenced by the growth in female attendance at mosques.

### *The Organisation of Faith Schools*

The same period also brought the establishment of Muslim faith schools, formally known as 'Sino-Arab' schools. They portray themselves as religious schools to foreign Muslims in the hope of attracting aid from abroad. They provide a general education in addition to the religious knowledge acquired as part of their courses in Arabic. If granted permission by the authorities, they are able to offer an alternative to the state school system. Faith schools are sometimes situated within the compound of a mosque, under the overall control of an imam, but are staffed by members of the laity. Other faith schools are located away from the premises of mosques. There is a link with the schools founded by the Hui before 1949 to provide elementary and secondary education and training.

The faith schools cater for a young population and have far more pupils than the predominantly male student intake of the mosques, compared to which they present a more dynamic and up-to-date image. Some have mixed classes, others offer single-sex teaching in separate buildings. Some are exclusively for women or girls (Halfon, 1994). In Ningxia, the authorities are in favour of these initiatives, which open up education to girls whose parents would not have sent them to state schools because of their distrust of non-Muslim teaching staff (Chérif-Chebbi, 1994). In Xinjiang and Qinghai, however, faith schools are virtually nonexistent because of the tight controls imposed on religious activities. In Xinjiang, the authorities are acutely aware of the links between religion and pro-independence sentiments, while in Qinghai the authorities are afraid of encouraging Muslim activism.

The 1980s marked the first stage of the faith school movement, which made considerable progress during the following decade. The main constraint on the rate of growth is a lack of funding. Educational establishments often have to make heroic efforts to maintain their activities (Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon, 1997). Education is theoretically fee-paying (as it is throughout China), but the fees are usually very low and are waived for the poorest children. It is not unusual to find teachers (especially women teachers) who are prepared to give their services free, for Allah, in exchange for their board and lodging.

### Religious Literature

Privately owned Muslim publishing houses are to be found throughout China, with the largest concentration in Linxia (Gansu province) which has monopolised the business of reissuing major Arabic and Persian classics. Volumes of Quranic exegesis, law, theology, rhetoric, philosophy and Persian literature, imported from foreign Muslim sources in Cairo, Istanbul, India, Lebanon and more recently Saudi Arabia, are copied in their entirety. Chinese-language works by Muslim scholars, first published from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,<sup>10</sup> are reproduced from editions dating from around 1900 which escaped destruction in the Cultural Revolution. As and when such books are unearthed, rough-and-ready unauthorised copies of the original content are printed for sale at relatively low prices through Muslim market stalls. There is also straightforward piracy of mainstream publishers' current editions. At the same time, Chinese researchers working on old manuscripts will put out annotated transcriptions into modern Chinese in advance of the publication of definitive official editions which take far longer to prepare. Apart from the CIA, the main institutions involved in the production of updated editions of old texts are the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the University of National Minorities in Beijing, the Academy of Social Sciences in Ningxia, and the Northwest Minorities Institute of Science in Gansu.

There are also private publishers producing Islamic apologetic literature by modern Chinese authors, including clergy, private scholars and moralists. Many of these authors use only their Muslim forenames or write under pen names which are often well known within the Muslim community. Prefaces sometimes mention the place where a work has been written, but the place of publication is never shown. The translation of foreign books is undergoing an unprecedented growth, the foreign author best represented in China being Mawdudi (who was born in south India and later based in Pakistan). Although the occasional Sufi work is translated into Chinese, most of the translated material (including some forceful polemics) comes from the Islamic scripturalist tradition which is opposed to Sufism. Like many of the essay writers, the translators often conceal their real names.

China has a multitude of privately produced publications devoted to Islamic issues, ranging from small newsheets to illustrated magazines. These publications (many of them catering for very local readerships) are in theory free, although in practice readers are invited to contribute to their production costs. The amounts contributed by generous named donors are listed at the end of each issue.<sup>11</sup> Such contributions are accounted as *zakat* (alms given as part of one's duty as a Muslim). Most of these publications are distributed by mail or passed from hand to hand. They are rarely on open display in Muslim shops. Only one of them, *Kaituo* (*Opening of the Spirit*), published at Lanzhou in Gansu, is officially licensed. All the others are dependent on uncertain inflows of voluntary contributions and run the risk of official disapproval. For example a magazine called *Shiming* (*Destiny*), produced at Huhehot, was banned after three issues; *Zhaohuan* (*The Call*) of Tongxin disappeared in 1994 after publishing five issues. Other banned publications have reappeared under different names. *Zhong-a xiaokan* (*Publication of the Sino-Arab School*), of Linxia, became *Xuesheng wenyuan* (*Students' Cultural World*). Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi province, with several such journals, appears to be the most active centre of this type of publishing.

The editorial approach of these publications is fairly uniform. First place is given to articles (often translations) on Islamic doctrine and practice. Considerable space is

devoted to Islam in China. The wide range of topics covered includes Islam's place in Chinese culture, society and regions, illustrated by biographies of imams, accounts of personal experiences, descriptions of schools, mosques and villages, and reviews of Hui literature. Magazines are usually spiced up by an article or two on Islam outside China. Finally, readers' contributions strike a lighter, more personal note; these include poems, humorous snippets and even advertisements for marriage partners (although these seem to have disappeared at the present time). Articles are contributed voluntarily on subjects of current interest to the Muslim intelligentsia (laypeople, imams and students) and are sometimes supplemented by material copied from official publications. There is a small circle of tireless authors who submit articles for simultaneous publication in several journals throughout China. These include the Yunnanese Na Guochang and his sister Na Lanzhen (whose father was a well-known imam); since retiring from public office they have devoted their time to confessional teaching and the production of articles. Researchers like Lin Song, another Yunnanese, make use of these outlets to express themselves more freely than official publications allow. Translations are often undertaken by Ma Enxin, yet another Yunnanese, translator of Muslim Brotherhood titles and the works of Mawdudi for the Hong Kong market; he also runs a school. Ma Xiulan, the daughter of the founder of the Sino-Arab School at Linxia, specialises in the production of material of particular interest to women. Ma Lan, from Changzhi in Shanxi, submits an endless stream of poems glorifying Islam. Articles are sometimes published anonymously, under a Muslim forename only, or under pen names. The more polemical the publication, or the higher the critical content of the article, the more likely it is to be published anonymously. It is common for publications of all types to include statements that they are intended for a restricted readership and should not be more widely circulated.

All these writings come from Muslim private publishers, operating without official authorisation but enjoying a very narrow margin of tolerance. Their existence, their variety and their dynamism are astonishing. However, the Hui intelligentsia within recognised institutions have nothing but scorn for these publications, pointing to their lack of literary merit. More telling is the lack of systematic research in this area, given that there is no shortage of studies devoted to the Muslim press of the first half of the twentieth century, a press which disappeared at the start of communist rule. It seems to us that the Islamic publishing scene of the latter part of the twentieth century has been obscured, either through indifference or through the community's protective instincts, so as not to attract the attention of the authorities.

An incidental by-product of the Islamic revival has been an extraordinary growth of academic research on Chinese Islam and its global context, undertaken primarily to keep the authorities well informed. Such research has tended to downplay issues which might cause official disquiet, such as the limited degree of social control over Islamic affairs or the nature of Islamic publishing. There are very few published studies of currently popular Islamic schools, such as the Salafiyya or even certain local Ikhwan movements. If such subjects are touched upon, it is often in an oblique, understated or bland fashion. Despite these gaps, academic studies contribute to debate within Muslim communities to the extent that they contain information on different local situations and place current developments in a broad historical context. Every Hui with an interest in Islam has a copy of at least a few of these academic studies, such as those of Bai Shouyi on the history of the Hui and of Islam, of Ma Tong on Muslim sects in China, and of Lin Song, a cultural specialist whose works include a verse translation of the Quran.

*Institutional Links with the Muslim World*

The reestablishment of links between Chinese Islam and the wider Muslim world is a logical outcome of the restoration of freedom of worship. The authorities have sought to benefit from this process while closely monitoring it. In the 1980s state-to-state relations with Islamic countries followed policies established in the 1950s and 1960s and modified for strategic reasons in the 1970s to focus on the more conservative Gulf states, among which Kuwait was the first to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1971; the others followed suit, although in the case of Saudi Arabia not until July 1990 (Yitzhak, 1989). Previously, during the first 20 years of the regime, China had relied not on Islam as such, but on charismatic Muslims unconnected with the diplomatic service, to establish state-to-state links with countries which had no formal diplomatic relations with China (for example Saudi Arabia and Indonesia). Chinese Muslims who undertook such roles included Burhan Shahidi, Da Pusheng,<sup>12</sup> Ma Yuhuai,<sup>13</sup> Zhang Jie and Ma Teng'ai. Such persons often presided over cultural friendship associations with Muslim countries (Yitzhak, 1984).

From 1979 onwards China dropped this approach and established institutional relations with international Islamic bodies via the CIA, thus recognising the role of Islam as a force and an issue in international relations. The Muslim World League, a nongovernmental organisation with headquarters in Saudi Arabia, was the CIA's first foreign partner. In 1981 a delegation from the League was invited to China for the first time, thus reinforcing 'the links of friendship and mutual understanding between China and Saudi Arabia' (Mu Bai, 1981). There followed a succession of visits and exchanges, culminating in the holding in Beijing in 1987, under the auspices of the League, of an international Islamic conference on the propagation of Islam (Mutahar, 1988; Ma Shanyu and Yixin, 1998).

As well as using Islam to further foreign policy aims, China has been open to foreign financial aid to cover part of the costs of its domestic policies on religion. Such funding has been forthcoming thanks mainly to the intervention of the Muslim World League and the Arab states. On the occasion of its first visit to China, the League donated US \$500,000 to the CIA, and each succeeding visit brought further gifts. In 1986 the League decided that one of its affiliated institutions, the Islamic Development Bank, should provide just over US \$4,000,000 to finance the building of four regional Islamic institutes in China, namely the Islamic Institute of Beijing (US \$900,000), the Islamic Institute of Ningxia (US \$1,400,000), an Arabic school at Tongxin in Ningxia (US \$800,000) and the Islamic Institute of Xinjiang (US \$1,200,000). Their architecture shows a marked 'Middle Eastern' influence, although the Xinjiang institute, with more of a Central Asian style, is the most aesthetically pleasing.

However, from a strictly religious point of view, the results have been mixed, if not disappointing. The creation and organisation of the Islamic institutes have left something to be desired. At Ningxia the size of the Institute building was reduced by one third compared with the original proposal and poor-quality building materials were used, leading to a deterioration in the fabric of the completed building, while the local Muslim community complained that part of the funding had failed to materialise. At the Xinjiang Institute (unauthorised entry to which was not permitted in 1996) it was evident that the walls were already starting to shed whole sections of cladding. The institutes, with the possible exception of the one in Beijing, were denounced by certain Hui as training centres for zealous officials lacking any true religious vocation. The Yinchuan Institute in Ningxia has 40 students and the same

number of teachers. At the end of 1987 the School of Languages and the Minorities in Tongxin, designed to provide 120 students with a three-year course at the level of a teacher-training college, had an intake of only 45 students, 16 of them female. The teaching staff numbered 13 (out of an intended complement of 24) and the support staff ten (out of an intended complement of 39). The recruitment of suitably qualified people to teach in this small town in the middle of the desert has proved to be exceptionally difficult (Yang and Yu, 1995, pp. 185–92).

Having come to be regarded as an inexhaustible source of finance, foreign funding bodies became more prudent. The government and the Party committee in the Hui Autonomous Region of Ningxia resolved in 1988 to turn the region into a 'centre of Islamic culture' and a sort of free Muslim zone, with the potential to develop into the Hui equivalent of Shenzhen (the vast special economic zone near the border with Hong Kong) (Dillon, 1999, pp. 177–78). The proposals, costed at around US \$12,000,000, called for the building of a mosque with a prayer hall to accommodate a congregation of 2500, of an Islamic Institute, a library, a Museum of the Hui Muslims, an Arabic printing establishment, a conference centre and restaurant, a technical training school for Ningxia's Muslims, and a Muslim hospital. The Muslim countries were naturally invited to finance this development programme. In 1985 representatives of the Muslim World League and of individual Islamic countries had agreed to provide funding only for the Yinchuan Islamic Institute and the school in Tongxin. Since that time, no proposals for large development schemes have been taken up in Ningxia (Yang and Yu, 1995, pp. 175–76). Ningxia is nevertheless portrayed by the government as a region symbolising the distinctive Hui culture and as a showcase for its policy towards Islam.

There have been other initiatives elsewhere in China. In Fujian, the restoration of historic tombs and a mosque has been underwritten by Jordan, while the Kuwaitis part-financed the building of Xiamen's airport. At the same time, the residents of two villages in the province, recalling their Muslim origins, have sought to have themselves recognised as Hui and have embarked on a gradual process of reislamisation.<sup>14</sup>

There is only anecdotal evidence regarding links with Libya's Islamic propaganda bureau in the 1980s, but there are known to have been several exchanges of delegations. Iran is an important partner of China in the fields of military and nuclear cooperation, as was made clear when Iran's President Khamenei visited China in May 1989.<sup>15</sup> In the purely religious sphere, Iran has invested in Islamic projects (principally in Manchuria and central China) and has sent teachers to China. In Henan, it has financed a school of Arabic and Persian, with one female department named after Fatima (Wang, 1994). Moreover, Iran welcomes Chinese students seeking religious training. Arab countries have reacted by offering education on more attractive terms. Pakistan, a longstanding ally of China, accepts Hui students at various institutions, including the International Islamic University in Islamabad. Representatives of this university have made at least two trips to China. Nevertheless, overseas study required official permission from the Chinese authorities throughout the 1980s, when only candidates approved by the CIA were eligible to undertake Islamic studies abroad. In the following decade these restrictions ceased to apply.

### *The Pilgrimage to Mecca*

An interesting example of the development of China's policy towards its Muslim population is provided by the issue of the pilgrimage to Mecca (a sacred duty for

Muslims). Having obtained Saudi Arabia's permission to send pilgrims from 1955 onwards, the Chinese government treated the pilgrimage for the next ten years as an opportunity to send delegations to further its foreign policy aims. Between 1981 and 1985 the government rewarded officially approved individuals, including CIA officials and progovernment imams, sending several hundred pilgrims each year. In 1984 private individuals were authorised to make the pilgrimage. In 1985, 2000 Chinese travelled to Mecca; in all, 10,000 had made the pilgrimage by 1990 (FBIS, 1990a). Different figures are given by different sources. The CIA tends to record only those pilgrims which it has approved, on the basis of selections by local Islamic associations, either as 'official' pilgrims (who travel free of charge) or private pilgrims. The private pilgrims are generally persons of note or merchants in search of spiritual renewal. Anyone who is deemed to be a potentially disruptive influence, liable to gain extra prestige by making the *hajj*, will fail to be selected. The records of Qinghai province provide examples of the distinctions which are made. Only one person made the *hajj* in 1982 and three in 1983 (two of whom were visiting relatives in Saudi Arabia). One official, whose travel costs were reimbursed, left in 1984. In 1985 ten persons made the journey privately; two of them died from the heat and the eight others were able to visit relatives. In 1986 ten persons stayed in Mecca at their own expense while 21 stayed with relatives. In 1987 there was one official pilgrim, as well as 15 private pilgrims and 94 visitors; in 1988 there were 15 private pilgrims and 230 visitors. The relatives resident in Saudi Arabia are the 3,000 descendants of the Muslims who followed the Qinghai warlord Ma Bufang into exile when he was driven out of China by the communist advance in 1949. The members of this community have been encouraged to reestablish links (not least financial links) with their Chinese cousins (Yang and Yu, 1995, pp. 153–54). This byzantine system of categorising pilgrims as 'private but authorised' is in all likelihood linked to the Saudi authorities' practice of setting national quotas for different countries.

In the two years 1994 and 1995 some 12,000 persons officially fulfilled their sacred duty. However, as well as the officially sanctioned pilgrims there were several thousand others (mainly Uighurs) who travelled unofficially from Xinjiang to Pakistan or Turkey before visiting Mecca. By 1995 the numbers involved were so large that the CIA finally acknowledged their rapid growth: some 42.5 per cent of Chinese pilgrims were unauthorised in 1990, 74 per cent in 1993, 80 per cent in 1994 and 63 per cent in 1995. The CIA criticised unauthorised pilgrims for exposing themselves to very poor accommodation and sanitary facilities. More importantly, it accused certain elements of exploiting the pilgrimage to promote separatism and serve the interests of hostile foreign powers. In addition, an appeal was made to national pride, it being claimed that the unauthorised pilgrims, many of whom were ignorant peasants, would damage China's image if they were not carefully supervised (Aiyiming, 1995). The Hui, who do not have access to irregular pilgrimage routes, have complained about the provincial quota system operated by the CIA, which obliges would-be pilgrims to endure several years of hard bargaining with the cadres of their local Islamic Association before their applications are approved.

### *The Demonstrations of 1989 and the Completion of the Religious Recovery*

As the full reestablishment of China's Islamic institutions proceeded during the 1980s, it became clear that the softening of government policy towards the Muslim population was undertaken primarily for internal political reasons, rather than being treated as a foreign policy issue. Islamic states, despite their monitoring of events,

tend not to prioritise the treatment of Muslim minorities when formulating their own foreign policies. For example, Saudi Arabia's relations with China have been largely unaffected by the growing repression of the Uighurs of Xinjiang since 1990.

The Muslim demonstrations of spring 1989,<sup>16</sup> coinciding with the Tiananmen Square protests, symbolised the completion of the Muslim revival. For the first time since 1949, throughout China, one religion's adherents staged impressive marches from late April until 19 May 1989. The Hui, led by imams and CIA representatives in the northwest, were the prime movers of these demonstrations. Their relatively minor grievance concerned a book, *Xingfengsu* (*Sexual Customs*), which, in describing various customs throughout the world, had made objectionable assertions about Muslim sexual practices. This form of protest, coming in the wake of an appeal to the authorities for respect for religion, had already been successfully used under previous regimes. In 1989 the offending book was banned just before the start of the demonstrations and its authors and private printers would subsequently be severely punished. The Muslims of the Chinese heartland, Hui for the most part, were pleasantly surprised by the strength and the extent of their protest campaign, seeing it as an opportunity to remind the authorities (and Chinese society at large) of their existence while (it was hoped) making an impression in the Islamic world by vilifying the so-called 'Chinese Rushdies'. While the cause of these demonstrations, the manner of their organisation and the demands of the protesters – that the authorities should act against profaners of Islam – harked back to events in the 1930s, their impact was quite unprecedented in the post-1949 period. These demonstrations symbolised the full restoration of the Muslim dimension in the Chinese heartland and the well-publicised arrival of Muslims on the social and political scene. Islam could no longer be regarded as a propaganda tool in the government's dealings with Muslim third-world countries, but had to be treated as a constituent part of Chinese society. These Muslim demonstrations took place at an exceptional time, in the heady atmosphere of spring 1989. The authorities gave permission for the protest marches, and even stewarded them, until 19 May, when riots in Urumqi, capital of the Uighur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, resulted in a dozen deaths. Martial law, imposed throughout China on the following day (but ignored by Beijingers), brought the religious marches to an end. The authorities' recognition of the legitimacy of the Hui appeal for respect for the law protecting minority peoples and religions was in marked contrast to their swift decision to treat the student protests as illegal. In addition, the hardliners in the government had the perfect excuse for a crackdown: the minorities in the border provinces were rebelling, and the territorial integrity of China was at risk from the general disorder resulting from nationwide prodemocracy demonstrations.

### **The Proliferation of Initiatives in the 1990s**

The 1990s brought a continuation and consolidation of the Islamic revival within China, while at the same time providing a clearer picture of the composite nature of Chinese Islam. An important development in this decade was the establishment (somewhat haphazardly) of a Hui presence, through links which were not under state supervision, in the international Islamic community.

Having won back a position of some influence in China, the Hui found themselves in a religious environment which could be described as a somewhat intensified version of the pre-1949 situation. The rivalries, internal conflicts and quarrels with non-Muslim neighbours which had been hidden from view for some years resurfaced

with more force under the stimulus of the reengagement with the wider world. In this regard the government was blatantly inconsistent in its treatment of the Turkic-speaking minorities and the Hui. The treatment of the Hui varied according to their places of residence, particular historical factors and the perceptions of local and national authorities. The recurrent unrest in Xinjiang (such as the incidents which occurred at the end of Ramadan in Yining in 1997 and more recently in Aksu) is routinely classed as secessionist activity and forcefully suppressed. Any Uighur apprehended for a drug-related offence or other 'antisocial' crime is likely to be immediately accused of threatening state security. Each repressive measure is widely publicised in order to instil lasting fear into the province.

The government oscillates between two different attitudes towards the Hui, conciliatory when addressing claims which relate directly to official policy on the status of minorities, but firm or even repressive in certain situations which are deliberately hushed up in order to avoid widespread resentment in Hui communities throughout China.<sup>17</sup> The government acceded to the demands put forward in the Hui demonstrations which coincided with the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, and in 1993 it agreed to ban the circulation of a drawing in the children's book *Naojin jizhuan wan* (*A Certain Turn of Mind*), published in Sichuan in August of that year. The illustration, showing a Muslim at prayer beneath a pig, with the caption 'Who on earth has never eaten pork but has seen pigs walk?', was regarded by Muslims as an insulting caricature. Demonstrations were able to proceed without any problem in Chengdu, Nanzhou and Linxia. However, demonstrations over the same issue in Xining took a different turn, ending in repression. Muslims who had gathered in the Great Mosque (headquarters of the local Islamic Association and stronghold of the Ikhwan movement) were brutally ejected after clashes with the security forces in early October 1993 (Églises, 1993b). Xining, where Han Chinese live alongside Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, Tibetans and other minority peoples, was a centre of political and religious conflict at the start of the twentieth century, when it was the capital of the Muslim warlord Ma Qi who controlled the Tibetan border region of Amdo with an iron hand. The authorities will not tolerate the reappearance of any kind of resistance movement in this area. Islam in Qinghai has therefore been tightly restricted. There are no more faith schools and no more unofficial publications, the only remaining Islamic publication (itself very irregular) being that of the Islamic Association of Qinghai.

The religious revival has been accompanied by a revival of Chinese Islam's internal feuding, which has in the past led to violent confrontations in northwestern areas, notably in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The latest bouts of in-fighting have been sparked by current issues. One could cite the friction between Sufi brotherhoods in the town of Linxia at the start of the 1980s, or the skirmishes in Xiji in southern Ningxia in 1992–93 involving a struggle to take over the leadership of a Sufi brotherhood (the Shagou branch of the Jahriyya). People were killed and arrests were made, but the authorities reacted disproportionately in autumn 1996 by shutting all the region's mosque schools (Gladney, 1997, p. 64). Factionalism within the Salafiyya led to street-fighting in Linxia at the start of the 1990s over disagreements about the interpretation of the Quran.

There has also been a reappearance of clashes with non-Muslims. A dispute between a Hui and a Han Chinese over a market transaction might lead to a general brawl, eventually broken up by the armed forces, or similar trouble might flare up as a result of a quarrel over the boundaries of two places of worship, as happened between Tibetans and Hui in Gansu in 1993 (Églises, 1993a).



*The Expansion of Religious Education*

Mosques continue to be built in China. Buildings which underwent rapid repairs in the early 1980s are now being improved and expanded. However, the most impressive efforts are being made in the educational field. The Hui, lay intellectuals and clerics alike, deplore the poor educational provision which is disadvantaging their community.

Different sections of that community have their own particular objectives, however. For those Hui who are not practising Muslims, the aim is to improve their living standards and to participate more fully in China's current modernisation process by educating more intellectuals, more cadres and more technicians. For religious activists, better education is seen as a means of improving Chinese society's understanding of and respect for Islam. According to this way of thinking, studying leads to a deeper religious understanding while dispelling superstitions, erroneous beliefs and suchlike signs of backwardness. Properly educated Muslims gain a stronger sense of belonging to the *umma* (community of the faithful), as they do not have to feel ashamed about deficiencies in their pronunciation of Arabic or their understanding of Islamic ritual.

The traditional system of teaching within the mosque – the training of their successors by the imams – has hardly changed; it is limited in scope and widely regarded as old-fashioned. However, virtually all imams (unless formally forbidden under current local regulations) have at least two or three trainee imams under their tutelage (the Hui term for such trainees being *khalifa*, the Arabic for successor). Even if all of them do not go on to become imams, there is still an impressive number of young people in training at any one time, given that there are at least 23,000 mosques in China proper, excluding Xinjiang. For some of the *khalifa* this is a practical way of seeing the country, spending several months in one mosque and several months in another at the expense of the local congregations.

The number of faith schools is growing at a phenomenal rate in every region and is no longer limited to a few schools for adolescents. A full network is now being developed at every level from creche to college. Kindergartens made their appearance in the 1990s, since when they have developed very rapidly. Faith-based higher education remains a rarity. A 'private Islamic university' was opened in Xi'an in Shaanxi at the end of the 1980s, and there is higher education provision at a Muslim cultural centre in Yunnan.

The expansion of faith-based education is a response to China's crisis of public education, which has become very expensive and no longer lives up to expectations in terms of its content. Young people are leaving state schools earlier and earlier, some even before the secondary stage. By providing an education for these children the many new faith schools are meeting a social need as well as performing a religious role. Their access to funding from abroad enables them to remain viable while offering their poorest pupils free tuition and accommodation. It is therefore understandable why, except in certain regions, such schools – named 'language schools', 'Sino-Arab schools' or *minban* ('schools run by minority peoples') – are generally tolerated and even welcomed by the authorities.

Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein has shown that in Yunnan four of the 12 main Sino-Arab schools are all-female; the eight others, although predominantly male, mostly allow women to attend classes. The alumni of these schools take a very active part in the propagation of Islam. Most become teachers themselves, either joining the staff of existing Sino-Arab schools or helping to set up new schools in the most deprived

regions. Some young alumni have set up pre-school centres and out-of-school activity programmes for Muslim children. One opened a school in the northwest which has grown to the point that it now has 500 full- or part-time students aged from five to 85 years (Armijo-Hussein, 1999).

Similar examples abound in many other provinces. An important factor underlying the popularity and continuing development of these schools (for example the Mu Guang or 'Muslim Light' school in Zhengzhou in Henan) has been the availability of career openings for alumni, including those seeking employment outside the strictly religious sphere. The stated aim of some schools is to produce young Chinese Muslim citizens at ease in the prevailing social environment. Others, in contrast, maintain that religious education should centre on a knowledge of spoken Arabic. To return to Yunnan, one may cite the example of an Islamic Cultural Centre near Dali, financed by the Muslims of Taiwan, which boasts that it is the only private school to offer a full advanced course in Arabic and Chinese literature, equipping pupils who have studied there for four years to take up an official degree course at university.

Another insight into Muslim education is provided by the example of Linxia in Gansu, known as the 'Chinese Mecca'. Designated a Hui Autonomous Prefecture in 1956, it is a territory of 8160 sq. km., situated in a mountainous region some 300 km. southwest of the provincial capital. Enjoying good communications with Tibet to the south, Qinghai to the west and the central Chinese plain to the east, Linxia is a major entrepôt. The prosperity of this arid and poorly resourced region is based on commerce, 80 per cent of which is in Muslim hands. Formerly known as Hezhou, Linxia has a population of 1,700,000, including 950,000 Muslims in the following proportions: 580,000 Hui, 346,000 Dongxiang, 12,500 Bonan and 6500 Salar (figures for late 1994). This prefecture contains 64 per cent of all Gansu's Muslims. More than 20 Sufi brotherhoods have a local presence. Many of them go back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although the Ikhwan and Salafiyya movements date from the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Some 2300 mosques, or one-tenth of all mosques in China proper (excluding Xinjiang), are situated in Linxia, as are 150 mausoleums belonging to orders of mystics (Ding and Ma, 1996). There were only 900 mosques here in 1949, and only 100 were able to function during the Cultural Revolution.

Linxia has had faith schools for many years. One teacher, Ma Zhixin, nicknamed 'Ahong Baha', taught from home during the 1970s before founding the prefecture's first Sino-Arab school in 1981. It has separate teaching facilities for boys and girls, the latter run by his daughter, Ma Xiulan. Enjoying continuing success over the years, this school attracts pupils from all over China. Since the early 1990s it has published a quarterly magazine and a fortnightly women's journal called *Muslimin funü* (*The Muslim Woman*). This school has provided a model for the development of many others (including all-female schools) in Linxia. There were 17 in 1993, each attached to a mosque (whereas the original Sino-Arab school is independently administered, as are private courses taught in the home). The existence of numerous all-female schools is surprising in a region which does not have a tradition of female attendance at the mosque, or indeed (even today) of women leaving their homes much. Their courses are designed for girls and for elderly women who are often illiterate or minimally educated. Research was carried out between 1994 and 1996 in 15 of these schools (mostly affiliated to the Ikhwan sect) with an average roll of 100 pupils. Over a period of two years the researchers noted a growth in the staffing levels and organisational structures of these schools. Interviewed about their future plans, the girls said that they hoped to become teachers in their turn. The eagerness of girls to enrol in these establishments is not unrelated to the fact that school

attendance allows them to leave the family home and to obtain greater recognition from their families and their social circle. It may also be an expedient to delay the age of marriage and of entry into an adult life made difficult by poverty.

Since 1994 there has been a new craze for kindergartens catering for children of three to six years. Several all-female schools have opened nursery classes, while one has turned itself into a kindergarten (Jiang and Wang, 1996). The largest, in Muchangyuan, has 600 girls and boys on its roll. It is funded by the prefectural authorities and by foreign Muslims. The children are taught very basic Chinese and mathematics and learn to recite the shortest chapters of the Quran. They visit the prayer hall to learn about Muslim ritual.

This provision for the very young is related to the ending of the social activities of China's 'work units' since the start of the 1990s. An appeal for US \$850,000 to fund the building of three kindergartens was launched in a Malaysian publication of the Regional Islamic Da'wah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, whose information on these projects in Linxia is provided by Baha ud-Din Ma, the founder of the Sino-Arab School (Al-Nahdah, 1993). In addition to financial support from abroad, there is help with teaching materials in the form of translations of children's literature produced in London, which are as easily obtainable in the Muslim bookshops of Linxia as in those of Paris.

Since the end of the 1980s Linxia has attracted the attention of foreign Muslims, previously confined to a few easily accessible urban centres such as Beijing and Guanzhou. Official delegations from several countries have gone there, including ones led by the Muslim World League's secretary-general and deputy secretary-general and Iran's chief mullah and ambassador to China. These dignitaries travelled into the mountains to visit an area renowned for its strong religious fervour. It is here that competitive recitations from the Quran are held in the presence of overseas visitors as part of the selection process for the award of scholarships for study abroad. There are also privately organised visits by foreign preachers, including notably Pakistanis from the Tablighi Jama'at (an Indo-Pakistani reislamisation movement active worldwide since the 1970s), who make regular annual visits lasting about 20 days. Linxia's residents also travel abroad, especially for the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was undertaken by 1600 people from this area in 1995.

#### *Hui Students Educated Abroad: a Mixed Balance Sheet*

Overseas study, once officially regulated, has nowadays become a privately organised process. Most students are selected locally by visiting foreigners or by their schools, the exceptions being individuals already holding passports and exit visas, who are able to travel to Muslim countries to apply for support from Islamic bodies. A private enterprise in Beijing has recently started to offer, at a cost of 13,000 *yuan*, to handle the whole process of registering to study at a Malaysian university and securing student lodgings (Kaituo, 1991). At the start of the 1990s Malaysia (culturally close to China) and Pakistan were the most popular destinations. Both countries admit Chinese students (including women) to their 'international Islamic universities'. Egypt takes about a hundred Chinese students, who have their own place to stay (*riwaq*) at al-Azhar. Few Chinese are attracted to the Gulf states. However, Saudi Arabia has recently taken positive steps to attract them, and offers the best financial package – free outward travel, a monthly allowance and an annual return trip home. Three Saudi universities are open to Chinese, in Jeddah, Medina and Mecca, one of which admits married couples. Syria, where living conditions are

relatively difficult, has the reputation of providing the best Arabic language teaching. The most demanding conditions are imposed by Libya, where a course of studies lasts seven years, young men have to pay their own travel costs, and there is no reimbursement of expenses until at least three years of the course have been completed. Young Chinese are eager to leave their country. The language of instruction is sometimes a key consideration for them when choosing a place to study abroad. For example, the classes in Islamabad are largely conducted in English.

Precise statistics on the number of Chinese Muslims studying abroad are hard to come by because this is something of a taboo subject in China, given that many Chinese are pursuing their overseas religious studies without any official authorisation (although the authorities tolerate it) while others have gone through an official selection process administered by the CIA. One can, however, roughly estimate that several hundred Muslim students go abroad each year and that a total of several thousand have therefore been educated overseas.<sup>19</sup>

The concrete results of the large waves of seekers after religious knowledge who have been leaving China for many years are however disappointing. Many of these people settled abroad, including virtually all those who went to Iran (Armijo-Hussein, 1999). On the other hand, the majority of Chinese have great difficulty in adapting to life in other countries and tend to stick together in groups, which does not help them to settle in their studies. One Chinese student spoke of spending three months in Egypt, which he found dirty and miserable, and having rejected the Gulf states (an unbearable climate) and Pakistan (too much unrest) decided that he was happiest in China. Having completed their courses, many students leave the religious life to take up careers in business or interpreting. Examples which come to mind include a Hainan-born entrepreneur who speaks perfect Arabic but chose to go into business in Hong Kong and a young man educated in Saudi Arabia who became the secretary and Arabic and English interpreter to a Yunnan-born Hui conducting business between Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Of those who return to China, very few become imams. The assistant imam of Hong Kong, originally from mainland China, was recruited on his return from Pakistan. One of the imams of Kunming was educated at al-Azhar. Often young people acquire language skills without showing any sign that they have the qualities needed to become the spiritual leaders of a community. They denounce the conservatism of fellow Muslims who are not best pleased to see their customary ways attacked in the name of religious practices learned in foreign countries and presented as orthodoxy. The foreign-educated young people complain that the Hui prefer to choose elderly (and, by implication, ignorant) imams. Full of their newly acquired knowledge, many of these younger people lack the flexibility, charisma and devotion needed to manage the religious life of a mosque.

Some become teachers and heads of schools. For example, a former pupil of the Sino-Arab school in Linxia returned after studying in Pakistan to set up a school in a small town in his home region. An admirer of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, he produced numerous articles and translations. One of the administrators of the Islamic Institute of Beijing was educated in Egypt, while the Islamic bookshop of the Great Mosque of Xining is run by two young people who studied in Saudi Arabia. However, very few of China's foreign-trained Muslims take up such posts. Active Muslims who have not been able to leave China declare themselves baffled when they see their coreligionists abandoning the religious path after returning home. Hong Kong's Muslims have acted as intermediaries between the Muslim world and China. They channel foreign funding to Chinese mosques and schools and produce new

Chinese translations of religious literature to supersede traditional manuals. They deplore all this wastage of financial resources for projects which bear little fruit.

The majority of educational courses available overseas reflect the priorities of a modern type of Islam, addressing the needs of societies in which Islam is the dominant religion. They are also influenced by the specific circumstances of each host country, which bear little relation to the situation of the Muslim minority in China. Such considerations help to explain the disappointing returns on the Muslim community's human and financial investment in education abroad.

### *Apologetic and Secular Literature*

The contrasting attitudes found within China's Muslim community are reflected in its literary output. As far as translations are concerned, there is (as noted above) a current vogue for the militant brand of Islam found in several works by imprisoned members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. A slightly more quietist form of Islam is found in the writings of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, including Mawdudi and the late head of India's Nadwat al-Ulama (Alumni Council), Abu al-Hasan Ali Nadwi (1913–2000).

Of late, Wahhabite material from Saudi Arabia has been much in evidence in the form of teaching materials and pilgrims' guides, for example.

The writings of Chinese Muslim authors span a wide range of reformist views, ranging from advocacy of a form of Islam fully adapted to current and past Chinese conditions to advocacy of a straightforward imitation of the ways of living and thinking which prevail in the wider Muslim world.

The former approach gives primacy to the distinctively Chinese contribution to Islamic thought expressed in classical Chinese from the late seventeenth century onwards. The China-centred Muslims have shown respect for different religious groups and have acquiesced in the social reforms introduced by the communist regime. In the 1950s they supported policies designed to give men and women equal rights, to reform outmoded traditions and to redistribute land. In more recent times they have not opposed the restrictions on family size and have actively supported the current economic reform process.

In contrast, the externally-oriented thinkers have espoused the debates and issues in vogue in the rest of the Muslim world, discussing for example the reformist ideas of Jamal-eddin Afghani and Mohammed Abduh, the merits of Khomeini, atheism in the West, and the Kashmir situation. In the name of the universality of Islam they object to the type of scholarly writing which seeks to relegate Islam to the status of one of the customs of a *shaoshu minzu* (minority nationality) within China.<sup>20</sup> In this they are at odds with many secularised Hui researchers who (in attempting to define a distinctively Hui history, culture, psychology and literature) take the line that Islam is an important part of Hui identity but not its sole determinant (see for example Ma, Gao and Ding, 1995; Ma Ping, 1998; Ma and Sui, 1998).

'Profane' literature also forms part of the recent growth of publishing. For publishers, the term Hui covers not only encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries of historical figures and writers from past eras, but also dictionaries of living authors and artists as well as collections of Hui legends and Hui history. Modern Hui writers have become known through a multitude of writings in virtually all areas of literary activity. This literary revival, involving both the emergence of new writing and the reappearance of older forms, is part of a wider movement affecting the whole of Chinese intellectual life. Chinese writers have not been slow to make use of new

openings and channels of communication which have become available to them. Local, provincial and national literary reviews regularly publish established and budding authors, including a fair number of Hui writers. Some material has little literary merit, but much of what is published is of a reasonable standard and some is outstanding. Apart from the two best-known Hui authors, the much published Zhang Chengzhi and Huo Da, dozens of others come to mind. The attention paid to the two leading authors is due not only to their writing talents but to their deliberately high public profiles. Zhang Chengzhi is a man of about 50, Huo Da a woman of similar age. Up to the 1990s he was known for his long novels of the Mongol plains, where he had been a young volunteer Red Guard, while she was a well-known writer for television and the theatre. Each of them had a reputation as a leading Chinese writer. In 1988 Huo Da published a long novel entitled *Musilin zangli* (in a literal translation *The Funeral of the Muslims*) which was to appear in English (in a translation published by Panda Books of Beijing in 1992) under the title *Jade King*. In 1990 Zhang Chengzhi published *Xinling shi* (*History of the Soul*), a work of historical fiction about the Jahriyya Sufi brotherhood in China, which was an instant success and remains hugely popular. Briefly banned, it became the 'bible' of every literate Hui, in the sense that even those who have never read the book from cover to cover feel duty bound to own a copy, to talk about it, to refer to selected passages and to take pride in it. It was already widely known that Zhang was a great writer, recognised throughout China and translated into several languages; what has now become apparent (even to some Hui) is that he is a Hui. It was with the two novels mentioned above that these writers emphasised their Hui identity for the first time.

Once a budding author has climbed the rungs of the periodical publishing ladder, the sign of success is to achieve publication within the covers of a book, starting with a piece in the type of anthology – with a title such as *Writers from the Chinese Countryside*, *Writers of Chinese Popular Literature*, *This Year's Chinese Literary Prizewinners*, *Chinese Short Story Writers*, or *Chinese Lyric Poets* – which will make the author known to a national readership. Subsequently (or, in some cases, simultaneously) will come inclusion in another anthology with a title such as *Hui Poets* or *Hui Novelists*. The author's ultimate goal is, of course, to have an entire book published under his or her name, an ambition which is becoming less difficult to fulfil at the present time thanks to the rapid expansion of private publishing ventures and newly established independent publishing companies.

However, many pitfalls remain to be negotiated by our author. In the past, Chinese writers had to run the gauntlet of the official censorship process in order to gain access to the major state-run publishing houses. Nowadays (when the onus is on them to be their own self-censors), authors are subject to market forces and financial pressures and may have to undertake hackwork of one kind or another in order to find a publisher. It is not unusual to come across books glorifying prominent businessmen, complete with step-by-step accounts of their routes to success and long lists of their kindnesses and good works. The preface to such a book (usually laudatory in tone) will be signed by a reputable author, while the businessman's catalogue of good deeds will include patronage of the arts and letters (the author of the preface being one of the beneficiaries of this patronage). There is also the example of the author of a book on Hui *qigong* (deep-breathing) techniques, who runs a hospital using *qigong* healing methods; in this case the author travelled to Singapore to publicise the hospital and its practices and to obtain grants to enable publication of the book. There are many similar examples, the end result being greater choice for readers, since the number of authors and the number of titles have

undeniably increased, even if the quality of some of the work leaves something to be desired. On the other hand, it is a matter for regret that several state-run literary reviews and journals have disappeared or are facing eventual closure for budgetary reasons, sacrificed on the altar of profitability. One has to remind oneself that China is undergoing a period of transition as a new order emerges.

*A Varied Picture, with Developments on All Fronts*

Visible affirmations of Islamic identity are to be found not only in the architectural, educational and religious fields but also in clothing fashions. Young schoolgirls, known as *talibat* (an Arabic term not previously used in China), are abandoning their traditional hand-sewn headwear in favour of scarves which frame their faces in the modern Muslim fashion. Women's clothes shops opened in recent years stock Pakistani and Malaysian styles, including headscarves decorated with bright colours, pearls and embroidery. Apart from the 'Pure' (*qingzhen*, which also means 'Islamic') brand of toothpaste, one is beginning to find khol in China, as well as henna, brought back from Arab countries. Other than the conspicuously worn scarves, women's fashions still tend to be worn mainly in the privacy of the home. Skirts and dresses, hitherto considered indecent by the Qadim traditionalists, are beginning to be accepted provided that they are modest. Men, who have traditionally worn a simple white cotton cap, are choosing caps from Pakistan trimmed with embroidery and sometimes coloured; their clothing is modelled on the current male wear in Pakistan or (in the case of the Salafis) in Saudi Arabia, consisting of a long shirt over loose trousers. Young men endeavour to grow luxuriant beards, squarely trimmed to distinguish them from the long, thin wispy beards of non-Muslim Chinese and adherents of Qadim. A strong growth of facial hair is thus a demonstration of ancestry 'from forbears from the western lands'. This foreign appearance represents a voluntary adoption by Muslims of features which mark them out from the non-Muslim Chinese.

The livelier mosques make their premises available for certain extra-religious activities. One such mosque might offer Arabic language classes of a high standard, conducted free of charge by a university professor, after Friday prayers and on Sunday afternoons, when the official schools are shut. Another might welcome the sick to a dispensary near its entrance, designating different days for different types of illness; this service would also be provided to their coreligionists on a charitable basis by volunteers (some of them retired people) with expertise in various fields. Another mosque might make the calm and privacy of its main courtyard available for Hui martial arts classes, or might provide a room for general use as a library and young people's discussion forum. Another might be affiliated to a Hui *qigong* hospital, to which it will refer patients, subsequently taking an interest in their progress. (It should be added, however, that the Hui *qigong* hospitals in urban areas accept all patients, regardless of religious or social background.) The most forward-thinking mosques are those which are able to accommodate the full range of extra-religious activities and actively encourage their development.

The proselytising mission of religious activists prompts them to look beyond the confines of the mosque and seek to establish a presence at outside institutions. Arabic courses are held at institutes of higher education with the aim of reaching the better educated young Hui, who are most likely to turn their backs on religion. In Beijing a foreign languages institute used to have a training course (funded by Saudi Arabia) designed specifically for young Muslims. However, these sessions were discontinued

in 1994. In Lanzhou in 1996 the head of a faith school held weekly Arabic classes on the campuses of the University of Lanzhou and the Institute of Minorities. Several Uighurs enrolled in these classes, which had strong religious connotations. Those seeking to bring religion to the urban elites involve themselves in social activities which are not necessarily connected with religion: public education, health care (through hospitals, pharmacies and Hui *qigong*) and sport (in the form of martial arts).

One of the individual activities which must be mentioned, at the risk of stating the obvious, is *da'wah* (preaching the faith to non-Muslims), which is increasingly in evidence among the young. The review *Kaituo* cites the example of three girls studying in a library at Lanzhou who were converted to Islam. A small publication in Henan refers to the conversion of a Japanese. The Sino-Arab school in Linxia enrolled a young student from Yunnan who had been converted by Hui pupils at a secondary school in her home province. All types of involvement are possible. One Yunnanese entrepreneur (encountered in Paris in 1997) was prepared to finance the return to China of young people (preferably Hui) from his province so that they could speak about their experiences and inspire other young Yunnanese to follow their example.

Any visiting Muslim (or visitor with knowledge of Islam) is soon bombarded with questions about the situation of Islam in his or her home country, the number of Muslims, their status and their practices. Recent publications are full of evidence of genuine curiosity not only about Islam but also about the context in which it is practised abroad, including details of living standards in foreign countries. The Hui are interested in comparing their own environment with the values and the styles of dress found abroad. There is a fast-growing market for published material, including the translations mentioned above and the personal memoirs or reference books written by Chinese Muslims who have spent time abroad.

Since the mid-1980s Saudi Arabia has become China's most important Middle Eastern market for exports of non-military items (including textiles, shoes, food-stuffs, confectionery, chemicals, machine tools, electrical equipment) for the use of non-Saudis making the pilgrimage. The volume remains modest, not exceeding one per cent of total Chinese exports (Yitzhak, 1989, p. 15). Apart from its economic significance, the pilgrimage is an occasion to renew ties with friends or relations who left China in the 1950s and remained in Saudi Arabia.

Money ('the sinews of war') is the constant preoccupation of those who wish to repair a mosque, set up a school or launch a project. Foreign aid is sought from all quarters, and it is sometimes interesting to try to guess the source of the funding from the shape of the minaret on top of a brand new mosque. There are, however, government-imposed limits on the proportion of foreign funding. Representatives of Muslim countries are often asked to donate copies of the Quran, school books and other teaching materials, including educational audio and video cassettes.

As mentioned above, the head of a Muslim *qigong* hospital at Yinchuan was able to visit Singapore to secure assistance for the publication of his book on *qigong* techniques and his methods of healing. Many Muslims who have written works on Hui themes approach all foreigners passing through their areas in the hope of getting their books published in a foreign language (preferably English).

In the same vein, foreigners are actively encouraged to invest in local commercial and industrial ventures. One ill-fated scheme was a joint venture with the Saudis on Wangfujing, one of Beijing's busiest shopping streets, where a building of Middle Eastern design was constructed to house a hotel, conference hall and shopping facilities, together with restaurants and various services designed to appeal to an



international Muslim clientele made up of Saudis, Malays, Hui and others. This huge complex failed to attract sufficient visitors and had to close. At Shenzhen (the special economic zone near the border with Hong Kong) the Muslim hotel complex, whose prayer hall serves as the local mosque, is a sorry sight with its closed shops and handful of customers. These examples have not deterred the Hui of Zhengzhou in Henan from building their own huge development topped with the inevitable cupolas. Such developments have a very doubtful future, because the Hui can rarely afford to purchase what they consider to be luxury items, the non-Muslim Chinese shun these places because they do not feel at ease there, and foreign Muslims (other than a few clerics, who are often short of money) prefer the more comfortable facilities of luxury hotels.

To touch on a little-publicised development which is not discussed (or is mentioned with great circumspection) within China, it must be noted that preachers from Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and even Bangladesh are to be found in growing numbers in every province of China.

### *Fundamentalist Tensions and Related Social Problems*

The CIA, formally responsible for administering a unified religious policy, by and large goes along with prevailing developments, which it is often happy to endorse through its provincial representatives. It does, however, take positive action to curb activities considered to be overly disruptive, such as the publication of reviews, tours by outspoken preachers and violent disputes between different sects.

The religious revival inspired by world Islam has led to sectarian quarrels within China. The Ikhwan fundamentalists cite examples from abroad to back up their claim to hold the key to orthodox practices. They preach the existence of a universal Islam and strongly condemn the continuing doctrinal quarrels among other religious groupings. They take the view that narrow sectarian loyalties are an affront to orthodoxy because they betray the sacred duty to respect the unity of Islam. Sectarianism takes different forms in different regions. In northern and central China Qadim traditionalists are opposed to fundamentalist reformers, while there are splits within the fundamentalist camp between Ikhwan and Salafis. The northwest is an area of conflict between the Qadim, the different Sufi groupings, the Ikhwan and the Salafis. As already mentioned, the brotherhoods sometimes descend into violent feuding which is promptly condemned by the Ikhwan. In the southeast the main issue is how to reintroduce the practice of religion to the Muslims who have forgotten what it means. In Yunnan, in the southwest, modernists and traditionalists rub shoulders within the Qadim, while the Sufi minority is kept at arm's length.

At the present time, the Hui intelligentsia are worried by these polarising tendencies, and in particular by the growing intolerance of the fundamentalists towards those Muslims who do not observe all their religious duties (including the obligation to pray five times a day, to fast during Ramadan, and to cover up women's faces). They have started to use the word 'Wahhabites' to describe these activists fired by a belief in their own infallibility, the uncompromising imams who had previously been described as 'Salafis'. In 1996 the term Wahhabite was used only in Xinjiang, where it was applied to Uighur Salafis to distinguish them from the region's Hui Salafis. The spread of a linguistic fashion imported from Central Asia means that the word is used today to include Hui living in China proper. In the 1930s and 1940s 'Wahhabite' was used in China to stigmatise the religious orientation of the Ikhwan. Its modern usage originated in the political discourse of Russia and Central Asia, where

it has a pejorative connotation. The activists stand accused of refusing other Muslims the right to examine and to criticise and of rejecting the authorities' right to govern, and generally of undermining the peaceful, conciliatory image and the positive commitment to Chinese society which the Hui have sought to associate with their religion.

Social problems have played some part in the ferment within Chinese Islam. A cassette of Ikhwan proselytising, probably produced in Xining, which claims to represent the opinions of the Hui, identifies three great threats to Chinese Islam: poverty, lack of education and drug trafficking. We have noted the efforts deployed in the educational sphere, which have so far fallen short of the community's needs in both the scale and the quality of provision. Poverty may not be the only factor behind the problem of illiteracy, but it remains a major handicap. And if the Hui are certainly not the only group implicated in drug trafficking, the scale of that problem has become very worrying. When it first began, communities and mosques might have been able to gain some profit from it, but the damage to the social fabric is now such that any involvement in the drug trade is unacceptable. This is especially so when Han Chinese are, dishonestly, blaming the Hui for all China's drug trafficking problems, thus demonising the Hui and building up a distorted image of Islam.

## **Conclusion**

Religious activism is not a feature of Islam alone. Other religions have experienced strong growth. According to official statistics published by the Chinese government in 1997 there were 4,000,000 Catholics, while the number of Protestants had grown fifteen-fold since 1949 to reach 10,000,000 (White Paper, 1997).

Since 1994 the authorities appear to have become concerned, at national level, about the potential impact of all kinds of preaching. Religions and spiritual movements alike have been targeted, with particular attention paid to Protestant missions and Catholics loyal to Rome. An official decree signed by Li Peng on 31 January 1994 to 'protect foreign believers' in China in fact regulated their activities by obliging them to apply to the national authorities for permission to preach to Chinese audiences (Zhonghua, 1994). So-called 'popular superstitions', sometimes involving unconventional practices, and traditional beliefs which were formerly encouraged, are perceived as threatening if they start to develop into mass movements. This is why Falun Gong has been subject to harsh repression since July 1999, while all other types of traditional gymnastics have been viewed with suspicion. Islam has also caused some official disquiet, notably because of the inflammatory preaching tours organised by the Tablighi Jama'at.

Regulatory measures have been introduced to prevent the accommodation of foreigners, while direct private donations (those not channelled through the Islamic Association) have been banned.

The forces at work within Chinese Islam, including the return to the scriptures, are in tune with developments within global Islam. In this connection, it is relevant to note that modern means of communication can give rise to uniform behaviour and stereotyped thinking through their 'globalising' influence on religious discourse and practices.

The Hui have a firm historical and social grounding in China, however. They do not have a political agenda like the Muslims of Xinjiang. They are a constituent part of the geographical and cultural diversity of mainland Chinese society, with its rich variety of dialects, customs and practices. Deeply pragmatic, they are wary of new

ideologies. At the local and the national level, the Chinese Islamic Association is the forum through which all the Muslim groupings have to reach compromises to address their tensions and power struggles. Even if international fundamentalist ideas take root in China as a result of the spread of education, they will have a lasting impact only to the extent that they adapt to Chinese conditions, as previous currents of Islamic thought have done.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This article is primarily concerned with Islam as practised by the Chinese-speaking Hui community and (in Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia provinces) by the Dongxiang, Salar and Bonan minorities, whose religious orientation is comparable to that of the Hui. Ten of China's minority nationalities are classed as Muslim, namely the Hui, Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Bonan, Dongxiang, Tajik, Uzbek and Salar communities, making a total of nearly 18,000,000 Muslims nationwide in 1997. China's Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Tajik and Uzbek communities are concentrated in the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, where Islam in its Sufi form is much in evidence. However, the main focus of attention in Xinjiang is not on religion per se but on the political tensions which exist between the Chinese state and the Turkic-speaking peoples of the province (many Uighurs being in favour of independence from China).
- <sup>2</sup> See Löwenthal, 1940, p. 219. The author gives a detailed account of publishing developments from the start of the twentieth century.
- <sup>3</sup> The Hui and the CCP were often on opposing sides. In 1935, at the time of the Long March, the Red Army was confronted by armed groups of Hui mobilised by local warlords. In order to ally itself with the Hui of the region (Gansu) the CCP organised the first (Hui) autonomous soviet in the district of Yuhai.
- <sup>4</sup> *Nahda* (Awakening) was a reformist, modernising Muslim movement which made its appearance at the end of the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century several renowned Chinese Muslim scholars spent time at Egypt's al-Azhar university, whose courses were brought up to date by the most eminent representative of the *Nahda*, Mohammed Abduh. The writings of Mohammed Abduh were translated into Chinese in the 1930s.
- <sup>5</sup> A native of Shadian in Yunnan, Ma Jian studied successively in Yunnan, in northwest China and, from 1928, at the training college in Shanghai. In 1931 he was one of the first five Chinese students sent to al-Azhar, where he produced numerous translations, notably of Mohammed Abduh and of the Quran rendered into vernacular language. Under the new regime he was a respected teacher but did not produce any further significant works.
- <sup>6</sup> In 1953 the CIA president was Burhan Shahidi (Baoerhan), a Tatar who was described as a Uighur in order to conceal the under-representation of the Uighurs; four of the five vice-presidents were Hui, as were the secretary-general, Zhang Jie (1917–87), and one of the two deputy secretaries. The second General Assembly of December 1956, which retained the existing president and secretary-general, appointed seven Hui vicepresidents (out of a total of nine) and two Hui deputy secretaries (out of a total of three). In October 1963, shortly before the Cultural Revolution, there were 10 vicepresidents (including seven Hui) and two deputy secretaries (both Hui), with an unchanged president and secretary-general. The fourth General Assembly meeting of April 1980, marking the CIA's revival, maintained a continuity of leadership, with the aged Burhan becoming honorary president, while Zhang Jie took over the presidency and one of the deputy secretaries (a Hui) became secretary-general. In 1987 Zhang Jie (who was to die in that year) took on an advisory role, while Shen Xiayi (a Hui born in 1927) became president; there were 14 vicepresidents, of whom eight were Hui. In 1993 An Shiwei (born 1922) became president, with 14 vice-presidents (seven of them Hui) and three counsellors (two of them Hui). There was a 214-member permanent committee, while the General Assembly had 300 members (Zhu, 1994, pp. 176–86).

- <sup>7</sup> This figure is an underestimate, since some rich mosques have two or three imams, and the imams of nearly all China's mosques have at least one pupil (many having two or three and some a dozen or more), although not all these pupils will go on to become imams.
- <sup>8</sup> Ma Yunfu, 1995; *Zhongguo Musilin*, 4, 1986, p. 42. Widely varying statistics are given by different sources. The official statistics quoted here may be regarded as minima.
- <sup>9</sup> See the section about these mosques in Allès, 2000.
- <sup>10</sup> Once it had become obvious to Chinese Muslims that their adoption of the Chinese vernacular was a barrier to the understanding of Islamic religious texts, efforts were made from the seventeenth century onwards to set out the principles of their faith in classical Chinese, using vocabulary borrowed from the established Chinese religious/philosophical systems (neo-Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism). This initiative was motivated in part by a desire to make Islam better understood by non-Muslims in China.
- <sup>11</sup> The practice of printing donor lists has recently spread to official publications.
- <sup>12</sup> Da Pusheng (1874–1965), renowned for his contribution to a modern form of Islamic education, had used a trip to the Middle East in 1938 to call upon the world's Muslims to support China in the face of the Japanese invasion. He became vicepresident of the CIA in 1953 and president of the Islamic Institute of China in 1955. In the latter year he accompanied Zhou Enlai to the Bandung conference, making use of this event to establish links between the People's Republic of China and Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government approved a Chinese request to send pilgrims to Mecca (refused two years earlier), the *haj* delegation being led by Da Pusheng, who had several meetings with the Saudi king and went on to visit Egypt, Pakistan and India. In 1956 he visited Indonesia in his capacity as president of the Sino-Indonesian Friendship Association, going on to visit Egypt and Syria.
- <sup>13</sup> Born in 1917, and until 1951 the head of an Islamic school, Ma Yuhuai was one of the founders of the CIA and a vicepresident of that body. He was among the delegates to the Bandung conference in July 1955. In 1960 he became a member of the Association for Friendship with African Peoples. In late 1962 and early 1963 he attended a congress of the Islamic Teachers' Association in Indonesia. He also visited Syria. His name is curiously absent from Chinese biographical dictionaries. See Winters, 1979, p. 62.
- <sup>14</sup> See the chapter dealing with the invention of ethnicity and the role of the state in a southern Chinese lineage in Gladney, 1991, pp. 261–91.
- <sup>15</sup> During his visit to the Niujie mosque in Beijing, Khamenei stated that his country felt bound to uphold the status of Muslims everywhere.
- <sup>16</sup> See Gladney, 1991, pp. 1–4; also a postgraduate dissertation by L. Chérif-Chebbi, *Contre les Rushdie chinois. Le réveil des musulmans Hui* (Paris, Institut d'études politiques, 1991).
- <sup>17</sup> The events at Shadian in 1975 and the ensuing bloody repression are still bitterly resented by the Hui, notwithstanding the government's decision to acknowledge in 1979 that a major wrong had been done by the 'Gang of Four' (see above).
- <sup>18</sup> The Salafiyya originated in a schism within the Ikhwan sect in the 1930s, instigated by a Linxia-born imam. Its interpretation of Islam is based exclusively on the first three generations of the faith and (like Wahhabism) it rejects the schools of jurisprudence. In contrast the Ikhwan, although inspired by Wahhabism, have not formally abandoned the Hanifite school.
- <sup>19</sup> Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein's estimate (broadly consistent with our own) is that there are between 500 and 1000 students abroad, including 300 at al-Azhar. Cf. Armijo-Hussein, 1999.
- <sup>20</sup> See for example the 1993 postscript to *Hai yuan yisilan zhen qingshen* (*Still Far From the True Spirit of Islam*) by 'Han Ge' (a pseudonym) and the 1996 work *Piaoyang de liuqi* (*The Green Flag Files*), published at Changzhi by the proselytising poet Habib Ma Lan.

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