Selected Papers from a Three-Conference Series on Muslim Minorities in Northwest China

Gansu Province, 2008 | Shaanxi Province, 2009 | Xinjiang Autonomous Region, 2009

PAPERS TRANSLATED BY:
Christine Sun

PUBLICATION SPONSORED BY:
Ethnic Minority Group Development Research Institute within the Development Research Center of China's State Council & The Religion and Security Research Project, Center on Faith & International Affairs, Institute for Global Engagement
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Publication sponsored by the Ethnic Minority Group Development Research Institute within the Development Research Center of China’s State Council, and the Religion and Security Research Project of the Center on Faith & International Affairs at the Institute for Global Engagement

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Printed in the United States of America.

First published in 2011.

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FOREWORD

By Jared Daugherty
Institute for Global Engagement

This collection of conference papers documents a multi-year research project carried out by the Ethnic Minority Group Development Research Institute within the Development Research Center of China’s State Council (EMGDRI) on Muslim minority communities in Northwest China. It is the result of EMGDRI’s long-standing partnership with the Institute for Global Engagement, the purpose of which is to better understand the relationship between religion and security, and therefore better enable religion to be a positive and contributing element to social harmony. During this project, EMGDRI carried out conferences on “Muslims and a Harmonious Society” in Gansu Province (2008), in Shaanxi Province (2009), and in Xinjiang Autonomous Region (2009). The conferences were hosted by local-level partners such as Gansu Province’s State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Lanzhou University’s Central Asia Institute, and Gansu’s International Cultural Exchange Association in Gansu; Shaanxi’s Normal University’s Northwest Minorities Research Center and Shaanxi Province’s State Ethnic Affairs Commission in Shaanxi; and, Xinjiang Autonomous Region’s Central Asia Research Center, and the Academy of Social Sciences’ Central Asia Research Center in Xinjiang. Each of these events convened high-caliber governmental, academic, and religious leaders from the local- and national-level to examine and discuss the relationship between Muslim minority groups and the broader community.

This publication testifies to the opportunities for peaceful coexistence and fruitful collaboration that open up to those who wish to cultivate and support our common global civilization, as well as the risks of conflict for those who foment a so-called clash of civilizations. Specifically it highlights the historical and contemporary situation of Muslim minority communities within Northwest China through eleven selected conference papers written by Han Chinese and Muslim minority experts from
across government, the academy, and Islam. Each paper speaks frankly and practically on issues related to faith, culture, development, the rule of law, and stability.

The views expressed in these papers do not necessarily represent the views of EMGDRI or the Institute for Global Engagement. However, both institutes support this publication as it represents a sample of contemporary Chinese thought on the role of faith in state and society among ethno-religious communities in northwest China. Though these papers highlight particular minority groups in a specific location, they also tell a story with broader, indeed global implications. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with the opinions presented in this publication, in the aggregate these diverse papers reveal the value of mutual respect across deep differences—exactly the characteristic that must define our common global civilization and discourse.

Finally, it is important to note the precedent-setting nature of the partnership that led to this publication—a partnership between a faith-based, American think-tank and a Chinese government think-tank. We believe it is a sign of things to come as the United States and China strengthen their bilateral relationship and partnerships across all sectors as we together pursue common goals of security and prosperity.
Figure 1: Provinces and Autonomous Regions of Contemporary Northwest China

1. Xinjiang Autonomous Region 4. Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
2. Gansu Province 5. Shaanxi Province
3. Qinghai Province 6. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

Figure 2: Dynasties of Ancient and Imperial China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td>Xia (c. 2100 – c. 1600 B.C.E.)</td>
<td>Tang (618-907 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Shang (c. 1600-1046 B.C.E.)</td>
<td>Five Dynasties &amp; Ten Kingdoms (907-960 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Zhou (1046-256 B.C.E.)</td>
<td>Song (960-1279 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Qin (221-206 B.C.E.)</td>
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<td>Han (206 B.C.E. - 220 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Three Kingdoms (220-280 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Ming (1368-1644 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Southern and Northern (420-589 C.E.)</td>
<td>Qing (1644-1911 C.E.)</td>
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<td>Sui (581-618 C.E.)</td>
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GANSU
RELIGIOUS SECURITY AND ITS PATH OF REALIZATION IN SOCIETY

By Li Xiangping (translated by Christine Sun)
Center for the Study of Religion and Society, Shanghai University
Gansu Conference, 2008

I. RELIGIOUS SECURITY AND RELATED ISSUES

In the age of globalization, security issues have become a serious concern for civil societies around the world, and all ideas about security have changed accordingly. In regard to this, scholars both within and outside of China have proposed a series of new concepts such as comprehensive security, global security, non-traditional security and new security. These have helped to introduce factors such as economy, society, ecology, culture and religion to traditional fields such as military security and state security. As a result, all ideas about security have undergone dramatic transformation.¹ Research on security is now reaching beyond the scope of traditional fields whose focus has been on military and state security, thus giving birth to research on religious security and its relevant issues.

The concept of “security,” refers to the state in which all matters and events can exist without being threatened or endangered. Security issues are generally divided into categories, including state security, military security, political security, societal security and environmental security. “Generally speaking, military security concerns the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states, and states’

perceptions of each other’s intentions. Political security concerns the organizational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Economic security concerns access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Societal security concerns the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom. Environmental security concerns the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend.”

Practically speaking, the two major aspects of religious security are the security of religions, which refers to the secure situation of the world’s religions, and the impact of religious factors on security, which refers to the great variety of religious factors and their many types of impact on the contemporary world. Based on its social nature, religious security belongs to the field of societal security. However, when it comes to religious security, various important fields are involved, including religion and state security, religion and societal security, religion and national security, and religion and cultural security. As a basic path, construction of a secure relationship among these fields needs to be carried out through the identification of religion. For a religion to relate to the stability and security of a country’s political life or social order, it should be viewed through the lens of “identity,” and therefore a religious security model that is based on concepts of identity is appropriate. The different ways in which such identity is achieved will lead to the presence of different religious security issues and their corresponding religious security models.

For example, the relationship between religion and a nation-state or society determines the way in which the identification of this religion by the nation-state or society is achieved. A different way to identify this religion will lead the society, nation-state or nationality involved to form a different sense of security. Therefore, in its social nature, religious security derives from the way in which the “collective religious identity” of this society, nation-state or nationality is constructed and maintained. More importantly, religious security and religious identity can be closely related to the maintenance and re-production of belief in a religious system, or to the expression and implementation of this religious belief, or a series of religious practices and habits, or the ability of this religious system to associate with a society or nationality.

If religious identity is determined by state and political factors, then the stability of this nation-state and its politics will become the major reason for religious security to exist. If religious identity is determined by nationality, then national issues will become a major element of religious security. If religious identity is determined by cultural traditions, then the transformation or conservation of these cultural traditions will become the major contributing factor to the development of religious security. If economic factors are a major component of religious identity, then the economy and its development will form the basis of religious security.

This is because all religions possess and must possess an element of law—or two elements of law, to be precise. One involves the social procedure within a group that follows a specific religion, while the other involves the social procedure within a larger group where the group following a specific religion is only one section. If this consensus is reached between religious, state, national and social identities, then the relationship between religious security and aspects such as national security, societal security, cultural security and national security will become legally, socially and historically complex.

Once the civil rights in a modern society are identified, the identification between religion and aspects such as state, society, nationality and culture becomes manifested. Such manifestation has to rely on this identification being socially significant, for it is not only an acknowledgment of personal morals and inner qualities, but also requires the assembly and institutionalization of civil rights as a prerequisite. Hence religious security as a security model is established on the basis of at least four types of identifications, i.e. state, societal, national and cultural identifications. In regard to this, in this paper, I would like to propose a realization path for religious security in society, in order to discuss what I have previously referred to as the “socialization of religion” from various perspectives.

II. RELIGION AND STATE SECURITY

State security refers to that of the three elements of a nation-state, i.e. the security of its people, territory and government. State security is established on the premises of a fixed territory and a set of predetermined rules on who is qualified to become a member of the nation-state; it is therefore different from societal security or social integration as a versatile and diverse field. State security is at the core of the whole concept of security, and it can be divided into a variety of security fields and their branch areas.

State security is different from political security. Political security concerns the stability of the nation-state as an organization, the governing system, and the legitimacy granted to both the state and the government by a certain ideology. State security is related to, yet different from, political security.

In the contemporary world, religious security is often entangled with the security of a state or nationality. Except for some small-scale extremist cults, religion has not yet transcended the state as a referent object for military security. This places issues of religious security within the relationship structure between religion and state security, so that the interactive relationship between religious security and state security has to be taken into account. Religious security at the state level derives from the considerable integrating and controlling power that religion possesses over state spirit and social psyche. Topics of religious security at the state level should include the identification and dis-identification between religions of different natures; the extent


to which religious systems can impact state spirit and how such impact may be dissolved; and how to prevent conflicts between orthodox and heterogeneous religious beliefs from being freely manifested on the state and international stages.

In the age of globalization, after the Cold War’s confrontation of ideologies, religion is able to provide a state with a relatively comprehensive ideological basis, a fundamental element on top of which various aspects of a society can communicate and integrate with each other. This also makes religion a major potential problem in the construction of a civil society within a civil state in the age of globalization. This is where religious belief as a double-edged sword is fully manifested. Therefore, although religion is often seen as a source of instability among the world’s politics, in its nature it is and has always been about peace and humanist concern.7

In regard to state security, are religions secure? Not all issues of religious security are caused by powerful threats that are external to religion. Some of them may be caused by internal factors. The security of a religion derives from its legitimacy in the state. The means by which the religion receives its legitimacy has a direct impact on the relationship between this religion and the security of the state. As a result, different states with their unique political patterns will have different religious security models. Specifically, the relationship between politics and religion in a state will have a direct impact on the construction of the state’s religious security model. In particular, the relationship between politics and religion in a state will directly impact either the relationship between religion and state security or the security of the state religion, which in turn will determine the nature and significance of issues relating to religious security in this state. Such is state security that derives from religion. It should be noted here that in this regard, issues relating to religious security can be considered an aspect of political security. Depending on the unique relationship between politics and religion in each state, some states try to politicize their religions. Others attempt to make religions apolitical, or to socialize them.

For a state’s political party in power, to situate religions outside of the “political threats” often faced by the state requires a great deal of political wisdom. It involves not considering religion as the party’s political baggage to be handled by the civil society, as well as not letting conflicts of religious beliefs cause any damage to state politics or the legitimacy of the state ideology. Instead, political security should be situated above all conflicts of religious beliefs, whether these religions have originated from within or outside of the sphere of any political influence. Most importantly, the state as a subject of power should situate religions outside of all political fields. While the state should construct a field in which religions can be identified, it should also provide religions with certain ideological guidance, so that none of the state’s resources needs to be used to ensure the existence of religions and their mutual communications. This, in other words, is an act of setting up a security fence for religions; it aims to separate the state and religions with a legal system and prevent religions from directly interfering with issues of the state and political security.

This was suggested by Alexis de Tocqueville—as long as a religion does not share the ruler’s material power, it does not have to face the consequences of hatred ignited

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by that ruler. For as soon as a religion seeks political power, it becomes attached to a specific political party and shares the hostility it attracts.8

The impact of a state’s political factors can be manifested through the extent to which various religions are identified and through the harmonious or discordant relationship between these religions. As for conventional research on security, it mainly concerns what constitutes a real threat in a state and how to handle the various factors that contribute to the formation of such a threat. In this regard, conventional research on security is subjective.9 As a result, in their handling of issues of religious security, states often employ this subjective approach to dealing with religious factors that constitute a threat to state security. A common problem of this approach is that states merely focus on conventional concepts of security and ignore the positive contribution any religion can make to state security.

Because religious security is part of a state’s security strategies at the macroscopic level, it is meant to provide these strategies with a necessary concept of belief and the resulting social belief system. The key here is how the state handles issues of religion. Should religion be upheld high at the same level as the state’s power? Or should religion be placed securely at the level of a civil society where it can be controlled by the state’s power through a legal system? These choices of handling religion will directly impact the security relationship between religion and state, while constructing the phenomenon of religious belief as a non-traditional religious security model.

III. RELIGION AND SOCIETAL SECURITY

Societal security is different from state security; the latter concerns the stability of the state as an organization, the governing system, and the legitimacy granted to both the state and the government by a certain ideology.

The most fundamental concept in the field of societal security is that of identity. Societal security concerns the mutual identification of the members of a collective. As individual lives in a society impact the process in which the collective is identified, their collective existence, based on shared experiences, becomes a continuity. Therefore, the concept of societal security concerns not only major economic activities at the individual level, but also the identification of the collective and the urge to protect it as “our identity.” More important, different types of societal security are constructed on top of different identities; hence each society is fragile in its own way. This depends on how its identities have been constructed. If a society has been constructed on the basis of separation, estrangement and mutual alienation, then even the appearance of a very small group of alien migrants will be seen as a threat.10

It is evident that religious security and its identity model, which is closely related to societal security, is a very important identification method within the structure of “our identity.” A society, as a large collective that is different from the state, may involve a wide range of conventional models, including its sustainability, acceptable develop-

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mental conditions, language, culture, religion, national identity and customs. Societal security is closely related to civil rights and the nature of social justice, with its referent object being the “collective identity” that is extensive and can exist and function independently from the state. One such large-scale identity structure is religion.

Furthermore, society is a concept that involves identity, the self-identification of the collective, and how individuals ensure that they are members of a certain collective. Society concerns how individuals choose non-state approaches to dealing with what they have become aware of as a “threat to their identity.” As a result, the fragility of each society serves as a constraint to the construction of the “identification” relationship between religion and society.

To establish a social identity or social role requires a certain quality and meaning within an individual as he becomes aware of the actions and intentions of others, while a collective identity involves the construction of an individual’s inner qualities. From the individual perspective, these qualities refer to his or her physical actions and thoughts. However, from the perspective of a group or organization, these qualities refer not only to the common religious belief shared by all members of a group or organization, but also to a certain system in which individual members behave as one of “us.”

Only with such social identification can the identities and attributes of the civilians of a modern society be constantly confirmed, in order to avoid any opportunity of controlling and manipulating the society and its civilians with a certain ethical hegemony that is supported by ample theories. In regard to religious security and its socialization, its key definition is to abide by the political behavioral patterns represented by the structure of a modern society while accepting all of its existing regulations, in order to construct a reasonable pluralism on the basis of a constitutional government, so that when the society’s civilians encounter a wide range of conflicting theories such as religion, nationality and ethics, they are able to consider them carefully and reach a consensus and to participate in public discussion according to the general principle of political justice.

Based on this, I think the fundamental element of religion and societal security is how to transform affairs of religious security into those of societal security. This is so that affairs of religious security will not be merely treated as a continuing struggle between the hearts and minds of civilians. Even when these civilians face the assaults of heterogeneous religious beliefs that affect their existing identification with a society, they will not counter such threats to their identity simply by using political power. In this regard, issues of religious security have become those of societal security, so that general approaches to handling social affairs can be used to deal with the arrival of heterogeneous religious beliefs.

The need to believe in a religion can have a direct impact on how identities are constructed; it is also the major way in which issues of religious security can be realized. As a result, to pay attention to the need to believe in various religions and how


they are realized in China is, in its nature, to take hold of the realization path where religion and social identification can be constructed. This is equal to grasping the fundamental ways in which China’s religious security issues are constructed.

IV. RELIGION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

A nationality is of a religious nature, in the same way that a religion is of a national nature. Religion is the source and inspiration of a nationality’s civilization. While the birth and development of a religion may have been supported by a race or a nationality, religious belief in turn can construct the cultural and psychological structure of a nationality. In the contemporary world, the relationship between religion and nationality is one of “mutual construction.”

A national religion is established out of the social traditions formed by a specific national group. All members of this nationality are almost born to belong to such a religion, with none of the individuals having any free and conscious choice. A specific social group determines the specific characteristics of a religious life. As a result, this religious life provides its source group with a particular social culture, which makes its way into the political, legal, economic and moral life of this group. The most extreme aspects of such religious life are manifested as the integration of religion and politics throughout human history, with a corresponding degree of insularity and exclusivity.

Hence the effects of religious and national factors are becoming increasingly significant in contemporary international society. The interaction or mutual exploitation of these two factors makes the many conflicts in our contemporary society even more complex. As nationalist ideology, which was once constrained by transnational consciousness, gains strength, come to play a leading role in contemporary world history. Religious nationalism has also gained a considerable role in this regard.

However, the key issue here is that such identification via a religion or a nationality can be manifested as “an advantage, an intention, a motive or a form or method of interaction between individuals, which appears through or in the form of individuals.” More important, such identification via religion or nationality causes this form or method of interaction to be constructed as a reality where a “society” can be established as a society. An extreme expression of religious belief is to consider “those who are not our kin are surely of a different heart,” so that all members of this “society” are followers of the same religion or belonging to the same nationality. This in turn forces the “civilians” as members of the modern civil society, as well as how they are identified, to slowly disappear into the cracks between the state, nationality and religion.

If a religion is manifested as a form of religious nationalism or as conflicts of power between nation-states, then the controversies and divisions between nationalities will display characteristics of unusually critical religious disputes. Behind most conflicts of nationalities hides a cultural background against which various religions directly or indirectly contradict each other. Indeed, many conflicts of nationalities are manifested as struggles between different religious beliefs, with some of them even occurring in the form of clashes among the different divisions

or doctrines of the same religion. A survey conducted in the early 1990s showed that “hostility caused by religious differences served as a major contributing factor in almost every one of the forty or so wars occurring around the world then. Some religious beliefs had even formed obstacles in the calling of attention to dealing with a series of urgent matters.”¹⁴ These conflicts, with religions set as their cultural background, appear to be far more complex than other disputes in many regions and states. They have become a key factor that affects the evolution of our global society and world civilization.

Worse, religious nationalism can be promoted as a “state religion” via the power of a nation-state, which can in turn transform nationalism and nationalist ideologies into religious beliefs. With such religious beliefs, whose nature is that of a nation-state with a certain “nationality” at the core, this “nationality” can become life’s ultimate value and a synonym for a utopia that is as sacred and transcending as concepts such as God, Allah and the Buddha. Even nationalism can turn into the target of one’s ultimate attention and requires all members of a nationality to fully devote to it. As a consequence, there can be divisions between nationalities as being “superior” and “inferior,” “internal” and “external,” as well as “us” and “them.” Different religious beliefs can become the criteria used to judge one’s spiritual level; in order to emphasize the cultural and spiritual uniqueness of one’s own nationality, the commonalities shared by all other nationalist beliefs and identities are ignored. Under the control of such religious nationalist ideology, the rights of civilians and requirements of their attributes and identities in a modern society appear to be downgraded from their status as a common value to that of a special demand.

Nationalism in itself is neither violent nor tyrannical; neither is religious nationalism a spiritual devil that aids and abets the evildoer. Nationalism and religious nationalism are historical social powers, distinct forms of organization, and special systems of cultural values. The deadly issue here is the combination of religious nationalism and the power of a nation-state, and the fundamental values on top of which this combination is formed. Religious nationalism happens to provide the most suitable religious wrapping for this combination. Under the exploitation and control of state violence or totalitarianism, religious nationalism is likely to become a spiritual source and motivating power for autarkic despotism, which in turn serves as a psychic catalyst for nationalist dictatorship or religious violence.

In the contemporary world, what exactly can constrain religious nationalism from increasingly leaning towards moral violence? Constraining factors can only be sought in the moral system transcending nationalism, and not in nationalism itself. While the process of modernization has provided an external contributing power to the construction of nationalism, it has also provided an internal moral norm—that the common moral values of all human beings should be respected—and this norm can be used in any attempt to constrain the malignant development of nationalism.

V. RELIGION AND CULTURAL SECURITY

Issues of religious security are placed above those of culture because religion, as a major carrier of civilization and culture, has a great deal of influence over cultures and cultural communications. In its theoretical form, religious culture should contain the common moral values of all human beings. Religious culture should transcend all nationalist and nation-state ideologies and convey the moral strength it possesses; while nation-states and their citizens should re-construct their self-identities and break out of their self-delusion with the so-called national religion.

In the history of each nationality, religious culture often serves as a cultural indicator to the differences between nationalities. Also in the history of each nationality, religions and their corresponding cultures are often the major means by which conquering nationalities force their conquered counterparts to assimilate. The conquered nationalities are required to give up their original religious beliefs and instead follow those of their conquerors.

Since the formation of modern nationalism, religious cultures have served as a foundation for and major carrier of national cultures. Religious cultures have enhanced the commonalities shared between the expression of fundamental nationalist values and that of the religious nature of these values, which has in turn caused religious nationalism to become an important school of thought in modern nationalism. As a result, religious nationalism is now a significant site for the manifestation of cultural nationalism in the forms of cultural integration and cultural reputation. Hence religious beliefs have become a major form of expression for national cultures or national subcultures.

However, it should be pointed out here that among the establishment of these major players, in the actual process of social integration, the culture and ethics of each state and nationality are already closely related to issues arising from the systematic establishment of religious nationalism and its methodologies and structures. Issues of religious nationalism in contemporary society are often entangled with all kinds of political, economic, national and religious matters. Due to various characteristics displayed in its identification process, national identity also plays a major role in nationalist thought.

In regard to the development of religion as a social pattern, although there have been three prominent stages of natural religion, national religion and world religion, national identity has always been an important part of the development patterns and contents of these three types of religion. World religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, have expanded beyond the boundaries of a certain ethnicity or nationality and spread widely, so that the followers of a religion can be members of any nationality in theory, with the only prerequisite being for them to consciously and intentionally accept the truth promoted by the founder of a given religion. In this regard, world religions have not only been free of any dependency on nature, they have also detached themselves from the control of nationalities or tribes. Yet, to a certain extent, world religions have still been integrated with nation-states.

For example, Christianity often adjusts itself to the needs of Westerners, while Islam often matches the cultural pursuits of the Arabs. As for Buddhism, it gives spiritual support to most people in the East. However, all three religions are considerably constrained by Western and Eastern cultures. There are always possible or practical mutual resistance and even expulsion between religions that have been Westernized or Easternized.
All religions attempt to deny or surpass the authorities of the secular societies they exist within by expressing how religious values can transcend the “this-sidedness” of the ordinary world and emphasizing the truth and nirvana to be found “on the other shore.” However, in the process of their development, due to the considerable constraints established by nation-states, these religions and their identification of values often cannot truly transcend the boundaries of nationalities or nation-states. The religious nature of each nationality often causes a nationality to possess an invisible but prevailing power to consolidate and inspire, so that even the spiritual support provided for the members of a nationality is also of a religious nature.

In the development of all existing religions, almost every one of them has been smeared with the colors of nationalism or culturalism; they are of a nationalist nature and have been constrained and affected by nation-states and their ideologies, and even the world’s three most prominent religions cannot truly manifest the global nature of their cultures. Whether it is Christianity in the West or Buddhism and Islam in the East, they have all neared the last stage of their development. The concepts of the “global” or “global religion” are therefore changing and should be inspected again.

John Hick, a contemporary philosopher of religion and theologian, once proposed that responses to the relationship between religions could be summarized as exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Having compared the world’s religions and their responses to each other, he suggested that the fundamental principle of humanity is non-violence. Because no religion has the privilege to surpass other religions or societies, and because violence against other religions and individuals is prohibited, we can avoid the kind of violence and evil that religion as a social entity is able to produce. However, it is not religion itself, but individual conscience and modern legal systems, which should abide by such principle of non-violence.15

Indeed, throughout history, the relationships between various religions and cultures are often mere marriages between national cultures and their traditions, which in turn gives birth to religious nationalism. However, such religious nationalism is not a socialized structure which, as a systematic aggregation of modern civil rights and ideologies, transcends the prerequisites of all religions and nationalities. Instead, it is often a moral order which, as the manifestation of the personal wills of political rulers or leaders of nationalistic religions, is forced upon individuals, and whose logical structure still demands improvement. Therefore, the most crucial element of nationalism or a nation-state is that it is adequately established on the basis of modern constitutional democracies and civil ideologies, as well as on direct and complete political participation by all citizens. In other words, one’s national and religious identities should not be established on the basis of one’s religious belief or ethnic background. This is the most important aspect of religion and cultural security.

In fact, religious security itself is a kind of cultural security, or it can be considered as the most important aspect of cultural security. This is because religious belief or religious culture itself provides major spiritual support to one’s hopes, ideals and strengths and therefore enjoys a status equal to that of the rights of all citizens in modern civil societies. It is precisely because of the establishment of religions in societies

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and the solid historical and social constraints they pose on nation-states that religious systems are able to prosper between different cultures. The “global ethic” consensus of “there is no peace between cultures without peace between religions” can be replaced by “there is no peace between religions without peace between cultures.” If the identification of a nationality is merely based on a specific cultural practice, then any global culture of a homogeneous nature, such as the so-called “Coca Cola” culture or “McDonald’s” culture in the West, can pose as a forthcoming cultural threat.

VI. RELIGIOUS SECURITY AND ITS SOCIAL REALIZATION

In most nation-states, the subject of their first modernization is to form a nation-state. The subject of their second modernization is to form a civil society, with socialization as its main content. As a result, in the second modernization process, nation-states as “containers” are likely to fall apart and be replaced by another mechanism that will allow us to form new concepts about international communications, lifestyles and mutual exchanges. Similar mechanisms will appear within each nation-state, region and organization, within all aspects of a society, including the economic and labor fields, social networks and political groups.

In this sense, globalization can be considered as the globalization of each and every internalized society, which transforms individual nation-states to pluralist global societies. Contrary to this, today many still hold on to the idea of a nation-state in a cultural, ethical and even religious sense; incite conservative reflections on ideological, political and ethical topics; and defend their right to unify their country through a certain culture, ethic and nationality. It is this tension that forces the birth of the aforementioned “second modernization” whose subject is to form a civil society.

Common sociological concepts, which were derived from modern nation-states, have now become invalid. This is manifested in three flawed principles. The first is the geographical constraints of sociology that derive from nation-states as “containers.” The second is the inclination of sociology to abide by the established collectiveness of a society and ignore the new trend of individualization. The third and final is the principle of evolution, one that is characterized by Western centrism. As a result, all kinds of controversies and conflicts arise in the modernization of societies and cause more problems to occur in the process of globalization, which require alternative solutions. Perhaps the re-construction of contemporary international society will begin where the era of nation-states ends. This will re-adjust not only the ways in which states and nationalities are identified, but also the complex relationship between the values, religious beliefs and religious resources of these states and nationalities.

Nationalism should be freed from all narrow-minded and exclusive methods of identification, and be allowed to identify with the sacred resources of religious traditions. Nationalism should also be permitted to identify with all modern social, political and legal systems and civil ideologies. In this regard, “nationalism based on a legal


system” is perhaps one way to integrate the socialization of nationalist resources; it can re-define and further cultivate the legitimate resources of nation-states and nationalism for the purpose of wiping off the heavily stained colors of religious nationalism.

Nationalist extremists and fundamentalists cannot tolerate the pluralist and autonomous nature of a civil society. As suggested by British sociologist Ralf Dahrendof, “as long as a civil society still exists within the boundaries of a nationality, it will combine with exclusive attitudes, measures and regulations, which are against the status of citizens and the principles of the society that has been built on top of such status.” In order to adapt to the establishment of “nationalism based on a legal system” or “religious principle based on a legal system,” the socialization of religion should be manifested in the civil ideologies it possesses, so that a religious identification and even a religious security model can be established to truly highlight the constitutional characteristics of a civil state.

The realization path of religious security enables the pursuit of enlightenment and faith by all followers of existing and unique religions to be truly realized in their respective societies. Such a realization path can serve as one for realistic socialization that abides by modern social rules, highlights the transcending and universal nature of a religion, and integrates with the civil ideologies of a modern society. The rational, intellectual, emotional and social aspects of humanity can also be freely presented through the process of this “socialization of religion.”

Here, socialization is defined as abiding by the political behavioral course represented by a modern social structure and acceptance of the existing social rules. This is different from the conventional socialization process that transforms individuals into social beings, which can only be manifested through the legitimate functions of nationalities or religions. Socialization takes place through social interaction, which exists beyond the control of all economic and national powers. Hence the value of an identification process and socialization path for modern individuals exists through the social significance generated from the interrelations of a series of social systems. As a result, “all societies can be both social systems and the products of interweaving between multiple complex social systems. Such multiple complex social systems can be either completely internal within a society, or reach across its boundaries to form various relationships between this society and other systems that transcend social boundaries.” Based on this, it is not difficult for one to understand that one’s socialization is established on top of his or her social nature.

A citizen not only has a national identity but also a social identity; he is not only the follower of a certain religion but also a member of the modern civil society. The identity of a citizen is based on universal values such as equality, democracy and freedom, which prevail across the boundaries of modern societies; however, his sense of value also derives from his nationality, individuality and society. If the sacred resources of religious identification can be re-integrated through socialization, then the mutual identification between religion and entities such as states, societies, nationalities and

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cultures, as well as the implementation of religious security, will not contradict state security, societal security, civil rights and the identification of these issues. Only when a follower of a certain religion can also identify with his state, society and nationality, can he be considered as both the follower of his religion and a modern citizen.

Our contemporary society not only integrates all kinds of ethics, values and religions, but the integration and security of this society also depends on its system or structure. Because of this, if there is a lack of systematic integration in the values and resources of religious identification, then no collaboration between members of a nationality or citizens of a society can be achieved. This will cause religious identification to be deprived of its social and historical nature and become merely a mysterious experience that is strictly of a personal nature. In this sense, perhaps individual freedom of religious belief and identification based on modern constitutional democracies can be a realization path for religious security in society.

Here, the individualization of religious belief means individuals are able to gain a considerable motivating power that has been systematized and socialized. The subject of such power is the individual, instead of the collective. “If we still think individualization only affects a certain collective, without fully considering and using sociological analysis to reveal the profound changes it can bring to the structure of a society, then we will be completely wrong.” In regard to the consensus and mutual identification between citizens of modern societies, a very good conclusion is this: “The private is the political.” Rising from the relationship between the socialization of individual followers of religions and the socialization of state politics is the new and timely theme of the socialization of religion.

This is because only when the individual activities of citizens in a given modern society are interpreted as part of a “should-be order” can this society exist, which in turn begins the socialization of individuals. In other words, this “should-be order” is the issue at the core of the socialization of individuals and even of politics. The validity of the norms derived from common understandings of this issue involves the construction and management of civil societies. That is, only when these norms are able to provide guiding principles for individual communications, by determining how an individual follower of a religion should relate to a certain collective form of religious belief and practice, can the socialization of religious security be achieved. The “regulatory relationship” between entities such as states, nationalities and societies and religion should be re-constructed as an identification method for the “social understanding of a regulatory nature.” This will provide a solid foundation for the realization of religious security in society.
CIVILIAN-OPERATED ARABIC LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM SOCIETY: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY REVIEW

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Gansu Conference, 2008

I. ARABIC LANGUAGE STUDY AS A CULTURAL TRADITION OF CHINA’S HUI MUSLIMS

It is commonly known that, since the eighth century, Muslims from Arabia and Persia have been "carrying jewelry and precious spices in one hand and the Qu’ran in the other; it is through the process of exchanging materials with each other that the Chinese and the Arabs began their cross-cultural and social communications, which eventually led to the introduction of Islam to China." Also introduced to China was the Arabic language, which, for a long time, had been an important international language. This marked the beginning of a long history of interaction between the Arab-Islamic and the Chinese, two great cultures of the East. In this process, a new nationality was born in China: the Hui people.

During the Tang and Song Dynasties, a large number of “foreign guests” living in China not only used Arabic in their daily associations with each other, but also established China’s first group of mosques in the country’s southeast coastal cities such as Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Hangzhou and Yangzhou. Arabic was used throughout their discussions and debates of religious scriptures and doctrines in these mosques. This is evidenced by the large amount of religious relics found in Quanzhou and Yangzhou that contain writings in the Arabic language.

During the Mongol-Yuan Dynasty, due to various changes in China’s political and

social circumstances, a large number of “Muslim people” arrived from the country’s western regions and, through “Sinicization” became an important part of Chinese society. The Muslim people used Arabic, the academic speech of all advanced technologies and cultures of the time. They introduced to China a series of Arabic technological and cultural achievements in disciplines such as astronomy, medicine, mathematics and military defense. In the collection of the Yuan government’s Secretary House alone, there were as many as 242 “Hui volumes” (books in Arabic). These books covered disciplines such as astronomy, calendars, medicine, mathematics, chemistry, geography, literature, philosophy and history, and included many prominent works such as Avicenna’s Canon of Medicine. When Persian astronomer Jamal ad-Din served as “tidian” of the Muslim astronomical observatory (i.e. head of Astronomical Bureau), he presented Kublai Khan a “Ten Thousand Year Calendar” and seven astronomical instruments, which were all named in Arabic. The Yuan government further established the Muslim Medicine Institute and the Guanghuisi (an administrative organ for the use of Arabic medicine by the emperor) under the Imperial Medicine Academy, introducing Arabic medicine and appointing Muslim scholars to develop medical research. Most important, the Yuan government adopted Muslim official Maujuddin’s advice and established the Muslim Imperial College to teach Arabic and Persian and the “yi-si-ti-fei,” a set of special symbols based on these two languages that was specifically used in the management of financial affairs. Fu Ke, an expert in foreign language education, suggests in his book Zhongguo Waiyu Jiaoyu Shi [History of Foreign Language Education in China] that the Muslim Imperial College may be considered “China’s first foreign language school.”

During the Ming Dynasty, as the “Sinicization” of Muslim people continued, the number of people who understood Arabic language declined, resulting in a “deficiencies within scriptures and a scarcity of scholars, with a lack of quality translations and absence of complex exposition.” Hence, out of a desire to save their cultural traditions, a group of Muslim scholars led by Shaanxi’s Hu Dengzhou (1522-1597) pioneered the renowned “mosque education” model for the teaching of Arabic and studies of Islamic doctrine. From these scholars’ efforts, several generations of teachers with profound knowledge in Arabic and even Persian were cultivated. Throughout its hundreds of years of history, mosque education made great efforts in passing on the Hui people’s cultural heritage, improving their depth as an ethnic group, and promoting cultural exchange between China and Arabia (Islam). Also launched via mosque education was the movement of “using Confucianism to interpret Islamic scriptures,” integrating “Islamic studies” with the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties and establishing a Chinese Islamic school of thought. This achievement

2 Wang Shidian and Shang Qjong, Yuan Mishujian Zhi [Records of the Imperial Secretariat of the Yuan Dynasty].
3 Ding Jun, Zhongguo Alaboyu Jiaoyu Shi [History of Arabic Language Education in China], China Social Sciences Press, 2006.
5 Xiujuan Hu Taishizu Jiacheng Ji [Notes on the Construction of Grand Master Hu’s Grave], see Bai Shouyi (ed.), Huiizu Renwu Zhi (Ming) [Biographies of Historical Figures from the Hui Ethnic Group (Ming Dynasty)], Ningxia People’s Publishing House, 1990.
not only realized the localization of Islam in China; it also enriched Chinese culture itself. However, as time went by, the inefficiencies and shortcomings of mosque education became increasingly obvious, so that it became an urgent task to improve mosque education in order to continue the cultural development of the Hui ethnic group.

The twentieth century saw dramatic and profound changes within Chinese society. The Xinhai Uprising led to the downfall of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China. The May Fourth Movement upheld the grand banners of science and democracy and advocated cultural and educational reform. As new schools and education methods rose in popularity, it became fashionable to study overseas. Against such a background, Chinese Muslims also embarked on a journey of self-discovery and explored various ways to transform mosque education. In their efforts to revitalize their religion and promote learning, the new model of “school education” was born.

The first person to begin the trend of school education among the Hui Muslims was Wang Haoran (1848-1919), a renowned imam. Wang went on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1905 and visited countries such as Egypt and Turkey, learning all he could. Upon his return to China, he was determined to launch a school and contribute to the education of his fellow people. In his own words: “Since my return from Turkey, I have come to realize that only by focusing on education can we survive in this great world. I then began to promote learning.” In 1907, Wang established Huiwen Shifan Xuetang [Arabic-language Normal School] in Beijing’s Niuji Mosque and replaced mosque education with school education, with Chinese language as part of its course. Later, dozens of new schools of various sizes were established in concentrated areas of Hui Muslims across the country, the most famous of which were the Qingzhen Elementary School in Wuchang, Hubei (1912); the Chengda Normal School in Beijing (1925-1949); the Chongshi Middle School in Jincheng, Shanxi (1927-1938); the Islamic Normal School in Shanghai (1928-1937); the Muxing Middle School in Hangzhou, Zhejiang (1928-1937); the Islamic Normal School in Wan County, Sichuan (1928-1935); the Mingde Middle School in Yunnan (1929-1952); the Islam Middle School in Changde, Hunan (1931-1933); the Islamic Normal School in Pingliang, Gansu (1938-1949); and, the Yangzheng School in Shadian, Yunnan (1940-1950). Among these, the Chengda Normal School in Beijing and the Islamic Normal School in Shanghai boasted the most prominent achievements.

The Chengda Normal School was established in Jinan, Shandong in 1925 by a group of people led by Imam Ma Songting. Its name came from the phrase “cheng-de-da-cai,” which means “attain virtue and fulfill talent.” The “Chengda Shifan Zongzhang” [Chengda Normal School’s General Guidelines] stipulated that the tenet of the school was to “promote normal education in order to cultivate capable teachers, to enlighten the Hui people, and to expound and propagate Islamic culture.” “The aim of Chengda is to revitalize our religion through education and to save our nation

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through religion. One way for our nation to become strong and prosperous is by expounding and propagating Islamic culture.” In 1929, the school relocated to Beijing and launched *Chengda Journal* and *Yuehua* magazine to assist in the teaching and promotion of learning. Many famous scholars were also invited to speak at the school, including Gu Jiegang, Zhang Xinglang, Feng Youlan, Bai Shouyi and Han Rulin. In 1932, the school began sending students to study at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. In 1936, the school established its own library, which had a large number of Arabic-language books in its collection. It should be noted here that the establishment of the library was supported by many famous people outside of Islam; renowned educators and scholars such as Cai Yuanpei, Chen Yuan and Gu Jiegang had all served as members of the Organizing Committee for Chengda Normal University’s Fude Library. In 1938, the school relocated to Guilin, Guangxi in the country’s south. In 1944, the school relocated to Chongqing after Guilin was captured by the invading Japanese army. After the Sino-Japanese War, the school moved back to Beijing. In October 1949, it was merged with Beijing’s Xibei Middle School and Yanshan Middle School and renamed the Hui Nationality School.

The Chengda Normal School’s achievement in ethnic education was viewed in many ways, as it had successfully revolutionized the traditional model of mosque education. The school had carried out great and valuable efforts in areas such as course design; introducing, editing and composing course content; appointing foreign teachers; sending students to study overseas; building up collections of books and other data; conducting academic research activities; and, developing exchanges with foreign institutions. It “laid a main road to the demolition of the barriers surrounding religious education and to the integration of religious education with general social education.”

The Shanghai Islamic Normal School is another renowned Arabic language school operated by the Hui people. It was established in 1928 by two famous imams, Da Pusheng and Ha Decheng, who had just returned from an overseas observation trip. They felt that Muslims in China faced “decadence in religious affairs and decline in culture,” and were determined to “reform mosque education and develop a new type of Islamic education.” Later that year, Da and Ha established the Shanghai Islamic Normal School. In 1931, the school began sending students to study in Egypt. In 1938, due to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the school relocated to Pingliang, Gansu, and was renamed the Pingliang Islamic Normal School. During its ten years of history in Shanghai, the Shanghai Islamic Normal School took in more than 60 students in four grades. Although this number was rather small, the school’s advanced education concepts and the strength of its teachers ensured the provision of high-quality teaching. The school’s location in Shanghai, the country’s leading city, also helped broaden the influence of the students it cultivated. For example, both Ma Jian, professor at Beijing University, and Ding Zhongming, the first dean of National

7 Li Xinghua, et. al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Shi* [History of China’s Islam], China Social Sciences Press, 1998.
8 Ibid.
Chengchi University’s Department of Arabic Language (Taiwan), were graduates of the Shanghai Islamic Normal School.

Represented by Chengda Normal School and the Shanghai Islamic School, all new Arabic language schools for the Hui people shared the same educational concept, which was to cultivate application-oriented students who had “profound knowledge in both the Chinese and Arabic language.” As a result, these schools were considerably different from traditional education in mosques in aspects such as course content, curriculum design and implementation of teaching methods. Some of these schools even promoted the learning of four languages (Arabic, Chinese, Persian and English) at once, while other subjects commonly added to the curriculum included mathematics, history, geography, arts, literature and physical education. In general, the Chengda Normal School in the country’s north and the Shanghai Islamic Normal School in the south were seen as prominent examples of the successful transition of Arabic language learning from the model of mosque education to that of new schools. They had launched a new trend and marched upon a new road, having laid a new foundation for the education of the Hui Muslims and considerably broadened their horizons. In short, these new schools helped write a special page in the history of ethnic education and even that of foreign language education in China.

These new civilian-operated Arabic language schools during the Republic of China represented attempts of the Hui Muslims to enforce their cultural identity and enrich their people. They displayed the characteristics of their era and reflected the strong desire of Hui Muslims of the day to closely follow the steps of their time and to strengthen themselves and further develop their culture and education. Whether it was the founders, teachers, or students of these schools, they all shared the concept of keeping themselves up-to-date with trends, possessed strong national consciousness and patriotic spirit, and exhibited a fierce desire to serve their country and accomplish whatever duties were required of them. These attitudes sustained the long-term development of these new Arabic language schools for the Hui people, but the biggest success achieved by these schools was the launching of a great variety of brilliant careers by their graduates. “These schools, including the Chengda Normal School, had cultivated a large group of Hui intellectuals, many of whom were teachers of elementary and middle schools and new imams. By sending students to study overseas, these schools had further cultivated a group of talents in the use of the Arabic language. After Liberation, as many as fifteen of their students were appointed as teachers of Arabic language in universities and colleges around the country.”

These schools were the founders and pioneers of New China’s higher education in the Arabic language.

History proves that the study of Arabic is a cultural tradition of Chinese Muslims. It is through study of the language that Hui Muslims are able to pass on their cultural heritage and improve the quality of their fellow people. Represented by the Chengda Normal School, the Arabic language schools established during the Republic of China were a manifestation of not only the Hui people’s tradition of devotion to their country and religion, but also their spirit of self-improvement in order to stay in

10 Li Xinghua, et. al., Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Shi [History of China’s Islam].
step with the times. They clearly indicate that the reason why Hui Muslims study the Arabic language is no longer merely to gain religious knowledge and apply it to their religious lives; a more important purpose is to pass on their cultural heritage, to serve society at large, to revitalize their ethnic group and to contribute to their country.

II. CIVILIAN-OPERATED ARABIC LANGUAGE SCHOOLS SERVE AS A POSITIVE FORCE THAT ENHANCES THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONCENTRATED AREAS OF MUSLIM POPULATIONS AND CONTRIBUTES TO A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

Since the reform and opening-up of our nation, many civilian-operated Arabic language schools have been established in concentrated areas of Hui Muslims, including Kaiyuan Arabic Language School in Yunnan (1979- ), the Linxia Foreign Language School in Gansu (originally Linxia Chinese-Arabic School, 1980- ), the Lanzhou Arabic Language Middle School in Gansu (1981- ), the Changzhi Arabic Language School in Shanxi (1984- ), the Guanghe Arabic Language School in Gansu (1989- ), the Zhangjiachuan Muslim School (1991- ), the Yinchuan Arabic Language School in Ningxia (1991- ), and the Najiaying Islamic Cultural Institute in Tonghai, Yunnan (1994- ). The establishment of these civilian-operated Arabic language schools is not only a necessary result of the implementation of a series of policies enforced by our nation since the reform, but also an inheritance and continuation of the cultural traditions of a people. Without these national policies and the unique cultural traditions of the Hui people, these civilian-operated Arabic language schools would never have been established. Many years of experience in educational work across the country has proved that civilian-operated Arabic language schools serve as a positive force to enhance the economic development, religious harmony and social advancement of their local areas. The achievements of these schools have also been confirmed and praised by their local governments and all relevant departments. An outstanding example in this regard is the Linxia Foreign Language School in Gansu.

The Linxia Foreign Language School’s original name was Linxia Chinese-Arabic School. One of the first group of civilian-operated Arabic language schools established in northwestern China since the reform and opening-up of the country, the school is now a large-scale secondary institution with vocational and foreign language learning as well as many ethnic characteristics. It was first established in 1980 by an open-minded scholarly imam named Ma Zhixin. In 1989, according to the Gansu Education Commission’s No. 1988 (154) document that was approved by the autonomous state’s Bureau of Educational Affairs, the school was officially launched [see the Gansu Education Commission’s No. 1989 (12) document]. In August 2007, the school was renamed the Linxia Foreign Language School. Its tenet is to “develop ethnic education, enhance the quality of our people, develop the economy of our ethnic group, promote exchange between China and Arabia, and cultivate professional talents with ideals and morals.” At the beginning, the school was in an extremely poor condition; however, as time went by, it overcame initial difficulties and transformed into a professional Arabic language school with two educational units, a men’s campus and a women’s campus. Each campus has its own academic buildings, with educational facilities such as a library, multimedia theater, computer laboratory, multi-
The Linxia Foreign Language School has inherited the patriotic traditions of the Chengda Normal School. Following the spirit of self-improvement in order to keep up with the times, its educational emphasis is on the cultivation of morals and talent and the study of Chinese and Arabic. The subjects in the school's curriculum can be divided into three categories. The first category contains professional subjects in Arabic, including basic Arabic, Arabic grammar, Arabic rhetoric, intensive reading of Arabic literature, general reading of Arabic literature, conversation in Arabic, practical writing in Arabic, exegetical studies in Arabic, phonology in Arabic, and translation between Chinese and Arabic. These subjects mainly use professional teaching materials adopted by the Beijing Foreign Studies University, with in-class lectures accounting for a large proportion of their total hours. The second category contains subjects in Chinese language and culture, including modern Chinese, selected ancient poetry and prose in Chinese, writing in Chinese, Chinese history, abridged history of the world, history of the Hui ethnic group, current affairs and politics, common legal knowledge, and basic computer applications. The third category contains subjects in common knowledge about Muslim culture, including fundamental studies of Islamic culture, study of Hadith, knowledge of the Qu'ran and history of Islam. Subjects outside of these three categories include physical education (whose main focus is on gymnastics, martial arts, basketball and table tennis) and military training activities specifically for instructors of the local armed police force. In 2006, the school developed a series of subjects for self-educated university entrants, including Marxist philosophy, university language, modern Chinese, introduction to culture and English.

At the beginning, the Linxia Foreign Language School suffered from a lack of teachers. However, since the 1990s, some of its former graduates have returned from their studies overseas and taken up teaching jobs at the school, which has considerably enhanced the strength of its teaching. On the premise of promoting education, the school further encourages its teachers to actively conduct academic research in teaching and translation; an internal Chinese-Arabic Journal was launched to publish the notes of teachers and translation exercises of students. Some of the school's teachers translated the classic Arabic philosophical work *The Revival of Religious Sciences* into Chinese, and it was published by the Commercial Press as part of a series of famous works on the world's cultures and religions. Other teachers have published academic papers in periodicals such as *Arab World Studies* and *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Study*. By 2008, a total of ten teachers had passed tests arranged by relevant authorities and were awarded teacher's qualification certificates by the government.

The Linxia Foreign Language School runs a four-year program and is operated by a board of trustees through the school principal. Its budget comes from donations, which are raised by the board. At the beginning, students could attend the school for free; later, to cope with the development of a market-oriented economy, the school began to charge tuition fees. While the school is situated in the country's northwest, it accepts students from all over the nation whose educational level is the equivalent of middle school or above. At present, it has students from ethnic groups such as the Hui, Dongxiang, Salar and Tibetan from more than 20 provinces and regions, including Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Xizang [Tibet], Henan, Fujian and Jilin. A total of
1,504 students (including 760 from the women’s campus) are divided into 34 classes under the charge of 131 staff members (among whom are four with master degrees, 46 with bachelor degrees and 13 with college graduate certificates). Since its establishment, the school has had a large number of graduates. Some of them have gone to study overseas, others have pursued professional research in the Arabic language in higher academic institutions such as Beijing University and Beijing Foreign Studies University, others have been appointed as translators by state enterprises with foreign relations such as the China State Construction Engineering Corporation, and still others have been involved in trading activities with Arabic countries in cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Yiwu, or working as translators and buyers for Arabic businessmen.

Throughout its many years of history, the Linxia Foreign Language School has made an important contribution in cultivating numerous students in the use of Arabic language, developing local ethnic culture, promoting religious and social harmony, and conducting exchanges with the international community. The school’s outstanding educational achievements have been recognized, praised and supported by local authorities and all sectors of the society.

The success of the Linxia Foreign Language School in Arabic language education has been praised by our nation’s foreign language education circles and Arabic language education circles in particular. In 2004, Professor Guo Shaohua, leader of the Arabic Language Division under the Department of Education’s Steering Committee for Foreign Language Education and head of the Beijing Foreign Studies University’s Department of Arabic Language, led an observation group to the school. The purpose of the group was to investigate, study and provide guidance on the school’s educational work, and to understand its academic operations by attending classes and conducting symposia with teachers and students. This was the first time any leading figure from higher educational institutions and Arabic language education circles had stepped into the door of a civilian-operated Arabic language school to conduct investigation and study. While the observation group fully affirmed the school’s achievements in its educational work, it provided several suggestions regarding the school’s professional construction. More importantly, having investigated and studied all civilian-operated Arabic language schools across the nation, the observation group concluded that “the expansion of Arabic language education in the country’s northwest and other concentrated areas of the Hui ethnic group is an important work for the development of the regional economy and the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of the Great Northwest.” In October 2005, more than 20 Arabic language experts from the nation’s higher educational institutions who were attending the “2005 Joint Session of the Seminar on China’s Arabic Language Education” (organized by the Arabic Language Division under the Department of Education’s Steering Committee for Foreign Language Education in Higher Educational Institutions) at the Northwest

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11 The statistics and relevant information about the Linxia Foreign Language School cited in this paper came from the author’s interviews with Ma Mingdao, current chairman of the school’s board of trustees, Zhao Yulong, current principal of school, and Kao Suxia, current deputy principal of the women’s campus.
University for Nationalities in Lanzhou, Gansu, made a visit to the Linxia Foreign Language School. These experts paid tribute to the school’s staff members for their long-term contribution to conducting educational work. They also gave a positive evaluation of the school’s achievements and its impact on improving the continuous development of our nation’s Arabic language education.

The Linxia Foreign Language School has served as a bridge for local commercial and industrial circles in their attempt to enter the Arabic market. For example, a local carpet factory already sells a large amount of products with Hui ethnic group characteristics to the Middle East, which is a great business achievement. In August 2002, Mohammed Al-Besher, then United Arab Emirates ambassador to China, visited the school and praised its contribution to Arabic language education and the promotion of economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

It should be pointed out here, in particular, that the women’s campus of the Linxia Foreign Language School has made a remarkable contribution to the promotion of education for Muslim women. Throughout the years, under the leadership of principal Ma Xiulan, all staff members of the campus have shouldered the responsibility of eliminating illiteracy among Muslim women. In Linxia, the problem of drop-outs and discontinuation of studies is particularly serious among women and girls. The women’s campus has actively welcomed these females and helped them overcome their illiteracy and accept universal education. Over one thousand females have benefited from the program, with many delighting in knowledge for the first time. Many of these women acquired basic survival skills that have improved their lives. In 1994, the women’s campus launched *Muslim Women* (a newspaper-style internal document published by the Gansu Province News and Press Bureau), which has produced a total of 46 issues and received excellent feedback from all corners of the nation. The publication received high praise from the organizing committee of the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing, and this shed new light on our nation’s work for women.

Staff members at the Linxia Foreign Language School excel in self-improvement and always abide by the development strategy of accurately serving as leaders of the autonomous state. They have seized every opportunity to augment their position, basing themselves in Linxia while attending to the needs of northwestern China, doing all they can to contribute to the development of the local economy and society. The Linxia Hui Autonomous State has approximately 1.1 million followers of Islam; as Muslims from various ethnic groups, they account for 56.5 percent of the autonomous state’s population and 66.9 percent of Gansu Province’s total followers of Islam. Because of this, the state committee and government of Linxia have always considered ethnic unity and religious harmony as a strategic mission that matters to the development of the whole nation, and they have established the development concept of “[positively including ethnic minorities] walking the civilian-operated road, thinking [of] strategies that enrich the people, and constructing a harmonious state.” For many years, the Linxia Foreign Language School has worked hard to abide by this concept, planning development, promoting unity and enhancing harmony. The school’s achievements in its educational work and its contribution to regional economic construction and social advancement have been fully affirmed by the local government and educational circles. Even the media, including the *Nation* and the *Gansu Daily* newspapers, China Central Television, and Gansu Television Station, have featured
coverage of the school in this regard. In 2006, the Linxia Foreign Language School was recommended by the Educators’ Association as a “school of sincerity and faith that carries out education work in accordance with the law.” In 2007, the school was added to the list of academic institutions accepting stipends from the government, receiving more than 800,000 yuan each year. In 2008, the school was awarded the honored title of an “advanced unit” within Linxia’s education system.

The Linxia Foreign Language School’s nearly 30 years of experience in education proves that civilian-operated Arabic language schools can serve as a positive force that enhances the economic and cultural development and social harmony of concentrated areas of Muslims.

III. GIVE ENOUGH RECOGNITION AND MORE SUPPORT TO CIVILIAN-OPERATED ARABIC LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Since the reform and opening-up of our nation, civilian-operated Arabic language schools everywhere have accumulated a great deal of experience and achievements in their difficult and long-standing educational work. However, many problems and obstacles still exist. Some of these problems and obstacles are of a local or individual nature, while others are more common, including: shortages in their operational budget; an insufficient number of teachers; a lack of uniformity in student levels; difficulty in promoting the quality of teaching and learning; and, a lack of accurate self-positioning and comprehensible development targets among some schools. To remove these problems and obstacles requires a great deal of hard work, as well as support and collaboration from relevant parties; guidance and assistance from local authorities in charge of educational affairs is particularly needed.

How does one enhance the quality of educational work in civilian-operated Arabic language schools to enable them to efficiently contribute to the economic, cultural and social development of their local regions and to keep pace with the times and continuously meet the demands of our changing society? This is a question to be seriously considered by civilian-operated Arabic language schools everywhere, one that relevant local authorities, especially those in charge of educational affairs, should carefully consider. The local authorities and all sectors of the society, including the organizers, sponsors and administrators in all educational work, should broaden their views, liberate their thoughts and include civilian-operated Arabic language schools in their vision for an ethnic region that continuously and harmoniously develops. A better social environment and stronger support should be offered to these schools.

Civilian-operated education is not only an important part of our nation’s educational work but also a crucial segment of ethnic work in our country’s ethnic regions. The promotion of ethnic civilian-operated education is essential to upgrading the quality of life for ethnic minority populations, to improving economic and cultural development in ethnic regions, and to enhancing ethnic unity. For civilian-operated education, and ethnic civilian-operated education in particular, to have a truly fair opportunity for further development, there should be a compatible social environment, which consists of lenient policies, a healthy legal system, a harmonious cultural arena and equal entry to the market. Therefore, we should work hard to create a social environment where ethnic civilian-operated education is valued by all citi-
Civilian-operated education is a segment of our socialist education work. We should abide by the guiding principle of “active encouragement, strong support, accurate guidance and lawful management” and protect the interests of all civilian-operated schools in accordance of the law. We should make clear our nation’s supports measures for civilian-operated schools, implement relevant favorable policies, and strengthen our political guidance. We should promote civilian-operated schools by extending the scope of their operations, improving their work conditions, enhancing their quality and boosting their strengths. We should commend and award those civilian-operated schools and educational facilities that have performed well. We should create an environment that is beneficial to the healthy development and self-regulation of civilian-operated education, where state-operated and civilian-operated schools can complement each other’s existence, compete fairly and develop together.\textsuperscript{13}

The “Action Plan” further stressed that we should “actively promote reform and innovate in all kinds of educational systems at all levels, bravely experimenting with all educational models that are compatible with our nation’s laws, in order to enable the development of civilian-operated education to make bigger steps forward.” In this spirit, relevant authorities should look far ahead and aim high, focusing on meeting the realistic demands of the development of the great Northwest, the establishment of an affluent society, the economic and social advancement of all ethnic regions, and the acceleration of our nation’s opening-up. These authorities also need to consider civilian-operated Arabic language schools as an effective path to the cultivation of human resources in ethnic regions and to provide them with more guidance and support. On the basis of thorough investigation and research, authorities should establish favorable policies that will assist civilian-operated Arabic language schools in upgrading their standards, such as helping them introduce new teachers and promoting collaboration between civilian-operated and other state-operated schools. A continual and effective mechanism of management and commemoration should be established to commend those individuals who have devoted their whole lives to civilian-operated ethnic education and those teachers who have excelled in their educational work. (For example, Ma Zhixin, founder of the Linxia Foreign Language School, having devoted his life to ethnic civilian-operated education, is a great contributor to the development of civilian-operated education in Linxia who deserves to be properly commended by relevant local authorities.) Only then can civilian-operated Arabic language schools continue their march towards normalization and specialization.

What is particularly worth noting here is the increasing exchange and collaboration between China and Arab countries, which have created a bright future for the development of civilian-operated Arabic language schools. In January 2004, Chairman Hu Jintao paid a visit to the headquarters of the League of Arab States and announced the formal launch of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum. He further proposed four principles in the development of a new type of partnership between China and the Arab states, which are: (1) Improve political relationships on the basis of mutual respect; (2) Increase collaboration in finance and trade to achieve the goal of mutual development; (3) Extend the scope of cultural exchanges for the benefit of mutual learning; and (4) Strengthen cooperation in international affairs for the purposes of safeguarding world peace and promoting mutual advancement. Chairman Hu stressed that the China-Arab Cooperation Forum is “an important measure to strengthen and further develop relations between China and Arab states in the new era; it is helpful in enriching the nature of such relations, as well as in augmenting and broadening mutually beneficial collaboration between the two sides in every field and at all levels.”

This clearly indicates that, in the face of the development of relations between China and the Arab states, new demands have been put forward and new heights set in the development of our nation’s Arabic language education. The mission of cultivating capable talent in this regard has become more urgent and difficult to achieve.

Under these circumstances, as an important supplement to our nation’s higher education in foreign language (Arabic in particular), civilian-operated Arabic language schools now face a wide range of new opportunities. Demand for human resources proficient in the use of Arabic comes from a variety of sectors at all levels, as not only top-rate professionals but also those at the beginning and intermediate level are required. As higher educational institutions for professional human resources in the use of Arabic cannot shoulder the responsibility of cultivating students at the beginner and intermediate levels, and as the supply of these students cannot currently satisfy the demand for them, there is an objective reason under the conditions of the market-oriented economy for more civilian-operated Arabic language schools. Throughout the years, the large number of Arabic language interpreters and translators are mostly graduates of civilian-operated Arabic language schools. They have been active in southeast coastal areas such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Yiwu and serve as a bridge for trading activities between China and the Arab states. Many of these individuals have even established their own companies and used their strengths in the use of Arabic to attract business investment and conduct trading activities with Arab states. For example, Suo Jincheng, a graduate in 1997, went to Guangzhou to work in the commercial arena after leaving the Linxia Foreign Language School. After many years of hard work, thanks to his talent in the use of Arabic, he is now owner of a furniture factory that exports products to the Middle East.

To summarize, the arrival of a new era has provided ample opportunities for Hui Muslims to promote and study the Arabic language as a cultural tradition. Civilian-operated Arabic language schools across the country should seize these opportunities to continue their development and reform, to adjust their operational concepts and di-

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rections, and to raise funds for the improvement of the quality of teachers and teaching facilities, the enhancement of school management, the design and implementation of courses, and the active development of collaboration and exchange with other parties. Only by promoting the quality of teaching and learning, and by cultivating more practical talents who are equipped with professional skills and capable of meeting the demands of our times, can we properly contribute to the cultural development, economic construction and social advancement of ethnic regions.
In order to enhance leadership over our nation’s religious work, to thoroughly implement policies and guiding principles over all religious matters, to solidify and reinforce the patriotic united front within religious circles, to unite and educate the religious masses on contributing to the modernization of socialism, to strengthen communications and extend friendly exchanges with the international community over religious issues, and to resist the penetration of foreign hostile forces via religion, the Party and the government decided in 1982 to resume the operations of national religious institutes and allow the establishment of relevant local religious institutes. The operating course of all religious institutes was set: “To develop a team of young religious teaching staff who are politically patriotic, who support the Party’s leadership over a socialist society and who are well-educated in religious studies.”

Based on this decision, ten colleges of Islamic scripture have been resumed or established around the nation. Throughout the past decades, these institutes have been working with very limited resources and an extremely positive and forward-looking attitude, and they have succeeded in cultivating a group of Islamic teaching staff members who are devoted to serving both the nation and the religion. Although their number is not very large, since their graduation these religious teaching staff members have performed to the fullest extent in upholding our nation’s ethnic unity and peace among different religions, in enhancing the mutual adaptation of Islam and our socialist society, and in constructing a harmonious society. In China, although religious education is not part of the quality cultural education that all citizens receive, it serves as a supplement to such education for followers of various religions, especially within those ethnic groups who have adopted only one religion. Our many years of experience of working in the field lead us to recognize that, as religious groups...
improve in terms of their overall cultural knowledge, they increasingly desire a high-
quality religious teaching staff.

Particularly among the Muslim communities of our Gansu Province, there is a great
need for staff members who have been professionally trained by first-rate religious insti-
tutes. The establishment of the Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou has laid an excel-
 lent foundation upon which the cultivation of teaching staff in Gansu can be achieved. Using the Islamic Scripture College as an example, this paper will briefly discuss how
the cultivation of a new generation of religious teaching staff members may have a posi-
tive impact on the construction of a harmonious society. It is hoped that those in au-
thority will address and support the educational work in religious institutes, so that re-
ligious institutes can better contribute to the construction of a harmonious society and
the great achievement of peace and prosperity for the Chinese people.

I. THE OPERATIONAL COURSE OF ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE COLLEGES
IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE DEMANDS OF CONSTRUCTING A
SOCIALIST HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

Religious institutes are institutions of higher learning that cultivate and train reli-
gious teaching staff. The construction of a socialist harmonious society is a develop-
ment strategy proposed by our Party, whose intention is to proceed from our nation’s
actual conditions and fully establish a society of prosperity in a new era, and whose
goal is to correctly deal with and dissolve all aspects of social controversies and fully
utilize all positive factors that are beneficial for social development, in order to create
a long-term stable social environment in which reform and growth can be achieved.
Since the Eleventh Party Central Committee’s Third Plenary Session, our Party and
government have decided to resume and establish the operation of religious insti-
tutes in accordance with the current status and needs of our nation’s religious work,
“to cultivate and build a team of religious teaching staff who are patriotic and willing
to accept the leadership of our Party and government, who insist on taking the social-
ist road and safeguarding our national unification and ethnic unity, who are well-edu-
cated in religious studies and aspire for professional occupations in religion, and who
are able to widely communicate with religious groups.” This is a strategic decision
of great foresight, aiming to safeguard religious harmony and guide religion to serve
socialist construction, in accordance with our Party’s policies on freedom of religious
belief under the circumstances of a new era.

At present, the number of religious followers in our nation totals more than 100
million. In some minority ethnic groups, nearly all their members are devoted to a
particular religion. Due to the fact that religion still possesses a relatively large base
among the masses, the proper conduct of religious work and correct handling of all
religious issues is of great importance to the immediate interests of the broad mass-
es, to the stabilization of society and unity among all ethnic groups, to our nation’s
international image, and to the enhancement of contact between our Party and the
masses. Hence the view adopted in this paper is that religious work in its nature is
still an essential part of our Party’s mass work. Because the masses are the foundation
upon which the construction of a harmonious society can be achieved, religious fol-
lowers as a positive force cannot be ignored throughout the process. Among the vital
components of a harmonious society are the unity and collaboration both between religious groups and between religious and non-religious groups, the normal way of life shared by all religious masses, and a stable religious situation. As citizens of the People's Republic of China, the broad religious masses are not only a positive force in the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, but they are also part of the mass basis of our Party. Whether they can be properly united, educated and guided is of great importance to the socialist modernization of our nation.

In China, there are approximately 20 million followers of Islam, including ten minority groups whose members have all adopted the religion. They live together over vast areas, and some reside in individual concentrated communities. Among Muslims who practice Islam, the religious teaching staff members, or “imams,” rank highly and are deeply respected by all community members. Practice proves that a good imam, who is familiar with the Party and government’s laws, regulations and policies on freedom of religious belief and who is able to keep close contact with the masses, plays a crucial role locally in safeguarding religious harmony, ethnic unity and a peaceful and prosperous life enjoyed by all. This is because the imam’s political orientation, moral character, religious philosophy and words and deeds in public have considerable influence over his followers. Islamic scripture colleges, as institutions of higher learning that cultivate imams and other Islamic teachers, should firmly shoulder the historical responsibility of nurturing qualified religious teaching staff for the purpose of constructing a socialist harmonious society. In this way, the task of religious institutes can be fully achieved.

II. SPECIFIC TRAINING OBJECTIVES, SCIENTIFIC CURRICULUM DESIGN AND PROMINENT EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT—PROOF THAT THE EDUCATIONAL WORK IN ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE COLLEGES SERVES THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

1. Specific training objectives

The establishment of the China Islamic Institute in 1955 marked the arrival of a new era in China’s Islamic education. The government took an unprecedented step, arranging for an institution whose goal is to cultivate professional religious teachers specifically for Islam. It was an important step towards the mutual adaptation of Islam and our socialist society. It was also a concrete manifestation of our Party’s policies on freedom of religious belief. As a supplement to their national education, the Institute takes students from among Muslim youth who possess superior cultural qualities and who aspire to a religious career in Islam. This has not only improved and revolutionized the pedagogical content and method, educational direction and management model adopted in traditional scripture halls, but it has also considerably shortened training time, widened the teaching staff’s horizons, and enabled a large group of Islamic professional talents to stand out from their peers in meeting the demands of our society. Students at the Institute are not only able to study Islam in a more systematized manner than in mosques, but there is also an emphasis on enhancing their Han cultural understanding and ability to pragmatically use the Arabic language, in order to satisfy the demands of social development and those of the broad religious masses.
According to the principle of the No. 60 document (1982) issued by the State Council’s General Office, a total of nine scripture colleges were established in the 1980s in the autonomous regions of Xinjiang, Lanzhou, Ningxia, Qinghai, Kunming, Beijing, Zhengzhou, Shenyang and Hebei. These colleges have helped standardize and regulate the cultivation and training of Islamic teaching staff. Over time, they have also become the backbone of our nation’s Islamic education. The Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou in Gansu has always strived to fulfil the requirements of its training objective and those of the construction of three contingents in religious work. Specifically, with regard to the requirement of enhancing Gansu’s religious work in the new century, the College has accomplished the mission of cultivating and training middle-aged and young Islamic teaching staff members for the whole province. At present, the province has more than 1,700,000 Muslims, nearly 4,000 mosques, and more than 15,000 religious education personnel (including more than four thousand serving in imam positions). The current status of Islam in Gansu indicates that the task of cultivating new religious teachers and training middle-aged and youth teaching staff members who are already in positions is a considerable one that carries great weight. It is not only a requirement of our Party and government’s religious work in the construction of three religious contingents; it is also a demand in guiding the mutual adaptation of religion and socialist society for the purpose of constructing a harmonious society.

2. Scientific curriculum design

Scripture colleges are a base for the cultivation and fostering of young Islamic teaching staff members who are patriotic and firm supporters of our Party and government’s leadership, who insist on taking the socialist road and safeguarding national unification and ethnic unity, who are well educated in Islamic studies and of a higher cultural standard, and who can widely communicate with the religious masses. The curriculum design has strictly followed the instructions of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, in accordance with the ratio of 70 percent religious studies, 20 percent cultural studies and ten percent political studies. To keep in step with the demands of our time, 11 of the 16 designed religious subjects have been offered. While the balance between religious, political and cultural subjects has been achieved, in order to enhance the cultivation of students’ comprehensive quality, subjects on patriotism have been added, including “Deng Xiaoping Theory” and “Theories on Constructing Socialism with Chinese Characteristics,” as well as elective subjects such as “The Constitution,” “Basic Legal Knowledge” and “Policy and Political Situation Analysis,” so that both “Lessons on Patriotism” and “Lessons on Muslim Patriotism” have entered the classroom, the curriculum, and the students’ thoughts. Furthermore, via the singing of our national anthem and the raising of our national flag in large-scale events and the systematic arrangement for students to visit various patriotism education bases, the students’ patriotic passion and sense of self pride have been raised, which has helped to make them a new generation of teachers.

1 Translator's Note: The “three contingents” are leading cadres in Party politics, cadres in religious work, and religious teaching staff.
who are familiar with laws, regulations and our Party’s ethnic and religious policies and who can act as role models.

In recent years, the Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou has strengthened its teaching of religious professional thought. It has improved the management of students in their religious practices and behavior and included student conduct as an important criterion for their assessment, which has in turn enhanced and extended the reception of the College’s students by Muslims. Under the circumstances of a new era, our graduates have the capacity to handle religious affairs, manage religious professions and direct local religious operations. As these graduates become imams, they can take the same position as our Party does in matters of principle, keep the overall situation in mind and put the general interest above all. They will develop religious activities in accordance with the law, actively deal with Islam-related issues arising from social development, strive to dissolve all controversies and conflicts among the religious masses, continuously explore all positive factors in religion, and contribute to the construction of a harmonious society.

3. Prominent educational achievement

Throughout their four years of studies, our students have acquired not only knowledge about Islam as a religion, but also about cultures, policies and laws in nationalities and religions in general. Their horizons have therefore been widened, their ideological awareness enhanced, and their ability to meet the requirements of social development greatly improved. Since their establishment, the aforementioned ten scripture colleges have cultivated and trained thousands of Islamic teaching staff members. The Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou is an example. Since its launch in December 1984, the College has cultivated, over 18 years, a total of 315 students with bachelor and associate degrees. Among those students with associate degrees, more than 20 are already high-ranking religious personnel. Four sessions of Ulama training courses for the province’s middle-aged and youth have been offered and were attended by 200 students. Among the graduates from previous years, more than 30 have become the imams of various prestigious mosques. Others, due to their academic and moral merits and outstanding achievements, have been assigned to be members of provincial, municipal or county political consultative committees or representatives to the People’s Congress. Still others have joined the leading bodies of Islamic associations and have become their principal members. Specifically, seven of our graduates are administrators in various religious affairs departments or Islamic associations; four are renowned scholars in studies of Islam and the Arabic language; 13 are teaching in various Arabic language schools; and 12 are pursuing further studies in famous Islamic institutions overseas. In general, the Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou has cultivated and fostered a group of young successors to Islam, who are beginning to have an impact both within and outside our nation. Among the College’s teachers and students, some are skilled in reciting the Qur’an, while others have memorized all of the Qur’an’s 30 volumes. Several of our students have had excellent performances in national and provincial Qur’an recitation contests, and they went on to attend contests at the international level on behalf of all Chinese Muslims. Some of our students are superb public speakers and have performed well in national
and provincial “al-Wâ’z” preaching contests. Others are accomplished in Arabic calligraphy and have produced works that are highly praised and enjoyed by Muslims all over the world. Still others are well-acclaimed in diplomatic activities for their knowledge of Islam and capacities as translators and/or interpreters. For example, the College’s teachers and students have been assigned the tasks of translating and interpreting for Gansu’s pilgrims. Finally, many of the College’s teachers place great emphasis on the study of Islamic scriptures and have become a new force in Chinese Islamic academic research. Not only have they edited and translated many works on Islamic law, doctrine and philosophy, but in 2004, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the College’s establishment, they also compiled an anthology titled “Islamic Culture and Education,” featuring 20 academic essays. This anthology has had considerable impact within Islamic circles.

With regard to the composition of the student population in scripture colleges, although the number of students coming from each location is limited, they cover all corners of the nation. Once the students complete their studies and assume teaching positions in their hometowns, they become leaders of the local religious masses in the development of religious activities in accordance with the law. The Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou is an example in this area as well. In recent years it has accepted students from various cities and Muslim communities in the province, whose members are from five ethnic minorities: Hui, Dongxiang, Kazakh, Salar and Bonan. As these Muslim students—who share the same religious belief but different ethnic cultures, languages, psyche, and folklife and customs—coexist in harmony in the family that is the College, their sense of ethnic unity is enhanced. Not only do they learn to put the general interest above all, but their political and religious literacy is also improved. Our students come from various Islamic divisions and sects throughout Gansu; many of them either have families that have been religious for generations or are division and sect leaders themselves. Together they have laid the foundation on top of which the harmonious coexistence of different ethnic groups and religions, as well as between different Islamic divisions, can be achieved.

III. FULLY UTILIZE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES AS AN EDUCATION BASE, SCIENTIFICALLY EXPLORE THOSE FACTORS WITHIN ISLAM THAT ARE ADAPTABLE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CULTIVATE THE CAPACITY OF STUDENTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

1. Islam as a religion promotes harmony, peace, continuous adaptation to the demands of the times and conformity to social development.

   Its articles of faith are simple and easy to understand, and its active pursuit of happiness is for this world and the hereafter. Its political outlook is to be patriotic and obedient to those in authority; its moral conduct is to be tolerant, fair and kind to others; its view of life is to remain content and pure; and its cultural philosophy
is to encourage learning and search for knowledge. All of these religious doctrines and views are having a positive impact on efforts to educate and guide the religious masses to respect and coexist with their non-religious counterparts, so that both parties can contribute to the construction of a harmonious society.

Throughout its more than 20 years of history in conducting educational work, via channels such as religious activities, gatherings, speeches and the distribution of printed materials, the Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou has taken advantage of its influence to quickly communicate our Party and government's laws and regulations to our students and the religious masses and to inform them of the latest happenings in social development. For example, when various incidents of “insults to Islam” have broken out, the College has immediately informed students and the religious masses of relevant policies, which both helped prevent the events from further deteriorating and safeguarded the stability of ethnic minority society. When the “three forces” [Editor’s Note: Ethnic Separatism, Religious Extremism, and Terrorism] have stirred tensions related to Islam, the College has worked on various occasions to urge the broad Muslim masses to remain in the same position as our Party does and safeguard national unity and peace. When natural calamities such as snow disasters and earthquakes have occurred, the College’s teachers and students have actively donated money and other resources to assist those in affected areas; they further appealed to the broad religious masses to contribute what they could and helped the victims survive difficult times, receiving a great deal of positive feedback from the Muslim masses.

2. Actively explore models and patterns of Islamic religious education that are applicable under the circumstances of a new era, in order to develop academic debates and other activities that serve as practical and theoretical support for the construction of a harmonious society.

To promote the preaching of new “al-Wa’z” is to adapt to trends in contemporary Islamic development. Members of our Islamic circles have conducted the interpretation of Islamic scriptures and the compilation of the Collection of New al-Wa’z, which actively advocate the fine Islamic traditions of patriotism, religious devotion, peace, harmony, collaboration, tolerance, balance, and the pursuit of happiness in this world and the hereafter. This has brought our Islamic circles to the road that closely connects these fine Islamic traditions with Chinese society. It is not only an important and beneficial way to enhance the mutual adaptation of Islam and our socialist society; it is also a new and vital approach to the examination of the reality of Islam in our nation. At the “Exchange of Experiences in Scripture Interpretation and Preaching New ‘al-Wa’z’” conference in 2003, Comrade Jia Qinglin pointed out that the interpretation of scriptures conducted by our Islamic circles is a project that sets a good grounding in religious work, keenly unites and provides leadership to the broad Muslim masses, effectively counters ethnic separatist and religious extremist forces in their attempt to influence the public, and productively guides the mutual adaptation of religion and our socialist society.

In accordance with the plans and requirements of the State Administration of Religious Affairs and the Islamic Association of China, and on the basis of continuing preaching and teaching the original “al-Wa’z”, the Islamic Scripture College of
Lanzhou has included the teaching of the *Collection of New al-Wāʿz* in its course design. It further plans to promote such work during the Ulama training courses for Gansu Province’s middle-aged and youth, promoting its entrance into the classroom in order to directly engage students’ thinking.

**IV. SERIOUSLY STUDY AND FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE OBSTACLES AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE COLLEGE**

In the process of constructing a socialist harmonious society, the cultivation of talented students within Islamic circles is of great importance not only to the development of Islam itself, but also to the harmonious coexistence of Islamic circles and other parts of our society. Based on more than 20 years of educational work, and taking into consideration the life conditions of our graduates after returning to their hometowns, the Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou believes that the following difficulties encountered by contemporary religious institutes should be studied and their solutions found.

1. **There is a need to further unify the strategic and operational courses of religious institutes.**

   Our nation stipulates that the operational course of all religious institutes is to cultivate qualified religious teaching staff. The training of professionals is the source of power for all religious institutes. Just as their names imply, the functions of religious institutes are to conduct research in religious education and to insist on following the highest standards in the cultivation of new teaching talents who are absolutely capable of performing well in their religious teaching positions. As to whether our students can find such teaching positions after graduation, it is not a problem that religious institutes alone can solve; instead, it has to rely on the government and society, as well as all the patriotic religious groups, for a solution.

2. **There is a need to fundamentally deal with issues regarding society’s recognition of the qualifications of students graduating from religious institutes of higher learning.**

   Because religious education is not part of the national education received by all citizens, the certificates of education gained by graduates from religious institutes of higher learning are not recognized by educational administration departments at all levels. This is not fair. These students, having graduated from high school, are answering the calls of our nation and society. They are determined to study in religious institutes in order to acquire the knowledge needed to serve the religious masses. However, having graduated from four years of studies in religious institutes, their certificates of education are recognized only by religious administration departments, and only within Gansu; their training is not recognized outside of the province. If we consider this problem from the angle of people first, then we can see that once graduates from religious institutes deem it impossible to find professional occupations in
religion, due to the fact that their qualifications are not recognized by educational administration departments, they will need to seek employment in other fields in order to survive. We suggest that the State Administration of Religious Affairs negotiate with educational administration departments and establish procedures to recognize students’ qualifications.

3. There is a need to study the issue of whether graduates from religious institutes of higher learning, especially those from Islamic scripture colleges, can quickly find professional occupations in their hometowns.

Due to various historical factors and the existence of religious divisions and sects, it still takes time for many in the religious masses to recognize the graduates from religious institutes approved, supported and established by our government, as they consider these graduates as coming from “government institutions” and possessing inferior religious thoughts when compared to those taught in mosques and prayer halls. However, judging from the educational achievements of the Islamic Scripture College of Lanzhou throughout its history of more than 20 years, our influence is slowly increasing. The actions and achievements of our graduates in various Muslim communities have been praised and recognized by the broad religious masses, and more students now aspire to study in our college. Nonetheless, whether students can find occupations in religion still depends on negotiations between government authorities and Islamic associations at all levels, and it may even require assistance and guidance through various administrative measures. If students cannot find employment, then the meaning of our government’s support for religious institutes of higher learning will surely be lost.

4. There is a need to speed up the unification of curriculum in religious institutes of higher learning.

At present, different religious institutes have adopted considerably different curriculum. Such a lack of agreement among Islamic scripture colleges leads to inconsistency in assessing the graduates and their performances. It is known that the State Administration of Religious Affairs is currently working on solving this problem. We suggest that this be done quickly, and that the unification of the “teaching guidelines” used in our nation’s many religious institutes also be achieved.
Menhuan, or “sects,” are denominations only found within China’s Muslim Hui, Dongxiang, Salar and Bao’an ethnic groups (hereafter referred to as “Islam of the Hui and other ethnic groups”). The earliest menhuan originated from the Hehuang area in Gansu and gradually spread across various provinces in China’s northwest, with its influence reaching the entire nation. Menhuan impact the development of Islam in China’s northwest, and they are a key focus of the country’s religious activities in that region. In short, menhuan are not only a heavy burden left to our era by Islam; they are a major problem to be tackled in our religious work under present-day circumstances. Since China’s reform and opening-up to the outside world, the Party and the government have been rather slow to conduct research on the menhuan when compared to their academic counterparts. Our view is that to research menhuan from the perspective of the government’s religious policies and our religious work will be of great benefit not only to the development of religious studies in China but also to the implementation of the Party’s religious policies and our conduct of religious work and handling of religious issues.

PART ONE: THE FORMATION, GROWTH AND EVOLUTION OF MENHUAN

Menhuan in China have undergone a historical process of formation, growth and evolution. An investigation of these historical issues will be useful both for our research on menhuan and for our attempt to resolve all related problems at the current time.
I. INTRODUCTION TO DENOMINATIONS WITHIN ISLAM

An understanding of issues related to various denominations within Islam will enhance our comprehension of menhuan.

1. Issues of Islamic Denominations: Global Perspective

Various denominations have existed within Islam throughout its history. Although some Islamic scholars pursuing religious unity continue to describe Islam as a “religion without divisions,” the historical and present development of the Islamic world tells us that Islam is a religion with multiple denominations. In fact, since the death of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, the religion has been troubled by the separation of different denominations. Even today, such separation is an important factor that contributes to ethnic controversies and regional conflicts, as demonstrated by the struggles between the Sunnis and the Shiites in Iraq. Around the world, the earliest clashes between different denominations originated from disputes over political power. Though the departure of the Kharijites and the rise of the Shiites were often considered the result of religious clashes, they were actually products of different political pursuits. These events were more about political divisions than merely religious denominations. As each denomination continued to strengthen its religious position, it was only later that struggles for political power were replaced by claims to be the rightful orthodox faith, marking the end of the process by which denominations were created. In the contemporary world, Islam is mainly divided into Sunnis and Shiites, with other denominations having either disappeared or considerably diminished. The Sunnis account for approximately 83 percent of the world’s Muslim population. Most Chinese Muslims, including those supporters of various menhuan, claim to be followers of Sunni Islam. Only a small number of Chinese Muslims and followers of certain menhuan claim to follow Shia Islam. The Shiites, as a smaller branch of Islam, account for approximately 16 percent of the world’s Muslim population and are mainly located in Iran and Iraq. Meanwhile, there are further divisions within the Sunnis and the Shiites. For example, within Sunni Islam, there are different schools of theology such as the Ash’ari, the Athari and the Maturidiyyah. In terms of Islamic law, Sunni Islam contains four legal schools of thought: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i, and Hanbali.

2. Denominations and Menhuan: Their Implications

Certain differences exist between the denominations and menhuan within the Islam of the Hui and other ethnic groups. First, the term “denomination” has two meanings. It is the collective name for all divisions within Islam, with each having its own unique characteristics, and it also refers to all the Islamic divisions other than menhuan. The term “menhuan” refers to those mystical Sufi groups formed in China under the influence of foreign Sufi thought. This is a phenomenon of religious divisions unique to China, as there is no such thing as menhuan in other countries. In recent years, some scholars have proposed that menhuan is merely an academic or scholarly division of a religion, hence its name should be replaced by “denomination.” However, this view is not widely accepted. As mentioned earlier, when the term
“denomination” is used to indicate all divisions within Islam, menhuan may be one of them. In fact, menhuan can also be considered as a denomination, or an alternative form of it. When the term “denomination” refers to all other divisions within Islam, apart from menhuan, it helps to differentiate the two concepts.

3. Issues of Islamic Denominations: Chinese Perspective

In China, Islam as a religion consists of multiple denominations and menhuan. Almost all the Muslims from the Hui and other ethnic groups belong to different denominations and menhuan, which exhibit a strong exclusivity, in sharp contrast to the supposedly inclusive and compatible nature of the religion. Chinese Muslims from the Hui and other ethnic groups generally follow Sunni Islam and abide by the Hanafi school of Islamic law. Denominations within the Islam of the Hui and other ethnic groups began their formation at the end of the Ming Dynasty. These menhuan experienced considerable growth in the Qing Dynasty, resulting in the first large-scale movement to differentiate the religion’s many denominations. From the establishment of the Republic of China until today, divisions have continued to appear within the denominations but they have been limited to a smaller number and have had a lesser impact. Currently, the Islam of the Hui and other ethnic groups contains four denominations and four major menhuan.

These four Islamic denominations are the Qadim, the Ikhwan, the Xidaotang and the Salafiyah. Among them, the Xidaotang is somewhere between a denomination and a menhuan. While the Xidaotang is mainly distinguished from the other denominations by its highly concentrated core of power and considerably centralized mode of management, it also displays a less mystical flavor when compared to the other menhuan. Although the Xidaotang shares the features of both a denomination and a menhuan, scholars tend to identify it as a denomination, instead of a menhuan. Meanwhile, although the Salafiyah separated from the Ikhwan in the 1930s, it used to be treated as one of the latter’s branches. This view is not correct, because the Salafiyah already possesses a series of characteristics that are different from those of the Ikhwan, because the religious personnel and members of both sides do not recognize each other as belonging to the same denomination, and because the Salafiyah hardly ever participate in those religious activities hosted by the Ikhwan. For these reasons, we tend to consider the Salafiyah as an independent denomination.

The four menhuan are the Khufiyyah, the Jahriyyah, the Qadiriyyah and the Kubrawiyyah. It should be pointed out here that some of these four titles are plural, while the others are singular; some of these menhuan have plenty of branches, while the others have none. For example, the Khufiyyah and the Qadiriyyah are not the titles of individual menhuan, nor are they real and independent entities. There is no such menhuan in China that refers to itself as the “Khufiyyah Menhuan” or the “Qadiriyyah Menhuan.” Instead, their formal titles are the names of their many branches. For example, the “Baizhuang Menhuan” (named after the place where the mausoleum of its founder is located) and the “Dagongbei Menhuan” (grand mausoleum) belong to the Khufiyyah and the Qadiryyah, respectively, with the two names “Khufiyyah” and “Qadiryyah” indicating the origins of their respective religious views. Finally, the Kubrawiyyah refers specifically to a single entity, which is the
“Zhangmen Menhuan” (also called the “Dawantou Menhuan”). As for the Jahriyyah, although many branches have developed under it, they all refer to themselves as the Jahriyyah Menhuan.

II. THE FORMATION OF MENHUAN

The menhuan within the Islam of China’s Hui and other ethnic groups mainly formed during the Qing Dynasty.

1. The Origin of the Term “Menhuan”

“Menhuan” is a new term developed in the Qing Dynasty, as previously it was neither observed in folk culture nor used in official records. The title of a menhuan was derived in one of five ways. The first was to name a menhuan after its founder’s name, such as the Zhang Menhuan or the Qi Menhuan. The second was to name it after the image or character of its founder, such as the Humen Menhuan (with “Hu” referring to individuals of foreign origins) or the Mad Menhuan. The third derived from the pronunciation of the word “Dhikr” (an Islamic devotional act) in a high or low tone, such as the Khufiyyah Menhuan (low tone) or the Jahriyyah Menhuan (high tone). The fourth was to name a menhuan after the location of its founder’s residence, such as the Huaijiachang (Hua Family Court) Menhuan or the Baizhuang (White Manor) Menhuan. The fifth and last was to name it after the name of the Sufi group it succeeded, such as the Kubrawiyyah menhuan (succeeded from the Kubrawiyyah order of Sufism overseas).

The earliest reference to the Sufi groups in China’s northwest as “menhuan” was made by Yang Zengxin, then magistrate of Gansu’s Hezhou Prefecture. In a report titled “Request for Official Elimination of the Muslim Menhuan” in February of the 23rd year of the Guangxu reign (1897), he wrote that “Gansu’s Muslim menhuan is essentially a feudal system.” According to various scholars, this term “menhuan” may have derived from a combination of the terms “menfa” (powerful and influential family) and “huanhu” (gateway or faction), which implies that these Sufi groups were organizations that were extremely rich and powerful. It is also possible that the term “menhuan” is an altered pronunciation for “menhu,” for many of these Sufi groups used to refer to themselves as “men” in order to emphasize the fact that they were of the same “jiaomen” (religion) but different “daomen” (denominations). After the appearance of the term “menhuan,” it slowly became a name specifically for China’s Sufi groups. As the continuous use of the term was never opposed by these Sufi groups, it has remained until today. It seems appropriate to refer to all these different Sufi groups as “menhuan.” At present, this term has at least three meanings: it indicates individual Sufi groups; it serves as a collective name for these groups; and it refers more generally to the menhuan system.

2. The Ideological Origins of Menhuan

The theoretical framework and ideological origin of menhuan is Sufism, a mystical denomination of Islam formed between the end of the 7th century and the begin-
ning of the 8th century. During the primary stages of Sufism, it was characterized by asceticism. It then transformed into mysticism and began circulating among the people, and it was legally designated as an official mysticism after the 11th century. By the end of the 12th century, many Sufi groups and organizations were formed around the so-called “Murshid” (guide or teacher, or saint). Before the rise of the Wahhabiyya movement, Sufism was in the dominant position in the Islamic world, particularly among ordinary followers of Islam. Although Sufism never launched a united movement or formed a series of unified doctrines, scholars find that it shares certain fundamental views with mysticism, including monotheism, pantheism, agape, theosophy, illumination and nondualism. The highest ideal of Sufism is the unity of man and Allah, an ultimate blessing to be achieved in four stages (some say three). The first is “jiaocheng” [harnessing the religion], which is to rigorously adhere to Islamic norms, such as ritual prayer at five prescribed times each day and the fast of Ramadan. The second is “daocheng” [harnessing the way], which is to select a renowned Sufi clergyman as the “Murshid” in order to embrace with certainty a correct creed and its tenets. The third is “zhencheng” [harnessing the truth], which is to practice consciousness of the Divine Presence, or “to seek a state of God-wariness.” The fourth and last is “chaocheng” [harnessing the beyond], which is to watch over or take care of one’s spiritual heart, to acquire knowledge about it, and to finally become attuned to the Divine Presence.

According to Sufis, in order to reach this final goal, one needs the guidance of a Murshid. In fact, Sufi practices are centered on the Murshids, who are upheld as the medium of communication between their disciples and Allah and who therefore receive absolute loyalty and obedience from their disciples and possess unlimited power over them, with the disciples being like “bodies at the hands of an embalmer.” As a result, the systematic worship of the Murshids has gradually developed. Such worship consists of one’s belief in religious traditions, lineages and systems, which can be traced back to the four Caliphs, to Muhammad and finally to Allah. Also included in this worship is one’s devotion to the Khanqah (a Murshid’s private residence or preaching hall) or the Gongbei (“Qubbat” in Arabic language, a Murshid’s grave). The Chinese menhuan not only followed these Sufi practices; they enriched, developed and enhanced them.

3. Menhuan’s Establishment Methods

Since the introduction of Sufism to China, the establishment of menhuan among Muslims from the Hui and other ethnic groups has been mainly through five avenues. The first is to study or conduct pilgrimage overseas and then return home to establish a menhuan. The second is to study in other locations within the country and then return home to establish a menhuan. The third is to follow the views brought to China by Sufi missionaries by establishing a menhuan. The fourth is for foreign missionaries to settle in China and establish a menhuan. The fifth and last is to branch out from existing menhuan and form a new one. Among these, the views introduced by the Uyghurs from Xinjiang have had a relatively large impact. Statistics indicate that among the ten menhuan established earlier, five had a direct relationship with Uyghur Sufi missionaries. During the primary stages of menhuan development,
founders of menhuan mostly spread their ideas within a small circle, such as among relatives and friends. Only when these ideas matured were they disseminated to other parts of society. In this process of disseminating new ideas, religious power struggles often occurred. Some of these struggles led to ideological confusion among the masses and disturbance of the social order, while others gave rise to violent conflicts that disturbed social stability. It may be suggested that religious struggles have occurred during the establishment of every new menhuan. Hence the history of each menhuan's development is that of a series of religious struggles, which not only involved conflicts within the menhuan but also clashes with other religious denominations. Therefore, the establishment of new menhuan is an important contributing factor to the occurrence of religious power struggles and tensions that affect Islam's internal unity and stability.

4. Historical Conditions for the Establishment of Menhuan

Menhuan mainly originated during the Qing Dynasty in areas across Gansu such as Didao, Hezhou, Xunhua, Xining and Huangzhong, which can be referred to as the Hehuang region. This mainly happened during the reigns of Qing Emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong and Jiaqing, which lasted more than 200 years. As for why menhuan formed in this region during this period of time, scholars have different views. Our view is that such formation was determined by a series of subjective and objective conditions at the time. First, the development of Islam was rather significant in Gansu. Since the Yuan dynasty, Gansu has been one of the major regions where considerable dissemination of Islam has occurred. Muslims settled here during the Ming Dynasty and had formed a large population by the beginning of the Qing dynasty. By the mid-Qing Dynasty, there were even popular sayings such as “there are more Hui than Han Chinese in Gansu” and “the population here is 70 percent Hui and 30 percent Han Chinese.” The Muslims in Gansu were deeply religious and cultivated a religious environment; the custom of discussing and debating religious thought served as a suitable soil for the growth of new Islamic denominations.

The second contributing factor was the continuous traffic of the Silk Road and the lifting of the ban on maritime trade. The ban was briefly enforced in the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, but was lifted in the 23rd year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong. Meanwhile, from the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, in spite of various local wars, there was considerable traffic by land between China’s northwest and regions such as Central Asia and Xinjiang. Such frequent traffic benefited not only Gansu’s Muslims—who conducted religious studies or pilgrimage by sea or by land in Central Asia, Xinjiang and the Arabian Peninsula—but also foreign missionaries who preached in China.

Third, China’s Islam in the Qing Dynasty was rather conservative and outdated, requiring new converts and reform. As a result of the Ming Government’s policies of cutting off the country from the outside world, Muslims in Gansu were isolated from the Islamic world for hundreds of years. Their development under such conditions therefore was limited; it was characterized by dissipation of religious orthodoxy, a lack of religious scriptures, and apparent differences between their religious rituals and customs and those of the Islamic world. Furthermore, under the influence of the
Han Chinese culture, Muslims in Gansu developed a series of religious features in their thoughts, concepts, rituals and customs with unique geographical and ethnic characteristics. Therefore, by comparison, the religious thoughts proposed by those returning from their studies overseas were more orthodox. Their suggestions for religious reform seemed attractive and gained the support of many from among the religious masses.

The fourth contributing factor was the substantial development of Sufism in Central Asia and Xinjiang. From the end of the 14th century, Sufism had developed considerably in Central Asia. Its growth reached such a peak in the 17th and 18th centuries that Central Asia was referred to as the “homeland of Sufism.” Sufism arrived in Xinjiang after the 12th century, with the prominent Sufi theologian Makhdum al-A’zam arriving in the region in the 16th century. His descendents continued to promote his thought and considerably enhanced the development of Sufism in Xinjiang, which contributed to the establishment of menhuan in Gansu. Some official documents recorded that Muslims in Xinjiang boasted the largest number of scriptures, which were widely circulated as the most trusted heritage from Islam in the West. Hence the suggestion of some that the establishment of menhuan is the result of the dissemination of Xinjiang’s Sufism towards the east seems reasonable.

Fifth, and finally, an important social reason for the establishment of menhuan was the loss of social status for Muslims and the increasingly evident ethnic and religious discrimination against them. From the beginning of the Qing Dynasty through the reign of Emperor Qianlong, the government paid greater attention to the existence of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, and although the existence of Islam was permitted, it was discriminated against and despised. The Qing Government even declared that Islam in China consisted of “members who are shallow and untrustworthy” and that “the religion of the Hui is not worthy of praise.” After the reign of Emperor Qianlong, the Qing Government adopted a high-handed policy towards Islam, resulting in an economic recession in Gansu’s Muslim areas where people could hardly make a living. Muslim society desperately needed an organization to unite all social forces in countering the Qing Government’s oppression. As it was evident that the local Muslim community as a single unit was not capable of taking up this responsibility, Sufi groups began to play a greater role.

5. Religious Characteristics of Menhuan

The following are the major religious characteristics of menhuan:

A. Worship of the Hierarch and the Gongbei. There are many different names for the leader of a menhuan, such as the “Hierarch” or the “Old Man.” Some of these names are created by others and some by the leaders of menhuan themselves. While the name “Hierarch” is mainly used in official and written documents, the name “Old Man” is widely circulated among the people. In some menhuan, the Hierarch or Old Man is considered to be capable of predicting the future and performing a wide range of “kelamaiti” (“miracles” or “mysteries”). These leaders are in charge of not only religious affairs but also secular issues within their respective menhuan. Some of them are even thought to be among the
“holy offspring” (descendants of Muhammad). The unique status and absolute authority enjoyed by these leaders of menhuan enable them to receive the respect and obedience of their followers. Indeed, the worship of these leaders by their followers is often extended to their families. After their death, each will have a “Gongbei” (“Qubbat,” which means a dome-shaped building in Arabic and a “grave of the leader of a menhuan” in Mandarin) constructed for him. A symbol of people’s respect for these leaders, the Gongbei has become one of the main venues for religious activities, through which the leaders and their clergy men are able to solidify the strength of their menhuan, collect their wealth and enhance their influence over others. Apart from constructing the Gongbei, the followers of menhuan also conduct the “ermaili” (“amal” in Arabic language, a feast or donation for a memorial service that commemorates the birth or death of the sheikh or founder) on anniversaries of the birthdays and death of their leaders.

B. **Focus on religious studies and practices of spiritual cultivation.** According to menhuan, one has to go through four stages in order to understand and approach Allah, which are the aforementioned “jiaocheng,” “daocheng,” “zhencheng” and “chaocheng.” The majority of menhuan consider “jiaocheng” as the basis for the practices of “daocheng” and the foundation of one’s religious belief. They further emphasize that one is only able to conduct the practices of “daocheng” on the premise of having adequately completed those of “jiaocheng.” Hence the majority of menhuan call attention to both “jiao” [religion] and “dao” [religious creed]. However, menhuan also stress that those who only conduct the practices of “jiaocheng” without pursuing those of “daocheng” are imperfect Muslims. Meanwhile, each menhuan has its own distinct ways to cultivate the spirit—mainly through meditation that enhances their consciousness under the guidance of their leaders and through the recitation of relevant scriptures (“dhikr”). Some menhuan further require a certain movement to enable one to disregard one’s self and all surroundings and to reach a state in which there is nothing else but Allah. Having merged with Allah and become attuned to the Divine Presence, one can be considered a person with superior virtues.

C. **Emphasis on religious heritage.** Each menhuan has formed a unique religious lineage system from its founding, which all of its members emphasize. Such lineage is manifested through the succession of the religious practices and preaching rites of a menhuan, and it entails some succession of the menhuan’s secular power as well. There are generally three ways to pass on such religious lineage: from father to son, between generations of family members or relatives, and by selecting a successor from those who are virtuous and talented. Even so, considerable differences may exist between menhuan in their adoption of any of these ways. For example, at one time, the Jahriyyah Menhuan selected virtuous and talented individuals as successors of its religious lineage, but later began to pass on the lineage of leadership from fathers to their sons. Some of the other menhuan turned away from the father-to-son system due to a lack of a legitimate or qualified heir, and chose to hand over their religious lineage to other relatives of the family. In all, each menhuan places great demands upon the qualities of its successors. Judging from the aforementioned three kinds of succession, the conventional view that “the
religious heritage of a menhuan can only be handed over to sons and grandsons, and no one else has any right to be involved” is incorrect.

D. **Tight and rigid organizational system.** Throughout the development of menhuan, their organizational systems have become extremely tight and rigid. The forms of organizations vary dramatically between menhuan, but they generally consist of a three-tier system in regard to one’s religious status, as well as three levels of religious authority. The three-tier system refers to the Hierarch, the Reyisi (headmen or chiefs) or Caliphs, and the Akhunds [based on the Chinese word for “imams”]. The Hierarch is the leader of a menhuan who has authority over the entire menhuan. Under him are a series of Reyisi or Caliphs who control various religious districts and their respective communities. The three levels of religious authority refer to the scripture halls of mosques, the districts and the communities. The scripture hall is the center of a menhuan, which is under the control of the Hierarch himself or his assigned representative(s). While the districts are managed by the Reyisi, the communities are supervised by Akhunds. Among these, the community is the basic administrative unit of a menhuan. In general, the Reyisi or Caliphs in charge of the districts and the Akhunds supervising the communities and the mosques, as well as those in charge of managing the Gongbei, are assigned by the Hierarch.

E. **Numerous religious activities and a heavy burden for the religious masses.** Apart from those religious activities required by Islamic law, each menhuan hosts a series of unique activities with certain mystical elements. Meanwhile, in addition to paying legally required taxes and levies for the normal expenses of the mosque and the Gongbei, followers of a menhuan need to donate all kinds of valuables to their leader for a great variety of matters. In some menhuan, certain casual religious offerings have even become an institution. During large-scale religious activities, such as memorial services on the anniversaries of the birthday and death of a menhuan’s founder, all followers of the menhuan need to give away the “Niyyah” [as an expression of their intention to act for the sake of Allah]. There are many additional expenses during funerals, burials and festivals as well.

### III. Development and Transformation of Menhuan

In general, the history of menhuan consists of four stages. The first stage is the dissemination of new religious views and the promotion of religious reform, which is the initial establishment of a menhuan. In most menhuan, the major activities at this stage are centered on the founder. Most of these founders are virtuous and talented individuals who have devoted all they have to religion. Their goal in the dissemination of new religious views is rather simple, which is to make a display of the orthodox characteristics of their religion and to promote what they consider as the correct religious views. This rarely involves any struggle for political and economic benefits, with very few of these founders intending to establish separate religious divisions.

The Jahriyyah Menhuan is an example. Its founder, Ma Mingxin, had studied in Yemen for 13 years before he was ordered to return and preach in his homeland in 1761. He promoted religious reform and proactively conducted a series of move-
ments to improve the religion. He opposed the forceful collection of the “zakat” [the only tax sanctioned to the state according to Islamic law], and proposed to eliminate those rituals and practices of religious activities that had begun to conform to the Han Chinese culture. He further proposed to ease the religious burden of the masses and to hand over the authority of menhuan to virtuous and talented individuals, while opposing the succession of religious lineage through relatives of the founders, the construction and worship of the Gongbei, and the assignment of menhuan leadership and its succession within individual families. In short, he “passionately attempted the elimination of menhuan.” While these proposals attracted the attention of the masses, they were rejected by the leader of the Huasi Menhuan and his followers. As a result of the inappropriate handling of this conflict by the local Qing rulers, the famous “Su Sishisan Uprising” [an armed riot led by a local Akhund nicknamed Su Sishisan, or “Su Forty-three”] took place, which later turned into a rebellion against the Qing Government during which Ma was killed. Ironically, though they were a target of Ma’s proposals for religious reform, menhuan have since thrived. This is a phenomenon that is worthy of consideration. Religious conflict at this stage features clashes over orthodox religious authority and the leadership of the religious masses. While the founders of menhuan were rarely hungry for personal power, it is highly likely that they had not expected the religious thoughts they promoted to one day transform into a menhuan system.

The second stage is the development of new religious thoughts as independent religious divisions (i.e., the formation of menhuan). This process was gradually achieved by the successors of the founders of menhuan. Again, take the Jahriyyah Menhuan as an example. Having been relatively quiet for a long period under the aforementioned Ma Minxin, the Jahriyyah Menhuan was revived twice at the hands of Ma Hualong and Ma Yuanzhang and formally formed as a religious division. Various changes were made during these two revivals, with the most substantial among them being the enrichment and improvement of the menhuan’s religious outlook and rituals. The menhuan also established its religious lineage and set up a system and mechanism to pass on its heritage to future generations. Furthermore, it began to worship the Hierarch and the Gongbei. There was unprecedented devotion to Ma Minxin, with his Gongbei being erected as the center of all worship activities within the menhuan. Finally, the aforementioned three-tier system of religious status and the three levels of religious authority were established, and a relatively complete design of religious districts and teams of followers were developed. In this process, some of Ma Minxin’s religious proposals were adopted and modified, including his opposition to the succession of the menhuan’s religious heritage by members of the leader’s family and the construction and worship of the Gongbei, and his insistence on easing the religious burden of the masses. However, these good intentions of the founder were all canceled or reversed in the later stages of the Jahriyyah Menhuan’s development. In comparison, some other menhuan had been established as independent religious divisions at the initial stages of their development. For example, the founders of various smaller religious divisions had already begun their formal operations as menhuan.

The third stage is the transformation from a series of simple religious divisions to a formal menhuan system. A typical established and well-developed menhuan not only is able to function as a formal religious denomination, but also has the capacity
to adapt to China's feudal traditions and the realistic conditions of different locations at different periods of time. Some menhuan had begun to display various characteristics of feudalism as soon as they were established. Their Sufi thoughts were merged with China's agriculture-based feudal economy and lineage system on a higher or spiritual level. This conversion is referred to in History of Islam in China as “the transformation from an original Sufi group that was mainly a folk religion to a new Sufi group that was mainly a religion led by its Hierarch, from religious to secular, and from denomination to menhuan.” The book further summarizes various features of this transformation. The first is the transformation from the worship of saints to that of the Hierarch as the head of a feudal family. The head of a religious group evolves from a religious teacher and spiritual leader to the “hierarch of a religion,” becoming the most important political leader and the most respected feudal family figure with the highest religious and secular authority in a menhuan. His title changes from those such as “daoshi” [guiding teacher], “shaihai” [strainer of the ocean] and “daozi” [ancestor of the religion] to those such as “daozutaiye” [great grand ancestor of the religion], “taiye” [great grandfather], “ye” [grandfather], “laojenjia” [the old man] and “jiaozhu” [the hierarch]. The choice of a saint to succeed the religious heritage switches from selecting someone who was virtuous and talented to choosing the eldest son or a member from the leader’s family. The system of worshipping rituals converts from showing the highest degree of respect to kneeling on the ground and paying tribute to the leader’s “kouhuan” [verbal instructions] as if these were commands of an emperor. The preaching of religious thoughts by the leader also begins to display various characteristics of mysticism. The second feature is the transformation of the relationship between the followers of a religious group and their leader, from spiritual worship and religious devotion to feudal-style administrative subordination. Their respect for the leader in terms of religious belief turns into an endurance of generations of religious, political and economic control and oppression by him. Their religious donations, which were originally used to assist the impoverished and to operate all religious affairs, are now a way for the leader to enhance his economic strength, collect assets, attract financial sponsorship and pursue personal pleasure and power. Numerous religious donations willingly presented by the followers are replaced with regular exploitation by their leader. The third is the transformation of the scripture hall and the Gongbei, from the venue for the leader’s religious practice and the grave of the previous leader, respectively, to the religious, political and economic center of a menhuan. The original system of one single religious community comes to consists of three levels of religious authority, i.e. the menhuan, the religious districts and the religious communities. The previous system with various Akhunds appointed by one leader now consists of three tiers of religious authority, i.e. the Hierarch, the Reyisi and the Akhunds, with all positions filled by individuals specifically selected and appointed by the leader, so that the other rectors and elders have only their religious titles but no actual power. As a result of this transformation, the menhuan is finally institutionalized as a religious organization, and the menhuan system is established.

The fourth and last stage is the diversification of menhuan. If the formation of various divisions and menhuan under Sufi Islam was the first large-scale movement to differentiate its many denominations, then the formation of branches under menhuan could be considered a movement to differentiate its many divisions. Although
not all menhuan have undergone such differentiation, its impact is still rather substantial. So far, throughout the history of menhuan, several have had relatively large branches form within them. For example, there are two systems and four branches under the Jahriyyah Menhuan. The Huasi Menhuan has been divided into Linxia and Xunhua branches. Having separated from the Linyao Menhuan, the Mufuti Menhuan has since established two branches. The Huajiachang Menhuan has emerged out of the Xiaoliu Menhuan. From the Baizhuang Menhuan derived the Jinggou Menhuan. The Humen Menhuan has been divided into two branches, which are the Dongxiang Humen and the Guanghe Humen. The Gaoyuejia Menhuan has broken away from the Aitou Menhuan. The Lingmingtang Menhuan has two branches. The Salar sect [of the Salar minority ethnic group] has three branches. The Xiangyuantang Menhuan is currently in danger of breaking apart. The Kubrawiyyah Menhuan is divided into two branches, which are the Dongxiang and the Kangle, with more than ten leaders. In all, there are three contributing factors to the formation of branches within menhuan. The first is the establishment of individual branches as a result of unsolved struggles for religious authority. The second is the relocation of religious personnel who intended to preach their own religious thoughts. The third and last is the formation of new branches by the disciples and followers of a menhuan. While some of these branches were established by peaceful means, others have experienced severe clashes.

It should be pointed out here that not every menhuan had undergone the aforementioned four stages of development; not all of them have formed a typical menhuan system; and not all of them have had branches forming under them. Nonetheless, the transformation of menhuan has never ceased. As long as menhuan exist, their transformation will continue.

IV. MENHUAN’S FUNCTIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Throughout their history, menhuan and the menhuan system have functioned in a wide range of ways. A summary is provided below.

1. Banner of resistance

Islam was not respected during the Qing Dynasty and the social status of the Muslim masses was rather low. In order to resist the Qing Government’s ethnic oppression, religious discrimination and economic exploitation—and to struggle for the rights to survive, develop and have their own religious belief as a people—Muslims in the country’s northwestern regions repeatedly rebelled against the Qing rulers. Menhuan served as a banner throughout these uprisings. Thanks to an Old Man’s sacred status, as soon as he gave a call, all of his followers would respond and form a considerable force under the banner of the menhuan. For example, nearly all of the leaders, Aghunds and other elders from every denomination and menhuan participated in the Hui Uprisings during the reign of Qing Emperor Tongzhi. Under the command of Ma Guiyuan as leader of the Huasi Menhuan, Ma Hualong as leader of the Jahriyyah Menhuan, Ma Wuzhen from the leader’s family in the Baizhuang Menhuan, Ma Yun as the leader of the Mufuti Menhuan and Ma Wanyou from the leader’s family in the Humen Menhuan, the great Muslim masses threw themselves
into this grand anti-Qing movement. The Jahriyyah Menhuan was particularly outstanding in leading frequent and violent anti-Qing riots.

2. Tool of power struggles

One important characteristic of menhuan is to participate in a wide range of struggles both as a menhuan and a religious group. The form of such struggles varies, but can generally be divided into two types. The first is the political struggle. When political struggles are presented as fights for justice, menhuan serve as a banner to unite. However, when political struggles are conducted for an unjust cause, menhuan become a tool and bargaining chip for the upper class of menhuan to seize profits and political power for their small group. During the reign of Qing Emperor Jiaqing, the Bailian Sect rose in the Jinxian region and spread to areas such as Sichuan, Chu, Shannxi and Gansu. Ma Guangzong as leader of the Huasi Menhuan was ordered by the Qing Government to suppress the Bailian Sect with 3,000 of his followers. While his followers were massacred, with only several hundred men left, Ma was personally awarded with a prominent position in the government. In order to comfort the dead, Ma requested that the Qing Emperor issue thousands of ceramic tiles for the construction of a Gongbei, with each “Emperor-granted golden tile” to be engraved with the name of a victim. In this way, Ma killed three birds with one stone, having comforted the dead, used the money and manpower donated by the followers of his menhuan to construct a Gongbei, and become a government official. The price of all this was paid for in the blood and flesh of the religious masses who believed in him. The other type of struggle is for religious authority between and within menhuan. For the purpose of sustaining and advancing their own interests, there are often clashes between menhuan, between menhuan and denominations and even within menhuan themselves. During these clashes, menhuan become the tool for their upper classes to seize profits for their small groups and themselves. They entice and encourage the religious masses to participate in these clashes and casually comfort those who are killed or injured. Some of them even initiate conflicts with other Muslim divisions or even within the same menhuan, family or home, using the excuse that one will be able to enter heaven if he dies for his menhuan or religious group.

3. Source of spiritual comfort

Across Gansu’s concentrated areas of Muslims, the land is barren and suffers from frequent natural disasters. As a result of generations of political oppression and economic exploitation by the reactionary ruling classes, the people’s material living standards are poor, with low educational levels and an extremely impoverished cultural life. All of this contributes to the continuous suppression of their minds and souls. The nature of the Sufi Islamic groups here is similar to that of a church or a provident society. Their religious beliefs and rituals possess characteristics of mysticism and are similar to those of certain folk religions embraced by those from the lower classes. In particular, members of these groups have long believed that someone within Islam would rise like a messiah and steer them away from all sufferings of life. From their point of view, such a figure has indeed emerged in the form of the founder of a
menhuan and its generations of leaders. These people are able to gather a brand new group of followers through the promotion of brand new religious concepts, rituals, lifestyle and organizational structure, as well as an unusual yet attractive religious atmosphere. More important, in this family-like environment, everyone can befriend and help each other. Not only are they able to openly express feelings of dissatisfaction towards society that have been deeply hidden in their hearts, but they can also receive emotional and spiritual comfort. Throughout history, menhuan have provided comfort to those who are confused or in need.

4. Source of religious conflicts

Differentiation of religious denominations is one of the major reasons for the emergence of controversies within a religion. This is so in Islam and in other religions as well. As a kind of denomination within Islam, menhuan have helped initiate numerous religious conflicts throughout the history of Islam in China. This has considerably affected Islam’s internal unity and stability, the economic and social development of concentrated areas of Muslims, the image of Islam in China and its future development. Today, the negative impact of various historical religious conflicts remains and religious conflict seems to be increasing. Indeed, one major source of friction within Islam is the continuous formation and development of denominations and menhuan. Historically, there are three types of religious conflicts. The first is clashes between different menhuan, such as those between the Huasi Menhuan and the Jahriyyah Menhuan and those between the Humen Menhuan and the Baizhuang Menhuan. The second is between one denomination and a group of menhuan, such as the united efforts of the upper classes of various menhuan to resist the rise of the Ikhwan. The third and last is the clashes between a menhuan’s various branches, such as the battles between the “old” and “new” branches of the Huasi Menhuan, which resulted in the Qing Government’s decision to “eliminate all, both old and new.” These horrific historical lessons on religious conflict should be remembered by all divisions of Islam.

5. Targets of suppression and enticement

Throughout the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, the ruling class adopted policies of both suppression and enticement toward menhuan. Nearly all larger menhuan were suppressed by the ruling class, but a few of them also became targets of the government’s enticement at various times. First, the government’s intention has always been to eliminate menhuan. On the 23rd year of the reign of Qing Emperor Guangxu (1897), Yang Zengxin, then governor of Hezhou, stated in a report to the government that menhuan were of a feudal nature and should be eliminated. After the aforementioned riots led by Sushishan, an Akhund of the Jahriyyah Menhuan, the government decided that menhuan should be “completely eliminated, once and for all” with “no trace left, to prevent any such incident from reoccurring.” According to historical records, approximately 8,000 people died during this suppression. A campaign was also launched to encourage followers of menhuan to withdraw their religious belief and support. “Those who follow any newly emerged menhuan should return to their previous menhuan, while all mosques of new menhuan will be de-
destroyed.” The Qing Government’s aim was to fundamentally eliminate the Jahriyyah Menhuan through these measures. The ideas promoted by the Jahriyyah Menhuan, such as “shuhaidayi” (from “shahada,” which means martyrdom) and the “religion of the bloody neck,” stemmed from suppression by generations of reactionary ruling classes and their policies against the menhuan. During the reign of the Emperor Tongzhi, after the aforementioned clashes between the Huasi Menhuan’s two branches, the Qing Government adopted the policy of “eliminating all” and “concentrating on elimination, no hesitation.” The Huasi Menhuan’s Gongbei was destroyed and all of its properties confiscated. Nearly all of its leaders at all levels were killed, leading to the menhuan’s eventual disintegration.

Second, one method often used by the government in its attempt to eliminate menhuan is to “control the alien through the alien,” which means to entice one menhuan to attack another. A common situation is when a new menhuan is established, the ruling class sides with the old menhuan and supports their suppression of the newcomer, even declaring it a cult. Such an approach was adopted by the Qing Government during the clashes between the Jahriyyah Menhuan and the Huasi Menhuan. It supported the Huasi Menhuan first, in order to drive Ma Mingxin out of the Xunhua area. It then shut down three of the mosques belonging to the Jahriyyah Menhuan and declared it a “cult” which should be “completely eliminated.” The Qing Government also made use of a new religious division in its attempt to suppress old ones. For example, after the rise of the Ikhwans, it was supported by local military commanders Ma Bufang and Ma Hongkui in their attempt to suppress the influence of menhuan.

The government often deliberately provokes conflicts between denominations and menhuan. For example, when the Xidaotang was established, local military commander Ma Anliang tried to make use of the influence of the denomination’s leader Ma Qixi to suppress the Baizhuang Menhuan. When this failed, Ma Anliang ordered his subordinates to defame and attack the religious leader. When this also failed, Ma Anliang assaulted the Xidaotang with his armed forces and caused considerable damage to the denomination.

Finally, the government often persuades the upper levels of denominations and menhuan to serve it. When not implementing a policy of suppression, the ruling class adopts a policy of enticement. Local officials often befriend individuals from the upper class of menhuan and make use of these people’s religious power to augment their own political status and seize profits. For various purposes, some menhuan befriend local officials. The two sides become wedded by common vested interests.

6. Manifestation of feudal rule

Scholars generally consider the typical menhuan system as one of a landlord working as a religious leader or a religious leader working as a landlord. Apart from being a religious organization, a menhuan is also a social entity or social organization that consists of the Hierarch and his family members, the Reyisi, the Akhunds and the religious masses. Within a menhuan, the Hierarch is both political leader and religious teacher and has both religious and secular authority. While the other members of the menhuan follow his religious views, they also serve him in all aspects of secular life and are under his command within the organization. From this perspective, a menhuan is
like an independent kingdom that “combines religion with politics.” The feudal rule of the Hierarch over his followers is manifested in various ways, including spiritual control, slavery and economic exploitation. In order to enforce such rule, each menhuan has a set of strict regulations that are established by usage. For example, in order to achieve spiritual control, the Old Man of a menhuan is declared as the medium between his followers and Allah. Without the Old Man’s word (“kouhuan”) no one in the menhuan is able to enter heaven. All services for the Old Man are also declared as those for the religion, with the extent to which one obeys and serves the Old Man determining how well one is appreciated. The better one is appreciated by the Old Man, the greater a chance one has of entering heaven. The more donations one makes to his menhuan and the Old Man, the more contribution one has made to the religion, and the better rewards one will receive in his next life. It should be noted that this kind of feudal rule is accepted by all followers of menhuan willingly and without condition. If anyone does not do so, then he will be suppressed in various ways until he decides to accept such feudal rule or break away from his menhuan.

PART TWO: THE PRESENT SITUATION OF MENHUAN AND STRATEGIES FOR RELIGIOUS WORK

The establishment of New China prompted various fundamental changes in the country’s social and historical conditions, and a series of historical changes have taken place within Islam’s menhuan, as in other denominations and religions. As we observe controversies and emerging problems within menhuan and the menhuan system, we need to understand the historical context and adopt new strategies and suggestions for how to handle these controversies and problems.

I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MENHUAN IN THE NEW CHINA

Since the establishment of New China, a series of dramatic changes have taken place within menhuan. A summary is provided below.

1. The Party’s religious policies granted a new life to menhuan

Since the establishment of New China, our Party has adopted the policy of freedom of religious belief. In regard to issues of Islamic denominations, our Party has abided by the principle of “[letting the masses] follow their respective religions, do as they wish and respect each other,” insisting that all religious denominations are equal, while protecting the legitimate interests of all menhuan and their followers in accordance with the law. Menhuan are no longer oppressed and exploited by the ruling class of the old society. The history of large-scale religious conflicts has ended, with all leaders of menhuan now supporting the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the newly established people’s government and proactively participating in a series of national movements such as the construction of democracy. The followers of menhuan lead these religious organizations on the socialist road and gain a new life. Since our nation’s reform and opening-up to the outside world, all unjust, false and mishandled cases have been redressed, and the mosques, Gongbei and scripture
halls of menhuan have been re-opened. New leaders have been assigned to menhuan, which are now recognized as legitimate religious denominations. As the normal operations of menhuan resume, the mutual adaptation between these religious organizations and our socialist society is gradually achieved.

2. Democratic reforms of the religious system weakened the menhuan system

In 1956, our nation’s reconstruction of socialism was basically completed. However, because remnants of feudal economic structures remained through the Islamic religious system, considerably affecting productivity, it was necessary to conduct democratic reforms of the religious system in order to remove these obstacles to ethnic development. From May 27 to June 27, 1958, with the Party Central Committee’s approval, the “Seminar on Issues of Islam of the Hui Ethnic Group” was held in Qingdao to formally propose reforms to the Islamic religious system. The reforms identified counterrevolutionary elements hidden within religious circles and those landlords, rich peasants and counterrevolutionary elements who had escaped from the country’s inland regions to concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups. It also destroyed the feudal economic foundation of religion, as all production resources, including the lands, forests and large animals owned by mosques, scripture halls and Gongbei, were now returned to the ownership of the nation, the collective or the masses. This effectively ended the ownership of all production resources by feudalists. Finally, the reform abolished feudal-style religious privileges and systems of oppression and exploitation.

A. All feudal privileges within the religion were abolished, including the establishment of religious courts, prisons and penalties by mosques; the interference with civil lawsuits by religious personnel; the private appointment of imams, Reyisi and Akhunds; the possession of weapons; interference with freedom of marriage; oppression and discrimination against women; and interference with cultural and educational careers.

B. The possession of production resources by mosques, Gongbei and scripture halls was prohibited, and exploitative systems such as usury and unpaid labor were abolished. All illegal commercial activities were suppressed.

C. Blackmail to obtain the belongings of the masses was strictly prohibited, as religion was not allowed to disrupt production and the nation’s orders and policies.

D. It was forbidden for anyone to force the masses to participate in Ramadan rituals or join mosques, or force children to study scriptures and become “manla” (the name for “Halifan,” or student, in China’s northwest).

E. The system of three tiers of religious authority, punishment by beating in mosques and the feudal relationship between religious leaders and their followers were abolished.

F. All religious personnel were granted citizen’s rights, but they were asked to shoulder their obligations as citizens. All who were able took part in productive labor, which considerably weakened the power of the Hierarch and his Akhunds.

In addition to these measures, a series of reforms corrected religious habits that disrupted social order and work order, limited the cultural and entertainment activi-
ties of the masses and endangered their physical and spiritual health. Some of these feudal religious exceptions were shared by all religious denominations, while others were only possessed by menhuan. As a result of these reforms, the menhuan system was considerably weakened, but all menhuan had made an important step forward on their road to achieve mutual adaptation with our socialist society. However, since our nation’s reform and opening-up to the outside world, these previously abolished feudal religious activities have resumed to various degrees.

3. Menhuan system gradually evolved into individual denominations

Since their formation, menhuan have basically evolved from menhuan to the menhuan system, and then back to menhuan again. The menhuan system reached the peak of its development before the establishment of the New China. Since the establishment of the New China, the menhuan system has returned to a simple menhuan structure. On the one hand, such transformation has benefited from social development and the Party’s and the Government’s enforcement. On the other hand, to satisfy the needs of their own survival and development, the upper class of menhuan are also exploring various ways to achieve the mutual adaptation between their religion and socialist society.

This transformation so far can be summarized as the following. First, the Hierarch’s power within his menhuan has been weakened and his status downgraded. As the absolute obedience of menhuan followers has been replaced by obedience with conditions, the conventional scheme of having the Hierarch making decisions over all religious and secular issues is now severely challenged. Second, the three-tier system of religious status and the three levels of religious authority are collapsing. As a result of the abolishment of religious districts controlled by the Reyisi, many menhuan no longer have the Reyisi as an authority. As various democratic administrative organizations perform their functions in the management of mosques, Gongbei and preaching halls, it is now a trend to democratically manage religious groups and to operate them in accordance with the law. The process of assigning Akhunds is also moving toward a system of appointment through public consultation. Furthermore, due to factors such as the government’s suppression and the consideration of menhuan’s private interests, the upper class of menhuan are restraining themselves from quoting “houkong” [instructions from religious scriptures] and issuing “kouhuan” in a careless manner. Some of these “kouhuan” are either obeyed with conditions or simply ignored. Finally, as social civilization progresses and the cultural level of all followers of menhuan increases, their sense of democratic values is greatly strengthened. The number of people blindly supporting the upper class of menhuan and their theories of mysticism is in decline, while the number of those who are capable of rational thinking is increasing. All of these trends indicate that the menhuan system is now in transition, gradually transforming into the system of individual denominations. This transformation is still in progress.

4. Various changes took place within the superstructure of menhuan

Four major changes haven taken place within the menhuan superstructure. The first major change is in political thought. After decades of ideological and political
work, the upper classes of most menhuan now support the Party’s leadership and the socialist system. Capable of combining patriotism and their devotion to religion, they are reliable on issues related to national unification, ethnic unity, religious harmony and other major political principles. The second major change is in social class. Since the reconstruction of socialism, members of the menhuan upper class have become self-sufficient laborers, whose unique function is to promote religious culture and teach religious knowledge. In short, these are laborers who earn their salaries through intellectual activities, the laboring of their minds. The third major change is in the age structure. Many from the menhuan upper class are young and middle-aged individuals who were born around the time the New China was established and who grew up during our nation’s reform and opening-up to the outside world. These individuals represent a new generation born in a new society, raised under the red flag in the spring wind of reform. Their political stance, ideologies and concepts, values and modes of thinking have the prominent characteristics of their times. The fourth and last major change for menhuan is in their feudal-style religious privileges. Those from the menhuan upper classes used to enjoy privileges under the system of patronage. However, as a result of a series of democratic reforms of the religious system, and particularly since our nation’s entry to the new historical era, these privileges have been limited and considerably weakened.

II. MAJOR PROBLEMS WITHIN THE PRESENT MENHUAN

Although various major changes have taken place within menhuan under the new circumstances, some of the old problems have merged with new problems to present complex challenges.

1. Feudal-style religious authorities are gaining power

The return to feudal-style authority in the menhuan is primarily manifested in the following four ways.

A. The Hierarch continues to exist. At present, apart from those menhuan that have already abolished the Hierarch as a title, each menhuan still has a leader. Some of these leaders openly refer to themselves as the “Hierarch,” while others consider themselves to be the “Hierarch” but try to conceal this thought. Both types of leaders are still honored by their followers as the “Hierarch.” Followers who make this mistake include some leading cadres and authors of certain internal reports of the Party and government offices, individuals from various aspects of society, some media professionals, and people from other religions who know very little about the situation.

B. The succession of the Hierarch continues. Since our nation’s reform and opening-up to the outside world, the older generations of menhuan leaders have passed on their duties to their successors. New leaders have to be selected for menhuan whose leaders are old, frail or dead. In this process, some menhuan have managed to pass on the leadership peacefully and successfully, while others have witnessed violent and large-scale internal struggles for political power and
religious heritage that resulted in various divisions within the menhuan. While some menhuan have chosen their new leaders by themselves, others have done so successfully with assistance from relevant government departments.

C. The Hierarch’s privileges are not completely eliminated. Under the circumstances of the new era, although the Hierarch’s privileges are very limited, they still exist. These privileges include determining major religious affairs, arranging important activities, organizing key events and the appointing, dismissing and transferring of personnel within the menhuan. Although a certain democratic decision-making process is enforced on a small scale, the Hierarch still has the right to pronounce the final verdict. The dominant role of the Hierarch within the menhuan therefore remains.

D. The system of feudal management exists in parallel with that of democratic management. Many menhuan maintain their feudal-style control of the management of clergymen and venues for religious activities, but have made certain changes in the form of management. For example, in the appointment, dismissal and transfer of Akhunds, on some occasions the Old Man is able to directly assign an Akhund; on other occasions the democratic management organization within a mosque must “request” an Akhund from the Old Man; and on still other occasions the appointment of an Akhund is the result of mutual consultation among the local government’s United Front Work Department and State Administration of Religious Affairs, the Old Man and the management committee of the mosque. In the management of Gongbei and mosques, most menhuan have adopted a democratic management style, in which the management committee of a mosque has the authority to decide on issues related to its community. However, some menhuan only let the management committee conduct daily management of the mosque, while decisions on other imperative issues—such as the renovation and refurbishment of the mosque, the conduct of important “ermaili” activities and the appointment of Akhund—either require the Old Man’s agreement or are simply decided directly by him. Some menhuan even have a certain family in direct control of the Gongbei and the preaching hall, so that no one from outside the family is able to interfere.

2. Menhuan continue to be divided

Differentiation of branches within menhuan is a major reason for the emergence of religious conflicts. In the Islam of the Hui and other ethnic groups, the differentiation of branches within menhuan never stops. The development of branches in Gansu since the establishment of the New China is an example. Within the Jahriyyah Menhuan, after the death of Ma Zhongyong as leader of the Beishan branch, three divisions were formed after disagreements over a new leader, with some of the branch’s supporters even switching their loyalty to a branch in Yunnan led by Zhou Zequn. Three divisions were established within the Salar sect after severe internal clashes over the succession of religious authority and heritage after the death of its leader Ma Shikui. After dividing into two branches in the 1950s, the Lingmingtang Menhuan produced a third branch in the 1990s. Some of the other menhuan have also produced new branches.

The succession of religious authority and heritage is the major catalyst for the
formation of new branches. Because some menhuan do not have a well-designed and well-enforced mechanism to determine succession, there is ample room for power struggles, in which different interest groups and individuals within the menhuan establish their own branches, declaring themselves the orthodox leader in order to seize control of the masses. These controversies appear to be struggles for religious authority, but in fact have serious political and social motivations. To become the leader of a menhuan is to gain instant fame, which brings power, reputation, social status and money. As older generations of menhuan leaders retire, more controversies surrounding the succession of religious authority are likely to emerge, causing further differentiation of branches within menhuan.

3. Switching between menhuan is a common phenomenon

This phenomenon refers to the switching of loyalties of the religious masses from one denomination or menhuan to another. As our society becomes more liberal and our national policies become increasingly moderate, frequent and rapid exchanges of information have enabled the supporters of each denomination and menhuan to better understand the opportunities and benefits offered by another. Supporters of different denominations or menhuan are therefore able to freely compare and communicate with each other and switch their loyalty to a new religious group. At present, it is rather common for the religious masses to switch their loyalty from a menhuan to a denomination, from a denomination to a menhuan, or simply from one menhuan to another.

This will be a long-term trend in the development of Islam and it is likely to impact the relatively stable existence of menhuan. From the perspective of national policies and the law, no one should interfere with the right of the religious masses to choose different denominations. However, because changes in religious loyalty often lead to clashes between denominations, this should be a natural process; it should not to be promoted simply because it is compatible with national policies and the law. It is worth noting that some denominations and menhuan have adopted various unlawful approaches to encourage the switching of loyalty by the religious masses, using financial incentives or defaming and attacking other denominations or menhuan while excessively promoting their own religious views.

4. Controversies within menhuan are increasing

Similar to controversies between menhuan and those between menhuan and denominations, conflicts within menhuan are also on the rise. This is a prominent characteristic of menhuan in the new era. Conflicts within menhuan are mainly centered on the struggles for “three authorities”: religious authority, authority over the menhuan’s properties, and authority in management, with religious authority being the key issue. Because the lack of a well-designed system to pass on religious authority and heritage has left ample room for all parties to desire power, dominant groups and individuals often provoke controversies in an attempt to seize religious authority. In order to obtain the proof of authority, they often manipulate the Old Man’s “kouhuan” and forcefully promote their own views through families.

Authority over a menhuan’s properties refers to the management of mosques and
Gongbei. In order to obtain a superior position or further weight in the management of these venues for religious activities, different interest groups (e.g., families) and individuals (often those with economic status) clash. For example, in recent years, the Shagou branch of the Jahriyyah Menhuan in Ningxia tried in many ways to seize the management of a Gongbei in the Nantai District of Gansu's Pingliang Township. (This Gongbei is the grave of Mu Xianzhang, the menhuan's second Hierarch.) This eventually led to the re-election of the Gongbei's management committee, which practically handed the management of all relevant affairs over to Ningxia. Struggles for the authority to manage properties and venues for religious activities have been on the rise in recent years. The conflict of interests in the management of menhuan is a result of an insufficient financial system and improper management.

Finally, within the same menhuan, all kinds of controversies exist between large and small mosques, between those in urban and rural areas, and between those in the upper class. These controversies affect the menhuan's internal unity. They are primarily manifested in two ways. The first is large-scale fighting between groups. For example, the Jahriyyah Menhuan in Ningxia has had two severe armed struggles since the 1980s. In 2000, a series of internal conflicts over the religious authority of the Salar sect in Gansu launched a large-scale armed battle between various groups, dubbed the “November 20” incident. Events like this one have seriously disturbed the stability of local society and the security of people's lives and properties. The other kind of controversy is collective and direct appeals to the local authorities through various inappropriate channels; this is also on the rise. During a menhuan’s internal conflicts, various individuals and groups often encourage masses who know none or very little of the truth to appeal directly to local authorities, with some of them even hiring crowds to increase their power. During their appeal, the masses often besiege the Party and government offices and attack the cadres there, with some of them even taking over the offices to conduct religious activities and other daily rituals such as cooking and eating. These are all abnormal behaviors.

5. Menhuan strive to enhance their impact on society

Those from the upper class of menhuan have made various efforts to enhance the scope and extent of their group's impact on society. First, various menhuan promote themselves by publishing legal or illegal newspapers and magazines, producing Video CDs (VCDs), printing propaganda materials and using the Internet. Media often become the targets of these people and are manipulated into promoting a certain menhuan and attacking its enemies.

Second, in order to enhance their impact on society, many menhuan proactively participate in social welfare and public interest activities, such as helping those who are impoverished, contributing to the construction of bridges and roads, making donations to local schools and planting trees to help cultivate forests. However, some menhuan try to force their followers to participate in these activities, adding financial burden to the religious masses in exchange for political glory for the menhuan.

Third, menhuan often organize large-scale religious activities across various regions. These activities have become bigger and more frequent in recent years, with an increasing number of people participating. They are generally for religious purposes,
but the existence of certain hidden agendas—such as gaining the trust of the masses, taking the opportunity to incite disputes, relying on the menhuan’s position to bully others and showing off its strengths—cannot be denied.

Fourth, some from the upper class of menhuan try to befriend the Party and government officials and social celebrities, having photographs taken with them and asking them to provide inscriptions and other writings as propaganda for the menhuan. In this process, some Party and government leaders with insufficient ideological and political training and a lack of knowledge on the proper procedures have become the victims of manipulation by these menhuan. A few of them even bow to the upper class of various menhuan and openly speak for their illicit pursuits.

Fifth, some menhuan are passionate in seeking political arrangement and intent on becoming representatives to the National People’s Congress, committee members of the National People’s Political Consultative Conference or members of the Chinese Islamic Association. The aim is to use their dual identities as a member of their menhuan’s upper class and as a “government official” to gain profits for their group and to enhance its impact on society.

Sixth, various menhuan continue to expand their power and influence by conducting illegal preaching activities and struggling against other denominations to gain adherents among the religious masses.

Finally, many menhuan place a great emphasis on searching for their roots. While some menhuan have compiled or edited the record of their history, others search for their roots overseas. For example, assuming that its roots are in Iran, the Kubrawiyyah Menhuan sent the Old Man’s oldest son to study there. Those of the Salar sect thought their roots were in Afghanistan and sent their Old Man to attend a series of memorial activities there. The aim of these activities is certainly to promote individual menhuan as orthodox and to enhance their impact on society. While these efforts cannot be judged as entirely detrimental, within positive pursuits there are still some negative motives that are worthy of our attention.

6. Individual menhuan face the risk of becoming “cults”

Throughout the history of menhuan within Islam, all new menhuan have been accused of being “cults” by existing interest groups whose only intention is to eliminate them. Hence the problem of “cults” is not a new one within menhuan. However, the emergence of “cults” from existing and old menhuan appears to be a new problem.

There are many reasons why the problems listed above exist within menhuan. In terms of the government’s position, the lack of unity in our thinking, the insufficient implementation of our policies, and the lack of results in our religious work should be considered when addressing problems within menhuan.

In regard to the lack of unity in our thinking, there is a serious ideological gap within the Party in terms of our understanding of menhuan and the menhuan system. Some people’s concepts are rather vague in this regard, which is far from meeting the demands of the central government. This is primarily manifested in three ways. The first involves confusion over the concepts of menhuan and the menhuan system, with many assuming that menhuan exist purely as religious divisions and without the need for a so-called menhuan system. The danger of this assumption is this: if the differ-
ence between menhuan and the menhuan system is denied, then it is likely that the feudal privileges of the menhuan system will be maintained within individual menhuan—menhuan that have a legitimate status as denominations of Islam. If this occurs, then our attempt to abolish feudal privileges may be considered interfering with the freedom of religious belief and violating the legal rights of the religious masses.

Second, there is some confusion over what was abolished during the democratic reforms of the religious system, particularly in terms of various feudal-style religious privileges. Specifically, there is a lack of understanding the abolished menhuan system (and there are also problems in unifying various views and clarifying the differences between them, with one example being the substantial gap between those who support and those who oppose the abolishment of the Hierarch). As a result, some comrades have proposed to re-visit and clarify these issues as a principle for our religious work. Particularly in regard to the issue of “broadening,” some comrades think that from now on, in our efforts to correct all relevant mistakes, there should be clear definitions on what has been corrected as well as what has not been and should now be corrected. This writer used to hold such a view.

Third and lastly, there are doubts regarding the “three abolishments.” In 1986, the “Opinion on Handling Issues of Internal Conflicts within the Jahriyyah Menhuan in Ningxia’s Xiji Region” forward by the Party Central Committee clearly stipulated that “because the Hierarch and the hereditary succession of the Hierarch have been abolished, the original Hierarch of a menhuan and his descendents no longer have the right to become the leader or inherit the leadership and therefore should be treated as people from the upper class of the menhuan.” In 1994, in the “Opinions from the Party Central Committee’s Department of United Front Work and Department of Public Security and from the Party Committee of the Ningxia Autonomous Region on Improving the Religious Work on Islam in Ningxia’s Xiji Region” issued by the General Offices of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, it was clearly specified that all should “firmly abolish the hereditary succession of the Hierarch, the system of appointing Akhund, and that of giving ‘kouhuan.’” Although these policies are already very clear, some people still consider them as being impractical and difficult to implement. There are also those who still wonder whether the abolishment of the hereditary succession of the Hierarch is a good thing for our religious work on Islam.

In regard to insufficient implementation of policies, the main difficulty surrounds the “three abolishments.” The following three issues are in need of further investigation. First, although the central government’s policies are already very clear (to firmly abolish the systems of “hereditary succession of the Hierarch, appointment of Akhund and the giving of ‘kouhuan’”), this policy has never been properly implemented across the country. The hereditary succession of the Hierarch continues without any interference from the Party and government departments, which results in the phenomenon of “abolished on paper, existing in reality.” Second, not only has the abolishment of the Hierarch yet to be completed, but a series of political arrangements have also been made to consider these people as patriotic and progressive individuals at all levels of the National People’s Congress and the National People’s Political Consultative Conference, with the excuse for these political arrangements being that Hierarchs are leaders of menhuan and boast considerable reputation among the religious masses.
such a move creates difficulty when attempting to abolish the hereditary succession of the Hierarch. Third and lastly, various local governments—fearing violent succession struggles in their local area—have taken the initiative to interfere by consulting with the Hierarch about who his successor should be. This can certainly be an expedient measure if the “Hierarch” title still exists in a menhuan. However, this consultation gives the impression that although the hereditary succession of the Hierarch has been abolished on paper, it is still being recognized in reality. This is not beneficial for our conduct of religious work.

No specific document has ever been issued from the Party committees at any level regarding the lack of results in our religious work, how to handle menhuan on the whole and the overall situation. Neither the central government nor local government has ever established any specific policy, organized any specific conference or planned any specific action. The current focus of our religious work is on the management of individual menhuan who have had certain problems, but this rarely considers the overall situation. Meanwhile, in regard to the study of menhuan and the menhuan system, the Party and government departments are considerably lagging behind academia. It is unknown how many academic authorities have been established and how many people have received their academic degrees in this speciality. In sharp contrast, the research produced by our comrades in their conduct of united front work and religious work, especially research of policies and theories on issues of menhuan, is so limited in quantity and scope that it pales in comparison.

III. RELIGIOUS WORK TO COMPLETE REGARDING MENHUAN: SUGGESTIONS AND STRATEGIES

The existence of menhuan within Islam is a substantial issue that significantly impacts our nation’s religious work on Islam. It also impacts the construction of the “three civilizations” in the concentrated areas of Muslims in our country’s northwest, the continuation of social and political stability and the construction of a harmonious socialist society. It deserves our focus and serious treatment.

1. Comprehensively analyze, correctly understand and seriously handle the issues of menhuan

The existence of menhuan is an important issue within Islam. However, there are considerable differences among the perceptions of this issue by all parties involved, with some of them having no knowledge of menhuan whatsoever. An important prerequisite for our conduct of religious work is to comprehensively analyze, correctly understand and seriously handle the issues of menhuan. Our understanding of the issues of menhuan should focus on the following aspects.

A. Comprehensively understand the “six characteristics” of menhuan. It is our view that the existence of menhuan is of a long-term, distinctive, complex, mass, exclusive and important nature. The long-term nature of menhuan refers to the fact that they will exist for a long period of time throughout the socialist period. We now understand that it may take longer to eliminate a religion when compared
to that of social classes and nations. The existence of religious division is an important feature of religion and will persist along with the long-term existence of religion. Menhuan have existed in Chinese society for more than 300 years and have witnessed the country’s feudal society, semi-colonial society, semi-feudal society and socialist society. While the basic form of menhuan has not changed much throughout this long period of time and is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, it does not seem possible, either, that any movement to merge all religious divisions into one would succeed. This means that menhuan will exist for a long time to come.

The distinctive nature of menhuan refers to the fact that they are a unique phenomenon within Islam. As this phenomenon occurs only in China and nowhere else throughout the Islamic world, there are no comparative lessons for us to study. Such distinctiveness also refers to the fact that menhuan are considerably different from other denominations of China’s Islam and have their own unique organizational structure, composition of personnel and religious proposition.

The complex nature of menhuan is manifested in their complex internal structure and how sensitively such complexity is handled. The various segments of menhuan are wedded together by their common interests and around the Hierarch to form a well-structured and tightly-knit entity, with the shift of any one segment necessarily affecting the operations of all other segments.

The mass nature of menhuan refers to the fact that each and every menhuan boasts a large number of followers whose religious beliefs are firm and sincere. To a certain degree, the leader of the menhuan is the target of worship by the masses.

The exclusive nature of menhuan describes how each menhuan is a completely sealed system of mysticism that naturally refuses all interference from the outside. While it is difficult to understand menhuan, it is significantly harder to understand them well. Menhuan have adopted an attitude of boycotting the outside world, particularly in response to democratic reform of the religious system.

The important nature of menhuan refers to the fact that the handling of menhuan is an important part of our religious work on Islam, especially in our country’s northwest. It is crucial that we handle all issues of menhuan adequately. In short, the long-term nature of menhuan demands that we avoid the establishment of short-term goals and instead consider all relevant issues strategically and for the long-term future. The distinctive nature of menhuan demands that we not only follow the general pattern in handling issues of religious groups, but also take into consideration the uniqueness of these religious divisions in our attempt to explore new channels and methods. The complex nature of menhuan demands that we avoid careless attitudes and simple mistakes in our handling of the relevant issues. The mass nature of menhuan demands that in the understanding and handling of issues of menhuan, we should establish the mass concept—not only improving our work on those from the upper class of menhuan, but also paying attention to and enhancing our work among the masses, who are the followers of menhuan. The exclusive nature of menhuan demands that we attempt, through all possible channels, to lower their guard and thoroughly understand them. The important nature of menhuan demands that we seriously consider the issues of menhuan.
B. Comprehensively understand the importance of religious work regarding menhuan. Our religious work on menhuan is a project that is based on the current situation and has a long-term view. It focuses on individual issues but keeps the broader picture in mind. It aims to unite the great religious masses and to firmly counter individual bad elements. These objectives concern both our nation’s internal stability and its impact on international society. To conduct such work requires the implementation of our Party’s policies on freedom of religious belief; the augmentation and development of the patriotic united front of the Party and the religious circles; the reform, development and stabilization of the concentrated areas of Muslims in our country’s northwest; the construction of a harmonious Muslim society; the upholding of peace and prosperity of the Islamic circles; and the upholding of our nation’s international image. These conclusions stem from our investigation of the formation, development and transformation of menhuan; from our Party’s positive and negative experiences in handling issues of menhuan; from lessons about the severe negative impact caused by religious clashes between menhuan; and from the prediction of the possible impact menhuan may cause as they enter international society under the conditions of our nation’s opening-up to the outside world. Therefore, our religious work is not something that we may or may not do. It is imperative work that requires our rigorous attention, serious treatment and meticulous implementation.

C. Comprehensively understand that it is a serious political mission to augment and broaden the results of democratic reforms of the religious system. The democratic reforms of the religious system were a revolution in the history of Islam in China and an important step towards the mutual adaptation of Islam and socialist society. However, it is unfortunate that such reforms were connected to the “leftist” errors within the Party and led to a series of mistakes in broadening the scope of these reforms, whose negative impact has not been eliminated even today. It is because of these mistakes in “broadening their scope” that the positive and negative aspects of the reforms are still being discussed and debated today. In all, these religious reforms were rather successful and produced a series of positive results, and those mistakes in “broadening their scope” have been corrected. Therefore, results of the democratic reforms of the religious system need to be augmented, in the same way that the feudal privileges now in recovery need to be firmly abolished.

It is the view of this writer that there is neither use nor need to continue the discussion of this matter. There is no use to discuss it because the mistakes in “broadening the scope” of these religious reforms have already been thoroughly corrected. There is no need to discuss it because to do so will require the partial denial or re-adjustment of our nation’s policies, which is not compatible with the spirit of our central government. We should employ all possible strategies to stop those who intend to linger on various historical issues in regard to the democratic reforms of the religious system. Whether it is academic studies or research on policies, we should ensure that no one is allowed to find fault in the choice of words and speculate about past reforms. Neither should anyone oppose these reforms.

D. Comprehensively understand and adequately handle the Hierarch system. This is the fundamental solution and key element of our religious work.
are religious groups centered on the Hierarch. While the existence of the Hierarch is the foundation of menhuan's survival, the Hierarch system is also a major characteristic of the menhuan system. Hence the problems within menhuan are mainly derived from the Hierarch system, and our religious work can never be successful without first solving the problems of the Hierarch system.

At present, substantial differences still exist among various parties involved in the handling of these issues. These differences are manifested not only in discussions of whether the succession of the Hierarch should be abolished, but also in debates on how this could be done. According to some, because the Hierarch is the soul of menhuan, a menhuan without its Hierarch cannot continue its existence. While the abolishment of the succession of the Hierarch is equal to the abolishment of menhuan, the abolishment of menhuan is a violation of the freedom of religious belief. Although some others agree that the succession of the Hierarch should be abolished, they also think that the central government’s policies to abolish this system cannot be implemented in reality, that there is no appropriate reason and method to do so and that no one will dare to do it. Still some others suggest that a balance should be found between the abolishment of the succession of the Hierarch and the endorsement of the Hierarch’s existence. Having considered all factors, perhaps the endorsement of the Hierarch’s existence will be more beneficial for our religious work. And still some others compare the Hierarch of menhuan with the Living Buddha of Tibetan Buddhism and propose that these two share the same kind of religious duty and are both targets of worship by the religious masses. While both also manage their respective religious venues and followers in roughly the same feudal style, both are products of the feudal system. Therefore, if the incarnation of the Living Buddha is allowed, then the succession of the Hierarch should also be permitted. We cannot simply abolish the Hierarch system because some of the leaders of menhuan have done something that threatens ethnic unity, while allowing the incarnation of the Living Buddha even after some of the so-called “Living Buddhas,” such as the Dalai Lama, have tried to incite separatist thoughts and movements. All of these different views demonstrate the fact that the Hierarch system is a fundamental issue within the menhuan system and should be handled adequately.

2. Use new vision to fundamentally handle the issues of religious denominations and menhuan

This issue can be considered from the following three perspectives.

A. Put down all baggage and go into battle without a burden. Menhuan have existed in Chinese society for more than 300 years. Both the Qing Government and the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China tried to solve this issue, but without much success. Since the establishment of the New China, our Party has made great progress and gained much experience in its handling of issues of menhuan. Now, with the opening of a new page in the book of history, we are confronted with many new problems with menhuan and thus require new modes of thinking in solving them under the new circumstances of a new era. We have
noticed that as soon as various issues of menhuan are mentioned, many people naturally think of the democratic reforms of the religious system and launch debates on this issue. These include popular topics such as whether the Hierarch has indeed been abolished, whether the mistakes of “broadening the scope” have been thoroughly corrected and whether certain policies require adjustment on the basis of re-visiting these democratic reforms. It is our view that such debates are meaningless. Instead of debating issues of democratic reform, we should adopt the more realistic and practical approach of considering what kinds of circumstances are confronting us and what kinds of problems should be solved.

B. **Consider the issues of menhuan within the overall situation of our work on Islam.** Because menhuan exist and grow within Islam, our overall religious work on Islam is directly related to our handling of issues of menhuan. Meanwhile, because there are both differences and connections between menhuan and denominations, we should connect the handling of menhuan-related issues with that of denomination-related issues, instead of simply treating issues of menhuan as an isolated case. If our overall religious work on Islam is successful, then we will have created an excellent external environment and a series of superb conditions for the adequate handling of issues of menhuan. However, if we simply manage menhuan as an isolated case, then it may induce the fear, confusion and anxiety of the upper class of menhuan and their followers, whose antagonistic sentiments are likely to have substantial consequences. A better approach will be to conduct religious work on Islam as a whole and solve the relevant issues from all possible aspects.

C. **Connect the handling of issues of menhuan with the mutual adaptation between religion and socialist society.** The mutual adaptation between religion and socialist society is a necessary demand for the existence and development of religion in the socialist period, and an unstoppable historical trend. To steer the mutual adaptation between religion and socialist society is already the consensus reached by our nation's religions, and Islam is no exception. In order to avoid various sensitive issues and focus instead on how to handle issues of menhuan's existence as a whole, we should specifically clarify the nature of issues related to the existence of menhuan in socialist society. That is, these issues are neither those of feudal privileges nor those of the hereditary succession of the Hierarch. Instead, the issue of menhuan's existence in socialist society is whether the mutual adaptation of these two can be achieved. All religious doctrines, regulations, organizations, systems, activities and behaviors that are not compatible with socialist society should be ended, abolished, reformed or adjusted, in order to adjust the relationship between religion and the political, economic and cultural systems of socialism and achieve the mutual adaptation between religion and socialist society.

**3. Principles for conducting religious work on menhuan**

In order to succeed in our religious work, there should be corresponding guiding principles. Judging from our current and practical work on menhuan, the guiding principles below should be followed.
A. Face reality. Menhuan emerged at the primary stages of socialism, in which the development of society was relatively backward. In today’s transition toward a more advanced stage, remnants of feudalism and influences of capitalism cannot be avoided. Within the ideological arena alone, apart from the persistent existence of Marxism as a guiding principle, numerous other ideologies are also impacting people’s spiritual development. Regarding religion, as well as menhuan, it is harmful to produce slogans for anything that is beyond society’s development. While we are anxious about the existence of menhuan, it will be naïve to imagine that all relevant issues may be solved once and for all through a single document, a speech or an instruction. After all, the issues of menhuan were not developed in one day and are not permanently unchangeable. A better and more effective way to handle issues related to menhuan’s existence is through gradual and gentle social reforms and the hard work of all parties involved. Our Party has already gained valuable experience in its handling of issues of menhuan. The succession of the Hierarch is an example. This tradition has existed within menhuan for more than 300 years; it has become a historical system and religious ritual. Although generations of governments have tried to abolish it and even to physically eliminate the Hierarch, the “Hierarch[s] still have plenty of successors.” Issues related to the Hierarch are not merely the concerns of one individual but involve tens of thousands of members of the religious masses. Handling the Hierarch tradition requires dealing with the masses and respecting their choices in religious belief; this can never be handled carelessly and hastily. The Party intends to abolish the hereditary succession of the Hierarch through political orders. This is certainly a kind-hearted approach, but its effects are still unknown.

B. Proactively steer mutual adaptation. To proactively steer the mutual adaptation of religion and socialist society is the fundamental starting point and finishing point of our Party’s handling of religious issues. To insist on the principle of “proactively steering” in our religious work on menhuan is to steer the mutual adaptation between menhuan and socialist society. Its focus should be on the upper class of menhuan, including the so-called Hierarch, the Akhunds and all backbone personnel. First, we should demand that menhuan abide by the political principles of patriotism, religious devotion and the promotion of unity and progress. They should take the initiative to support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system, to politically collaborate with other religions and denominations and to respect each other’s religious belief, in order to become a model in patriotism and religious devotion. Second, we should demand that menhuan reform those religious doctrines and regulations that are not compatible with socialist society, while those positive elements of their religious doctrines and code of ethics should be carried forward to serve the society and the masses. Third, we should demand that menhuan abide by the principle of “mutual respect with no intention to interfere in each other’s business, all are equal and whose unity should be strengthened,” in order to establish a new type of socialist relationship between religions and between denominations. There should be a pleasant and friendly relationship between religions, between denominations and within menhuan, in order to uphold ethnic unity, enhance religious peace, and construct a harmonious society. Fourth, we should demand
that menhuan abide by the principle of democratically managing religious groups and operating them in accordance with the law. They should regulate their management of religious affairs and personnel, conduct religious activities in accordance with the law, oppose the monopolization and dictatorship of religious power by individuals, and resist any internal attempt to interfere with the secular affairs of each menhuan. Fifth and lastly, we should demand that menhuan be industrious in their religious operations and do their best to ease the burden of the masses. They should oppose the organization of large-scale religious activities across various regions; resist the construction of venues for religious activities that are beyond their capabilities and permitted building standards and which are excessively luxurious; and counter any attempt to enforce or institutionalize the religious donations willingly made by the religious masses. The patriotism and socialism education of the great religious masses should also be enhanced. If the upper class of menhuan ignore or deliberately disobey such steering, then they should be suppressed and constrained until they do. If any group or individual violates the law and commits any crime, then they should be seriously handled in accordance with the law and without leniency or compromise.

C. Manage in accordance with the law. As a result of the gradual implementation of the strategy of managing the nation in accordance with the law, the concepts of the law among the religious masses have been strengthened. Individuals and groups increasingly demand the legal protection of their rights, which requires us to thoroughly conduct our religious work in accordance with the law. In regard to issues of menhuan, this requirement is manifested in two ways. One way is to recognize, in the form of law, the legal status of every denomination within each of China’s religions, including menhuan. Currently, because there is a lack of registration and record of the denominations within our nation’s various religions, while their activities are legal, these denominations are in danger of being considered as illegal organizations. No denomination or menhuan within Islam has ever been formally granted legal status by the government in the form of law, or even recognized through national policies. As a result, a menhuan can be a legal organization in one place but treated as an illegal group in another location, which not only gives the masses the impression that “there is no unity in the policies of the Communist Party of China,” but also causes difficulties on the ground. Perhaps we should consider recognizing these religious denominations through an “index of denominations within China’s religions” issued by the State Bureau of Religious Affairs, which grants them a legal status. Those religious denominations listed in this “index” will be considered as legal organizations across the whole nation, while those who are not listed in the “index” will be treated as illegal groups. This will have a certain shock value for those denominations and menhuan who often provoke religious conflicts, while serving as a gatekeeper for newly emerged menhuan.

The other way to manage menhuan in accordance with the law is to clarify the key aspects of management, with the most important of them being the features of menhuan; members of the upper class of menhuan; the people in charge of venues for religious activities, mosques and Gongbei; and the types of religious activities. In regard to those from the upper class of menhuan, various systems should be established to periodically contact them, to record their requests for
and resumption from leave, and to monitor and manage the width and depth of their friendship with others. In regard to those people in charge of the democratic management organizations of venues for religious activities, while their duties and responsibilities should be clearly specified, their training and education should be enhanced, in order for them to perform a guiding function in the democratic management of these venues. In regard to mosques and Gongbei, the main focus is to establish and improve all regulatory systems and achieve the final goal of democratizing their internal management, normalizing their religious activities, making public their financial incomes and expenses, standardizing their religious learning and teaching and institutionalizing the appointment and transfer of Akhunds. In order to prevent the direct interference with the democratic management of mosques and Gongbei by the Hierarch of menhuan and to break down any administrative subordination, we should consider managing these two venues as corporate bodies, with the head of the management committee for each mosque or Gongbei as its legal representative. This person would take full responsibility for managing all the affairs of the mosque or Gongbei in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, instead of instilled habits.

D. Adequately constrain. Because menhuan as religious organizations congregate and unite, we can make use of them when their functions are well performed. However, if a menhuan cannot perform its functions adequately, then it may impact social stability and the menhuan may even transform into a political force or group. Therefore, while the positive elements of menhuan are carried forward, certain adequate constraints should be applied to negative elements. In order to dissolve these negative elements within menhuan, we should apply certain adequate constraints to the menhuan's social functions and help it exist purely as a religious denomination. There are four types of constraints. The first is to constrain the upper class of menhuan. Those from the upper class of menhuan should not be assigned any political position that is excessively prominent or influential. In particular, adequate suppression should be enforced on members of the upper class of those menhuan that are larger and more influential yet have a rather controversial presence. We cannot let them develop the habit of considering everyone as inferiors, or form the assumption that they can become “prominent officials” simply because they are rich and powerful and boast large numbers of religious followers. At the present time and in the future, the political arrangement of those individuals with backgrounds in menhuan should be confined to the level of the Akhunds. The selection criteria for these candidates should be politically-oriented, with their political conditions being the major focus. The second is to constrain the use of social propaganda. In regard to those social welfare and public interest activities that are organized by the upper class of menhuan or in the name of menhuan, there should be moderate propaganda or no propaganda at all. In particular, any behavior of appeasing menhuan or individuals with the money earned through sweat and toil by the masses should not only be prohibited, it should warrant serious criticism and correction. The third is to constrain the use of citations and rewards. In choosing candidates at all categories for special citations and rewards, we should shift our attention from the upper class of menhuan and Gongbei to those ordinary Akhunds, members of ordinary masses and mosques. The fourth and last is to constrain the
expansion of menhuan. The status quo of our nation's religious denominations and menhuan should be maintained. No individual or group is allowed to preach across different regions and denominations, to divide the religious community and construct separate mosques, or to illegally construct venues for religious activities. The aim is to uphold the unity and stability of all concentrated areas of Muslims.

4. Adequately handle issues of the Hierarch

Issues of the Hierarch are at the core of those of menhuan. Despite the fact that these are difficult and complex concerns, no research on issues of menhuan can or should avoid them. In order to uphold the unity and stability of Islam, the goal of “three abolishments” should be achieved in accordance with the principle of recognizing reality as well as facing it. Under the current circumstances, this writer considers it adequate to adopt the following measures.

A. Abolish the title “Hierarch” and resume each menhuan’s original and usual reference to its leader. The term “hierarch” has been so commonly used by the others in menhuan to refer to their leader that it is now a custom. But while many menhuan have borrowed the term without really understanding its nature and significance, various menhuan are consciously using it. The reasoning behind the use of this term is actually very simple. Since the fundamental theological concept of Islam is “tawhid,” the belief that there is only one god, and since no other god should be worshiped except “Allah,” what is the “Hierarch” as the “rule or first place of power” within menhuan? What “rule or place” or “power” does it imply? Is menhuan itself a “rule or power” apart from Islam? Once we understand this, issues of the Hierarch can be easily solved and the abolishment of “Hierarch” as a title can be easily accepted. After the abolishment of “Hierarch” as a title, each menhuan should still use its original and usual reference to the successor of its religious heritage. It should be clearly understood that the “Old Man” of a menhuan should not refer to himself as the “Hierarch,” for this is not compatible with either the spirit of the central government's policies or that of Islam. The term “Hierarch” is not allowed to appear in any document, news report, individual autobiography and file or propaganda material. While each menhuan refers to its leader with his original and usual title, the term “leader of such and such menhuan” should be used on all official occasions and in all documents and materials. The original and usual title of menhuan’s leaders can also be used on other occasions.

B. Abolish the succession of the Hierarch while preserving the succession of religious heritage. Leaders of menhuan in Islam (apart from those menhuan that have already abolished the succession of their religious heritage) have two important functions, with one being the management of the menhuan’s secular affairs and the other being the succession of its religious heritage. These functions have existed since the formation of menhuan and are now an institution. Therefore, to abolish the succession of the Hierarch is to abolish the secular power of the “Old Man” within menhuan, not only abolishing the “Hierarch” as a title, but also putting an end to the succession of the leader’s secular privileges, especially feudal-style ones. While all internal affairs of menhuan will be democratically managed
by a democratic management organization in accordance with the law, the leader will only be responsible for preaching the menhuan's religious doctrines to his followers. To preserve the succession of a menhuan's religious heritage is to respect the form of its religious belief, while allowing the leader to continue his existence as a religious teacher. Each menhuan will be passing on its religious heritage in the same way as designated by the tradition or institutionalized habit. In the process of passing on a menhuan's religious heritage, either the local government's department of religious affairs should preside over the signing of all relevant agreements and documents, or the event should be approved by the local government. In all agreements and documents, there should be clear specification that the successor is only to conduct teaching of his menhuan's religious doctrines, and that he should not in anyway interfere with the menhuan's secular affairs, such as appointing Akhunds and giving “kouhuan.” Otherwise, the government will not recognize the successor's qualification as a menhuan's leader, and the previous leader will not be allowed to give “kouhuan” over the succession of religious heritage by the successor. Meanwhile, more research and investigation should be conducted to establish a mechanism for the succession of menhuan's religious heritage within Islam under the new historical circumstances.

C. **Abolish the privileges of menhuan while preserving their names.** All religious privileges and feudal-style systems should be gradually abolished in multiple ways in the process of steering the mutual adaptation between religion and socialist society. Throughout this process, we should abide by the principle of being steady, gentle and cautious. We should provide guidance through various policies and conduct religious work on the masses, while avoiding any excessive political interference or extremist mass movement. The abolishment of menhuan's feudal privileges is part of the transition process from the menhuan system to menhuan. The goal is to turn menhuan into a religious denomination. Apart from the fact that the leader of a menhuan only exists as a religious teacher, all of the menhuan's other features will remain the same as those of a religious denomination. The menhuan's original name will also be preserved.

**5. Religious work on other aspects of menhuan**

Our religious work on menhuan is both plentiful and complex, which requires hard work and efforts to develop it from all possible angles. Based on the current development of issues related to menhuan, we should emphasize the following aspects of our religious work.

A. **Prevent new menhuan from emerging.** The formation of new menhuan and denominations is an important catalyst for religious conflicts. At present, Sufism is still being disseminated across the world and there is an increased opportunity for the introduction of Sufi thoughts to our country as a result of the arrival of the information age and frequent exchanges between all members of international society. It is also likely that new menhuan may emerge within those menhuan already existing in our country. Therefore we should remain on high alert in this regard.

B. **Prevent the further differentiation of divisions with menhuan.** The existing
menhuan in our country continue to divide, including many that are currently in
the transition process from old religious thoughts to new ones. If their mechanism
of passing on the religious heritage is not well designed and enforced, then this
lack of efficiency may provide ample room for the differentiation of religious
divisions. Steering the establishment and improvement of such a mechanism is a
new challenge for us.

C. **Prevent various menhuan from restoring the already abolished succession
   of religious heritage.** Some of our nation’s menhuan have abolished the
succession of the Hierarch and the inheritance of religious heritage. However,
the descendents of those from the upper class of menhuan and those people in
charge of Gongbei still exist. As they face the frequent temptation to receive all
kinds of benefits, whether these people will cave in to such pressure and restore
the already abolished Hierarch is unknown. We should prepare ourselves for such
possibility and develop strategies to counter it as soon as possible.

D. **Prevent the formation, development and expansion of cults within menhuan.**
The term for “cults” within Islam refers to religious heretics, but the term is also
commonly used by Chinese Muslims in their reference to “religious heretics” of a
political nature. At present, it is possible for these “religious heretics” to continue
their existence and development. While these cults share certain characteristics
of real cults, they also declare themselves to be part of Islam. This is despite the
fact that true Islam does not tolerate their existence. From the perspective of
regulating these cults in accordance with the law, our government should define
their activities as illegal, instead of merely tolerating them. Once any trace of these
cults is found, the government should eliminate them as soon as possible, instead
of simply leaving them alone for the sake of temporary stability. We cannot and
should not allow these religious heretics to endanger our society.

E. **Prevent menhuan from contacting and forming multifaceted relations with
   international Islamic denominations and organizations.** At present, Islam across
the world is both complex and sensitive. In opposition to political oppression
and economic exploitation by the West, many religious denominations and
organizations from the Muslim world have evolved into various kinds of extremist
groups with extremely complex political backgrounds. As our nation’s menhuan
search for their roots overseas, if any connection is established between menhuan
and extremist religious groups, then menhuan not only will become followers
and lose their own independent and self-sufficient position, they also will bring
the disaster of international political struggles to our country and damage our
efforts to conduct diplomatic missions. Therefore, we should pay attention to
any attempt by our nation’s menhuan to search for their roots overseas and firmly
prevent this from happening.

F. **Prevent menhuan from transforming into political groups.** At present, we cannot
find any sign of such a transformation. However, the history of menhuan tells us that
once the conditions are there, it is possible for a menhuan to turn into a political
group, political force or even political opposition. We should remain on high alert
and prepare ourselves by doing the foundational work, maintaining the nature of
menhuan as religious denominations and preventing them from turning into other
forces, especially political opposition groups.
SHAANXI
CHANGES IN ISLAM’S STATUS IN MODERN SHAANXI PROVINCE*

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Shaanxi Conference, 2009

The Guanzhong region in Shaanxi Province was once the center of Islamic culture and an important home and gathering place for the Hui ethnic group in China. However, due to the nearly complete extermination of the Hui ethnic group in Shaanxi during the reign of Qing Dynasty’s Emperor Tongzhi (1862-1874), Islam almost disappeared from the province. The religion was not revived until the early years of the Republic of China, when Muslims began to relocate from other regions to Shaanxi and a newly emerged Islam was introduced to the province. As Chinese-Arabic language schools and praying halls for women were erected around major mosques, there were changes in the concepts and practices of Muslim communities, which has helped to shape the current face of Islam in Shaanxi. Studies on the change of Islam’s status in Shaanxi Province in modern times (1840-1949) not only possess academic worth, but also contribute to the mutual understanding of all ethnic groups and the enhancement of social harmony.

I. ISLAM IN SHAANXI PROVINCE BEFORE THE REIGN OF EMPEROR TONGZHI

According to historical texts such as the *Jiu Tangshu Xiyu Zhuan* [Old Book of Tang’s Biography of Western Regions], the earliest introduction of Islam into Shaanxi Province was in 651, the second year of Tang Emperor Gaozong’s Yonghui reign,  

* This paper is part of the interim progress reports for the doctoral dissertation “Jindai Xibei Huizu Shehui Lishi Bianqian Yanju” [Study on the Historical Changes within Modern Northwestern Hui Societies], sponsored by Shaanxi Normal University.
when the third Islamic Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan sent an embassy to the Tang court (although Muslim merchants had already entered the capital Chang’an before then). More Arabic diplomats came after that, with a total of 37 diplomatic missions arriving during the Tang Dynasty. Even more civilian exchanges were held between the two sides, which were not officially recorded. According to an entry in the third year (787) of Tang Emperor Dezong’s Zhenyuan reign to the Zizhi Tongjian [Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government], since Tang Emperor Xuantong’s Tianbao reign (742-756), those Arabs and Persians who settled in China “had stayed in Chang’an for as long as forty years”; they were “content with life and not desiring to leave,” with “approximately four thousand such people purchasing properties” and conducting business in the capital. During the An Shi Rebellion (755-763), the Tang Dynasty borrowed troops from the Arabic Empire to help conquer the rebels. After that, many Arabic soldiers settled in areas such as Shayuan in Chang’an. Arabic history scholars have also noted that these people “were allowed to stay in the capital and marry Chinese women; they also built a mosque in 762.” These Muslims settled in Chang’an and married Chinese women, turning into “localized foreigners.” Particularly during the Yuan Dynasty, those Muslim soldiers settled here and were assigned land to farm, becoming “soldiers on horses and farmers on foot.” The Guanzhong region was widely developed, as wild lands became cultivated and villages and mosques were erected. A Ming author noted that eastern Guanzhong “was covered in yellow dust with no grass or any sign of life, except some small villages occupied by the Hui ethnic group.” Even today, the Hui ethnic group still have the saying that “eight hundred square leagues of the Guanzhong Plain were all cultivated by the Hui.” During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Hui ethnic group in Shaanxi, whose members were mostly farmers, concentrated in the fertile lands of Guanzhong and the northern part of the province. In 1781, Bi Yuan, then governor of Shaanxi, said in an official report, “It has been noted that there are more Hui residents in Shaanxi than in other provinces. In the administrative district of Xi’an and cities such as Chang’an, Weinan, Lintong, Gaoling and Xianyang, as well as in the county of Nanzheng and towns such as Dali, Huazhou and Hanzhong, the Hui ethnic group lives in groups and its population is dense. There are no less than thousands of Hui families living in Xi’an, with a total of seven mosques.” At that time, members of the Hui ethnic group in Shaanxi were widely distributed over the province’s seven administrative districts and five counties, with most of them in Guanzhong, then the northern and southern parts of the province. In the words of Liu Rong, governor of Shaanxi at the end of Qing Dynasty, “Every three out of four soldiers and civilians in the province are Muslim.” There was also a note in volume one of the Qin Long Huivwu Jilue [Brief Records of Muslim Affairs in Shaanxi and Gansu] that “three out of every ten people in Shaanxi are Muslim.” In Shaanxi, “since the reign of [Qing Emperor] Qianlong, peace and prosperity prevailed, so that there was neither war nor political unrest in Guanzhong and Gansu for nearly a hundred

1 See “Zhongguo yu alabo zhijian de lishi Guanxi” [Historical relations between China and Arabia], Historical Research, Number 11, 1958.
2 Zhang Han, Songchuang Mengyu [Dream Words by the Pine Window], Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986.
years. Generations of the Hui ethnic group lived and rested in contentment, and their numbers had increased considerably.4 As a result of Islam’s peaceful dissemination in Shaanxi, many Han people were converted and became Muslims. The number of the Hui ethnic group “increased to approximately one million and seven hundred thousand by the reign of [Qing Emperor] Xianfeng,”5 with thousands of mosques erected. By the middle of the Qing Dynasty, the development of Muslims and Islam in Shaanxi Province reached its peak.

Throughout Islam’s more than 1,300 years of history in China, mosque education has played an important role in the dissemination and development of religion. The Guanzhong region in Shaanxi Province is the birthplace of mosque education. By the end of the Ming Dynasty, Islam in China had reached a low point, facing the harsh challenges of “deficiencies within scriptures” and “scarcity of scholars.”6 When Hu Dengzhou of Xianyang, Shaanxi, became an imam, he adopted the characteristics of Arabic monastic education and launched a Chinese system that carried out education through the mosques. The study of scriptures grew from nothing to the establishment of Shaanxi’s Guanzhong region as the center of Islamic culture and education in China. In the implementation of mosque education, 13 texts emerged as “must reads.” The basics included syntactic structures and rhetoric and logic, while the specialty subjects covered the study of Tawhid, Islamic law, Sharia, science of hadith, Islamic philosophy, Persian literature, Persian grammar, and the Qu’ran. Scriptures in Persian language accounted for a large proportion of the overall content to be studied. The Shaanxi school placed great emphasis on studies that are “specialized and concentrated,” focusing on the teaching and research of Islamic philosophy and exploring through Tawhid the profound thoughts contained in Arabic scriptures. The languages used include Arabic, Persian, and the “Xiao’erjing” that uses Chinese dialects in Arabic script. In Bai Shouyi’s words, “Shaanxi is the birthplace of China’s Islamic culture, where the country’s Islamic institutes of the highest learning are located.” Bai further suggested that “Islamic studies in China has always had two schools of thought, Shaanxi and Shandong. The Shandong school originated from the Shaanxi school.”7 One can imagine the national prominence of mosque education in Shaanxi’s Guanzhong region. Many Muslim students traveled from all corners of the country to study here, while “Muslim scholars from Ningxia would carry their luggage and walk to Guanzhong, simply to find answers such as the writing of an Arabic word or the pronunciation of a Persian word.”8 Via such dissemination by generations of students, mosque education was established all over the country.

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5 Lu Weidong, “Qingdai Shaanxi Huizu de Renkou Biandong” [Population Change of Shaanxi’s Hui ethnic group in Qing Dynasty], Huizu Yanjiu [Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Study], Number 4, 2003.
and greatly contributed to the development of Islam in China.

II. THE "NO HUI IN GUANZHONG" POLICY ADOPTED DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR TONGZHI CAUSED THE NEAR COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF ISLAM IN SHAANXI PROVINCE

After the two Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860), China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. In order to pay reparations of war, the Qing government forcefully collected money from all of the provinces. Particularly during the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), southern China (the location of much of the country’s financial resources) became occupied by the Taiping troops. In order to raise enough funds to suppress the rebels, the Qing government increased the amount of taxes it collected from provinces in northern China, especially Shaanxi. Here, the authorities not only extorted excessive taxes and levies from local Hui and Han residents, but also deliberately created conflicts and controversies between the two ethnic groups. For the purpose of using the Han people to control their Hui counterparts, the authorities even provoked fighting between them and planned and participated in killings of Hui people. For example, Liu Rong, then governor of Shaanxi, considered Islam an “uncivilized religion” and proposed its annihilation “through the use of the Han to transform the Hui,” even forcing Muslims to “consume pork.” When conflicts and controversies occurred between the two ethnic groups, many local officials adopted the policy of “protecting the Han and suppressing the Hui,” “favoring the Han people so much that throughout any lawsuit and fight, no matter which side was right and which was wrong, the Hui ethnic group was always suppressed.”

If a Han person is injured by a Hui, then the Han should be compensated by ten [from the] Hui. If a Hui person is injured by a Han, then it takes ten Hui to compensate for one Han.” There was even a report that “killings of Hui ethnic group [would] not be investigated by authorities.” The Hui ethnic group suffered injustice but had no one to complain or appeal to. After the Taiping troops entered Shaanxi Province in the first year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi, the Qing government urgently ordered authorities in the province’s numerous counties, towns and villages to organize local militia for self-defense. In May 1862, after the Weinan militia massacred the Hui ethnic group in Huazhou’s Qin Village, the Hui ethnic group began to defend itself. Local militia took advantage of this and, supported by the authorities, started the circulation of “No Hui in Guanzhong” leaflets and the killings of innocent Hui began. In Weinan, local militia “demolished all Hui villages without discrimination.” In Dalí, local militia killed all of the city’s Hui ethnic group. In Xian’s southern suburbs, local militia exterminated tens of thousands of Hui who had taken refuge here. These violent killings eventually sparked the uprising of

11 Liu Dongye, “Rexu Huazhou Huihuan Ji” [Records on Huazhou’s Hui Uprising in the Year of Rexu], see Shao Hongmo and Han Min (eds.), *Shaanxi Huimin Qiyi Ziliao* [Data on Shaanxi’s Hui Uprising], Compilation Committee of Local Records in Shaanxi Province, p. 65.
Hui ethnic group in Shaanxi; “with no stability in their lives and no where to escape to, they had no reason to exist except to fight for survival.”

Landlords and members of local militia became the targets against which the Hui launched their attack. It may be said that economic plundering on a grand scale had caused class division to intensify, while ethnic division accelerated as a result of religious discrimination. The Hui ethnic group was forced to rebel, and the most important reason for such a decision was the cruel killings conducted by landlords and local militia. The arrival of the Taiping troops in Shaanxi contributed to the Hui uprising, which quickly spread everywhere like wildfire, “crossing thousands of leagues over rivers and plains.” In June of the first year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi, the son of one of Shaanxi’s militia leaders who supported the “No Hui in Guanzhong” policy was killed by a group of angry Hui. This marked the formal starting point of the Hui uprising in the province as a result of the Hui’s decision to defend themselves. From this point, the Qing government started sending troops to suppress the Hui in Shaanxi.

There were four large-scale attempts by the Qing army to suppress the Hui ethnic group in Shaanxi. The first attempt involved 2,000 troops led by Cheng Ming, Governor General of Hebei Province, who were besieged by the Hui in Dali and ended up failing their mission. The second attempt involved 8,000 infantry and cavalry troops led by imperial envoy Sheng Bao, who were confronted by the Hui who had adopted various proactive and flexible military tactics. The Qing troops were assaulted to such an extent that the imperial envoy went into hiding in Xi’an and was later ordered by the Qing government to commit suicide as punishment. The third attempt involved 18 battalions of Qing soldiers led by Dolongga, a famous general. Relying on new weapons such as Western-styled guns and cannons, Dolongga commanded his troops to advance slowly and consolidate themselves at every step, moving westward across the Guanzhong Plain and demolishing Hui villages one by one. In Weicheng alone, 18,000 Hui were killed, including women, children and the elderly who were thrown into the Wei River and drowned. “Only one or two thousand [Hui ethnic group] escaped and survived.” While these survivors, carrying their old and young, retreated to the Dongzhi Plain near the border of Shaanxi and Gansu, Dolongga also died later in battle. The fourth attempt involved a total of 120,000 troops led by Zuo Zongtang, Governor General of Shaanxi and Gansu. These were countered by Hui returning from the Dongzhi Plain, who decided to join forces with the Nien rebels who had just arrived in Shaanxi. Zuo considered the Hui people as “possessing a nature that was different from normal human beings,” claiming that they were “cruel and disorderly” and needed to be “annihilated without hesitation.” Such deliberate and systematic destruction of the Hui ethnic group was implemented until 1878, when approximately 2,000 remaining Hui were driven across the border into Russia. By the end of the 16-year assault against Shaanxi’s Hui ethnic group, more than one million members of the

13 Li Qina, “Youfen Jishu” [Writing in Fear and Anger], in Shao Hongmo and Han Min (eds.), Shaanxi Huimin Qiyi Ziliao [Data on Shaanxi’s Hui Uprising], p. 68.
14 Yu Shuchou, Qin Long Huiwu Jilue [Brief Records of Muslim Affairs in Shaanxi and Gansu], Volume 1, in Huimin Qiyi [Uprising of the Hui Ethnic Group], Issue 4, Shanghai Shenzhou Guoguang Chubanshe, 1953.
15 Wu Tingxi, Chongxiu Xianyang Xianzhi [Re-edited Annuals of Xianyang County], Description, 1932.
group had been killed, with thousands of mosques destroyed. “As many as one million five hundred and fifty thousand Hui individuals were lost in just six or seven years,” “or nearly ninety-one percent of the Hui population,” “almost to the extent of genocide.” Even Zuo himself reflected that “counting the number of Hui ethnic group in Shaanxi … nine out of every ten had died from military turmoil, disease or starvation; this was indeed a great calamity unprecedented throughout the hundreds of years of Hui people's history.”

After their uprising was suppressed, apart from the thousands of Hui imprisoned in Xi'an and a small group of their counterparts from southern Shaanxi, there were neither members of the Hui ethnic group nor mosques left in Guanzhong and the northern part of the province. This had considerably changed the composition of Shaanxi's population and the conditions of its various religions. Among those who were fortunate enough to survive this catastrophe, some had relocated to places such as the Qingling Mountains, Sichuan, Inner Mongolia and Ningxia, while others were forced to abandon their religion and become part of today’s Han people. Still others were relocated to the barren lands of Gansu and Ningxia and forbidden to “return to their religion and homeland,” with a few having drifted to Xinjiang or even outside of China. Their mosques were either damaged or destroyed by fire, or converted to family shrines and temples of the Han people. Tens of thousands of square leagues of land and numerous properties previously owned by the Hui ethnic group were then divided and occupied by the Han. “Except for areas near the province's border, there was none from our religion left in the vast regions south of the Qingling Mountains, such as Chang'an and the northern part of Shaanxi. All our villages, farms, houses and graveyards were now owned by those from other religions. More than eight hundred mosques were destroyed by fire.”

“The county of Fengxiang used to have sixty-three thousand Hui ethnic group (some suggested seventy-two thousand). According to surveys conducted after its liberation, in 1953 there were only seventeen,” who had moved to Fengxiang only after 1911. In short, Islam in Shaanxi was completely destroyed as a result of the policy of “demolishing Hui” in the late Qing Dynasty. In Bai’s words, “Since the failure of the Hui uprising during the reigns of Emperor Xianfeng and Tongzhi, most of Shaanxi’s Hui ethnic group had moved to the eastern part of Gansu. From then on, the center of Islamic culture slowly moved towards the west to the County of Daohe; even those originally from Shaanxi would go and study in Daohe.”

Because the Qing government’s assaults against the Hui ethnic group mainly took

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17 Lu Weidong, “Qingdai Shaanxi Huizu de Renkou Biandong” [Population Changes of Shaanxi’s Hui ethnic group in Qing Dynasty], Huizu Yanjiu [Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Study], Number 4, 2003.


place in Guanzhong and the northern part of Shaanxi, those living on the south side of the Qingling Mountains, such as the Hanzhong region and the city of Ankang in the southern part of the province, were lucky to have survived. However, their number was small, only about 30,000. Their religious activities also reached a low point. Meanwhile, at that time, those Hui living in Xi’an were guaranteed by a Hui official named Ma Bailing as “fine Muslims,” which led to their temporary confinement in the northwestern corner of the city, within a fenced area with Sajinqiao [Sprinkling Gold Bridge] to its west and Beiyuanmen [North Court Gate] to its east. The authorities set up guillotines to execute any Hui person who crossed the fence, so that those confined within this area lived their lives in fear and prayed in mosques everyday for hope. Such life in captivity continued for a total of 18 years, until the beginning of the reign of Emperor Guangxu, when local authorities invited the Hui families of six surnames—Ma, Jin, Liu, Mu, Lan and Mi—to raise horses for the government. The Hui ethnic group was finally able to gain a limited amount of freedom.

Throughout those 18 years, the Hui ethnic group in Xi’an lived their lives in fear. According to historical records such as the *Qinnan Jianwenji* [Notes on What I Saw and Heard during the Catastrophe in Shaanxi], after tens of thousands of Hui were slaughtered in the southwestern part of Xi’an on May 17th of a certain year, the local militia decided to continue on and demolish the rest of the city’s Hui ethnic group on the same night. However, as they were about to commence the killing, “a great storm suddenly arrived with severe lightning and thunder, with the rain pouring down until after three o’clock the next morning.” It was said that balls of lightning descended from the sky, rolling around the government house for so long that then governor Yingqi swore in fear, “If the Heavens desire the Hui to live, then I won’t dare think about destroying them!” Thus many of the city’s Hui people had a narrow escape. On May 21st, a leader of the local militia named Mei Jintang again claimed that he would destroy the city’s Hui ethnic group, causing them to feel “miserable and terrified throughout the night.” “As Han people from the southeastern part of Xi’an swarmed to the south side of the Bell Tower, for several days the city’s Hui were sallow-faced; with no hope to survive, they ran away from anyone who approached them, and were almost scared to death by anything that sounded slightly suspicious. They could not eat anything for days, but they did not even feel hungry.” On July 30th, after another leader of the local militia announced his decision to slaughter the Hui ethnic group, they “were sleepless all hours of the night.” On November 7th, “it was rumored that the government wanted all the Hui ethnic group dead.” Just as members of the local militia were getting ready for action, “a great earthquake occurred at three o’clock the next morning, which was as powerful as the lightning storm that took place on the night of May the Seventeenth.” “Thanks to such stunning intervention from the Heavens, none of them dare to move. Ay! The Heavens take extreme measures in the protection of their people!” This was another close shave for the Hui ethnic group in Xi’an.

Throughout *Qinnan Jianwenji*, phrases such as “the city’s Hui ethnic group were in fear,” “the city’s Hui ethnic group were restless throughout the night” and “the city’s

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22 Dong’e Jushi [Buddhist Dong’e], *Qinnan Jianwenji* [Notes on What I Saw and Heard during the Catastrophe in Shaanxi], see see Shao Hongmo and Han Min (eds.), *Shaanxi Huimin Qiyi Ziliao* [Data on Shaanxi’s Hui Uprising], p. 121.
Hui ethnic group spent their night in fear and panic” are everywhere. At that time, the Hui women in Xi’an had bounded feet and did not dare to take their clothes off at night. They often wrapped their feet tightly and put on “chastity belts” to safeguard themselves from any sexual assault. Many women even took the extreme measure of stationing themselves beside wells, with knives and scissors in hand, ready to commit suicide at any moment. This is how they spent those 18 years. Ma Guangqi, an intellectual from Xi’an’s Hui community in the early years of the Republic of China, wrote in a paper titled “Shaanxi Huijiao Gaikuang” [General Situation of Islam in Shaanxi] that for more than ten years in the beginning of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi, those surviving Hui ethnic group in Xi’an “lived in darkness, as our religion was trapped within the city under such difficult circumstances; never before had we been so frequently humiliated by outsiders and borne so many assaults and shames of all kinds. We were not allowed to leave the city and conduct business. Having to only stay within the city and find a living, we were like caged birds, of which anyone could make fun. We were fish that dared not go one step beyond our prescribed limit.”

The misery suffered by these Hui ethnic group in captivity was rare in this world, but they were fortunate to have kept seven ancient mosques in Xi’an. There was no doubt that their conduct of religious activities was severely restricted, as no one dared to raise their voices in the morning and evening pronouncements of adhan and would use the watchman’s rattlers instead. After the death of a Hui individual, his or her body could not be carried outside of the city, but was only quietly buried within the Hui community. It was said that the custom of the Hui ethnic group in Xi’an to welcome brides home at night also originated from those 18 years of life in captivity they suffered.

III. THE GRADUAL RECOVERY AND TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAM IN SHAANXI DURING THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Before the Republic of China was established, except for the Luling Mosque in the town of Xixiang in the city of Hanzhong (established in 1769), which belongs to the Jahriyya order of Sufism, all followers of Islam in Shaanxi called themselves Gedimu, which is the oldest form of Islamic practice in China. However, after the establishment of the Republic of China, the Ikhwan and Salafiyya teachings were introduced to Shaanxi. While groups of Hui moved from other provinces (such as Henan, Hebei, Shandong and Shanxi) to various regions in Shaanxi (such as Xi’an, Weinan, Xianyang, Baoji and Tongchuan), many Hui families from Guanzhong who had left during the reign of Qing Emperor Tongzhi also returned to the province now. The Chinese Communist Party’s liberal policies toward nationalities and religions further attracted the migration of Hui ethnic group from other regions of the country to the northern part of Shaanxi. On the basis of traditional mosque education, new Chinese-Arabic language schools and women’s praying halls were erected. The concept and customs of Muslim community had also undergone a quiet transformation under the influence of the Islamic Renaissance Movement across the world.

1. The introduction of Ikhwan and Salafiyya teachings to Xi'an's Muslim community

The term “Xi’an’s Muslim community” refers to the concentrated areas of those Hui in Xi’an who escaped the killings at the end of Qing Dynasty. Together with the seven ancient mosques situated here, the combined “seven mosques and thirteen Hui neighborhoods” in Xi’an was the largest Muslim community in Shaanxi. Since as early as the fourth year of the reign of Qing Emperor Xianfeng, Xi’an had been under the influence of Wahhabism from Arabia. When Imam Yang Xuehai’s grandfather returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he modified the tradition in which the reading of Qu’ran was followed by the re-reading of its first chapter (Al-Fatiha) and the first five verses of its second chapter (Al-Baqara), and used instead the reading of salam as conclusion of a prayer. Because salam begins with the sentence “Allahu Akbar, Subhana kallah humma wa bi hamdaka” (Allah is the greatest, Highly glorified are You oh Allah), members of the Hui community borrowed the word “Subhana” and referred to followers of this new prayer structure as the “Subha jia” (Subha group). Later, Imam Mu Yuanfu from Xiaoxueyi Xiang [Small Xuexi Alley] also established certain rules (al-mas’ alat) on performing the Salah (Islamic prayer): one should wipe his face with his hands once to signal the end of the du’a (praying), one should keep his beard, and one should not touch his forehead to the ground again after Tarawih, the extra prayers at night in the Islamic month of Ramadan. However, these changes were not widely promoted at that time, hence having very little influence on the Hui community. Instead, it was commonly thought that the earliest advocate for the Ikhwan teachings in Xi’an was Imam Liu Yuzhen (1861-1943). Liu was originally from the Gaomiao Village in Xi’an’s northern suburbs, with individuals from five generations of his family having served as imams. Having made pilgrimage to Mecca twice, in 1912, Liu was invited to give lectures in the Grand Mosque in Xi’an’s Sajinqiao area and put in charge of the educational work of cultivating 20 Hailifans (students studying Islam in mosques). In order to become a better teacher, Liu went to Mecca again and pursued further studies under an imam of the Hanafi school for more than a year. He then returned with more scriptures and formally began teaching in Xi’an. In Liu’s opinion, many of the religious rituals and customs commonly practiced in the city were under too much influence of Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian thought. He placed great emphasis on the strict obedience of Islamic law, while proposing that one should “establish the religion according to its scriptures; obey the scriptures and change the customs.” Using teachings from relevant scriptures, he established twelve religious doctrines that were “beneficial to the living and loyal to the dead,” and published these via stone lithography as a book titled Xingmi Yaolu [Essential Records on Informing the Misguided] with Imam Xiao Dezhen, who was also from the Hanafi school. As a result of this division between those Gedimu who followed the oldest Islamic practices and those who insisted on strict obedience of Islamic law, an event called the “chaos within Islam” occurred. Liu and Xiao ended up being banished from Xi’an. Later, in the city’s Dapiyuan Mosque, a visiting imam of the Ikhwan teachings from Qinghai announced 12 al-mas’ alat on performing the Salah. In accordance with the official policy of “each reaping what they had sown, without interfering in other’s affairs,” Liu was able to resume teaching in Dapiyuan Mosque, and the two divisions entered a stage of mutual non-interference. In 1926, more than 150 followers of the Ikhwan teachings
in Xi’an’s Sajinqiao area raised funds to purchase the Haihui Monastery (of Lamaism), which was located in the northwestern corner of the Sajinqiao intersection, and turned it into a mosque. When Ma Hongkui, commander of the Seventh Battalion of the First Nationalist Army, arrived in Shaanxi, he named the mosque “Qinzhen Xi Si” [Western Mosque], which was inscribed on a horizontal board fixed on top of the mosque’s front entrance. By the time the mosque was officially opened by General Yang Hucheng, then military governor of Xi’an, it had established the private Mingde elementary school, as well as teaching facilities for the general public, including women. Imam Wang Jingzhai was also stationed here during his translation of the Qur’an. By the 1930s, apart from the Dapiyuan Mosque, the Western Mosque and the Grand Mosque in the Sajinqiao area, followers of the Ikhwan teachings had also established the Daxuexi Xiang [Big Xuexi Alley] Mosque and the Yingli Mosque in Xiaoxuexi Xiang [Small Xuexi Alley].

In the following years, due to further conflicts between different divisions, hundreds of Gedimu left the Daxuexi Xiang Mosque, which had adopted the Ikhwan teachings, and relocated to Xiaoxuexi Xiang. They purchased properties there and launched a new mosque in order to continue following the oldest Islamic practices. In the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, more followers of the Ikhwan teachings arrived from Henan, making the Ikhwan the second largest school of thought in Xi’an within Islam. A considerable part of the city’s Hui community belonged to this school. It can therefore be said that the Ikhwan teachings in Xi’an were not only influenced by Wahhabism from Arabia, but also related to the atmosphere of “obeying the scriptures and changing the customs” promoted by Ma Wanfu, an active advocate of the Ikhwan teachings in China’s northwestern region (who had also preached in the city of Ankang in Shaanxi).

The Salafiyya teachings were introduced to Xi’an in the late 1940s. Some of their famous imams, such as Ma Debao and Ma Yuqing from Gansu’s county of Linxia, had visited the city. As a result of attacks and oppression by other religious divisions, only a few members of Xi’an’s Hui community followed the Salafiyya teachings, and they did it in secret. After the city’s liberation, it was only when three prominent imams returned from their studies of the Salafiyya teachings in Linxia and were appointed imams of the Yingli Mosque in Xi’an that the teachings were finally promoted in public, attracting an increasing number of followers. At present, both Hongfu Jie [Hongfu Street] Mosque and Xicang Mosque follow the Salafiyya teachings.

2. Mosques established by Hui Muslims from Henan and Hebei after their relocation to Shaanxi

After the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, the descendants of those Muslims who had been forced to relocate to places such as Gansu returned to Shaanxi and settled around the province. In 1934, when the Longhai Railway was extended to Xi’an, more Hui arrived from Henan and Hebei to trade or work in Shaanxi. Particularly during the Sino-Japanese War, in order to evade the invading Japanese troops, large groups of Muslims from Henan, Shandong, Hebei and Shanxi entered Shaanxi and settled along the Longhai Railway in various cities and counties in the Guanzhong area. Their arrival led to the establishment of mosques and the growth of Islam in general. Most of the Muslims arriving from Henan and Hebei’s city of Baoding chose to settle in today’s Xincheng District, the relatively less crowded area of old Xi’an’s northeastern corner.
that was close to train station. They lived around the Minleyuan [People’s Paradise] area, in places such as Jianguo Xiang [Jianguo Alley], Hunhui Jie [Honghui Street], the vegetable market and the people’s market. Thus a concentrated area of migrant Muslims was formed. For the convenience of their religious life, these migrant Muslims raised funds in 1937 to rent a piece of unoccupied land and build on it a simple prayer hall, the first in the district that became today’s Dongxinjie Mosque [Dongxin Street Mosque]. This was the first of Xi’an’s migrant mosques. Later, more funds were raised to extend the mosque. In this extended version, the three rooms on its west wing are prayer halls, the four rooms on its east wing are for bathing, the eight rooms on its south wing are dormitories for the imam and classrooms of the Chinese-Arabic language school, and the three rooms upstairs are for the preaching of scriptures. Soon after the launch of the mosque, certain women’s prayer halls were erected and hosted by wives of the imams. The aforementioned Wang Jingzhai was appointed imam of the mosque and principal of the Chinese-Arabic language school (which later moved to Xier Lu [Second East Road] due to a dramatic influx of students and was renamed Yisilan [Islam] Elementary School). Other famous imams such as Da Pusheng and Ha Decheng also visited the mosque. Since the establishment of the mosque in Dongxin Street, to satisfy the needs in their religious life, those Muslims from Henan raised funds and opened the Jianguo Xiang Mosque [Jianguo Alley Mosque] in 1939, which was extended in 1940. Those Muslims from Henan settling on the north side of the railway in Xi’an also raised funds and established the Beiguan Mosque [Northern Gate Mosque] (renamed from “Daobei Mosque” [North of the Way Mosque]). These three migrant mosques, established in the early years of the Republic of China, followed the Ihkwan teachings.

Meanwhile, some Muslims relocated from Xi’an and Henan to counties such as Xianyang, Sanyuan and Xingping, and opened restaurants that sold beef and mutton dumplings. To meet the demands of their religious beliefs and daily life, in 1938 these Muslims purchased four acres of land near the intersection in front of today’s Tibetan Minorities Institute in Xianyang, established a mosque, and appointed Ma Duanyun (from Henan’s city of Yingyang) as imam. This was the first mosque in Xianyang since the end of Qing Dynasty. Later, four acres of land on Xianyang’s hills were turned into graveyards for the Hui ethnic group, which marked the normalization of religious life of the Muslims in the city. In 1948, the Chengguan [City Gate] Mosque was established in the county of Sanyuan. In Tongchuan, there had been no trace of Islam since the killings at the end of Qing Dynasty, until the arrival of seven Hui families from Xi’an, Henan and Hebei in 1940. Two years later, another eight Hui families arrived. Among these Hui families, some worked as laborers in coal mines, others sold beef and mutton, and still others drove horse carts to make a basic living. In 1946, Tongchuan’s Muslims raised funds and purchased three yaodongs (caves dug out of the loess plateau) near Boshupo [Cypress Hill] in the Sanxindong [Three Star Cave] area for the launch of a mosque. After the country’s liberation, the number of Hui ethnic group arriving in Tongchuan increased. By 1986, the Hui population in Tongchuan had reached 2,995. In other places around Shaanxi, such as Weinan, those Muslims arriving from Henan and Hebei had also established mosques. Islam was thus revived in Shaanxi’s Guanzhong area.
3. General situation of Muslims in northern Shaanxi in the Yan’an period

As early as May 1935, on the eve of its march westward, the Red Army announced the “Zhonghua Suweiai Zhongyang Zhengfu dui Huizu Renmin de Xuanyan” [Manifesto of the Chinese Soviet Republic’s Central Government to People of the Hui Ethnic Group], in which it proposed to “protect mosques and Imams according to the principle of freedom of religious belief.” In February 1939, the first State Council passed the “Shaan Gan Ning Bianqu Kangzhanshiqi Shizheng Gangling” [Administrative Guidelines for the Bordering Provinces of Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia during the Anti-Japanese War Period], which stipulated the “beliefs, religions, cultures and customs of the Mongol and Hui ethnic groups should be respected.”

Li Weihan’s “Guanyu Huihui Minzuwenti de Gangling” [Proposals regarding issues of the Hui ethnic Group] (April 1940) also emphasized that “Hui ethnic group’s freedom of religious belief, as well as their customs and practices, should be respected.” These proposals issued by the Chinese Communist Party won the hearts of the broad Muslim masses. In the words of a news article titled “Dingbian Huimin Zishixiang shengchan fazhan shimian fanrong” [Dingbian county’s Hui autonomous town reaches Prosperity through industrial development] and published by the Jiefang Ribao [Liberation Daily] on May 30, 1944, “While the town government has its administrative duties, all religious duties are fulfilled by the mosque. There is a clear division of work, as all religious issues are handled by the Imams, while all political issues are dealt with by the town government. Thus the town government has gained the willingness of the Imams to cooperate.” Such policies toward nationalities and religions not only helped many poor Hui in their relocation to bordering provinces of Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia, but they also cast new light on Islam in northern Shaanxi.

The Party Central Committee clearly recognized the horrific killings suffered by the Hui ethnic group in northern Shaanxi at the end of Qing Dynasty: “During the Qing Dynasty, there had been Hui ethnic group living in counties of these bordering provinces. Throughout the Hui Uprising during the reign of Qing Emperor Tongzhi, as a result of the killings conducted by Qing rulers, the majority of the Hui ethnic group in these areas had either died or escaped.” Only after the arrival of the Party Central Committee in Northern Shaanxi in the 1930s did the Hui ethnic group begin to appear in counties such as Yan’an, Sanbian and Huanglongshan. “Many of the Hui ethnic group in the bordering areas had arrived after the establishment of these areas at the end of the Sino-Japanese War.” “After the Sino-Japanese war, almost all of the Hui people had arrived in the bordering areas in their attempt to escape from illegal taxation, conscription and forcible participation in the militia, as well as from economic and social turmoil caused by natural disasters.”

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Chapter Nine of Huihui Minzuwenti [Issues regarding the Hui Ethnic Group], edited by Chinese Communist Party Central Committee on Work of the Northwest, April 15, 1941.
28 Ibid.
titled “Dingbian Huiminxiang Liangxiang Xinjianshe: Kuoda Yisilan Xiaoxue, Zenxiu Qinzhensi” [Dingbian County’s Hui Autonomous Town Launches Two New Projects: Extension of Islam Elementary School and Renovation of Mosque]” and published by the Liberation Daily on July 22, 1944: “Due to the arrival of a large number of Hui refugees this year and the resulting lack of space in the fifteen mosques in town, the town government’s Bureau of Salt Affairs has decided to allocate five hundred thousand yuan from its budget to erect new mosques among the salt fields in the Yanchangbao area.” The newspaper further reported in an article titled “Fangwen Huimin Canyiyuan Yang Biao” [Interview with Hui Councilor Yang Biao] on December 15, 1944: “In the twenty-sixth year [of the Republic of China], thanks to the government’s help, two washing rooms and three houses, as well as more than twenty Hui shops, were erected outside of Xiguan [West Gate]. More than ten buildings were constructed to launch a new mosque, and a district for the Hui ethnic group was established. The Hui people have been arriving since then.” “This year, in the Hui autonomous town alone, a total of one hundred and fifty-six Hui families have settled.” In the third administrative village of the first township in the first district of Xinzheng County alone, there were three Hui families in the seventh year of the Republic of China, but this number had reached 204 by the twenty-ninth year of the Republic.39 It was therefore obvious that the Hui population had grown considerably in northern Shaanxi. It was noted in Huihui Minzuwen [Issues regarding the Hui Ethnic Group] that “there were six mosques in the bordering areas, five of which were erected after these areas were established.” In particular, the construction of the Yan’an Mosque, completed in October 1940, was proposed by the Chinese Islam Saving the Nation Association for the Bordering Areas of Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia and assisted by the governments of these areas. With a total of 15 rooms, the mosque’s name was written by Mao Zedong himself; Zhu De, Xie Juezai and Li Weihan all attended the mosque’s inauguration ceremony.

Since the “killings of Hui” at the end of Qing Dynasty, after more than 50 years of development, particularly including the arrival of large groups of Hui from other provinces and from northern Shaanxi, there was substantial growth for the first time in Shaanxi’s Hui population. By the time the first national population survey was conducted in 1953, the number of Hui in Shaanxi had reached 55,000,30 and they mainly lived in places such as Xi’an, Xianyang, Baoji, Tongchuan and Weinan. By the time the fifth national population survey was conducted in 2000, the number of Hui people in Shaanxi had reached 140,000, ranking the fifteenth most populous Hui community in the nation31 and accounting for 0.4 percent of Shaanxi’s total population. There were 126 registered mosques and a total of 232 Islamic teaching staff. It is thus obvious that although the Hui population in Shaanxi has had more than one hundred years to recover and grow, it has not been able to return to the prosperous status of “three out of every four were Hui” as it was in the middle of Qing Dynasty. The scene in which thousands of mosques stood all over Shaanxi is now history.

29 Ibid.
Since their arrival and settlement, the Hui people have lived together in concentrated areas in and around cities of all sizes in China. For more than a thousand years they have maintained their traditional culture within these communities, partly as the foundation upon which their cultural heritage can be passed on to the next generation and partly as a necessary component of their social life. However, as new cultures and new ideas arrive with overwhelming force, new technologies and new information continue to assault people’s traditional ways of thinking. Inevitably, the modernization of cities is now impacting the concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups. The gap between the overall development of Hui communities and the modernization of the surrounding cities is widening. Judging by various indicators of modernization, such as economic development, education, culture and the environment, it is evident that these communities are far behind their urban counterparts. How should such a considerable divide be bridged? The focus of our discussion in this paper will be how to retain the traditional cultural characteristics of the concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups while helping them follow the steps of urban modernization, so that the development of both minority ethnic groups and cities can be coordinated.

I. URBAN MODERNIZATION: ITS NATURE AND INDICATORS

To discuss urban modernization, one needs to be clear on two issues. First, what is urban modernization? A concept that was first proposed by scholars in the United States, numerous experts both within and outside of China have examined and debated the nature of modernization from different angles, from different positions and using different criteria, but they have not reached a consensus.
It is thus evident that defining modernization from different angles and to different extents will lead to the formation of different concepts. However, generally speaking, modernization is a dynamic and progressive process. Whether it is from agriculture to industry or from tradition to modernity, whether it is the transformation of economic development or that of values and ideas, modernization is a goal that people pursue. The contrast and choice between modernity and tradition is also an issue that people inevitably have to deal with as their society evolves. Modernization is an objective historical process. To discuss issues of modernization, there should be a corresponding evaluation and index system.

Presently, to assess whether a certain city has been modernized, a specific index system is needed to precisely evaluate and describe the process and status of its modernization. The use of such a system is not only an objective reflection of the progress of a city’s modernization; it is also a subjective recognition of a city’s achievement in this regard. A particular city or region can then be further compared with others and can learn from more advanced locations in order to enhance its own modernization.

According to the index system of urban modernization, the modernization of a city should be considered from the following five aspects:

1. **Modernization of its economy**

   Economic modernization is the foundation and core of modernization. It is not only the primary condition under which a society can be fully developed, but also an important indicator of urban modernization.

2. **Modernization of society**

   The modernization of a society is the manifestation of the extent to which the civilization of a country or region has progressed, which can be assessed from aspects such as people’s lifestyle, the existence of a social security system, differences between the rich and the poor, and the adoption of a democratic legal system.

3. **Modernization of culture and education**

   Education is the foundation upon which the economy and culture can be developed. Both economic reforms and cultural upgrades require the support of education.

4. **Modernization of basic infrastructure is an important prerequisite, as well as a symbol, of urban modernization**

   As the economic and social development of a major city reaches a certain stage, the support of corresponding basic infrastructure becomes absolutely necessary.

5. **Modernization of the environment**

   The development of a city takes place in a specific environment. It is in the city, and the country’s major cities in particular, that the most powerful and dramatic changes
in human life and their impact on the environment occur. Urban modernization is a process in which the relations between the economy, society and environment are constantly adjusted. To achieve true modernization is to enhance the prosperity of both economy and society while ensuring the continuous improvement of the environment, in order to reach a balance between the development of the economy and society on the one hand and use of the environment and resources on the other.

These five aspects of modernization are dynamically interconnected, with each complementing another’s existence. There is no doubt that the modernization of an economy is a crucial factor in modernizing culture, society, basic infrastructure and the ecological environment. However, culture, society, basic infrastructure and the environment are bound to have considerable counter effects on the modernization of the economy. If the development of any of these five aspects is lagging behind, then it will likely interrupt the whole modernization process. Because modernization is a dynamic process, the five general indicators described above are helpful in our research on problems arising from the modernization of Xi’an’s concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups and their possible solutions.

II. THE CURRENT STATUS OF XI’AN’S CONCENTRATED AREAS OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

The most prominent among Xi’an’s concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups is the Hui community, which is situated in the Mingcheng area in the northwestern part of the city, right next to the square facing the Bell and Drum Towers. It is surrounded by Bei Dajie [North Main Street] in the east, the ancient city wall in the west, Xi Dajie [West Main Street] in the south, and Lianhu Road in the north. The total area covers approximately 2.4 square kilometres of land (including parts of the ancient city wall and surrounding woods). Among the area’s population of more than 60,000, there are approximately 20,000 Hui people. This is the conventional gathering ground of Xi’an’s Hui ethnic group, where a rich Islamic cultural atmosphere still exists and is characterized by the Hui people’s traditional lifestyle and architectural features. This kind of community culture with traditional spirit is evidence of its historical nature, and the community enhances the prosperity of the local “Huimin Street” [Street of Hui People]. Today, Xi’an’s Hui community, highlighted by the Grand Mosque in Xuajuexiang [Huajue Alley] and numerous restaurants along the “Huimin Street,” is a famous landmark. Large crowds of local and international visitors help make the Hui neighborhood one of the most prosperous tourist spots of the city. Behind all this, however, we can detect a wide gap between the modernization of this Hui community and the continuing development of the modernized city of Xi’an.

First, let us examine this gap from the angle of economic modernization. Members of Xi’an’s Hui community have always been owners of small businesses. In the words of Wang Zengshan in Chang’an Huicheng Xunliji [Notes on a Visit to Chang’an’s Hui Community] during the years of the Republic of China, “among the ways in which Xi’an’s Hui people lived their lives, the majority of them were laborers and owners of small businesses, followed by merchants. Most of the trades were in food and groceries, beef and mutton, and eateries, with an average capital of several hundred yuan. Very few of them could boast a capital of more than a thousand
yuan; even fewer had several thousand yuan. The foods commonly sold were thick pancakes in woks and boiled mutton in pots.”¹ Such operational and occupational methods of the 1930s were roughly the same as they are today, as the economy of Xi’an’s Hui community is now based on eateries and tourism-related industries. Their operational scale is rather small, mostly run by family units and conducted through the sale of low-end products. They further take advantage of the conditions of “Huimin Street” and operate as holders of portable stalls and booths to serve the crowds. This operational model dictates that businesses are run at a low standard, on a small scale and in a temporary nature. The tradesmen here are constantly affected by immediate profits, which are mostly earned through low-level labor during the “rush hours” of markets and festivals. Except for a very small group of outstanding individuals, the overall income is low; there is also a lack of technical capacity and innovation. As people’s living standards become higher, their consumption structure and eating habits are undergoing rapid change, so that there is an increasing demand for the quality of the service industry. Facing such mounting pressure in the provision of quality, quantity and special technique, it becomes clear that there is a lack of strength and competitiveness in the operation of Hui small businesses. In the words of the locals themselves, “Hui businesses work hard to earn their money, but the money is not big.” This demonstrates the fundamental problem faced by the Hui economy, which is a lack of modernized concepts of management and techniques of high standard, resulting in an absence of scope, industrialization and the use of information technology in their businesses.

Second, let us examine the gap between the modernization of Xi’an’s Hui community and the overall development of this modernized city from the angle of social modernization. Social life is one of the manifestations of modernization. Because members of the Hui community operate their individual businesses, they work all day in their own premises, with neither social life nor holidays. Worse, because they are not protected by the country’s social welfare system, the gap between the rich and the poor among them is also widening. As people commonly demand a better material and cultural life, they are no longer satisfied with simply “filling stomachs.” The need for a vibrant cultural life is slowly becoming an essential part of people’s daily existence. Using Islamic culture as their guide, the Hui people devote their early years to operating businesses and their later years to conducting religious studies. There are hardly any cultural activities and facilities; even if there are plenty of them to attend, most members of the Hui community must give them up under the pressure of “earning bread and butter for the family.” At present, within the Hui community, there are rich businessmen and holders of small stalls and booths, as well as pullers of carts and the unemployed. Except for those who used to have work units and therefore now receive social welfare benefits, owners of small businesses have no social security, no pension and no medical insurance. This forces them to spend their entire lives struggling to make their small businesses survive, which leads to an absence of cultural life and a lack of time and strength to participate in cultural activities.

Third, an examination from the angle of cultural and educational modernization

¹ Wang Zengshan, *Chang’an Hucheng Hanliji [Notes on a Visit to Chang’an’s Hui Community]*, *Yuehua*, Volume 5, Number 1-14, 1933.
is required. The average cultural and educational level of the Hui community in Xi’an is very low, with the majority of its members being only high school graduates; only a very small number of them have attended universities. Among the city’s Hui schools at the primary level, elementary schools such as the Tuanjie, the Damaishijie and the Sajinqiao have been closed. Among those at the intermediate level, the No. 41 Middle School has difficulty operating due to a lack of students and is now facing the alternative of converting to a vocational school. These examples illustrate the tough circumstances and limited educational opportunities for the Hui community. The backward nature of educational facilities and concepts will no doubt impact the modernization of the Hui community. Education is the foundation for the development of a people, and only when the cultural and educational qualities of the Hui community improve can the level of its overall economic, cultural and ideological development be efficiently advanced. Only then can the modernization of the concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups be effectively enhanced.

Fourth, the Hui neighborhood is lacking in basic infrastructure. Because the Hui community is situated in an older district of Xi’an, it faces a variety of issues such as high population density, considerably-aged infrastructure facilities and deteriorating road conditions. Everything is so compact that there is a lack of space within the Hui community for further development. “As the population increases, there is a greater demand for space. However, all kinds of temporary and illegal structures have eroded public areas such as courtyards and passageways, so that there is less space for social life. As a result, the average living space per person becomes smaller, and there is not even space in some of the premises for construction of basic infrastructure facilities.” Combining the Hui neighborhood’s population of approximately 60,000 with other temporary residents, there are regularly 70,000 people living in the area. Furthermore, the Hui community is situated in central Xi’an, a golden precinct for commercial operations. Statistics show that the average number of visitors to the Bell Tower area ranges from 800,000 to one million per day, about half of which are estimated to be visitors to the Hui community. While all these people and the many shops crowded along the narrow streets reflect the area’s prosperity, its aged roads and small alleys can no longer bear the heavy pressure brought on by an increasingly large population. Because the Hui community in Xi’an is a multifunctional district that features tourism, commerce and residences (and although the noisy crowds and shops everywhere have presented plenty of opportunities to local operators of small businesses), they also cause a great amount of inconvenience to the local residents in their daily lives. Hence the first issue to be dealt with in regard to basic infrastructure is that of roads, as roads that are uneven, narrow, crowded and illegally occupied have become a serious problem for members of the Hui community. As a result of these narrow roads, three-wheeled carts have become the mainstream means of transport, something that is convenient and widely used, but illegal. Meanwhile, there is very little use of central heating in the Hui community. Except for individual dormitories for families of company employees, the majority of households get warm by us-

ing traditional stoves. In recent years, some households have installed coal burners, which not only contribute to the city’s air pollution but also impact each household’s basic hygiene. Worse, there is a lack of natural gas supply in the Hui community, as well as a limited connection to sewage facilities. All these serious problems in basic infrastructure make the Hui community look like a “village” in the center of Xi’an, and its difference from the modernized city cannot be more pronounced.

Finally, in regard to the modernization of their environment, because the Hui community in Xi’an is of a multifunctional nature and boasts a wide range of residential, tourist and commercial features, the cultural, commercial and residential aspects of this environment are dynamically interconnected and impact each other’s existence. Judging from the cultural aspect, although the Hui community is a concentrated area of traditional Hui cultural and ethnic characteristics, its Islamic culture, represented by mosques and a variety of Hui folk customs, is increasingly obscured by packed shops and teeming crowds, so that what today’s tourists have considered to be representative of Hui culture is actually the commercial operations of a series of small stalls and booths. Not only is there a lack of focus on services at a professional level, but the pleasure of shopping has been replaced by the impatience of consumers who have to always wait among the crowds. Lastly, judging from the residential aspect, the living areas are surrounded by commercial neon lights that are always lit, while the green trees and golden beams of sunlight have disappeared behind shops of all styles and sizes. The recreational areas for children and the elderly are increasingly turned into passageways for all types of vehicles, so that there is neither room for children to play games nor space for the elderly to get exercise. The only things left are the crowds and their noise.

III. MODERNIZATION OF CONCENTRATED AREAS OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS: ISSUES AND ANALYSIS OF THEIR CAUSES

Judging from the aforementioned five aspects of modernization, we can see that there is a considerable gap between the Hui community in Xi’an and the modernization of the city. While a wide range of factors have contributed to the formation of this gap, at its core are conflicts between traditional culture and modernization. “Tradition, as the prerequisite of an ethnic group whose members have no other options but to accept it, is a gene whose DNA composition determines the cultural characteristics of this group. Thus, in its nature, tradition is a prior requirement that has already been established. It predetermines the cultural personality, psychological structure, sense of value and mode of thinking of an ethnic group, hence setting the conditions in which the development of its culture can continue.”

Which of the Hui community’s traditions have been affecting its modernization in Xi’an?

The first tradition is that of lifestyle. The Hui people in China have always lived together in concentrated communities over vast areas across the country. While the small size of a community is convenient for its members to pursue a religious life, it also serves as the foundation on top of which this community can continue the development of its culture. The Hui people live around their mosques and form

3 He Zhonghua, “Chuantongwenhua yu Xiandaihua” [Traditional Culture and Modernization], Social Science in Shandong, Number 4, 1993, p. 76.
“mosque communities” of all sizes, which serve as the fundamental structure of all concentrated areas of the Hui people. However, because the first step towards urban modernization is to break down such “mosque communities” and set the goal of establishing new living patterns, there is an obvious conflict between this change of lifestyle and the Hui people’s more than one thousand years of tradition. As the Hui community is situated in an older district of Xi’an, with a very dense population and aged infrastructure, the first steps toward urban modernization are to improve the conditions of infrastructure through reconstruction and to reduce the population density through relocation. Nonetheless, to reconstruct the Hui community is to deny the traditional and collective lifestyle of its members. To relocate some of the Hui people to suburbs far away from their community and mosque is to instill a sense of fear and loneliness in their hearts. There is no doubt that such negligence of the Hui people’s traditional lifestyle will lead to their dissatisfaction with the policy of “Yidianzhi” [inter-region placement]. The evident emphasis on commercial factors during the reconstruction process will also result in the destruction of the cultural atmosphere of the Hui people’s traditional lifestyle as a community. The major reason why the reconstruction of Xi’an’s Damaijie [Damai Street] has not yet come into effect is the Hui people’s attempt to safeguard their traditional lifestyle. It is therefore obvious that life within a community has been supported by the Hui people as a tradition for more than a thousand years. This is an important issue to be dealt with in the process of urban modernization.

The second tradition is that of commerce. As the Hui community is situated in the center of Xi’an and within the commercial zone established around the Bell Tower, famous tourist spots such as the numerous restaurants along the “Huimin Street” and the Grand Mosque in Xuajuexiang have helped to make the community one of the city’s landmarks. These advantages have brought plenty of opportunities to the Hui people who, through operating traditional-style businesses as a major source of income, have managed to considerably improve their lives. Such great returns on their investment in small businesses have drawn people away from the option of conducting large and high-end commercial investments, as these require more capital and are at a higher risk of losing all profits. The business model of operating small businesses that rely on their geographical strengths is at a lower risk of losing profits and receives great returns, which is why it has become the traditional way in which the Hui people conduct commercial activities. While this tradition is beneficial to the Hui business owners, it also limits the conditions through which the economic development of the Hui community can reach a higher level of modernization. Because people are content with their small businesses and the associated freedom, they do not want to become further involved and take additional risks in pursuing more. Thus the Hui economy has stopped moving forward.

The third tradition is that of culture. The Hui people live their lives around Islam. Under the influence of Islamic culture, most people abide by the principle of “Zhizuchangle” [Happy is he who is content] and have adopted “Buyao zhengtian mang duuye” [Do not spend every day only busy with work] as their motto. The result is that religious studies are an essential part of life as a Muslim, with mosque education becoming an important way to pass on the Hui people’s cultural heritage, to augment their own culture and to keep away from the influences of other cultures.
However, as the communication between the world’s cultures increase, it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone to avoid the impact of various dominant cultures, including the Hui people, who are starting to witness all kinds of adjustment and change among their own. Such conflicts and lack of mutual adjustment between cultures cause the weaker cultures such as the Hui Islamic culture to become even more conservative and closed, thus becoming the most crucial psychological issue to be dealt with in the process of cultural modernization. The manifestation of such conservatism in education is the concern over the values of national cultural education. Many people are worried that “the more one learns, the farther away he will be from his religion.” On the one hand, they want their children to be educated and become capable of improving the Hui people’s quality of life. On the other hand, they are concerned that children will end up ignoring the study of their ethnicity and abandoning the religious and cultural roots of their people. To a large extent, such controversies have contributed to the low cultural and educational levels of the Hui people.

The fourth tradition is that of food and drink. Under the influence of Islamic culture, the Hui people have adopted Muslim foods and drinks as their cuisine, with relatively more restrictions on what can and cannot be consumed. It is convenient for the Hui people to find all that is required in their concentrated areas and not have to worry about their daily meals. However, as the modernization of Xi’an advances, the reconstruction of the Hui community and the relocation of its members to all corners of the city make it hard for them to find their meals. Partly because beef and mutton are not widely available, and partly because there is a lack of balance in the distribution of Muslim restaurants around the city, the Hui people have to endure a great deal of trouble cooking at home and travelling far and wide to purchase suitable ingredients. This alone illustrates the conflicts between Muslim life and modern life. The common saying “Huihui tuiduan” [Hui people have short legs] is an indicator of the amount of trouble suffered by the Hui people, as the restrictions of their traditional food and drink have caused inconveniences in their lives, putting a limit not only on the scope of their daily activities but also on the operations of their businesses and associations with clients and friends. After all, the modernization of commerce and economy requires one to widely liaise and establish connections with the others. In China, where the majority of people are non-Muslim, to associate with members of other ethnic groups and promote business opportunities requires one to consider carefully the traditional food and drink consumed by others.

The fifth and final tradition is that of customs. In their daily conduct of weddings and funerals, Hui Muslims abide by a specific set of religious rituals. Tradition dictates that members of the community carry out wedding and funeral rituals at home and invite an imam to lead all participants in praying for Allah’s blessings—an occasion that enables all families and friends to gather together. However, contemporary living conditions in apartment units are clearly not suitable for gatherings like this. In recent years there has been considerably less living space in Xi’an. As urban modernization progresses, traditional-style individual units are gradually replaced by high-rise apartment buildings. This has led to a considerable decline in the number of suitable venues for weddings and funerals, which will inevitably change how relevant religious rituals are performed. Meanwhile, urban modernization is also impacting
people’s lifestyle, simplifying wedding and funeral rituals and streamlining the ways in which families and friends get together. Whether their traditional customs should be maintained or modified is therefore a matter of choice that confronts members of the Hui community.

The aforementioned traditional ways of life and thinking are affecting the modernization of all concentrated areas of the Hui people. In the words of Frederick Engels, “tradition is a great retarding force, is the vis inertiae [inertia] of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down.”4 In contrast, modernization is an innovation, a transcendence of tradition, which always upholds a critical attitude towards tradition. From this angle, there appear to be intractable contentions between tradition and modernization. However, traditional culture cannot be considered as being merely passive, for modernization is a revolution that is based on tradition; the process of modernization is that of innovative reconstruction of tradition. Modernization is a cultural choice to be made under new social conditions and in accordance with the characteristics of a new era, a choice that includes new creations as well as reasonable disposal or reconstruction of traditional lifestyle. Therefore, the key to the modernization of the concentrated areas of the Hui people is to reconstruct or dispose of certain lifestyles, food and drinks, business operational methods, cultural characteristics and traditional customs of the Hui community in order to achieve coordinated development between the Hui people and modernization in a new era.

IV. REFLECTIONS ON ISSUES OF COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN CONCENTRATED AREAS OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS AND URBAN MODERNIZATION

The modernization of concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups should abide by the principle of putting people first, while proceeding on the basis of the modernization of the minority ethnic groups themselves. Only when the progress of the Hui community’s economy and culture meets the requirements of modernization can the community itself be modernized and the coordinated development between concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups and the overall modernization of cities be achieved. The current reconstruction of the Hui community in Xi’an is far from successful, because the relocation and dispersion of its members have brought dramatic changes to their lives. The Hui people are still safeguarding their traditions and do not wish to cooperate with authorities, which should be considered a failure in the reconstruction process. The key to dealing with issues of modernizing concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups is to upgrade these people’s traditions and make them serve as a positive force throughout the modernization process.

If one simply relocates the Hui people and breaks down their traditional lifestyle, dispersing them to other areas and transforming their living quarters into a series of commercial and cultural complexes, then can these actions be considered the modernization of “concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups”? Obviously, such a method only concentrates on seeking quick results and instant benefits.

4 Makesi Engezi Xuanji [Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works], Volume 3, p. 402.
and is therefore not compatible with the wishes of members of minority ethnic groups; neither is it a target for the modernization of the concentrated areas of these groups.

Based on the aforementioned interpretations of modernization, we can see that “modernization is a multi-faceted and full-scale process in which traditional societies are transformed into modern ones. Modernization is not merely the process of economic reform; rather, it is a historical process that, on the basis of economic reform, upgrades social reform, political reform and cultural growth from their traditional status to that in modern life. It concerns each and every aspect of human life.”

Hence the modernization of the concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups is an overall transformation that takes place across multiple disciplines. Only when such a creative transformation is completed, can members of minority ethnic groups in their concentrated areas follow the steps of modernization and enhance the coordinated development between these areas and urban modernization. From this, in regards to the creative transformation of traditions, I have the following proposals:

The first step is to liberate people’s thought. People’s thoughts are the command center of traditional lifestyle. Only when people’s thoughts are liberated can their views toward traditional lifestyle be changed. This is why, at the start of our country’s reform and opening-up, we proposed the liberation of people’s thoughts and the pursuit of truth from facts and thoroughly discussed various criteria for the determination of truth; we were able to break down those thoughts people held during the “cultural revolution” and establish a solid foundation on top of which our country’s economic development was achieved. As the Hui people’s life is deeply influenced by Islamic culture, the key to liberating their traditions and thought is through a modern interpretation of this culture. At present, all Islamic teaching staff members abide by their glorious tradition of patriotism and devotion to religion. They consider the promotion of traditional Islamic virtues and our Party and nation’s religious policies as their responsibility, preaching the scriptures and guiding the Muslim masses to pursue the good and abandon the evil, serving in their teaching positions as a positive force that contributes to the united and steady development of our society. However, as modern Islam develops, how can the Hui modify doctrines related to economy and education, so that the modernization of the broad Muslim masses can be advanced to accommodate the demands of a new era? How can they renew and improve their traditional lifestyle, business operations, culture and education, cuisine and customs of their concentrated areas, but within a scope that is allowed by Islam and Islamic culture? How can they better interpret superior Islamic scriptures and contribute to their adaptation to today’s new trends? These questions await answers from Islamic teaching staff members, experts and scholars, whose duty is to alter the views and attitudes of the broad Muslim masses toward new economic development models and the importance of education.

The second step is to develop the economy and promote education. Economic de-

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5 He Jianwen, “Zhongguo Zhongxinchengshi Xiandaihuajianshe Wenti Yanjiu: Jianlun Wuhan Xian-
daihuaqianshe” [Studies of Issues Arising from the Modernization of China’s Major Cities, with Dis-
cussion on the Modernization of Wuhan], p. 3.
Development is the foundation of all careers. Only when economic growth is achieved and people's living standards are raised can they begin to consider the improvement of the other aspects of their life. The current economic structure and operational model of the Hui people are centered on family-oriented small businesses. Only through integrated development, and extending the operational scope and improvement of service standards can these businesses meet the requirements of modernization and satisfy the demands of the overall economic development of the Hui people. Meanwhile, education is the foundation on top of which a people can move ahead. The current average education level of the Hui people is quite low, with noticeably insufficient educational resources. The lack of fundamental education is gravely hindering all attempts to raise the overall level of the Hui people. While economic progress supports that of culture, cultural advancement also affects how the economy is developed. Only when education is promoted and the Hui people's intelligence is enriched can their views toward economic development be modified. Only then can their traditional business models be enhanced and made beneficial for the modernization of their economy and education.

The third step is to conduct integrated planning. The concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups are cultural circles formed over time. They are not individual units; instead, they are folk organizations in the form of communities with mosques at their core. Therefore, to modernize these concentrated areas, it is necessary to treat them as a whole. Not only do they belong to a residential tradition that is essential to the Hui people's existence, but they also serve as a way for these people to pass on their cultural heritage. Today, as our population increases, our businesses become increasingly competitive and the amount of liveable space is considerably reduced. How can we discover new ways to safeguard the Hui traditions while searching for a new space in which the long-term development of the concentrated areas of the Hui people can be achieved? In my opinion, it will be beneficial for the modernization of the Hui people to establish a new community via “individual collaboration-based apartment construction” and to focus on “keeping the roots but removing the branches.” To transform from scattered concentrated areas to those that are united and in collaboration is also one of the trends of modernization.

The fourth and final step is to enforce efficient management. Currently the concentrated areas of the Hui people in Xi’an are a multifunctional community that features residences, tourism and commerce, which makes it rather difficult to manage. Many of the Hui people have set up businesses within their residential units or work as itinerant hawkers without permanent residential permits, which not only causes a great deal of inconvenience to the local residents but is also hindering the modernization of the overall business environment. Only by enhancing the management of the whole community, revamping its landscape and promoting a sense of responsibility among the local residents, can the commercial and residential environment of the whole community be improved. The modernization of management is one way to modernize the community environment. If there is a lack of management, then even high-rise buildings and luxurious gardens cannot be said to be contributing to the establishment of a good commercial and residential environment for local residents.
V. CONCLUSION

The modernization process of concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups is one of integrated development. The success of this process depends on the liberation of ethnic groups and their thought and the advancement of their economy, education, and culture. It also depends on whether relevant authorities, through careful consideration of the characteristics of these concentrated areas and the conduct of integrated planning and efficient management, are able to enforce a coordinated development between the concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups and modernized cities. Modernization cannot be achieved in one day; instead, it is a dynamic process. Only through continuous reform and innovation can we overcome the obstacles caused by traditional cultures. Only then can we transform these traditional cultures into a positive force that not only enhances the coordinated development between concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups and urban modernization but also contributes to the construction of a socialist harmonious society.
THE POSITIVE MANIFESTATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

By Ma Guiping (translated by Christine Sun)
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Shaanxi Conference, 2009

At the Sixteenth Party Central Committee’s Fourth Plenary Session, a goal was set to construct a socialist harmonious society. This is one major step towards the modernization of our nation’s socialist development—from the construction of a material civilization to that of a spiritual civilization and finally to that of a political civilization. This is also a grand plan to realize the Chinese people’s long-term vision of building a peaceful and prosperous society where the government’s policies are implemented smoothly and the people are united. General Secretary Hu Jintao pointed out that the socialist harmonious society we construct should be one that is based on a democratic legal system as well as a sense of fairness, justice, sincerity and friendly affection—full of vitality, stability and orderliness, where men and nature can coexist in harmony.

Based on the scientific nature of this “socialist harmonious society,” we can see that some of Islam’s fundamental doctrines and code of ethics fully match the nature and characteristics of a “harmonious society”; they even contain extensive understanding and interpretation of its scientific nature. Below, I will briefly discuss, from various angles, the positive manifestation of Islamic values in the construction of a socialist harmonious society.

I. RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND GOD

The fundamental belief of Islam is the Oneness of Allah: “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.” This is the “Shahada” that every Muslim needs to recite on the first day of their new life in the religion.

Allah is the creator and sustainer of everything in the universe. He makes the sun,
moon and stars function in an orderly and continuous manner, “each of them ... floating in its own orbit” (Qu’ran, 36:40). This is a harmonious universe, for Allah created everything on earth. The first verse in the Qu’ran reads: “Praise be to God, Lord of the universe. Most Gracious, Most Merciful.” Allah arranged the essentials for all living creatures to survive: air, sunlight and water, which make our planet full of vitality and beauty. This is life in harmony. Allah created men as his representatives on earth, making them the major player in all social activities. However, the Qu’ran says: “The best among you in the sight of God is the most righteous.” According to Islam, Allah is the almighty owner of everything and the most gracious and merciful caretaker of all living creatures. His orders are the ultimate law to be obeyed by men. While men enjoy Allah’s blessings, they should strive to respect and fear him, obey him, and appease him. Men cannot violate Allah’s law. Only those who respect and fear Allah are allowed to become his best representatives on earth.

This master-servant relation between Allah and men can prompt the cultivation of characteristics such as modesty, obedience, honesty and righteousness. It enables men to consciously obey laws and the code of ethics and to shoulder all corresponding responsibilities and obligations. In this case, due to the calling of religious beliefs, man’s attempts to do good as a behavioral mode are an essential element in the construction of a harmonious society.

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND SOCIETY

Islam, as a “peaceful religion,” actively promotes the harmonious coexistence of men and society. Its views on balancing the relation between men and society include: pursuing happiness in this world and the hereafter; patriotism; obeying those who are in authority; being law abiding and peace loving; opposing violence and promoting moderation; opposing extreme and narrow-minded thoughts; upholding unity and opposing division; respecting knowledge and promoting learning; opposing superstition and fortune telling; upholding generosity and giving to those in need; opposing corruption and the giving and receiving of bribes; upholding moral standards and maintaining a sense of duty; and, promoting filial piety and harmony in one’s neighborhood.

These views are evidenced and supported by a great number of religious teachings whose details need not be repeated here. It is worth noting that wars and violent conflicts have occurred throughout the history of Islam. Wars can be either for justice (such as defending one’s religion, life, land and properties from being violated) or for injustice (such as the oppression of religion and men, and the looting and killing of the innocent). However, even in wars for justice, it would be best to avoid all violent tactics and measures. This is why Prophet Muhammad signed the “Truce of Hudaybiyyah” with his enemies, effectively liberating Mecca in peaceful terms and ensuring the peaceful unification of all Muslims.

As for the other internal conflicts and wars between various Islamic dynasties since the times of Prophet Muhammad, most of these were either the result of power struggles and attempts to protect the interests of private groups or the result of civilian unrest and riots against the tyrannical ruling of dictators. All of them caused social turmoil and violated fundamental Islamic values; this kind of turmoil has always
been opposed by Muslims. This is why, to counter the three forces that have appeared within and outside of our nation—ethnic separatism, terrorism and religious extremism—we should openly declare our opposition against them. In the name of Islam, these three forces have been trying to split our nation and disrupt our national unity. No Muslim who is sincere and righteous will allow such assaults on the purity and holiness of Islam as a religion.

III. RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN

In negotiating and regulating relations between men, Islam places great emphasis on equality, respect, honesty, reliability and generosity, while opposing treachery, deception, arrogance and revenge. The Qur'an says, “O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another” (49:13). Prophet Muhammad said, in his last sermon, “All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.” The religious teaching specifically states that men are created “from the same male and female”; therefore all peoples and tribes should respect and learn from each other and cooperate and assist one another. Prophet Muhammad said, “Whoever is kind, Allah will be kind to him.”

Equality and mutual affection are the Muslim way of treating others, while honesty and truthfulness are the Muslim way of handling men’s affairs. The Qur'an says, “You should weigh with an equitable scale. Do not cheat the people out of their rights, and do not roam the earth corruptly.” (26:183) It also says, “You shall fulfil your covenant with God when you make such a covenant. You shall not violate oaths after swearing (by God) to carry them out, for you have made God a guarantor for you. God knows everything you do” (16:91). Prophet Muhammad stressed in the hadith, “Honesty leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man remains honest and concerned about honesty until he is recorded as an honest man with Allah.”

Islam further upholds justice and advocates readiness and courage to help others in a righteous cause. Prophet Muhammad left us with a specific teaching: “Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest of faith.”

These virtues, guiding men to do good, are the essence of Islamic values. They not only belong to Muslims, but also to society at large. They will provide support, in the forms of cultural and moral resources and wisdom, for the construction of a harmonious society.

IV. RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIONS

Islam has always advocated for the peaceful coexistence of all religions, each acting in its own way. The Qur'an says, “There shall be no compulsion in religion: the right way is now distinct from the wrong way...” (2:256). It also says, “Do not argue with the people of the scripture except in the best possible manner—unless they
transgress—and say, ‘We believe in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to you, and our god and your god is one and the same; to Him we are submitters’” (29:46). Prophet Muhammad further says, “The prophets are brothers of different mothers; but their religion is one.”

From these, we can see that the fundamental beliefs of Islam and other monotheistic religions are in unanimity, and that there is no severe conflict or contradiction of interests. Followers of different religions should have respect and trust among each other, strive to communicate with and understand each other, and deal with each other peacefully and as equal. They should not consider themselves to be right and the others to be wrong.

In the initial stage of Islam’s development, Prophet Muhammad and Muslims were abused and persecuted by aristocratic tribes in Mecca. Muhammad sent these Muslims to Abyssinia (south of today’s Yemen), which was then under Christian influence, and they received protection and kind treatment from the area’s Christian rulers. In 622, as Prophet Muhammad established a single Muslim religious community in Medina, he took in all ethnic groups and followers of different religions living in Medina and the surrounding areas. Within this polity, Muslims, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians alike could exist together. Muhammad drew up the famous Constitution of Medina, which stipulated, in the form of law, that non-Muslims were part of the community. As long as they did not oppose Islam or show hostility against Muslims, the security of their lives and properties would be protected, and their religious beliefs and reputations be safeguarded from violation.

Later, during the times of the Caliphates, as Islam’s influence grew stronger and the Muslim empire expanded, the number of people following other religions increased. Not only were these people given a great deal of respect and protection, they also enjoyed the same treatment in taxation as Muslims. By the sixteenth century, the Islamic Ottoman Empire had become a refuge for those Jews driven out of Spain. Hundreds of thousands of Jews, suffering religious persecution at the hands of the Spaniards, relocated to various dependencies of the Ottoman Empire, including Istanbul, Izmir, Edirne and Thessaloniki. As a matter of fact, throughout the history of Islam, there have been many occasions in which different religions and cultures were able to coexist; there has never developed discrimination toward other religions, nor incidents of persecuting innocent followers of pagan religions.

V. RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND NATURE

At present, a serious problem faced by all mankind is that of the environment. As men continue their development of the world and ignore the importance of ecological balance, our living environment suffers an unprecedented amount of pollution and destruction—global warming, frequent natural disasters, pollution of air and water, deforestation, desertification, and the endangerment of marine life. In this regard, the Qur’an has already warned us, “Disasters have spread throughout the land and sea, because of what the people have committed. He thus lets them taste the consequences of some of their works, that they may repent” (30:41). Facing this cruel reality, men have indeed repented.

Comrade Hu Jintao said in his speech, “If we cannot effectively protect our living
environment, then not only are we unable to pursue the sustainable development of our economy and society, but our people also will not be able to have fresh water to drink, clean air to breathe and quality food to eat. That would surely lead to a series of social problems.”

Islam promotes frugality and opposes extravagance. It also advocates reasonable use of natural resources. The Qu’ran says: “O children of Adam, you shall … eat and drink moderately; Surely, He does not love gluttons” (7:31). With regard to the protection of the natural environment and animals, there are many religious teachings and doctrines that serve as instructions and regulations. For example, during the annual pilgrimage, once the pilgrims have entered the sacred state of Ihram, they are forbidden to harm any animals, including insects; nor can they damage any living plants in the surroundings, or they will not be able to successfully complete the tasks required. Some scholars have suggested that these are the world’s earliest laws on environmental protection. Prophet Muhammad also encouraged his followers to plant trees and look after animals while refraining from destroying them without reason. He said in the hadith, “If a Muslim plants a tree or grows grain and a bird, a person or an animal eats from it, it will be counted as a charity for Him.” He also said, “A good deed done to a beast is as good as doing good to a human being; while an act of cruelty to a beast is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being.” Prophet Muhammad loathed acts of environmental pollution. He said, “Avoid the three actions that bring people’s curses: defecation in water sources, on roads and in the shade.”

To summarize, in the process of constructing a harmonious society it is necessary that we properly adjust the relations between men and God and adequately handle the relations between men and society, between men, between religions, and between men and nature. Islam’s core value is fear and respect for Allah. Its manifestation of a harmonious society is through its promotion of principles of doing good and preventing evil, its spirit of forgiveness and compassion and its pursuit of happiness in this world and the hereafter. As Ma Zhu (1640-1711), the renowned Chinese scholar of Islam, has written in his book Guide to Islam, “Those who are kind to their children have individual virtue, those who are kind to those of the same faith have collective virtue, those who are kind to those of different faiths have civic virtue, while those who are kind to animals, birds, insects and all vegetation have universal virtue.”

With such spiritual capacity to accommodate all differences and its corresponding achievements in cultivating a culture of ethics, there is no doubt that Islam will be able to positively contribute to the construction of a socialist harmonious society.
MIGRANT MUSLIMS’ ADAPTATION TO URBAN ECONOMIC LIFE: CASE STUDIES FROM TIANJIN, SHANGHAI, NANJING AND SHENZHEN

By Tantian² (translated by Christine Sun)
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Shaanxi Conference, 2009

I. THE ISSUE AT HAND

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, China’s social transition process has seen many changes. There is an increase in the complexity of factors contributing to population migration, as the movement of people becomes more self-induced and the number of long-term city dwellers rises. According to the latest observation in the “State of World Population 2007,” published by the United Nations Population Fund, China is currently at the peak of its urban transition process, with approximately 18 million individuals migrating from rural areas to cities each year.³ Accompanying this trend is the outstanding issue of migrants’ adaptation to urban society.

Although in recent years the number of ethnic minority people migrating has not been large, it is growing fast. Particularly in the provinces and cities of eastern China, the participation rate among minority ethnic groups is generally higher than that of the Han population, with the rate being above 50 percent among minority ethnic groups in Guangdong Province, Zhejiang Province, Shanghai City and Jiangsu

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¹ This paper is one of the interim progress reports of the project “Studies on Issues of Migrants’ Religious Beliefs in the Process of Urbanization” (No. 06BZJ009) sponsored by the National Social Science Fund, and part of the symposium series “Discussion on Migrant Muslims’ Social Adaptation and the Harmonious Society.”

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At present, most scholars are concerned with issues of social adaptation among the majority members of the migrant population, who are Han “agricultural laborers.” There is little research on minority people as migrants, and what there is has a limited focus on the relationship between cities and minority ethnic groups. There are even fewer studies on minority people as part of the migrant population, especially on migrant Muslims’ social adaptation. China boasts many ethnic groups, and all of them are involved in the process of the country’s modernization. Therefore, judging from the perspective of social development and transition in urban areas, it is perhaps more practical to now concentrate on the mutual adaptation between urban societies and migrant Muslims and to explore potential solutions to the controversies arising from this process.

II. CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

1. Concept of Social Adaptation

In sociology there is no specific explanation of the term “social adaptation.” Some suggest that “adaptation” should be defined as “the change or refusal to change, either in individual psychology, behavior and lifestyle or in collective function and culture, as a result of situational change or transition.” Others consider “adaptation” from the perspective of socialization and suggest that “socialization and social adaptation are the same thing interpreted from two different viewpoints,” and can be further divided into three levels: the economic level, social level and psychological level. Still others attempt to explore the nature of “social adaptation” from the perspective of socialization, including one’s adaptation to the social living environment, to the performance of various social roles, and to the conduct of social activities. Specifically in regard to the issue of migrants (mainly “agricultural laborers”) and their adaptation to cities, there is the argument that “one’s complete adaptation to a city should be his or her acceptance of and familiarization with (not necessarily including his or her psychological identification with) the lifestyles, work patterns, behavioral modes and sense of values of the city.” All this discussion on “adaptation” or “social adaptation” emphasizes the fact that the structural interaction between individuals or groups at the micro-level and the new environment at the macro-level is actually a conscious behavioral process. This indicates that the social relationship between the micro- and macro-levels is the crucial point where one’s entry and adaptation to a new environment begins.

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5 This term is placed between quotation marks because it is of a discriminatory nature.
2. **Push-Pull Theory**

Among Western studies on theories of migration, the earliest scholar to propose the push-pull theory is perhaps R. Herbele. Later, in a complete and concise fashion, D.J. Bogue summarized the factors that enhance or hinder the population flow between source and target locations, which include twelve push factors and six pull factors. Of course, some Western scholars have criticized this theory for oversimplifying the complex migration process. Others have proposed to preserve the theoretical structure of this theory but to use only four factors (source location, target location, intrusion or interference, and individual circumstances) as components of an extended model. In practice, it is common for researchers to combine the push-pull theory with other theoretical models in their conduct of empirical studies. Therefore, as a model for theoretical analysis, the push-pull theory can be an important inspiration to the study of migrant populations in China’s social transition process. A recent example of its implementation and the results appears in studies of migrant populations within Li Qiang’s “Analysis on the Push and Pull Factors Affecting China’s Population Flow between Urban and Rural Areas.”

3. **Human Capital Theory**

“Human capital, unlike physical capital, is the value added to a laborer when the laborer acquires knowledge, skills and other assets useful to the employer or firm in the production and exchange processes. The important distinction between physical and human capital is that human capital is the added value embedded in the laborers themselves. Typically, human capital is operationalized and measured by education, training and experience.” Apart from its direct impact on individuals, human capital has the potential to cause long-term effects for a person; it can “raise earnings, improve health, or add to a person’s good habits over much of his lifetime. Therefore, economists regard expenditures on education, training, medical care, and so on as investment in human capital. People are called human capital because they cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health, or values, in the way they can be separated from their financial and physical assets.” In addition, because human capital is a “non-current asset,” which cannot be sold or used as a deposit for bank loans, such an asset is likely to have quite a large positive liquidity premium. The human capital theory is therefore helpful in extending the scope through which issues affecting the adaptation of migrants to urban economic life, as well as the interrelationship between migrants and urban areas, are analyzed.

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4. Push and pull factors, human capital, and adaptation to urban economic life

“In China, the push and pull factors are effective because agricultural laborers are situated within a specific ‘life cycle.’ If the push and pull factors are not compatible with this life cycle, then their effects will be lost.” This is because “overseas studies on push and pull factors are established on the premise of a market-oriented economy where the flow of labor is completely free. The development of the market in our country is still rather limited, and the most prominent indication of this is the household registration system. Under the influence of this system, both pushing and pulling forces can be distorted, with some of them becoming ‘invalid.’ In other words, although these push and pull factors still exist, they are not effective at all.”¹⁵ The results of our investigation also reveal a significant difference between the institutional environment in China and that in Western societies, which affects not only the push and pull factors and their impact on population flows but also the interrelationship between these and other factors on both sides. As a result, there is also a difference in the push and pull factors and their formation in China as compared to Western societies. In particular, individual members of society are powerless to escape the structural constraints caused by inconsistencies between economic and social transition processes. With discussions on push and pull factors alone, it is difficult to deal with all issues arising from China’s social transition process.

In order to compensate for such deficiency in its use of the push-pull model, this paper includes the human capital theory within its framework of analysis. The theory is treated as a “crucial point” where the relationship between the push and pull factors is manifested. This treatment is an attempt to examine the characteristics of the push and pull factors that affect the flow of Muslim population, with a focus on exploring how these factors impact the adaptation of Muslim migrants to urban economic life. This is because the manifestation of the push and pull factors is a background influence at the macro level, while human capital is a concrete manifestation of the relationship between individuals and their macro-backgrounds. Not only can human capital convey the complex relationship between the push and pull factors, but it can also extend the scope in which the relationship between the individual factors of migrants and the social environmental factors of their backgrounds can be analyzed. Thus, any inconsistency between individual migrants and their social environments at the macro level (including the developmental differences between the source and target locations) can be avoided. More importantly, human capital is part of the individual factors of migrants when they encounter concrete problems in adapting to urban economic life. However, when the source and target locations of migration are examined, the differences between the two locations as macro-backgrounds are manifested in the evident distinction between their respective requirements for human capital. When this happens, human capital is manifested as a background factor that is universally distinct.

For example, in regards to those individuals who have migrated to urban areas in recent years, there appears to be a wide gap between the human capital invested

in them at their source locations (i.e. the villages or towns they came from) and the amount of human capital they need in order to survive in their target locations (i.e. the cities they went to). For the migrants, this is likely to be the major macro-background factor that determines whether they can adapt to urban economic life successfully. Against this macro-background, human capital as an individual factor is also likely to have a long-term and direct impact on the abilities of these migrants to adapt to urban economic life, as well as to the ways in which and the extent to which they can do so. In this case, human capital is a “crucial point” where the relationship between the push and pull factors is manifested. That is, human capital reflects the difference in micro-backgrounds against which human capital serves either as a contributor to overall economic development or as an essential condition for individual survival. It also highlights the impact of such difference in micro-backgrounds (which is needed in order to satisfy the demands of both overall economic production and individual survival), which is manifested as an obstacle for migrants in their adaptation to urban economic life. Therefore, in my opinion, the pushing and pulling forces formed as a result of various institutional changes against a micro-background are the factors that impact the adaptation of migrant Muslims to urban economic life, while the human capital factor is a fundamental and major condition for this process to occur. Of course, this is a brand new attempt to combine human capital and push-pull theories in the discussion of issues of migrant Muslims and their adaptation to urban city life.

III. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

1. Analysis of basic conditions

Most of the migrant Muslims in Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing and Shenzhen came from concentrated areas in Western China and were moving toward individual communities of the southeast coast (see Table 1).

The differences between the source and target locations of migrant Muslims are not only in their geographical positions and natural environments, but also in their positions and achievements in the social development process and their cultural characteristics. Particularly for those Muslims who work in agriculture and animal husbandry in concentrated areas in the country’s northwest, life is tough as a result of political oppression throughout their history. Limited by the inferior conditions of their natural environment, their production methods and lifestyle are considerably different from those that are common in the cities of the country’s southeast. These Muslims are situated at a completely different stage in the process of social

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16 Notes: Our researchers distributed 1,000 copies of the survey and received 875 back. Among the received responses, 95.8 percent were valid. Apart from those whose sources are specifically mentioned, all the tables and relevant data used in this paper are from the results of our survey.

17 Western China is identified as including Shaanxi, Gansu, Henan, Ningxia, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Xizang, Chongqing, Inner Mongolia and Guangxi, including 12 provinces and cities and two autonomous states. Together, they account for 71.9 percent of China’s total area and 23 percent of the country’s total population, including those from five autonomous regions. Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan are provinces with comparatively more concentrated areas of minority ethnic groups.
development than their city counterparts. Therefore, with regard to social adaptation, when migrant Muslims arrive in the cities of southeast China, each of them is already under three types of “pre-existent” pressure as a result of such substantial difference between their source and target locations. The first type of pressure is that of being forced to “adapt” to the considerable difference between their previous and current living environments in terms of regional development. The second type of pressure is that of having to “adapt” to the change of lifestyle and production method that is forced upon them, particularly as a result of their insufficient human capital. The third and last type of pressure is that of culture and identity, including the psychological weight of having to “adapt” to an altered sense of security that arises from the different ethnic groups and religions these migrant Muslims now encounter, as well as from changes in their own behavioral patterns and social environments. These three types of pressure serve as an “internal factor” that always accompanies these migrant Muslims as they move around the city; it also directly impacts how they adapt to life in the city and the numerous institutional constraints this embodies.

Table 1 Sources of migrant Muslims, in accordance with the provinces or autonomous regions where their households are registered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Valid Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qinghai</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ningxia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaanxi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinjiang</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gansu</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>726</strong></td>
<td><strong>94.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invalid</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>875</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In discussing the pushing forces for population flow, income is often a primary factor. It is indeed so in the case of migrant Muslims. Although there are numerous other forces, the differences in regional development are manifested directly in opportunities of gaining a higher income. This leads to the formation of a pushing force in rural areas where the average income is relatively low and that of a pulling force in cities where the average income is expected to be relatively high. These push and pull factors combine to bring migrant Muslims to the city. This is the major reason for population flows during the social transition period, which has the same evident impact on the population flows of other ethnic groups. Therefore, just like Han migrants who are mostly “agricultural laborers,” the goal of most migrant Muslims is very clear—to gain a higher income in the city and improve the standard of living.
for themselves and their families. This well demonstrates their personal intention to actively “adapt.”

Table 2  Reasons for migrant Muslims’ relocation to cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>VALID PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALID</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn income and improve life</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better development for children</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work demands</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study or research</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVALID</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the data shown in Table 3 and Table 4, we can see some positive changes. There is a considerable improvement in the average income of migrant Muslims after their relocation. Specifically, the number of those with an income of less than five hundred yuan has dropped, while there is an evident increase in the number of those with an income of between five hundred and one thousand yuan. In addition, there is an obvious increase in the number of those with an income of between one and two thousand yuan. These three groups account for approximately two-thirds of all who were surveyed. It also indicates that, at least at the level of basic survival, these migrant Muslims have successfully adapted to city life.

Table 3  Income of migrant Muslims before relocation (unit: Yuan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>VALID PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALID</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 500</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500–1,000</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000–2,000</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000–3,000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000–4,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 4,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVALID</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4  Current income of migrant Muslims (unit: Yuan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Valid Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALID</td>
<td>Below 500</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500-1,000</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,000-2,000</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,000-3,000</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,000-4,000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,000-5,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 5,000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>799</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVALID</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>875</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Analysis of factors affecting migrant Muslims’ adaptation to urban city life

(a) Impact of “Household Registration System”

In reality, land ownership and the household registration system are the source of all pushing and pulling forces; they are also the roots from which all kinds of institutional constraints grow. From the point of view of the migrants, factors such as the systems of household registration, urban management, social security, education and the protection of the interests of minority ethnic groups have become an obstacle to their adaptation to urban economic life. Many scholars have discussed these issues, including “A Discussion on the Social Adaptation of Agricultural Laborers,”18 “Analysis on the Push and Pull Factors Affecting China’s Population Flow between Urban and Rural Areas,”19 “Urbanity and the Urban Adaptation of Agricultural Laborers”20 and “Development Difficulties and Social Risks Faced by China’s Migrant Population in Cities.”21 There appear to be many similarities between the kinds of institutional constraints encountered by migrant Muslims and those faced by the Han migrant population whose members are mainly “agricultural laborers.”

Throughout the past three decades, China’s cities have been relatively successful in economic transition. However, in their social transition process, these cities are

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still at the exploratory stage. Particularly in the implementation of various mechanisms through which these cities can function as modern and harmonious societies, it seems the so-called “path dependence” phenomenon still prevails, in which the cities simply abide by the traditional pattern of passively reacting to changes and mending whatever damage has been done. In my opinion, urban societies play a part in the occurrence of obstacles for migrants to adapt to city life, primarily because these societies are still situated within a conventional institutional structure that is under the command of government-led administration and a management style that prevents inclusion. For example, an urban society provides support only to those residents who have registered their households within the city boundary. Such support includes policies and procedures that enable the city’s residents to enjoy various benefits for and protection of their efforts to promote their economic status, or at least to safeguard this status from being downgraded; also provided is protection of social mobility for all city residents. However, such an institutional structure, with all its mechanisms, only serves as a series of formal constraints for the migrant population in their attempts to enhance their social mobility. As a matter of fact, this institutional structure is the primary reason for the scale of relationship between urban societies and migrants to lose its “balance.” On the one hand, the institutional structure of an urban society creates a “pre-existent” unfairness that blocks the channels through which migrants ought to be able to upgrade their economic status and lay a foundation for their urban and social adaptation; it also blocks any new motivation for this society to continue its development. On the other hand, such an institutional structure forces migrants to seek support from non-institutional sources in order to reach their goals, which in turn increases the complexity of this urban society’s transition process. While these results of self-contradiction are caused by the institutional structure of an urban society that adopts traditional administration and management models, they are also the primary reason why such self-contradiction and all related problems cannot be solved without conducting institutional reform.

Nonetheless, if we look at this issue from another perspective, is it possible that these problems of unfairness and self-contradiction created by the institutional structure of an urban society also contribute to the formation of certain pushing and pulling forces in regards to the direction, manner and substance of the transition of this society? The answer should be a positive “yes.” Of course, Chinese societies may experience difficulties in their transition process, and although the push-pull theory can be used to explain some of the causes of these difficulties, there are “insufficiencies” in doing so, because the push and pull forces can only be effective “on the premise of a market-oriented economy where the flow of labor is completely free.”22 The aforementioned interaction between urban societies and migrants generally has two consequences: either some of the migrants are forced to return to their source locations, including the unwanted “baggage” (those who are “incapable” of surviving in the city or who are sick or injured through work), or these migrants will continue to cause unpredictable problems to the economic order and social stability of these cit-

ies. Either way, it is not compatible with the expectations arising from the construction of a harmonious society.

(b) Factor of “inflation” in the cost of living in cities

For migrant Muslims, there can be many unforeseen economic factors affecting their life in the city. If we take into consideration the differences between various amounts of income earned by migrant Muslims before and after their relocation (as shown in Table 3 and Table 4, which illustrate the extra amounts of money they receive after moving to the city) and measure them against three indicators for the cost of living in cities (i.e. the consumer price index [CPI] of a city, the lowest living security line [minimum wage] for the city’s residents, and the city’s house rent price index [HRI]), then we see that a higher income is likely to be canceled out by the increased cost of living in the city.

Specifically, such a comparison can be done using data from 2006 statistics in four cities. In Tianjin, while the CPI reached 101.5, an increase of 1.5 percent from the previous year, the HRI rose 4.4 percent in the same period. The city’s minimum wage per month reached 670 yuan from the previous year’s 590 yuan. In Shanghai, the CPI and the HRI rose 1.2 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively, from the previous year. The city’s minimum wage per month reached 750 yuan from the previous year’s 690 yuan. In Nanjing, while the CPI reached 101.7, an increase of 1.7 percent from the previous year, the HRI rose 4.1 percent in the same period. Starting from October 1, 2006, the city’s minimum wage per month reached 750 yuan from the previous year’s 690 yuan. In Guangdong province (where Shenzhen is), while the average CPI rose 1.8 percent from the previous year, including 1.8 percent in urban areas and 1.6 percent in rural areas, the HRI rose 4.6 percent in the same period. These data indicate that in all four cities, the CPI kept rising. Take the example of noodle eateries, a business operation that appears to have attracted a relatively large amount of migrant Muslims. If we compare the nearly permanent price of noodles with the CPI’s increase, we find that the income of migrant Muslims was nearly “permanently stable.” However, “some welfare policies and social security systems have excluded [these migrant Muslims]. Why? Because the migratory nature of these individuals has invalidated their access to social protection. … They exist in regulation-oriented public management systems, but are invisible in all service-oriented public management systems.”

Taking into consideration these basic living conditions, we can imagine the difficult circumstances in which migrant Muslims try to adapt to urban economic life.

In Table 5, we can see that two-thirds of the migrant Muslims surveyed are renters; they are renters of commercial space for noodle eateries and renters of residential units. If we compare the HRI figures with the incomes of these small business operators, we soon reach the same conclusion: the increase in their incomes is likely to be completely canceled out by their rents, which include necessary utilities like water and electricity that they cannot avoid. It is worth noting that Muslims take particular care of their environment; however, the excessively high operating costs make it difficult for these migrant Muslims to consider improving the eating environment of their noodle eateries. Should the “invisible” impact this is likely to have on the incomes and business reputations of these noodle eatery operators, as well as the resulting misunderstanding among their customers, be considered as a factor that affects the adaptation of these migrant Muslims to their urban economic life? Particularly when we take into consideration the fact that there is a relatively high rate of controversies and conflicts between migrant Muslims and city authorities in charge of examining food and employer hygiene in restaurants and eateries? On the whole, as the CPI in cities continues to rise, the kind of “compensation” that city residents receive through various types of institutional protective mechanisms is also increasing, as data from the 2007 statistics is likely to demonstrate. How can we “compensate” for the fact that any extra income of migrant Muslims will be canceled out because they do not have access to the benefits that only city residents get? This may be considered a major constraint on migrant Muslims’ adaptation to urban economic life.

Table 5  Housing conditions of migrant Muslims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALID</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>VALID PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchased with private savings</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank loans</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting from others</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary stay in units of others</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary stay unspecified</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>834</strong></td>
<td><strong>95.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVALID</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>875</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Personal factors

Personal factors include many aspects. From the perspective of human capital, migrant Muslims from China’s west are in a worse situation than that of “agricultural laborers,” many of whom are of the Han ethnicity. This has a lot to do with the amount
and types of investment in human capital in the western regions, and it is manifested in the level of education, and acquisition of knowledge that meets the demands of modern economic development, and the skills training of migrant Muslims, which affects the kinds of employment they are able to find. If we also take into consideration factors such as ethnicity and religion, we find that it is even more difficult for these Muslims to find appropriate jobs when compared to other migrants who are mainly Han “agricultural laborers.”

The primary contributor to such difficulty is an individual's education, and the average educational level of migrant Muslims is rather low. Often they have not received any professional skills training; they have only acquired noodle-making skills from family members. This is the primary reason there is not much diversity in the production methods of migrant Muslims; that is, they can only excel in the so-called “noodle economy” that displays a lack of variety in the types of products offered. The majority of their occupations are also within the boundary of this “noodle economy,” which in turn limits their association with others and affects their contact with modern urban economic life, thus forming a major obstacle to their social adaptation in modern cities.

Table 6 indicates that there is a substantial gap between the cumulative percentage of migrant Muslims whose educational levels are “middle school” and below (81.42 percent) and that of Han “agricultural laborers” belonging to the same educational levels (66.5 percent). Such a considerable gap illustrates the institutional and structural insufficiencies in the investment in the human capital of minority ethnic groups in China’s western regions. We should consider the standard and quality of the development of education in these regions and pay attention to the nature and reality of “education at the level of middle school” in different regions. Limited educational opportunities and human capital investment form an obstacle not only to migrant Muslims’ adaptation to urban economic life, but also to their efforts to improve their economic status and rise within the society.

28 Sun Faping, etc, “‘Noodle Economy’: An Effective Model to Solve the ‘Three Rural Issues’ in Hualong County, Qinghai Province,” Ascent, 2005 (2), p. 63. [Translator’s Note: “Three Rural Issues” refers to three issues relating to China’s rural development, which are agriculture, rural areas and peasants.]
Table 6  Educational levels of migrant Muslims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>VALID PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALID</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school and below</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>46.29</td>
<td>47.31</td>
<td>47.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>33.37</td>
<td>34.11</td>
<td>81.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or technical secondary school</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>91.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University or college</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>98.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>856</strong></td>
<td><strong>97.83</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVALID</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>875</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrant Muslims’ customs are the second contributor to their difficulties finding appropriate employment. The reasons it is difficult for migrant Muslims to adapt to urban economic life are rather complex, for they are a minority ethnic group. For example, the sentiment “it is hard to find jobs” may reflect the different criteria adopted by city enterprises in their search for proper employees, or it may indicate the constraints formed around migrant Muslims as a result of their religious beliefs, customs and social habits. At the personal level, the impact “invisible” customs may have on the adaptation of migrant Muslims to urban economic life is particularly worthy of note, for the following reasons: (1) “Customs are a compound mixture of elements such as habits, emotions and one’s recognitions of various events, which cannot be easily dissolved. There is a powerful inter-influence among habits, emotions, religious beliefs and personal thoughts. They complement each other’s existence, with one’s strength compensating another’s weakness.”30 As a result, the “invisible” inflexibility between different customs may form a major obstacle for migrant Muslims in their attempt to adapt, which cannot be easily and rapidly changed. (2) So far there has not been any institutional attempt to narrow the gap between China’s urban and rural areas in terms of the consequences of their transitions. The differences between the development of the farming villages in the country’s west and that of the cities in the east have extended the strain between different customs; the complex mutual repulsion between them has also increased. For example, while economic behaviors in western China’s rural regions are likely to abide by those customs that are traditionally observed in these areas, similar behaviors in eastern China’s urban regions may

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simply follow the economic rules of a market mechanism; between these two is a relationship of mutual repulsion. Although such differences between the western and eastern regions are caused by a lack of balance in the social transition process, they are manifested in the conflicts between the behaviors of individual migrants and the rigidity of social administration systems constantly at work in urban economic life. (3) China is a country where each of its many regional cultures has a pronounced presence. Between the heavy concentration of ethnic and religious peoples in the west and the increasing dissipation of the same distinctions in the east, there can be a great deal of misunderstanding deriving from the difficulties in mutual communication between the two sides. This will in turn create problems as individuals attempt to “adapt” to different regional cultures. In addition, as migrant Muslims only have their own “trials and errors” to rely on in the process of urbanization—without assistance or guidance from any government or private agency or the support of any institutional mechanism within urban society—it is impractical for them to overcome all the constraints surrounding them and rapidly adapt to urban economic life. (4) An urban society is essentially a social environment where all “alien Muslims” have to face discrimination from various institutional mechanisms, from city residents and from the local Muslims. While migrant Muslims may feel repelled by such discrimination, it can also serve as a distinct force that pulls them to identify with the city, where their expectation for a better income stands above all. However, once these migrant Muslims are in the city and can only survive within the boundaries of all kinds of constraints, their inability to achieve their expected goals and to enjoy whatever cultural life the city has to offer may cause their sense of belonging to become “uprooted.” This can serve as a pulling force from their source location, which may combine with the pushing force from the target city to create a “resonance effect.”

IV. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Since the Sixteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, many innovative theories on the development of a harmonious society have emerged. Their focus is to closely follow the reality and trends of China’s reform and opening-up and to promote innovations in such theoretical framework both specifically and strategically. While the theories of social development in advanced countries are to be absorbed, there should a systematic promotion for theoretical innovations in accordance with the realistic situation of China’s social development. For example, the converging point of the construction of a “service-oriented government” and “social construction” is clearly manifested in concern for “people’s livelihood,” which serves as the prerequisite and warranty for all solutions to issues of the adaptation of migrants to urban societies.

The emphasis of a service-oriented government is that “the government should execute its duties in public service and social administration and provide more and better public-oriented products and services.”31 We should consider the construction of a “service-oriented government” as a process, one in which brand new mecha-
isms for social management and systems of public policies can be constructed. This process also serves as the prerequisite for the successful completion of social transition. In other words, in the process of constructing a service-oriented government, all institutional obstacles to the adaptation of migrants to urban societies will be gradually dissolved. Such a process is also one in which new institutional systems and mechanisms will be gradually established to assist the adaptation of migrants to urban societies. These institutional systems and mechanisms will eventually help dissolve the current difficult situation in which urban societies and migrants need each other in their mutual development but in which one serves as a constraint for the other in terms of management. Through the construction of a service-oriented government, the conditions for the development of social enterprises and people’s livelihood-oriented industries can be improved, and a fair and just environment can be established for social development. These will help to effectively enhance the construction of a harmonious society.

The report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China provided a detailed explanation on “Accelerating Social Construction to Improve People’s Livelihood.” The report’s content can be categorized into three levels. “The first level mainly refers to the bottom line for the people’s basic survival. The second level mainly refers to the people’s basic opportunities and capabilities for development, as one not only requires dignity in order to survive, but also should have the ability to survive. The third level mainly refers to the social welfare conditions above the bottom line of the people’s basic survival.”32 We should consider social construction as a process, and its focus on the people’s livelihood highlights the realistic situation of the early stage of China’s social transition. As for the issues discussed in this paper, once the process of social construction is focused upon the people’s livelihood, the difficulties and problems (such as the input of human capital and the fairness of social protection) that exist within a society’s institutional structure and environment as part of the micro-background—and which cannot be removed by individual members of the society—will gradually be dissolved. The solution to these difficulties and problems will improve the mutual communication and understanding of different regional cultures, enhance the integration and interaction of all members of the society, and serve as a foundation for the construction of a harmonious society.

As we observe the adaptation of migrant Muslims to their life in the city, we can see that many of them are still situated on the edge of an urban economic life, restrained within the early stage of their economic adaptation and thus unable to pursue further development. Among all the contributors to this problem, the institutional constraints of urban society are the primary factor and the human capital of these migrant Muslims is another major factor. The two combine to impact the adaptation of migrant Muslims to all aspects of the urban society. Finding solutions to migrant Muslims’ limited adaptation to urban society requires an overhaul of the environment for social development. But it also requires these migrant Muslims to take initiative and change themselves.

XINJIANG
THE DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF ISLAM IN XINJIANG, AND RELEVANT POLICIES

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Xinjiang Conference, 2009

In Xinjiang, Islam is a widespread religion of an ethnic character. More than half of Xinjiang’s population is Muslim. It is no coincidence that Islam is Xinjiang’s major religion, as it has a long history in the region. The introduction of Islam to Xinjiang occurred more than 1,000 years ago. Since then, there have been considerable changes within Xinjiang’s religious structure.

Before the arrival of Islam, Xinjiang was home to many ethnicities and religions, including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Nestorianism. Islam was neither the first nor the only religion in Xinjiang. Religion is a product of human society’s historical development; it is a social ideology deriving from the residue of history. As a social ideology, religion forms and develops on the basis of society and economy. However, under certain historical circumstances, the counter-effect of religion often emerges as the thoughts and actions of individuals are affected and constrained by an ideological dimension of religion. In other words, while religion forms from social and economic factors, it affects and constrains how individuals think and behave. This is why we can never underestimate the counter-effect of religion in society.

As a product of natural and social oppression, religion has a cognitive and social origin. The formation of religion reflects a low level of social productivity. In primitive societies, individuals were neither capable of producing scientific explanations of the numerous natural phenomena they encountered nor able to stand against the assaults of all kinds of natural disasters. They explained these phenomena and disasters through mystery and considered the power of nature as the master of life, death, calamity, and the fortune of all human beings. As a result, they began to worship “supernatural power,” which gradually evolved into the primitive religious concept of “animism.” Hence “nature is the first target of religion.” As society evolved, people’s
religious concepts also changed, from nature worship to totemism to beliefs in tribal
gods. As individuals passed into class societies, their religious concepts further devel-
oped into polytheistic and monotheistic religions. Three major religions were estab-
lished during this last stage: Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

In this sense, a religion’s formation is a result of primitive people’s inability to under-
stand and command nature; it is an external supernatural power that people have imag-
ined out of their fear of nature. This is why “human beings create religions, but religions
do not create human beings.” As class antagonism appears in class societies, individuals
are oppressed not only by natural power but also by social power. Because the oppressed
masses are unable to escape from numerous catastrophes caused by all systems of ex-
plotation, they imagine “God” will help them break away from such miseries in life. As
Vladimir Lenin points out: “Impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against
the exploiters inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death, just as the im-
potence of the savage in their struggle with nature gives rise to belief in gods, devils,
miracles, and the like.” This self-generated religious belief derives from the exasperation
and protest of the working people against their real sufferings. However, the oppressing
class manipulates the masses with religion by attributing the suffering of working people
to their “fate” and punishment from “God”; they further advise these people to accept
“fate” and surrender their struggle against their present lives in order to be able to enter
“paradise” or a “pure land” after death. It is therefore clear that the exploitative systems of
class-based societies prompt the existence and development of religion.

The development of religions in Xinjiang is a result of the same historical and
social processes explained above. Archaeological studies show that as early as the
Neolithic Age, primitive human societies in Xinjiang had already developed primitive
religions and evolved from nature worship to totemism to the worship of their ances-
tors. As these societies further evolved, Shamanism appeared in Xinjiang, whose fol-
lowers included the Huns, the Rouran, the Turks and the Uyghurs—all groups active
in the region at the time. Beginning in the first century, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism,
Manichaeanism and Nestorianism were introduced to Xinjiang along the “Silk Road.”
Among these, Buddhism spread the most rapidly and widely, and it gradually replaced
Shamanism. Starting from Buddhist centers such as Khotan, Kuchar and Karakhojo,
the religion disseminated throughout Xinjiang. Although both Zoroastrianism and
Shamanism had existed in Xinjiang for a long time, Buddhism gained dominance in
the region and established a solid foundation, boasting the longest history, the largest
number of followers and the most significant impact on local people when compared
to other religions. It was only after the introduction of Islam to Xinjiang that the sta-
tus of Buddhism began to decline.

As one of the world’s three largest religions, Islam has a long history of formation
and development. Buddhism was established the earliest of the three, during the 5th
and 6th centuries BC. Christianity was established during the first and 2nd centuries
AD. Islam was established the latest, during the 7th century AD.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF ISLAM IN XINJIANG

Islam is a foreign religion, introduced to Xinjiang after the arrival of Zoroastrianism,
Buddhism, Manichaeanism and Nestorianism. It originated on the Arabian Peninsula,
where it was established by Muhammad in Mecca, and and it arrived in Xinjiang through Central Asia. No consensus has been reached on the exact date Islam was introduced to Xinjiang. However, according to current data, this probably occurred during the Kara-Khanid Khanate, when Satuk Bughra Khan began to accept and promote Islam. It is widely accepted within academia that this took place sometime before the mid-10th century. However, it should be pointed out here that although Islam spread through regions dominated by the Kara-Khanid Khanate, it was not widely adopted by the masses. It was only after Satuk Bughra Khan took the lead in accepting Islam that people began to follow the religion. By 910, Satuk had gathered enough support within Muslim circles to overthrow the king and establish a new empire in Kashgar. Afterward, Satuk Bughra Khan and his son Musa Arslan Khan actively promoted Islam within the empire. They were the first local political leaders in the history of Xinjiang to be converted to the religion.

Satuk Bughra Khan reigned for over 40 years, but Islam did not become the official religion of the Kara-Khanid Khanate during his rule. It was his son Musa Arslan Khan who ensured the conversion of most of the empire’s citizens to Islam. After this, Musa declared Islam the state religion. Since then the religion has greatly impacted the religious beliefs of Xinjiang’s many ethnic groups.

The dissemination of Islam in Xinjiang has peaked twice in its history. While the first peak occurred during the aforementioned Kara-Khanid Khanate, the second took place during the Eastern Chagatai Khanate. Both were characterized by a series of “holy wars” to conquer Buddhism. Indeed, the dissemination of Islam was generally conducted in two ways: through peaceful means—by missionaries or through merchants—or by force through “holy war.” These methods alternated and complemented each other, but “holy war” was often employed as the predominant way to disseminate Islam. This is why Islam replaced Buddhism in Xinjiang through a long and complex process.

However, it is worth noting that Islamic “holy war” is merely a war that expands political influence in the name of religion. “Holy war” is a military approach adopted by the feudal ruling classes of the Middle Ages, who encouraged mutual conquest and hatred and killing between different ethnic groups and religions simply for the purpose of gaining ruling power for themselves. Subsequent ruling classes have also adopted “holy war” as a military means to incite religious fanaticism in order to reach their own political and economic goals.

The development of Islam peaked during the Kara-Khanid Khanate. The rulers enforced the promotion of the religion and ensured it was followed by all citizens of the empire. However, outside the empire, these rulers promoted Islam by launching “holy wars,” the most famous being the religious war against Buddhism in Khotan. It was only after decades of battle that Islam was able to replace Buddhism as the dominant religion in Khotan. In the beginning of the 11th century, the Kara-Khanid Khanate launched another war against the Buddhist Uyghurs in Karakhojo, but it lost. Due to intensifying conflict within the ruling class, until the empire’s destruction in the 13th century, the Kara-Khanid Khanate never again attempted to promote Islam by military force. Nonetheless, Islam in Xinjiang expanded considerably during this time. With its base in Kashgar, the religion attracted followers in numerous regions, including Atush, Yangi Hisar, Kargilik, Yarkand, Khotan, Cherchen, Maralbexi
and Aksu. In the 13th century, Islam began to spread to nomadic regions north of the Tianshan mountain range in Central Asia.

The development of Islam peaked again during the Eastern Chagatai Khanate. In the beginning of the 14th century, Tughluq Timur Khan, founder of the Eastern Chagatai Khanate, became a follower of Islam. Like Satuk Bughra Khan before him, Tughluq adopted a combination of peaceful and military approaches to the promotion of Islam, often resorting to using the political power of his administration to force his citizens into following the religion, greatly enhancing its dissemination within the empire. Following Tughluq’s rule, Xinjiang’s religions underwent a fundamental change; in between the 14th and 16th centuries, Islam became the region’s major religion.

During the Eastern Chagatai Khanate, Islam continued to spread to the eastern and southern sides of the Tianshan mountain range. Its influence first reached Kuchar, then Turfan and Hami.

At one time Kuchar was a center of Buddhism, but the religion lost its dominance over the region under the assaults of Islamic forces during the Kara-Khanid Khanate. The religion was in evident decline after the 10th century. Indeed, when Islam first reached Kuchar, it could not compete against Buddhism. However, as time went by, the relationship between the two religions began to change. In the mid-13th century, a group of Sufi followers from India introduced Islam to Kuchar. In the mid 14th century, with the support of Tughluq Timur Khan, Errshiddin Khoja led a delegation of religious personnel to promote Islam in Kuchar. They established the “Kuchar Islamic Council” to promote Islamic doctrine, construct mosques and schools for the study of Islamic scriptures, establish Islamic courts, and recruit more adherents to the religion. They attacked Buddhism, committing acts such as smashing Buddhist statues and destroying Buddhist scriptures in an attempt to force followers of Buddhism to convert to Islam. The establishment of Islam in Kuchar was therefore based on a series of struggles against Buddhism. After that, Errshiddin Khoja sent various delegations from Kuchar to promote Islam in places such as Aksu, Xayar, Yanqi and Turfan in order to further extend Islam’s influence.

By the end of the 14th century, with the assistance of Errshiddin Khoja, Khidr Khoja of the Eastern Chagatai Khanate took over the Turfan region through a “holy war” in 1392 and forced the local residents to convert to Islam. These struggles between the two religions continued until the end of the 15th century when Buddhism was completely exterminated in Turfan. Islam was now the dominant religion in the region.

By now, the three major Buddhist centers in Xinjiang—Khotan, Kuchar and Karakhojo—had come under the influence of Islam. By the end of the Eastern Chagatai Khanate, Islam began to “march” from Turfan to Hami. In the 16th century, Islam entered Hami and converted the royals, officials and citizens there. Thus, the whole Tianshan mountain range, except for the Mongols in the Dzungarian Basin, had come under the influence of Islam. From the above summary, we can see that it took approximately 600 years after the introduction of Islam in Xinjiang in the mid-10th century for the religion to become dominant in the region in the 16th century.

The summary above also suggests that individual conversions from Buddhism to Islam represent a dramatic ideological transition. Such a transition has not always been peaceful and silent, but rather has prompted fierce struggle and even violence.
That the battles between Islam and Buddhism lasted as long as 600 years indicates the transition from one religious ideology to another cannot be achieved simply through one round of struggle, but requires numerous and repeated battles between the two sides at different levels. Meanwhile, transitions between religious ideologies are still subject to the constraint of economic factors. The reason why Islam was able to replace Buddhism as the dominant religion in Xinjiang was closely related to the weaknesses and poor development of the region’s economic and social systems at the time. Members of Xinjiang’s various ethnic groups had long suffered from political and economic exploitation, poverty and the turmoil of war. Because they could not escape these realities, and because Buddhism could not help them “break away from the sea of bitterness” and arrive at “nirvana,” people tried to find new spiritual comfort in alternative religions. Therefore, when Islam appeared as an alternative to Buddhism, it was a highly attractive option. People began to find spiritual support in their desire to escape from oppression and exploitation and their hope that “Allah” would offer “blessing” and “happiness” in their “afterlife.”

Furthermore, the dissemination and development of Islam in Xinjiang was closely related to the region’s economic, cultural, historical and geographic conditions. Having arrived from the Arabian Peninsula, the religion always maintained its “unique Eastern rituals.” Xinjiang shared a close relationship with the Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia in the development of its social, economic, cultural, and historical conditions. These conditions served as a foundation for common religious belief in Xinjiang. As Friedrich Engels suggests, Islam as a religious ideology is adapted “on the one hand to townsmen engaged in trade and industry and on the other to nomadic Bedouins.”

An important geographic factor is Xinjiang’s position along the “Silk Road,” which makes it ideal for frequent economic and cultural communication. The exchanges between people from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds have contributed to the establishment of conditions that are beneficial for the dissemination of Islam in Xinjiang. The Islam introduced to Xinjiang through the “Silk Road” has therefore had a bigger impact on the region than the Islam introduced to the inland areas from China’s coastal cities. The number of both Muslims and ethnic individuals is greater in Xinjiang than elsewhere in inland China. Islam in Xinjiang has gradually evolved into a multi-ethnic religion of a mass character.

II. THE QING GOVERNMENT’S POLICIES TO SEPARATE RELIGION FROM POLITICS

After the Qing Government conquered Xinjiang, it enforced a series of policies to separate Islam from politics according to the principle of “modifying the religion without changing its relevance to the people, while adapting the government’s religious policies without taking away their advantages.” The government’s goals were to prevent religious leaders from using religion to pose threats to national unity and the Qing Government’s rule in Xinjiang, to uphold the stability of Xinjiang’s society, and to change the historical and practical factors that from a long-term perspective contributed to religious forces’ interference with secular politics.

The Qing Government’s policies to separate religion from politics were implemented on two levels. The first was to prohibit religious forces’ interference with the state’s
political and legal systems. The Qing Government stipulated that no individual who worked as an imam could be employed by the administration; an imam could not work in an official post and gain political power. Imams were only allowed to preach scriptures and lead the masses in worshipping, i.e. normal religious activities, and they were not permitted to interfere with anything of an administrative nature. If any follower of these imams worked for the government or on official orders, then he would never be appointed as an imam, in order to prevent imams from using their relatives and friends to participate in or interfere with politics. As for those imams who served as major religious leaders, the Qing Government stipulated that they be “selected and recommended” by local government officials, in order to secure direct control of all religious leadership. Previously, there was no distinction between religious and political affairs during the rule of the Khojas, so it was a common phenomenon for powerful religious leaders to try to interfere with political affairs. For example, on the first day of Eid ul-Fitr each year, during the visits to mosques by the Hakim Begs (local administrators), the imams often took the opportunity to comment on their political achievements. “The Imams kept those Hakim Begs whom they considered to be talented, but criticized others they considered as having violated religious doctrine; and if a Hakim Beg had done something that was thought to be a serious violation, then the imams would lead the Muslim crowds to have him removed from his official post and killed.” In other words, religious leaders had the power to assess and pass judgment on government affairs, and to punish and sentence to death those government officials who did not meet their demands. This power allowed these religious leaders to control political authorities at all levels. Such interference with political affairs by religious forces continued even after the implementation of the policies to separate religion from politics. For example, when complaints were made against the Hakim Beg by local officials in the Karkant Khanate in their official report to the Qing Government, the first signature in the report was that of an imam. The Emperor Qianlong paid specific attention to this report and stipulated that subsequently, the affairs of all local governments could only be handled by the Hakim Begs, “without any interference from imams.” He also ordered that government officials ensure this rule was known by all residents in Xinjiang.

The Qing Government adopted a step-by-step strategy in response to various circumstances where the combination of religious and political power had developed. In the beginning of Xinjiang’s unification, the Qing Government stipulated that only severe crimes such as conspiring against the state and plotting treason be dealt with in accordance with Qing law, without any interference from religious forces. As for ordinary criminal and civil cases, they could be handled by religious courts in accordance with Islamic law and the minority custom law. Later, the Qing Government began to revoke the rights of religious courts to enforce criminal law and stipulated that all criminal cases be dealt with in accordance with Qing law. Religious courts were allowed to continue but they were only authorized to handle civil cases. The Qing Government’s attempts to reform its legal system resulted in a double-track legal system. Although these reforms were not completed, and although this legal system was not perfect, it was still a relatively gentle and effective system for Xinjiang, a society only recently liberated from the religious and political rule of the Khojas. The system also played an active and important role in ensuring the separation of religion from politics and the prevention of interference with the legal system by religious forces in Xinjiang.
The second level on which the Qing Government’s policies to separate religion from politics were implemented was the government’s principle of non-interference with the internal affairs of all religions. Within Islam, there had always been many divisions and different interpretations of religious doctrine. As a result, the history of the religion was full of struggle among these divisions and their supporters. A famous example of these struggles was the violent conflicts between the Aktaglik Sect and Karagaghlik Sect in Xinjiang, which lasted for several centuries. Nonetheless, however vicious the struggles between different divisions lasted, as long as there was no damage to social stability and the security of people’s lives and properties, they remained the internal affairs of the religion. The Qing Government ordered that its officials at all levels not interfere with the conflicts between different religious divisions, and that in appointing government officials, the selection criteria be based on their political attitude, instead of their religious disposition. As for the aforementioned Aktaglik and Karagaghlik sects, the Qing Government’s view was that “there was no difference between them.” Although these two sects “chose to differentiate one from the other,” such a choice was their own internal matter. As long as both sects supported the Qing Government’s rule in Xinjiang, they should be treated equally. Regardless of whether they belonged to one sect or the other, all those with prominent military and political achievements should be awarded. For example, various Khojas from the Aktaglik Sect had contributed to the elimination of local rebels and were awarded official posts in the local government. When an imam from the Karagaghlik Sect led local rioters against the Qing Government’s rule, he was punished severely and put to death by dismemberment. After the rebellious act of another Kawaja from the Aktaglik Sect, some officials in Xinjiang requested that the Qing Government change its attitude towards the two religious divisions and begin selecting the Begs from the Karagaghlik Sect. The request was refused by the Emperor Daoguang who thought that it would only cause the two sects to “further suspect each other and provoke more conflict,” which would surely threaten the Qing Government’s rule in Xinjiang. It was only after the descendents of the Kawajas began to rebel that the Qing Government changed its policy and adopted instead the approach of suppressing the Aktaglik Sect by supporting the Karagaghlik Sect. A series of conflicts between the two sides developed and resulted in further social turmoil.

In addition to the separation of religion from politics, the Qing Government also strengthened its management of religious affairs. In the Qing Government’s view, imams as “religious leaders” were “always obeyed” by the Muslim masses and therefore boasted important social status and influence. Great emphasis was placed on the selection and appointment of imams. The government stipulated that candidates for imams had to be selected by the Begs in each village from those who were honest, honorable and familiar with Islamic scriptures. Lists of candidates were then sent by the Begs to the Qing Government’s representative in Xinjiang for approval. The appointed imams were required to visit the government representative periodically. If it was discovered that any appointed imam was not familiar with Islamic scriptures, not reliable, or was exploiting the Muslim masses, he would quickly be removed and severely punished, and the Hakim Beg that recommended him would also be disciplined.

All attempts to “plot rebellion” through religion were strictly prohibited and suppressed. Since the unification of Xinjiang by the Qing Government, the Kawajas of
the Aktaglik Sect and their descendants exiled to Central Asia were impoverished and unwilling to confront their failure. They sent spies to Xinjiang to gather information, to contact and encourage followers of their sect to conspire against the Qing Government, and to raise funds for their rebellious activities. The Qing Government was fully on guard against these acts and ordered officials at all levels to strictly prohibit and attack them. Once found and convicted, “all of the leading criminals” were “immediately executed.” Beginning with the reign of the Emperor Qianlong, the Qing Government cracked down on many such criminal cases and dealt a serious blow to all attempts to plot rebellion through religion.

The “study and recitation of dark scriptures” was prohibited. The term “dark scriptures” refers to scriptures other than formally-recognized texts such as the Qu’ran. At the time, “dark scriptures” could refer to those scriptures adopted by followers of Sufism and/or fabricated by religious leaders such as the Kawajas. In the sixteenth year of the Emperor Jiaqing’s reign (1811), officials cracked down on one case where “scriptures were fabricated with illegal wording added” by the descendants of a certain Kawaja. Using fabricated scriptures to trick and persuade the Muslim masses into conducting illegal activities was an approach often adopted by religious leaders such as the Kawajas and by criminals, and brought with it serious consequences. In order to prevent these Kawajas and criminals from inciting the masses into opposing the Qing Government, those who were found to have “fabricated scriptures and added illegal words” were severely punished. The “study and recitation of dark scriptures by Moluos and Hui” was strictly prohibited. The term “Moluos” referred to “mullahs”—those young individuals in Xinjiang during the Qing Dynasty, including all cultured Muslims, who possessed religious knowledge and were able to read and write. The term “Hui” was used during the Qing Dynasty to refer to those Uyghurs who followed Islam. It was stipulated that if anyone violated this rule, he would be dealt penalties such as “banishment” and “beating” in accordance with the length of time in which he had been “studying and reciting the dark scriptures.” It was further stipulated that government representatives in Xinjiang should publicize this rule at the beginning of each year so that all residents could understand and obey it.

While the aim of the aforementioned policies to separate religion from politics and to manage religious affairs was clearly to uphold the Qing Government’s rule in Xinjiang, it was also the right and responsibility of a central government to do so. Although these policies were neither complete nor fully implemented (e.g. the continuing existence of religious courts still enabled a means by which religious forces could interfere with the legal system), their establishment was in accordance with the practical conditions and customs of Xinjiang at the time. Hence it could be said that these policies were of a strong niche nature. The implementation of policies to separate religion from politics solved the problem of the long-term entanglement between religious and political power and ensured their permanent divorce from each other. They played an active and important role in the normal development of both Xinjiang’s society and Islam. The strengthening of religious affairs management also played an important role in the prevention of attempts to use religion to encourage opposition against the Qing Government’s role. It contributed to the maintenance of social stability and economic development in Xinjiang.
III. ISLAM IN MODERN XINJIANG

1. Islam and the Peasants’ Uprising in 1864

A series of important historical incidents occurred in Xinjiang, and their impact is felt even today.

In 1864, under the influence of the Taiping Rebellion and the Hui Uprising in Shaanxi and Gansu, an unprecedented rebellion of the peasants against the Qing Government broke out in Xinjiang. The first to raise the banner of righteousness were the Uyghur peasants in Kuchar. They occupied the city and killed the Qing officials and Uyghur feudal lords stationed there. The flames of rebellion soon spread all over the Tianshan mountain range. Within a few months, similar riots had occurred in places such as Korla, Urumqi, Changji, Kashgar, Khotan, Hami, Tacheng, and Yili, which dealt a serious blow to the Qing Government’s rule in Xinjiang. While the rioting masses in Yili and Tacheng struggled against Qing power, they also fought the invading Czarist Russian troops and contributed to the defense of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. During this uprising against the Qing Government, leaders of the rioters raised the banner of Islam, using religion as a tool to summon, mobilize and organize the masses. Leaders incited religious fervor and an antagonistic spirit among the populace, which led to their initial victory. Islam played an active and important role in this peasants’ uprising.

Although Islam made a positive contribution at the initial stage of the uprising, its various side effects were also quickly exposed. Like all riots in the name of religion, Islam distorted the class alignment and goals motivating the masses, so that the control of the rioters was eventually leveraged by Islamic leaders. After the initial victories of the uprising, various Islamic leaders and feudal lords took the opportunity to join the rioting crowds and used their status and influence to seize control. This changed the nature of the uprising and turned a vigorous battle against the Qing Government’s feudal rule into a killing spree targeting all alien rulers and heretics.

In Kuchar, where the uprising first began, Rashidin Khoja (a descendant of the aforementioned Errshiddin Khoja) took control of the riots. As soon as he seized power, Rashidin Khoja proposed the use of the sword of Islam on the heads of all “heretics” and started an ethnic cleansing. Islamic leaders and feudal lords in control over the riots in other locations followed his example, slaughtering “heretics” and establishing their own political administrations. In order to expand their influence and territories, these Islamic leaders and feudal lords attacked each other and turned all of Xinjiang into a killing field. They provoked hatred between different ethnic groups within their own administrations, oppressing “heretics” and brutally conducting political oppression and economic exploitation of the working people. As a result, the rioting masses did not achieve their goal of changing their own lives and status; worse, they suffered even greater pain and loss. In addition, the fighting among different political administrations provided an opportunity for hostile foreign forces to invade.

2. Yaqub Beg’s Support of Islam

In an attempt to expand his own influence, a feudal lord from Kashgar demanded
that the Kokand Khanate in Central Asia send back Buzurg Khan (the only surviving son of the famous Jahangir Khan), whom he intended to appoint as a puppet leader. With the support of the Kokand Khanate, a military officer named Mohammad Yaqub Beg led Buzurg Khan and a group of militants in the invasion of Kashgar in January 1865. Relying on Buzurg Khan’s popularity among the local people, Yaqub Beg soon banished the feudal lord and established his own political administration in Kashgar. In the name of Islam, he invaded and captured the political administrations in Yarkand and Khotan. Legend has it that when Yaqub Beg and his troops arrived in Khotan, he wrapped a piece of brick in red silk and pretended that it was the Qu’ran. With the “holy book” in his hand, Yaqub Beg swore to the feudal lord in Khotan that he was only passing by the city on his way to visit a prominent local imam. As soon as Yaqub Beg gained the feudal lord’s trust, he launched a sudden attack and occupied Khotan on that same night. By 1867, Yaqub Beg had basically occupied the whole of Southern Xinjiang and established the so-called “Yatta Shahar” (which means “administration of seven cities”). By now, Buzurg Khan had lost his political value and was banished by Yaqub Beg.

There are two reasons why Yaqub Beg was able to invade Xinjiang and establish a powerful political administration in only two years. The first is the fighting between Xinjiang’s many religious leaders and feudal lords, which provided ample opportunity for Yaqub Beg to gain a foothold and conquer them individually. The second is Yaqub Beg’s use of Islam. Claiming that he was from the same “religious roots” as the Muslim masses, Yaqub Beg managed to win the trust of those who considered him a “Muslim brother,” instead of an invader. To a certain degree, using Islam was far more effective than using force. Yaqub Beg knew this very well. After the establishment of his own political administration, Yaqub Beg further used Islam as a tool to uphold his rule. The measures he took to actively promote the religion included:

A. Forefully Enforce Islamic Doctrine.

In order to ensure the execution of Islamic doctrine, Yaqub Beg established religious courts in many cities and towns and strengthened their functions. He stipulated that all lawsuits and trials involving religious, civil and criminal cases could only be handled by religious courts in accordance with religious law. The system of “religious police” was resumed, who not only monitored the execution of religious rules and doctrines but also had the right to deal with certain small cases. These religious police appeared in all cities and towns with batons hanging from their waists, beating everyone whom they thought to have violated the religious rules; they could even enter people’s residences at will at any time to inspect whether they had committed any such violation. The cruelty of the religious police soon made them seem like great scourges in the eyes of the Muslim masses, who greatly feared them.

B. Strengthen the Zakat System.

In areas ruled by Yaqub Beg, the Zakat system (i.e. the only tax sanctioned to the state according to Islamic law in the form of giving a small percentage of one’s possessions to charity) had become a taxation scheme involving everyone and everything. The taxes and levies collected in the name of the Zakat system had all kinds of names but no “standard rates.” Numerous tax collectors were able to decide the rates at their
own free will, which were often three times higher than what they should have been. Under such exploitation, having paid all required taxes and rents, a tenant farmer could only retain one quarter of what he produced, instead of the nine-tenths traditionally stipulated by the Zakat system.

C. Support and Develop a Mosque Economy.

In order to appease religious leaders, Yaqub Beg not only presented them with all kinds of political privileges and honors, he also offered them plenty of financial advantages. For example, looted land was “awarded” as Waqf (i.e. a religious endowment in the form of the donating of a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes) to mosques, mazhars (i.e. tombs of famous saints or scholars) and scripture schools. With Yaqub Beg’s support, the Islamic mosque economy developed rapidly in Southern Xinjiang and became an important part of the region’s feudal economy.

D. Actively Construct and Expand Religious Buildings.

In order to convey his piety to and passion for Islam, Yaqub Beg constructed and expanded a series of mosques, mazhars and scripture schools in the lands he ruled. Many famous mosques and mazhars in Southern Xinjiang, such as the Id Kah Mosque, the Afaq Khoja Mazhar, the Satuk Bughra Khan Mazhar and the Errshiddin Khoja Mazhar, were expanded under Yaqub Beg’s personal order. While working on the mazhars, Yaqub Beg also led the masses in visiting them, which greatly encouraged the practice of mazhar worshipping.

E. Force Non-Believers to Convert to Islam.

Yaqub Beg forced all non-believers under his rule to convert to Islam and killed those who refused to do so. According to British persons in Kashgar at the time, approximately 40,000 people were killed, and even more converted to Islam in order to avoid death. In Kashgar alone, more than 3,000 Manchu and Han Chinese officials, soldiers, women and children were forced to convert to Islam. At the time, there were a large number of newly converted Muslims.

Yaqub Beg actively supported Islam and attempted to use it to uphold and augment his political administration in Xinjiang. However, like all invaders before him, even Islam could not save him from failure. In 1876, the Qing Government launched a series of battles against Yaqub Beg and his troops. Thanks to the support and cooperation of the people in Xinjiang, it only took around a year for the Qing Government to recover all the areas previously lost to Yaqub Beg. After a series of struggles within Yaqub Beg’s camp, his subordinates killed him. His failure did not result from ineffective policies and strategies, but because by nature he was an invader.

3. Yang Zengxin’s Policies Toward Islam

The 1911 Xinhai Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen resulted in the downfall of the Qing Dynasty’s feudal rule. After the collapse of the Qing administration in Xinjiang, all political and military power fell into the hands of Yang Zengxin, formerly a leading Qing official. Yang was born in the multi-ethnic region of Yunnan, began his politi-
cal career in Gansu, and had worked in Xinjiang since 1907. Highly experienced in the management of ethnic and religious affairs, particularly those involving Islam, Yang had always placed great emphasis on religious issues as a fundamental policy throughout his control of Xinjiang. Having learned from the Qing Government’s experiences in setting up various religious policies, and combining his own experiences in dealing with religious affairs in Gansu and Xinjiang, he established a series of religious policies that featured both utilization and restriction. In his opinion, in Xinjiang, where the majority of the population were Muslims, it would be difficult to maintain control without making use of the power and influence of Islam. However, without certain restrictions, such control could be lost to others who desired to occupy the region. This is what he meant when he declared, “to rule it well, then it can be of my use; without good rule, it will be used by others.” His method to effectively govern the region involved both utilization and restriction.

Yang adopted two major measures to achieve the utilization of Islam. The first was to appease and utilize religious leaders. In Yang’s view, all Muslims obeyed and respected their imams even more than their political rulers. In terms of restraining and controlling all followers of Islam and maintaining local stability and social order, the imams were able to do what local officials could never achieve. Therefore, it would be “impossible to maintain the status quo” without utilizing these imams, and to do so required providing them with certain political advantages. Based on this view, Yang offered imams the power to assist the government in dealing with all civil and some criminal cases. This not only upgraded the status of imams, but also provided them with the circumstances under which they could “receive bribes and manipulate lawsuits” and receive financial benefits, both of which made them extremely grateful to Yang and willing to serve him with full loyalty. When Yang went to Hami to suppress local rebels, groups of religious leaders were willing to march deeply into the mountains and persuade the rioters and their followers there to surrender themselves, which played an important role in the final quelling of the riots. The second measure was to establish the “Hui Regiment.” All soldiers of the “Hui Regiment”, as well as its officers at all levels, were Muslims from the Hui and Uyghur ethnic groups—a practical manifestation of Yang’s strategy of “controlling foreigners by foreigners.” The “Hui Regiment” played an important role in Yang’s attempt to suppress Muslim resistance and uphold and augment his rule.

As the saying goes, “The water that bears the boat can also swallow it up.” While Yang strove to utilize Islam, he was also on guard against any attempt to utilize the religion as a threat to his rule. A series of restrictions were therefore enforced. It was stipulated that religious activities could only be conducted publicly in venues specifically designed for them; all gatherings and reciting of scriptures in private functions and homes were strictly prohibited. Only members of the same family could gather and worship in a private home, and no outsiders were allowed to participate. Existing religions could conduct legitimate activities, while it was forbidden to “establish alternative religions” and “set up other religious divisions.” Existing mosques could continue their operations, but the private construction of new mosques was prohibited. Imams were only allowed to preach locally; while imams in Xinjiang could not travel outside of the region, neither were those religious leaders from other inland provinces nor foreign nationals able to promote religious thought and conduct re-
religious activities in Xinjiang. In order to prevent religious leaders from interfering with political affairs or overtaking local rule, and to prevent any collaboration between local government officials and religious leaders from threatening social order, it was stipulated that the appointment and dismissal of imams only be decided by the religious masses; any “inspection” or “vetting” by local government officials was strictly forbidden. There were severe restrictions on pilgrimages overseas, as all traveling documents could only be provided by foreign organizations and approved by Yang himself, instead of any local government. To apply for a passport required the payment of a stamp duty and an additional 600 Kashgar silver notes.

Because Yang’s religious policies were more compatible with Xinjiang’s practical conditions, they were more effective. The utilization of religion not only gained the support and cooperation of all religious leaders, but also dissolved the conflicts between different Muslim groups, which was helpful in upholding Yang’s rule and maintaining social order. A series of restrictions ensured the normal development of religious activities within stipulated areas. These restrictions prevented attempts by religious leaders to interfere with political and legal affairs or use religion to conduct activities that threatened Yang’s rule and social stability. They further prevented religious forces from partnering with officials to gain control of local government and threaten local order. In terms of countering foreign religious forces in their attempts to interfere with Xinjiang’s religious affairs and penetrate the region through religion, and particularly in stopping the dissemination of pan-Islamist thoughts in the region, the active and important role of these restrictions is undeniable.

4. Separatist Activities in the Name of Islam

The two rulers after Yang Zengxin, Jin Shuren and Sheng Shicai, basically adopted Yang’s religious policies in their management of Xinjiang. However, they constantly changed their religious policies to meet the demands of certain times and events, and neither was successful. During Jin’s and Sheng’s rule, a series of incidents involving Islam took place in Xinjiang. Among them, were separatist activities conducted by elements of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism that greatly damaged Xinjiang. Yang had adopted a series of measures to prevent similar activities and had subjected the dissemination of the “Two Pans” [“Two Pans” is a phrase frequently used to foreshorten “pan-Turkism” and “pan-Islamism.”] to relatively sufficient government control. However, after Jin’s ascent to power, a series of political mistakes resulted in social turmoil that provided ample opportunity for the “Two Pans” to enter Xinjiang. While foreign “Two Pans” forces penetrated Xinjiang in all forms and through all channels, the region’s ethnic separatists were able to train in “Two Pans” thought within and outside of China and conduct separatist activities in their name. In the 1930s, elements of the “Two Pans” launched an independence movement with the slogan “our people are Turkestan’s and our religion is Islam.” They adopted this slogan as their political guideline and wildly pursued separatist activities.

In 1932, Muhammad Amin Bughra rose to power in Khotan under the influence of the “Two Pans” and plotted a series of riots in nearby Moyu. As soon as the rioters captured Khotan, Muhammad Amin Bughra declared the independence of the “Khotan Emirate” and established himself as the first “emir” (ruler). In 1933, Sabit Damolla
(originally from Atush) and Muhammad Amin Bughra announced in Kashgar the establishment of the “Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan,” as well as its “constitution,” “organizational guidelines,” “policy guidelines” and “implementation laws of government departments.” Sabit Damolla declared himself as the first prime minister, with other members of this haphazard government consisting mostly of landlords, merchants, reactionary religious leaders and agents of the “Two Pans.” This separatist government breached the people’s fundamental interests and hopes. The government was indisputably opposed by all of Xinjiang’s ethnic groups and collapsed quickly.

In 1944, the “Three Districts Revolution” broke out in Ili, Tarbagatay and Altay (today’s Aletai) against the Kuomintang (KMT) government. As all participants in the riots were Muslims from the Uyghur and Kazakh ethnic groups, who had difficulties escaping the constraints and influence of Islam, their leadership was soon overtaken by a group of reactionary ethnic religious leaders led by Elihan Tore, a functionary of the “Two Pans” who had escaped from Russia to Xinjiang. As soon as the rioters captured Ghulja (today’s Yining), Elihan Tore announced the establishment of the “Temporary Government of the Eastern Turkestan Republic” and declared himself as the first chairman. He claimed that “we will not throw down our arms until we have made [our brethren in religion] free from the five bloody fingers of the Chinese oppressors’ power, not until the very roots of the Chinese oppressors’ government have dried and died away from the face of the earth of Eastern Turkestan, which we have inherited as our native land from our fathers and our grandfathers.” Because Elihan Tore relied on his Islamic “cloak” to deceive the masses, to join the ranks of the revolution and to overtake its leadership, he named the separatist Temporary Government as an Islamic administration that possessed both religious and political power, while continuing to employ Islam as an important tool to augment his own position.

In order to strengthen the religion’s status and function, Elihan Tore’s Temporary Government set up a Department of Religious Affairs and Religious Court. Under direct control of the Department of Religious Affairs, the Religious Court fulfilled its judicial duties independently, without supervision and monitoring from legal courts and inspection agencies at any level. Consisting of a group of religious judges, assistant judges, judicial policemen and the chief of court, the Religious Court not only had the right to convict, but it also served as a public security agency conducting arrests. As the Religious Court handed out decisions, the accused had no right to defend or appeal. As for the Religious Court’s scope of jurisdiction, according to the Temporary Government’s Criminal Procedure Law, “all cases involving religion should be handled by the Department of Religious Affairs and the Religious Court.” The legal basis of all verdicts was the “Sha’aria,” (i.e. Islamic doctrine).

While controlling his administration through Islam, Elihan Tore also paid specific attention to the control of armies through religion. He stationed religious personnel within the army, with each legion’s religious activities organized and supervised by its deputy head, who was also a religious leader. An imam was appointed to conduct the daily religious activities of each regiment and to encourage soldiers to fight for Allah in accordance with the spirit of “holy war.”

Elihan Tore’s separatist and pan-Islamist acts changed the direction of the Three Districts Revolution and caused great damage. His attempts to resist the tide of hist-
tory always were opposed and resisted by the progressive revolutionary forces repre-
sented by Ehmetjan Qasim and Abdulkermim Abbas. With Elihan Tore’s true nature
revealed and due to the continued strengthening of the progressive revolutionary
forces, the relationship between these two sides began to change. The progressive
revolutionary forces eventually defeated Elihan Tore’s separatist forces. They as-
sumed the leadership of the Three Districts Revolution, correcting the mistakes it
previously made. Under the leadership of Ehmetjan Qasim and Abdulkermim Abbas,
the progressive forces of the Three Districts Revolution worked together with the
masses to overthrow the KMT in Xinjiang. Due to the leadership of the Chinese
Communist Party, Xinjiang was peacefully liberated.

Using religion to conduct separatist activities is a prominent characteristic of
Xinjiang’s history. The pattern of history shows that none of the attempts to conduct
separatist activities could avoid failure. Individuals such as Muhammad Amin Bughra
and Elihan Tore and the separatist administrations they established were crushed by
the wheels of history. However, the poisonous effects of their pan-Islamist and separat-
ist thoughts have yet to be eliminated. Their successors are sure to use other religious
and political thought, such as pan-Islamism or other ideological trends combining reli-
gion and politics within the Islamic world to promote separatist activities. Nonetheless,
like the ethnic separatists before them, these people will surely face failure.
THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EXTREMIST FORCES IN XINJIANG, AND THE THREATS THEY POSE

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Xinjiang Conference, 2009

Located in China’s northwest, Xinjiang is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious region. Due to various historical reasons, Xinjiang’s development has been deeply influenced by religion, as members of more than ten ethnic groups are followers of a certain religion and account for more than 50 percent of the region’s total population. The local people are deeply religious, with members of each ethnic group firmly united through their shared religious belief. In addition, the region is strategically important and has always been desired by hostile foreign forces. These hostile foreign forces have sometime made use of the collective and national nature of religion, as well as its complex ability to transcend the boundaries of time and all countries, in their attempts to infiltrate, subvert and destroy China. Particularly after the opening-up of China to the outside world, as various religious policies have been implemented and put into effect, there has been ample opportunity for exchanges between members of religious circles both within and outside of China. An increasing number of Chinese pilgrims have been travelling to Saudi Arabia each year, which provides plenty of opportunity for hostile forces both within and outside of China to infiltrate, subvert and “peacefully evolve” Xinjiang through religion. On the one hand, hostile foreign forces have enhanced their research on religion and upgraded their efforts to conduct religious penetration and other forms of sabotage through international religious organizations and Xinjiang’s ethnic separatists who are active overseas. On the other hand, reactionary forces within China have been echoing these hostile foreign forces and promoting ethnic separatism in the name of religion, in their attempt to participate in the “peaceful evolution” of China by these foreign forces. Under these circumstances, Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces have formed, developed and maliciously expanded, and have adopted different forms and tactics at different times and in different places (such as Northern and Southern
Xinjiang). This is likely to have a serious impact on the social and political stability of Xinjiang, as well as on its economic development and ethnic harmony.

I. THE FORMATION, DEVELOPMENT AND MALICIOUS EXPANSION OF ISLAMIC EXTREMIST FORCES IN XINJIANG

1. The Formation of Islamic Extremist Forces in Xinjiang (approximately from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 1940s)

Between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, particularly after the October Revolution in Russia, large groups of foreign nationals from Central, Western and Southern Asia, including individuals who had conducted religious studies and pilgrimages, arrived in Xinjiang. Many of these people had adopted the “new” views of fundamentalism, pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism (hereafter referred to as the “two pans”). They brought these new and foreign Islamic thoughts into Xinjiang and promoted fundamentalist and pan-Islamist ideologies in Kashgar and Khotan. One of those belonging to this “new” school of thought was Abdulkadir Aziz (1862-1924), who was born in Artush. He had studied in Bukhara in Central Asia and toured countries such as Egypt, Turkey and India. Upon his return to China, he began teaching in various Islamic scripture schools. He emphasized “pure Islam,” striving to “clear up all confusions and bring Islam back to order” and to eliminate all “heretical beliefs and evil doctrines” that had deviated from original Islamic teachings in order to carry forward the religion. Aziz based his criteria for one’s moral standard on whether one followed Islam, and he severely attacked mazhar worship—a common practice in Xinjiang where people visited the tombs of Islamic saints or famous scholars in the hope of getting blessing for good harvests, health, the birth of children, etc. He was interested in politics and encouraged Talibs (“students” in Arabic) to parade through streets and commit crimes such as beating, vandalism and robbery.

The “new” school of thought Aziz promoted was passed on to other latecomers, including Muhammad Amin Bughra, who was originally from Luopu. In February 1933, Muhammad Amin Bughra, Sabit Damolla and a group of violent rioters established the “Khotan Islamic Government,” which was later renamed the “Khotan Emirate.” This bogus government promoted Islamic law and forcefully “purified all rituals and customs,” including the abolition of singing and dancing of the masses, which were considered evil habits. Also conducted were acts of burning, killing, robbery and looting, all in the name of a “holy war.” Meanwhile, Muhammad Amin Bughra appointed two of his cousins as the county chief and religious leader of Pishan, and cultivated his other family members and relatives in fundamentalist thought. After more than a decade of careful cultivation, a new generation of Muslim extremists was formed, and its members were systematically trained in fundamentalism and the “two pans” while serving as local religious personnel. One representative figure was Hasan Mahsum, founder and leader of the “Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement” recognized by the United States. By now, the formation of Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang was complete.

2. The Development of Islamic Extremist Forces in Xinjiang (approximately from the 1950s to the 1980s)
In the 1930s and 1940s, an increasing number of people made a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia and studied in Western Asia. These people continued to introduce Wahhabiyah fundamentalist thought to Xinjiang, encouraging religious leaders and other followers of Islam to take over control from the Kuomintang (KMT) Nationalist Government and establish their own state based on a combination of religious and political power. Upon their return to China, these people undertook systematic training in fundamentalist thought and participated in the “Eastern Turkestan Islamic Association” that drew heavily on ideas of nationalism. After the liberation of Xinjiang, people like Muhammad Amin Bughra and Isä Yusuf Alptekin escaped overseas. As they passed by Yecheng, they summoned local supporters from Khotan and Yarkand to participate in a series of subversions and riots. These supporters later formed the leadership and backbone of Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang, having conspired and organized a series of reactionary riots in Moyu and other places in the name of the newly established “Eastern Turkestan Islamic Public.”

From 1980 to 1990, the Chinese Government endeavored to rectify various leftist behaviors of the “Cultural Revolution” via the implementation of a series of religion policies, an over-emphasis on the freedom of religious belief through official propaganda, and the relaxation of the management of all religious affairs. Taking this opportunity, Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang raised the banner of freedom of religious belief to promote religion as being fundamentally important. They encouraged the “revitalization of Islam” and religious fanaticism, which quickly led to a boom in the construction of mosques. This, combined with the broader climate of the “Islamic Renaissance Movement” across the world, provided ample opportunity for the development of Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang. They seized this chance to network with supporters and to strengthen and unify their actions. A large number of underground scripture schools were launched to target adolescent youth, to cultivate them in religious extremist and ethnic separatist thought and to actively and ideologically prepare them for opportunities to conduct sabotage. Their activities during this period were basically of an underground and secretive nature, hence the term “development.” Still, these activities laid a foundation for the malicious expansion of Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang.

3. The Malicious Expansion of Islamic Extremist Forces in Xinjiang (from the 1990s to the present)

A series of historical lessons tell us that since China’s reform and opening-up to the outside world, Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces have grown from weak to strong. Initially, their extremist nature was not revealed. Instead, they basically promoted “Islamic revivalism” and the resumption of fundamentalism. In the second half of the 1980s, these forces began to promote the resumption of Islamic doctrines, the opposition of “heretics” and the conduct of “holy wars.” In the 1990s, those who were active in the frontline of Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist activities had all been reactionary Talibs and their students cultivated by the old-style Islamic extremists of the 1980s. Keeping an eye on the development and demands of various circumstances, these religious extremists worked together with ethnic separatists and terrorists to form the so-called “three forces.” As their conduct became increasingly radical, it was
evident that they were leaning towards the politicization of religion. The so-called “Baren Incident” armed riots in 1990 indicated that they had moved into an action phase to grab political power, with their political aim of separating from the motherland fully exposed. Their malicious expansion was now complete, marked by a series of cases involving rioting, bombing, assassination, robbery, arson and poisoning.

Throughout the formation, development and malicious expansion of Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces, although their organization and number have been limited, they have been highly vigorous for several reasons. The first is that they have considerable religious effects. Xinjiang was one of the earliest regions in China to witness the arrival of Islam. The religion’s influence is broad and profound, as people have formed strong religious consciousness and are strongly devoted to conducting religious activities. It also has strong and multiple social functions, as well as strict demands for religious studies. Particularly in Southern Xinjiang, any event that calls for people’s attention in the name of religion is able to generate a considerable effect on the masses.

The second reason Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces are highly vigorous is that they are of a relatively young age with highly aggressive thoughts. The major characteristics of these extremists are the following. (1) They are young, robust and energetic, with reactionary views and a willingness to put their words into effect. The masses in general also consider them as being “highly capable,” with “mighty power” and “great talent,” and often keep a good distance from them. These extremists act secretly and work as individual cells through networks. If they find someone who is likely to be of any help to them, and if they like him or her, then they will surely strive to include this person in their circle in order to enlarge their group and strengthen their camaraderie. (2) Many of these extremists are well educated in religious thought and scriptures, familiar with the Arabic language and history, and capable of being highly persuasive in debates on a wide range of religious issues. It is therefore easy for them to convince others and poison their thoughts. (3) Some of these extremists are society’s dregs, local bullies and hooligans whose quality is low in every aspect, and who spend the day in idleness and misbehavior. Being of a simple mind, these young men do not understand what they are saying and doing and are therefore willing to try anything. These suicidal maniacs and thrill seekers are often stationed at the frontline of all religious extremist activities.

The third reason Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces are highly vigorous is that many of them are merchants with significant financial power. The fourth is that they are highly mobile and have all kinds of social contacts. Unlike conventional religious personnel who are content to stay and work in their hometowns, these extremists are active everywhere and keep constant contact with people at all social levels, from tradesmen to intellectuals, and from street thugs to government officials. Due to their great variety of contacts, they are highly informed and can quickly react to any social change, without having their identity easily exposed. Finally, they are highly inflammatory. They often spread rumors about society’s various shortcomings in an attempt to appease and provoke hatred among those who possess misconceptions, complaints and dissatisfaction against society. As a result, mosques under the control of these extremists are often able to attract large crowds to their preaching.

II. FUNDAMENTAL VIEWS OF ISLAMIC EXTREMIST FORCES IN XINJIANG
1. Religion is of ultimate importance

They advocate the following: “Apart from Allah, we obey no one.” “Those working for the government will go to hell after death. True Muslims do not associate with the Communist Party.” “Trust only Allah and obey Him only. We should walk the path shown by Allah.” “Those Muslims who have joined the Communist Party, we call for them to give up their Communist ideologies. If, under these circumstances, they still refuse to give up Communist ideologies, then we will destroy them right away.” “We should find all our hopes in Allah and refuse to work for the Han Chinese government.”

2. Theory of the “Heretics”

Islamic extremist forces view those who consider any god other than Allah to be “shirk” (polytheists), “heretics” and “renegades.” “Whoever practices government regulations as the ‘Sunna’ is a heretic.” “Those who consider the verdicts of heretical authorities and judges as being more accurate than those of Islam are renegades.” In a popular book titled “The Muslim Standard,” these Islamic extremist forces list ten behaviors that they consider to be those of “renegades.” These behaviors include: “Those who call on other deities instead of Allah, or those who worship and pray in front of the dead, call their names, conduct “nasz” (anniversary memorials) and kill animals for them, are renegades. When someone dies, one should not cry or recite scriptures in front of his grave, or one will be worshipping an idol, a renegade.” “If one finds an agent for Allah and asks for his blessings, then one is a renegade. Those who conduct memorials and prepare food to worship the dead, and those who recite scriptures to convey their thoughts and feelings for the dead, are renegades. If one does not consider or believe the polytheists to be renegades, or thinks that their road is the correct one, then one is a renegade himself.” “Never befriend those who are without Iman (belief in Allah). To act kindly to them and establish secret relationships with them is absolutely forbidden. One should be cruel and merciless to heretics and those without Iman, while Muslims should love and be kind to each other.” “Never be kind to heretics. Do not open your heart to them. Do not eat with them or even offer them a mouthful of food.”

3. Theocracy

“To establish an Islamic administration is the only ideal assigned by Allah.” The only goal of the “Hezbollah” (Party of God) is to “continue the Islamic struggle led by our religious leader Muhammad until the establishment of an Islamic administration.” “We shall realize the dream of our ancestors who have died for the establishment of an Islamic administration, so that the Islamic flag can fly high in our homeland.”

4. The “Haraam”

Islamic extremist forces insist on having the Qu’ran and the “Hadith” (narrations originating from the words and deeds of the Islamic prophet Muhammad) as the cri-
teria for all rights and wrongs. They advocate that only countries and administrations established on the basis of the Qu’ran and the “Hadith” are legitimate, or they will be “Haraam” (forbidden) and should be overthrown. “Only Allah sets the law for the world. Allah’s law is the Qu’ran, and the next is the ‘Hadith’ of Prophet Muhammad who explains and supplements the Qu’ran.” “Allah establishes everything ... Those who do not obey the laws and rules of the Qu’ran are renegades.” “The Qu’ran and the ‘Hadith’ are our law and motto.” “We have no reason to pay tax to ‘Kafir’ (heretical) administrations; neither is it necessary to work for them or use their currency. We will seize their power and then only use our Muslim items; our goal now is to get rid of the ‘Kafir.’” These Islamic extremist forces call for all women to be imprisoned within their homes, with the claim that the duty of women is to “serve their husbands” and “produce and raise children.” They consider women’s participation in work as “Haraam.” They also impose many restrictions on women, forbidding them to ride bicycles, take large steps while walking, cross channels of water and wear short skirts; any woman who violates these is considered as “Haraam.” They force women to wear veils and attend religious services, insisting that the food cooked by women who do not wear veils or attend religious services is “unclean,” and that sleeping with them is “prurient.”

5. The “Holy War”

Islamic extremist forces strive to realize “Allah’s will” through conducting “holy wars” and seizing power from current administrations by force. As early as 1990, one of the leaders of the “Baren Incident” armed riots had specified in a pamphlet titled “The Holy War: A Manual” that the holy war “is ‘Allah’s will,’ and all those who have died for it are martyrs. They can enter heaven in their blood-stained clothes and enjoy happiness there forever.” “For a Muslim to conduct five times of ‘namaz’ (worshiping) per day is not enough. He should join the holy war, as fighting against the heretics is more valuable than conducting ‘namaz.’” “Allah creates men so that they can join the holy war.” A terrorist group leader once also said: “Our ancestors launched the holy war for our faith, so we should rise to overthrow the Communist Party and establish an Islamic administration.” “We only obey the Qu’ran and Allah’s instructions to launch the holy war.” “The aim of the holy war is to eliminate heretics and the bad elements of our people, and to establish an Islamic administration. This is the only way out.” “If one in his life has never participated in any holy war or killed any heretic or bad element of our people, then his death will be meaningless.” “If we are able to continue sending three of our brothers each night to conduct bombings and assassinations, then within one month we will be able to call on the people to join our holy war and drive the ‘Black Boss’ [Han Chinese] out of Xinjiang, and an Islamic administration will be established.” “In order to make the Qu’ran our law, we are willing to do anything, including shedding our blood.” In a confiscated reactionary cassette tape titled “The Holy War: Our Duty,” there are even more fanatical calls: “Stand up to struggle against those non-believers and kill every one of them you see.” “As long as you stand firmly on your ground and dare to kill those non-believers, there is no need to fear, even if the whole world’s non-believers have risen to attack you, for Allah will help you.” “Even if you are the only one left, you should conquer all
the non-believers in this world and cause them to follow our faith. If they do not obey us, then we will take their lives.” “Only when we are willing to devote ourselves, and to use our religious belief to kill all the heretics across the world, as if using a nuclear weapon, then Allah will help us.” “When you are protecting your faith in a holy war, if your parents, brothers and sisters try to stop you ... then you can break away from them. [Otherwise,] you too will become a heretic, and Allah will not accept people like you.” “Simply conducting worship is not enough, as we should go where blood is shed.” “Only when you are struggling for Allah’s work will He help you counter your enemies.” “Your being away from your parents, wives and children and your sacrificing your lives is a test for you. Those who have died in the holy war are in fact still alive, and Allah will look after them.” “If you present yourself to Allah, then the bullets of those heretics will have no effect on you in the holy war. You will die only when your time is up.”

The reactionary writing “The Key of Paradise” may be considered the “guidelines” for these Islamic extremist forces and their declaration of “holy war.” It is therefore the most evocative: “The only way for Allah’s dearest followers, for our most excellent sons and daughters and for the purest and most patriotic people is holy war! It is worth giving your life! One only lives once, but can he live forever without dying for holy war? This is not possible.” “Considering that one holy war against the Han Chinese is worth the conduct of namaz for 60 years, is the status and glory of holy war not obvious?” “Holy war is the highest merit of Islam.” “Our fellow people are not afraid to kill ... It is only that they do not have the courage to kill their enemies and the bad elements among them.” “If the reason for our failure is the lack of action among our people, then our path to victory is for every one of our people to join the holy war.” “If we have the correct faith, if we have the holy war in our consciousness, then in our hearts we will have deep hatred against the Han Chinese and the bad elements among our people. This hatred will be manifested in our daily activities, and will guide us towards the path of struggling against the Han Chinese. It will enhance our courage to conduct revolution.” “Holy war is Allah’s will for everyone to fulfill. Those who have money can use it, those without money can use their lives, and those who are old, weak, sick or disabled can use their promotion of Allah’s will to join the holy war.” “At the moment we have three most urgent tasks—the first is the holy war, the second is also the holy war, and the third and final is still the holy war!”

III. MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC EXTREMIST FORCES IN XINJIANG

There are four major characteristics of Islamic extremist forces. The first is that in the name of Allah, they reject everything and contrast one’s belief in Allah against his abiding by government leadership and national laws. They consider anyone who both believes in Allah and obeys government rule as being not a true Muslim, but a “renegade” or “Kafir.” They further reject practical, everyday reality in the name of “purification of Islam,” including certain Uyghur customs that have been practiced for more than a thousand years. Traditional practices such as singing and dancing at festivals, visiting the graves of the dead and conducting “nasz” are all considered to be non-Islamic and heretical, to be strictly prohibited. The second characteristic
of Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces is their anti-government attitude and evident political aim to break away from China. Their claim is to “take action to construct an organization and nation that is compatible with Islam.” They want to “rescue their motherland from the rule of heretics and make it independent, while augmenting the position of the Caliphs, in order to contribute to the construction of an Islamic nation with advanced civilization.” Many of them possess deep hatred against all existing administrations, having announced in public that they do not accept the current government and its laws and that “heretics should be overthrown.” They directly target the Chinese government and encourage anyone who will listen to stand up and bring down the people's administration. In an attempt to establish a political administration that “does whatever it wants to,” they actively conduct all kinds of subversive activities. In terms of political performance, Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang have merged with elements of ethnic separatism, with their leaders displaying the characteristics of both ideologies. Since their aim is to establish theocracy, they have surely been plotting the separation of Xinjiang from the bigger family that is the People's Republic of China. The third characteristic of Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces is that they are highly radical and display the traits of terrorism. Claiming that all means should be used in order to reach their end, they particularly encourage the destruction of normal social order through the use of violence and terror, even to the extent that innocent lives are harmed or lost. Finally, Islamic extremist forces in Xinjiang are characterized by the fact that the elements of their backbone are mainly young and underground Talibs. While those who possess Islamic extremist views can be from all walks of life in Xinjiang, the majority of them are youth and members of the middle and lower classes of the society, with underground Talibs as their backbone.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF XINJIANG’S ISLAMIC EXTREMIST FORCES: THEIR IMPACT AND THREAT

As a result of the penetration of Islamic extremist forces from outside China, Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces have grown considerably during the past 20 years. They now have a certain foundation and conditions that enable them to continue strengthening their energies and social impact. As these forces merge with those of ethnic separatists and terrorists, they are rapidly becoming a major threat to the long-term stability of Xinjiang. At the present time, under various policies that strictly crack down on crimes and severely punish all criminals, these Islamic extremist forces have adjusted their strategies to conduct destructive activities. However, there has not been any fundamental change to their aim and its results. The threats they have posed and will continue to pose are still endangered the social and political stability of Xinjiang, and will not be completely eliminated in the short-term. These will surely have a serious impact on the region’s development.

1. Islamic extremism has become a common ideological weapon and source of strength used by the “three forces” in Xinjiang. It has become a considerable force impacting Xinjiang’s stability, and will continue to be a serious concern in regard to the region’s long-term peace and prosperity.
To summarize the discussions above, since China’s reform and opening-up to the outside world, there has been increasing communication and political, economic and cultural exchange between Xinjiang and various Islamic countries in Southwestern Asia and Central Asia. Taking this opportunity, Islamic extremist forces in these countries have been promoting Islamic extremist thoughts in the name of religion. Worse, they are collaborating with the “three forces” in Xinjiang to encourage religious fanaticism, in an attempt to separate Xinjiang from China, to establish the so-called “Eastern Turkestan Islamic Republic,” and to ultimately disrupt and overthrow China’s socialist system and administration. Islam and Islamic extremism are not necessarily connected. However, in order to gather people’s trust, these religious extremists are raising the banner of Islam and are taking advantage of the simple religious passion of the Muslim masses. They deliberately ignore the unique cultural history of Islam, quoting various Islamic doctrines out of context to exaggerate the radical and violent elements of Islam, while adopting extremist methods and approaches to seize political power. By nature, theirs is a political activity that dresses up as a religion in order to fool the masses.

Xinjiang is a concentrated region of Islam and Muslim masses. Particularly in remote areas, far away from the rich economic and cultural lives of major cities, religious belief as a cultural phenomenon and traditional custom has been internalized as part of the life and consciousness of minority ethnic groups. As there is already a sense of alienation between followers and non-followers of Islam, if the unique centrifugal effects of the religion as an introduced foreign ideology are exaggerated and misguided by those harboring evil intentions, then it can easily lean towards extremism. Knowing this, Islamic extremist forces deliberately uphold one’s religious belief as being of ultimate importance, pushing it to a definitive height so that all control over religious fanaticism and illegal religious activities is lost. As a man-made disaster, the multiple impact and threats posed by Islamic extremist thoughts can be observed from the following two perspectives.

The first is the establishment of private underground scripture schools, which disseminate extremist thought to convert their students to Islamic extremism. Some minority ethnic groups share the tradition of conducting education through religious scriptures. Many parents are willing to send their children to study in scripture schools, where they can learn to understand Islamic scriptures, rituals and regulations in order to enhance their own character and morals. Taking advantage of these people’s respect for religion and traditional educational concepts, Islamic extremists have set up underground scripture schools across Xinjiang and have recruited a large number of young students. They have adopted a great variety of approaches to teaching the scriptures, visiting private households sometimes and openly preaching in mosques during religious services at other times. On the one hand, they can assist those students with difficult family circumstances and gain their trust. On the other hand, they can also put considerable pressure on those students who are unwilling to believe or study the scriptures, and even force them to attend religious services. As some minority ethnic students grow up in remote farming or nomadic villages and hardly get a chance to experience modern industrial civilization and humanist thought, both their self-sufficient economic lives and their religious beliefs have constrained the liberation and development of their thought. This has led to the outdated
and conservative nature of their behavior and views, which are likely to be corrupted by Islamic extremist thought and transformed into fanaticism and paranoia that are targets of manipulation by extremists. Judging from those participants in recent terrorist attacks, underground scripture schools have become a major source of the dissemination of separatist thought, as well as a greenhouse for the cultivation of a new generation of separatists; many of them have even turned into Islamic extremists.

The second is the revision and distortion of religious doctrine and the denial of everything in the name of religion, which poses a threat to national security, Xinjiang’s stability, and the safety of the people’s lives and property. Taking advantage of Xinjiang’s prominent features, such as its extensive religious population, numerous religious venues and large number of religious teaching personnel, Islamic extremists have been trying their best to seize control of various religious bases and authorities. In their preaching of religious scriptures, the content of the Qu’ran and the “Hadith” have been distorted and quoted out of context to suit the political needs of these Islamic extremists to promote separatism and independence. They even claim that these political pursuits are lessons from the scriptures and “Allah’s will,” which should be obeyed by all Muslims without any condition or hesitation, in order to brainwash the religious masses and control their spirits. In this regard, their major claims include the following: (a) The establishment of a social system that “combines religious and political power.” Islamic extremists consider the combination of religious and political power as the most ideal social system stipulated by Allah, and all Muslims should strive to realize “Allah’s will” in this regard and establish an administration that is compatible with it. Hence they promote the need to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party’s leadership and China’s socialist system in order to establish an independent Eastern Turkestan Islamic Republic in Xinjiang. (b) The dissemination of the concept of “holy war.” Islamic extremists claim that all those who have died for the holy war can enter heaven; that one battle for Allah is better than conducting namaz for 60 years; that the three most urgent tasks faced by all Muslims are the holy war, the holy war and still the holy war; and that everybody, whether they are drummers, poets, Mullahs (Muslim men who are educated in Islamic theology and sacred law), scholars or intellectuals, should march to the frontline and immediately join the holy war, for anyone who fails or is unwilling to do so will die like the dregs of society. Many young people have become the victims of these extremist thoughts. (c) The assertion that only through the execution of “religious law” can social order be maintained. Islamic extremists repeatedly promote Islamic law as the only true law, and they assert that only by abiding by this law can society be managed and the Muslim masses saved. They attribute some of the problems China has encountered since its reform and opening-up to the outside world to its failure to progress in accordance with religious law, and they insist on replacing China’s law with Islamic law. As a result of such incitement, illegal behavior, such as the burning of wine and alcohol shops and the destruction of entertainment facilities, has occurred in some places, which has severely disrupted social order and stability. (4) The call for exclusion of and opposition against the Han Chinese and the destruction of all heretics. Islamic extremists claim that “every blade of grass and every tree in Xinjiang is Allah’s gift to the Muslims; they do not belong to the Han Chinese, but have become exploited and overtaken by them,” and that “heretics have taken over our land and
trampled on our religion; we should rise and resist this, and even if our lives are lost, we can enter heaven and see Allah’s face; whoever does not do so will be banished to burning hell after death and be punished forever.” As a result of such lies, various killings of individual Han Chinese have occurred and seriously endangered the safety of people’s lives and property. They also cast a shadow on the relationship between different ethnic groups.

All of the above are attempts to disrupt one’s ideology. They not only affect Xinjiang’s stability, but also pose a serious threat to the region’s long-term peace and prosperity. Since the development of concentrated reconstruction and management in various key areas in Xinjiang, the terrorist activities of the “three forces” and their ability to conduct frequent and large-scale terrorist activities have come under effective control, which has created a series of unique conditions for the region’s steady development. However, judging from those criminal cases uncovered in recent years that are related to Islamic extremist organizations, Islamic extremist forces within and outside of China have relied on the use of multiple channels such as Xinjiang’s mosques and underground scripture schools, media such as books, newspapers, magazines and audio-visual products, and modern communication methods such as the Internet and also “word of mouth,” in their attempt to disseminate extremist thought among the Muslim masses, especially ethnic cadres, intellectuals and young students. Their goal is to encourage religious fanaticism, ethnic hatred and “conflicts between civilizations,” to generate negative changes in people’s views toward the Party and the government, and to gather their sympathy or secret support for separatists, terrorists and extremists. Some of these people may even “drop their pens and pick up weapons” and become the leaders and backbone of the “three forces,” like Muhanmetemin Hazret, chairman of the “Eastern Turkestan Liberation Organization” outside of China, and Dolkun Isa, secretary general of the “World Uyghur Congress.” If this “ideological undercurrent” cannot be effectively stopped, then it will further erode the social foundation of Xinjiang’s opposition of the “three forces” and pose a serious threat to the region’s long-term peace and prosperity. The results of this may be the disruption of people’s minds, which will cause those unable to distinguish between right and wrong to lose their faith in following the government on the road to prosperity; the provocation of ethnic hatred, which will sow the seeds of ethnic conflict and controversy in some people’s hearts; the uprising of religious fanaticism, which will swallow up some in its frantic waves while leading others down the wrong track of treating religion as being of ultimate importance; and religion’s interference with politics in some rural areas, which will weaken the government’s authority at the grassroots level by impacting its implementation of policies and execution of political power.

2. The terrorist activities conducted by Islamic extremist forces pose a serious threat to the unity of China and its national security. This provides an excuse for hostile international forces to interfere with China’s internal affairs, which severely constrains the development of Xinjiang’s economy.

Based on studies of more than 200 terrorist cases involving murder, bombing, robbery and arson in Xinjiang since the 1990s, it is clear that the organizers and backbone of these crimes are basically the “Talibs” cultivated by Islamic extremist forces or those
individuals severely poisoned by Islamic extremist thought. Also undeniable is the fact that wherever there are frequent activities of Islamic extremist forces, the formation and development of terrorist organizations becomes prominent, with frequent occurrence of terrorist crimes that cause considerably social damage. This is manifested in the following three ways. The first is that these terrorist activities cause significant damage to national, collective and individual property; seriously disrupt local, regional and national stability and unity; and have a negative impact on Xinjiang’s good image in its opening-up to the outside world. Because these are not ordinary crimes, but activities that damage national security, they pose a serious threat to China’s unity and its social order. The second is that these terrorist activities provide an excuse for hostile international forces to interfere with China’s internal affairs. Although it is only natural that the Chinese government attack Islamic extremist forces and counter their various terrorist activities, certain hostile Western forces are trying their best to attack, condemn and pressure China in the name of the oppression of “religious freedom” and “human rights.” One example is the American government’s attempt to use “International Amnesty” to smear Xinjiang’s crackdown on Islamic extremist forces as “religious oppression” and “destruction of the Declaration of Human Rights.” In this sense, the destructive activities of Xinjiang’s Islamic extremist forces have become a political tool for hostile Western forces to implement their plans of “Westernizing” and “dividing” China. The third is that these terrorist activities provoke fear in Xinjiang’s society, damage the region’s investment environment, and pose a constraint on the development of the regional economy. Economic development requires the existence of a good external environment and an internal social environment. Since its reform and opening-up to the outside world, Xinjiang has fully prepared itself for the establishment of a series of cross-century strategies to modernize the region and develop its economy. However, in recent years, because the government in Xinjiang devotes a considerable amount of manpower and material efforts to upholding social stability and cracking down on Islamic extremist forces and their subversive activities, the region’s economic development has been disturbed and constrained.

3. Islamic extremist views have severely poisoned the hearts and minds of adolescent youth and created an ideological crisis for the next generation.

Adolescents are the fresh blood for society’s progress and the hope for our future development. Because they are the most creative, imaginative and lively group within a community, they inevitably become a key target for all kinds of political forces. Meanwhile, there is no doubt that religion is the best channel through which the numbing of minds and the control of thoughts can be achieved. As Frederick Engels once said, among all the spiritual means one can use to influence the masses, religion is still the first and most important. Islamic extremist forces deliberately propose the so-called principles of “politicization of religion, teaching of religion, socialization of religion, and rejuvenation of religion,” and concentrate all their efforts on the cultivation of religious extremist thoughts among young people. Their first step is to influence the ideological development of youth with a series of religious thoughts, widening the gap between these young people and the Han Chinese masses and strengthening the former’s intolerant and conservative ethnic consciousness.
and their opposition against the latter, in order to form a psychological foundation for their separatist activities. Their second step is to openly conduct political separatist activities, mainly in the form of terrorist crimes.

They poison the hearts and minds of youth in the following ways. The first is to disrupt school education. They focus their “breakthrough” point on teachers, with the assumption that as long as the teachers are converted, they will cease the promotion of atheism and turn away from socialist teaching methods. As a result of the threats and seductions of these Islamic extremists, the ideological defense of some teachers has been eroded. As they become increasingly indifferent to the development of political consciousness, their ideals and ideologies begin to crumble into pieces. Not only are they unenthusiastic and doing just enough to get by in the teaching of political theories, but they also become indifferent to the occurrence of ethnic separatist and illegal religious activities on campus. Their attitude is to compromise and avoid trouble, and to be deliberately vague in dealing with anti-terrorism issues and activities. Some teachers even defy the rules and regulations of their schools and devote themselves to the conducting of religious activities and rituals, and their introduction of religious extremist thoughts to students is a serious breach of their duties as educators. The result is that the abilities of these students to distinguish between right and wrong is disturbed, with many of them abandoning their studies and diverting their passion to various illegal religious activities. Some students not only declare their religious extremist views in public, but also participate directly or indirectly in criminal activities that jeopardize social stability.

The second is to infiltrate the hearts and minds of young students through the Internet. Under the influence of Islamic extremist thoughts on the Internet, some students circulate the web addresses of various religious sites and encourage others to conduct religious studies or promote religious thoughts through the Internet. Other students support each other’s “insistence on conducting Ramadan,” “insistence on conducting namaz,” and “insistence on upholding religious belief.” Frustrated by their school’s decision to ban the conduct of Ramadan and “namaz,” they secretly group together to discuss various methods of resistance.

The third is to actively seduce, absorb and incorporate young students into Islamic extremist organizations. For example, the “Hizb ut-Tahrir” (Party of Liberation) is able to rapidly develop within and across Xinjiang’s tertiary institutions by setting up networks of secret cells.

The fourth is to urge and seduce students to participate in underground scripture schools, which serve as the base for the cultivation of future generations of Islamic extremists. The participation of adolescents and students in underground scripture schools sponsored by Islamic extremists is a prominent phenomenon in Xinjiang, with some students having even abandoned their studies to become criminals. These deeply disturbed youths, with their hearts and minds poisoned by Islamic extremist thoughts, are becoming a major contributor to social instability at present and in the future. It is therefore evident that the damage caused by Islamic extremist forces on adolescents cannot be easily measured; it is also difficult to mend such damage. In fact, it may take years for these damaged hearts and minds to recover the effects of these poisonous Islamic extremist thoughts.
4. Islamic extremists attempt to seize religious leadership at the grassroots level and to interfere with normal religious activities and lives of the masses, which has severely impacted the internal unity and stability of religious circles.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, Xinjiang’s Islamic personnel and the religious masses lived in harmony. However, since the 1980s, some religious personnel and their Muslim followers have accepted Islamic extremist thought and adopted various approaches to attacking the government’s ethnic and religious policies, such as insulting and smearing the government’s reputation, seducing and recruiting members of the public, threatening and terrorizing non-believers, and conspiring against and even assassinating their opponents. Their goal is to provoke conflict within the religion. They refuse to be managed by religious organizations and the imams of mosques, while openly opposing government regulations. They encourage the masses not to worship in mosques, not to conduct namaz with those imams appointed by the government or recognize the weddings and funerals presided over by them. They openly claim that “those who do not conduct namaz five times a day are heretics,” while demanding that women wear veils, men keep their beards, and the masses celebrate the Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) in accordance with Saudi customs. With these acts, Islamic extremists attempt to force the religious masses to give up their normal religious activities, and to interfere with the general operations of religious management. Worse, they openly oppose government regulations and seize religious leadership at the grassroots level, resulting in a series of malicious struggles within the religious masses.

5. It is difficult to eliminate Islamic extremist organizations, which serve as a launching pad for terrorist activities.

A good example is the aforementioned Islamic extremist organization “Hizb ut-Tahrir,” which has infiltrated Xinjiang since the 1990s. Although the organization has undergone a series of raids and long-term suppression by the government, due to its well-organized and secretive nature and ability to resist and rejuvenate, not only has it survived well, but it has also bounced back in Xinjiang and integrated through its networks all of those terrorist individuals and groups that were previously under the government’s attack. This proves that in addition to promoting their religion, Islamic extremist forces have started preparing for the conduct of “armed struggles.” If such struggles eventuate, then their only approach to countering superior political administration is through terrorist acts. Their ultimate ambition is to establish an Islamic republic in Xinjiang, which will “evolve” into a living entity of terrorist and separatist forces.

The above facts prove that Islamic extremists have been plotting further growth through the infiltration of religion. In addition to seizing from the government various religious and ideological bases among the masses, they also conduct secret meetings and promote the use of violence on all possible occasions. At present, judging from the discovery of various improvised explosive devices such as dynamite and detonators, their ability to conduct terrorist activities is increasing. This is a daunting task faced by Xinjiang in its anti-terrorism efforts.
A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN XINJIANG AND ITS CHALLENGES

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Xinjiang Conference, 2009

At the end of 2008, there were a total of 8,345 schools with 4,465,000 students in Xinjiang, 57.4 percent of whom were minority students. There were 345,000 teaching and administration staff working in these schools, including 281,000 appointed teachers. On average, among every 100,000 people in Xinjiang, there were 1,416 students studying in higher education institutions (the national average was 1,816), 2,906 in senior secondary schools (the national average was 3,321), 5,822 in junior secondary schools (the national average was 4,557), 10,438 in primary schools (the national average was 8,192), and 1,095 in kindergartens (the national average was 1,731). On average, individual residents received eight years of education in Xinjiang.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN XINJIANG

1. As reforms in basic education curriculum continue, the quality of teaching is steadily enhanced.

The national-level government and the autonomous region are increasing support for compulsory education through a series of policies and financial aid. On the basis of the “National Project of Compulsory Education in Impoverished Areas” during the Tenth Five-Year Plan period (2001-2005), the state implemented the project of “Renovating Buildings at Rural Junior Secondary Schools in Western Regions” between 2007 and 2010, which aims to make nine-year compulsory education universal and to eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults. The national-level government allocated a special budget of 40 million yuan to extend the scope of the
project, while the autonomous region provided 20 million yuan in counterpart funds, enabling the total investment in the project to reach 60 million yuan. The project’s scope included 40 counties and cities, covering a total of 173 secondary and primary schools. Approximately 47.5 million yuan were dedicated to the construction and refurbishment of a total of 506,500 square meters of school structure, while another 12.5 million yuan were provided for the acquisition of teaching equipment and facilities. The monies for construction in 2008 were already allocated by the state and the autonomous region.

As reforms in Xinjiang’s basic education curriculum continue, there have been further revisions to the secondary school curriculum. Guiding documents such as “Schemes to Implement Curriculum Reforms in Secondary Schools of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” and “Instructional Views on the Establishment and Management of Secondary School Curriculum” now provide a system of guiding policies for the teaching of subjects, management of credits, evaluation of overall quality, assessment of courses and reform of the college entrance examination.

2. Focus on secondary vocational education and speed up the development of secondary education.

In order to further strengthen the structure of secondary education and unify its development across the autonomous region, the government launched the development and planning of secondary vocational education between 2008 and 2012. A total of 283,800 students will be accepted, including 138,500 by secondary high schools and 145,300 by secondary vocational schools. This is the first time that the autonomous region has planned to steer more students toward entering secondary vocational schools than secondary high schools. The focus will be to improve the quality of secondary vocational students, to upgrade the teaching conditions of these vocational schools, and to enhance the inspection and supervision of key tasks such as moral education.

Construction of the fundamental capabilities of vocational schools is progressing in an orderly manner. Since the implementation of the Tenth Five-Year Plan, Xinjiang has launched the project, “Constructing the Fundamental Capabilities of Secondary Vocational Education.” A total of 73 vocational schools in Xinjiang are included in the National Development Plan, with a special budget of 27.6 million yuan planned; among these, between 2006 and 2008, approximately 12.6 million yuan were already allocated. Since 2005, a total of 18 secondary vocational and other schools in Xinjiang have been included in “Constructing Fundamental Capabilities of Secondary Vocational Education.” The program establishes the public training base for highly-skilled students in primary, secondary and tertiary industries and the petroleum and petrochemical industries. It also launched a series of training bases for commonly-skilled students in eight leading industries, as well as 13 training bases for skilled students in industries with related to specialized regional products. As the teaching conditions in vocational schools improve, Xinjiang’s ability to support the training of application-oriented and skill-oriented talent will be considerably enhanced.

As reforms in vocational education continue, the quality of education is greatly improving. In 2008, Xinjiang hosted the Autonomous Region’s Secondary Vocational
Students Skills Competition and the National Secondary Vocational Students Skills Competition’s Xinjiang Preliminaries. Students from Xinjiang won the second and third place awards and the excellence award in the National Vocational College Students Skills Competition, which fully demonstrated the skills of secondary vocational students and Xinjiang’s achievement in the cultivation of vocational talent. Most important, since the implementation of the project of “Training Professional and Principal Teachers in Secondary Vocational Schools” in the autonomous region, a total of 854 teachers have been trained. Three training courses for the use of information management systems in secondary vocational schools have also been organized, which greatly enhanced Xinjiang and the state’s efforts to construct information management systems in secondary vocational schools.

All civilian-operated secondary vocational schools and training agencies are now regulated, as relevant authorities in Xinjiang work together to closely examine all of them, especially those offering language training. A total of 59 educational facilities were either suspended or closed, while 348 unlicensed and illegal educational institutions or agencies were legally shut down. The authorities handled all unlawful educational behavior in individual schools operated by civilians in accordance with the law, and issues regarding the follow-up placement of students were adequately negotiated and solved. The “Interim Provisions on Further Strengthening the Management of Civilian-Operated Secondary Vocational Schools and Training Facilities” were drafted to regulate all teaching behavior in civilian-operated secondary vocational institutions. Xinjiang authorities have strengthened efforts to eliminate illiteracy, and a series of inspections and surveys were conducted to determine to what extent such efforts were put into effect in Xinjiang. Currently there are 976,500 illiterate people in the autonomous region, including 318,900 young and middle-aged adults. While the average illiteracy rate is 6.51 percent, the rate among young and middle-aged adults has reached 2.43 percent. The government established a national scheme to allocate special budgets for the elimination of illiteracy. Also launched was the construction of Xinjiang’s training base for teachers specialized in eliminating illiteracy. A compilation of anti-illiteracy teaching materials in Mandarin, Uyghur and Kazakh languages was also developed.

3. Continue internal construction and enhance the steady development of higher education.

While reforms in the higher education system continue, efforts are being made to enhance the establishment of academic subjects and to strengthen scientific research and development in higher educational institutions. Among the 38 courses considered to be excellent in the autonomous region in 2008, two were awarded prominence at the national level. Among the 19 teachers considered to be exceptional in the region, one has won the National Outstanding Teacher Award. Among the region’s ten experimental teaching demonstration centers, two were awarded national-level recognition. Two out of the region’s 18 teaching groups were excellent at the national level. While the evaluation of those nominated for the 39 categories of the autonomous region’s Fifth Teaching Achievement Awards for Higher Education is currently underway, construction of secondary vocational schools and general col-
leges with individual characteristics and specialties is progressing.

In order to further strengthen the establishment of key disciplines in the autonomous region, the government has begun 25 evaluation and assessment projects in this field. The “Specialized Cultivation of Urgently Needed Professionals for the Autonomous Region's Key Industries Project” was implemented, so that the targets, positions, methodologies and measures of specialty construction in each institution were clarified with evident results. As reforms in teaching colleges and universities continue, with an emphasis on granting students opportunities to conduct in-post teaching practice at the grassroots level, a series of schemes have been implemented to specifically cultivate bilingual teachers for rural secondary and primary schools. The government established projects to train qualified personnel specialized in various ethnic languages, and to allow graduates trained in those ethnic languages where there are particular needs to enter Master’s degree courses by recommendation, without taking admission tests. As the national and regional governments work together to construct laboratories for preponderant and characteristic disciplines in tertiary institutions, they have approved a total of 12 construction projects. In order to adequately assess scientific research and development projects in tertiary institutions, to conduct mid-term inspections and final appraisal and acceptance of these projects, and to ensure the successful completion of all relevant statistical procedures, the Managing Committee for Scientific Research and Development in Tertiary Institutions of Xinjiang’s Uyghur Autonomous Region was established.

Efforts were made to train teachers and cultivate professionals. While the implementation and expansion of projects such as “Cultivation of ‘Bilingual’ Teachers for Rural Secondary and Primary Schools,” “Training of Qualified Personnel Specialized in Various Ethnic Languages” and “Cultivation of Physicians Specially for Rural Areas” continue, the “Specialized Cultivation of Urgently Needed Professionals for the Autonomous Region’s Key Industries Project” has been carried out. This latter project was based on the strategy of transforming the advantages of the autonomous region’s resources for a new approach to industrialization. “Specially-engaged positions” were established to introduce urgently needed human resources in order to build up professional teams, increase financial investment and improve conditions for further development. A total of 60 million yuan will be invested over three years to fundamentally change the conditions of 16 industries whose development is lagging due to a shortage of specialized talent. This will be the most direct and practical contribution to the autonomous region’s pillar industries, with approximately 22 million yuan already invested in 2008.

The overall strength of tertiary institutions and their ability to serve society was considerably enhanced. The combined fixed assets of Xinjiang’s tertiary institutions are now worth 7.39 billion yuan, which serve as a solid foundation for further development. Specifically, Xinjiang University has built up a series of key disciplines and improved its overall teaching strength, which greatly enhanced the progress of its modernization and internationalization. The university has also added two key disciplines at the national level and seven key disciplines at the regional level, and established three postdoctoral scientific research stations and nine second-level doctoral degree programs. It has successfully completed the tasks stipulated by the “211 Project” and the Tenth Five-Year Plan and launched three construction projects. A
total of 16 tertiary institutions across the nation are providing all-around peer-to-peer support to Xinjiang’s 11 regular tertiary institutions and one teaching college (Hotan Teachers College). A total of 41 tertiary institutions promoted by the “985 Project” and the “211 Project,” including Beijing University and Tsinghua University, are supporting the 85 first-level disciplines established among Xinjiang’s 11 tertiary institutions. Indeed, peer-to-peer support has boosted efforts to upgrade the development of Xinjiang’s tertiary institutions. The construction of key disciplines is in accordance with all established schedules, as the autonomous region has chosen 25 key disciplines at the regional level and invested a total of 21.4 million yuan over five years. By introducing urgently needed human resources, increasing financial investment and improving conditions for further development, the autonomous region has accelerated its project of “Reinvigorating Tertiary Institutions through Human Resource Development” and strengthened the establishment of key disciplines and the cultivation of urgently needed professional talent in tertiary institutions. The implementation of the project of “Constructing a National Model of Higher Vocational Institutions” has reached its year-to-year goals, as the Xinjiang Agricultural, Vocational Technical College and the Karamay Vocational and Technical College were promoted by the project and received considerable financial support from the state. In 2008, Xinjiang’s Shihezi Vocational and Technical College was included in the project of “Constructing a National Model of Higher Vocational Institutions,” while the Xinjiang Light Industry Vocational and Technical College was considered a key institution to be cultivated as part of the national model. A total of four vocational education parks were established in the autonomous region to extend and improve the integration of vocational educational resources and the development of vocational education for industries with local characteristics. In short, the construction of a national model of higher vocational institutions and the vocational education parks greatly enhanced the development of higher vocational education in Xinjiang.

Provide student career consultation and adequately manage student data. Inspections were conducted specifically on the employment status of tertiary institution graduates in order to implement and put into effect various policies that support employment and entrepreneurship. Taking advantage of the tertiary institutions as a market, a series of orientations were conducted on various campuses to enhance communications between employers and potential employees, with a total of 33,000 employment opportunities provided. The tertiary institutions were also mobilized to actively participate in a wide range of recruitment activities through the Internet, which provides even more platforms for exchanges between tertiary institution graduates and employers. The promotion and provision of career guidance for graduates was strengthened to help them develop correct views of employment.

As of 2008, there were 32 tertiary institutions in Xinjiang, with 9,623 graduate students, as well as 216,000 undergraduate students in both general and vocational institutions. The intake of undergraduate students increased from 55,700 in 2005 to 65,500 in 2008, with a growth rate of 17.5 percent. These tertiary institutions employ 15,000 teachers, with 30.89 percent of them having received a master’s degree or above. There are eight independent tertiary institutions for adults, with 63,000 students and 2,800 teachers in both general and vocational institutions.
4. Expand the training of bilingual teachers and promote bilingual teaching, in order to improve national education.

The term “bilingual” here refers to the ability of the members of a nationality to master not only their own ethnic language but also that of another ethnicity. In July and September 2008, in Kashgar and Hotan, respectively, the autonomous region’s government and Party committee hosted a Work Site Conference on “‘Han Chinese Language [Mandarin]’ Preschool Education for Minority Groups in Southern Xinjiang” and the “Conference on Launching Construction of ‘Bilingual’ Kindergartens for Minority Groups.” A series of meetings took place to discuss the cultivation of bilingual teachers in the autonomous region in order to continue the promotion of bilingual teaching. At the end of 2007, there were 2,378,000 minority students in Xinjiang’s preschools, primary and secondary schools and secondary vocational schools. Among them, 649,500, or 27.33 percent of all minority students, were taught “bilingually” or enrolled in Mandarin schools. This was the highest ratio ever.

Further enhance the research and supervision of bilingual teaching. The autonomous region has established a team of experts in bilingual teaching for preschools and primary and secondary schools. Educational administrative departments at all levels have upgraded their research in bilingual teaching by setting up research topics, organizing teaching demonstration activities, conducting academic exchanges and launching school-based teaching and research projects. These initiatives greatly improved their supervision of bilingual teaching in preschools and primary and secondary schools.

In order to develop better bilingual teaching materials, the team of experts organized the compilation Han Yu as a textbook for bilingual teaching in primary and secondary schools, and they systematized all bilingual teaching materials. The “Test of Han Chinese Language [Mandarin] Ability for Minority Groups” (MHK) was actively promoted. A series of speaking and promotion tours on the autonomous region’s achievements in bilingual teaching created a strong atmosphere for the care, support and promotion of bilingual teaching in Xinjiang.

The cultivation of bilingual teachers was boosted to ensure the successful provision of bilingual teaching. In 2008, the scope of distance training was greatly extended. Teachers who underwent training returned to their posts and have become the backbone of the promotion of bilingual teaching. In 2009, a project to actively cultivate minority bilingual teachers in Xinjiang’s primary and secondary schools was launched to strictly monitor the quality of teacher training. Nearly 2,500 individuals participated in the spring and autumn selections of candidates to be trained as primary and secondary school teachers, with those selected having to undergo two years of training in order to upgrade their academic qualifications. In the end, nearly 6,000 participants of various bilingual teacher training courses participated in a test to determine whether their academic qualifications should be upgraded. Efforts were made to actively encourage all participants of the training courses to participate in a teaching practice program on bilingual teaching. Specifically, more than 1,100 primary and secondary school teachers have participated in a three-month teaching practice program that supplemented the results of their training courses. With sup-
port from the state, Xinjiang has established a system of training bilingual teachers at national, regional, prefectural, county and school levels, with training at each level becoming increasingly successful. The further education of primary and secondary school teachers has basically reached the planning objective of the third control phase. At the end of 2008, it was estimated that 99 percent of Xinjiang’s primary and secondary school teachers received further education and training in this phase.

**Train additional bilingual teachers.** In order to resolve the shortage of bilingual preschool teachers, in 2006 the autonomous region resumed the intake of students to be trained as bilingual teachers at the three-year high school level. More than 5,000 students were recruited over a period of three years, which built a reserve of bilingual preschool teachers. Since 2007, the project of training bilingual teachers for Southern Xinjiang’s three prefectures and one region has been implemented. Nearly 1,000 students were trained free of charge at the two-year junior college level and, after graduation, served as bilingual primary and secondary school teachers in Southern Xinjiang. The “Implementation Scheme for the Project of Cultivating and Training ‘Bilingual’ Teachers for Newly Established Preschools in Southern Xinjiang’s Three Prefectures and in Wushi and Keping Counties” was launched. A total of 575 students were recruited for a two-year “special training,” with another 1,111 preschool teachers to be trained for one year in their own prefectures. Also launched was “Training Bilingual Preschool Teachers for Four Prefectures in Northern and Southern Xinjiang”; the project’s aim was to press for the training of all bilingual preschool teachers in Xinjiang by 2012. In order to enhance the strength of peer-to-peer teaching support, the project of “Teaching Practice and Support” was implemented, which specifically focused on senior students in teaching universities and colleges. Nearly 6,000 students specializing in teaching and ethnic languages have arrived from 13 regional universities and colleges to participate in teaching practice in agricultural schools across Xinjiang, with those in Southern Xinjiang as the focus.

Efforts were also made to encourage students from teaching universities and colleges outside the autonomous region to conduct teaching practice in various locations in Xinjiang at the grassroots level, and more than ten universities and colleges expressed their intention to participate. Finally, senior high school students specializing in preschool education were encouraged to participate in teaching practice and support at various locations, with a total of 510 students currently doing so in 2009 in Southern Xinjiang. These projects and efforts helped resolve the shortage of Mandarin and bilingual teachers at the grassroots level, not only by reversing the trend of teaching children too early using methods of primary school education, but also by creating opportunities for local teachers to receive further education and training.

**Establish special policies to optimize teachers.** In order to provide more work opportunities to qualified bilingual teachers, the autonomous region has decided to enforce the policy of “sabbatical leave” on teachers in ethnic language primary and secondary schools and in schools for both Han Chinese and minority students. The number of those qualified teachers who are on sabbatical leave generally does not exceed 20 percent of the total number of teachers in a school. For male teachers who have reached 50 years of age and who have worked for more than 25 years, as well as female teachers who have reached 45 years of age and who have worked for more than 20 years, if it is confirmed through assessment that they have difficulty provid-
ing bilingual teaching, then they can voluntarily apply for and be permitted by relevant departments to go on sabbatical leave. During sabbatical leave, these teachers retain their employment benefits, including the same criteria for salaries, allowances and other favorable treatment. Alongside these measures, the autonomous region launched a scheme to implement the special project of recruiting bilingual primary school teachers. Its goal is to fundamentally resolve the shortage of bilingual primary school teachers in six years.

**Actively utilize distance education and employ modern educational techniques to enhance bilingual teaching.** In recent years, the state and local governments have invested 320 million yuan in major projects such as “Modern Distance Education for Rural Primary and Secondary Schools” and “Construction of Campus Networks for Tertiary Institutions in the West.” These projects established Xinjiang’s regional educational network and satellite broadband network. More than 6,000 rural primary and secondary schools in Xinjiang’s 86 counties and cities have now realized the “Three Models” of distance education and are capable of communicating with each other through satellites, cable television and broadband Internet networks. As these schools are now able to access the Internet at low cost, almost 20 million students benefit from this program. Meanwhile, Xinjiang has established a distance education network and a database for bilingual teaching resources for primary and secondary schools. It has also organized the synchronized broadcast of demonstration videos of bilingual teaching across the autonomous region, so that more than 80,000 students and teachers can simultaneously participate in a demonstration of distance teaching. This is an important trial in the promotion of bilingual teaching in Xinjiang. By conducting bilingual teaching and training bilingual teachers through the Internet, the best teaching materials for classrooms in Xinjiang can be directly delivered to all the students and teachers in farming villages and nomadic areas across the Tian Shan mountain range. This means that Xinjiang has established a multifaceted, multifunctional and interactive service architecture for the distribution of educational information resources.

**Continue the healthy development of bilingual education.** In 2008, the autonomous region allocated a special budget of 103 million yuan for bilingual preschool education, which was used to subsidize the meals and learning materials of 162,000 minority preschool children, the salaries of 4,054 preschool teachers, and the construction of basic educational facilities across seven prefectures. Starting from 2008, the monthly salary of teachers in the autonomous region was increased from 400 to 800 yuan. Increased teacher benefits offered social security, including hospital insurance, annuities and employment benefits. These benefits have greatly improved the attractiveness of bilingual teaching as a profession. With the launch of the “Project of Constructing Kindergartens for Xinjiang’s Minority Groups” came the establishment of the “Regulations on the Construction and Management of the Autonomous Region’s ‘Bilingual’ Kindergartens,” with a total of 214 bilingual kindergartens currently under construction in Southern Xinjiang and in Wushi and Keping Counties. From 2006 to 2008, approximately 205 million yuan were invested in bilingual preschool education. This not only allowed 330,000 preschool children to enjoy subsidies to their meals and free bilingual textbooks, but also enabled 4,054 bilingual preschool teachers to receive subsidies to their salaries. Bilingual preschool education was therefore considerably improved.
S. Continue training individuals who are proficient in both ethnic and Mandarin languages, and train additional highly qualified minority students.

Since 2007, there has been a yearly intake of 200 students to be trained to specialize in the Uyghur and Kazakh languages. In order to train highly qualified minority individuals who are proficient in both ethnic and Mandarin languages in Xinjiang, the state launched a project in 1989 to coordinate inland tertiary institutions’ efforts. The project has since increased the number of participating tertiary institutions from 72 to 133, and the number of students recruited each year has grown from 1,000 to 2,000. So far, more than 20,000 minority students from Xinjiang have been recruited and trained by these general and vocational institutions, with nearly 9,000 graduates. Meanwhile, the Department of Finance and the Department of Education have been allocating 16 million yuan each year to subsidize minority students from Xinjiang who are experiencing financial difficulties during their studies at tertiary institutions. The aim is to ensure that these students can successfully complete their training.

Since 2000, the State Council has conducted a series of Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes in various economically-developed inland cities. The number of participating cities has increased from 12 to 24, with the number of participating senior secondary schools growing from 13 to 50. While the number of students recruited each year has increased from 1,000 to 5,000, there are 17,065 students currently studying in these classes. More than 5,000 students have graduated over a period of four years. While more than 90 percent of these students have successfully entered various inland tertiary institutions, 85 percent of them are studying in key institutions, which is a highly positive result. In total, the state has invested 400 million yuan to establish these Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes, while the autonomous region has invested 180 million yuan in their regular operations. The participating cities are allocating an average of 6,000 yuan each year per student, with the majority of them offering over 10,000 per year. Both figures have met or surpassed the level stipulated by the Department of Education.

Since 2004, in accordance with the operational model of the Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes, the autonomous region has launched a series of Xinjiang junior secondary school classes in eight regional cities, including Urumqi. There are currently 18 participating regional junior secondary schools, with 5,000 students now recruited each year. The number of students currently studying in these regional schools has reached 13,000, with 973 students already graduated from the first class, 85 percent of whom have successfully entered the aforementioned Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes. The autonomous region has allocated 130 million yuan for the basic construction of these regional junior secondary school classes and another 200 million yuan for their regular operations; a total of 2,400 teaching and administrative staff members were also recruited for these regional classes. Since 2007, the autonomous region has launched a series of regional senior secondary school classes, with 161 students recruited for the first class. This figure was increased to 900 in 2008. The autonomous region has allocated 60.8 million yuan for the basic construction of these regional senior secondary school classes and another 1.127 million yuan for their regular operations. Furthermore,
the autonomous region has established the Medical Aid Fund for Serious Diseases for students studying in the regional senior and junior secondary school classes, with one million yuan allocated each year as a special budget. Efforts were made to recruit, assess, intake and manage students for these regional senior and junior secondary school classes. In 2008, both senior and junior secondary school classes in the autonomous region planned to recruit 5,000 students. Among those 5,205 students successfully recruited by the regional junior secondary school classes, approximately 90 percent are children of farmers and nomads, a ratio that is slightly higher than the previous year. The region also launched customized training for the aforementioned Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes in moral education as well as ideological and political education. A total of 174 leaders, middle-level cadres and teachers from the participating senior secondary schools attended the training and cooperated with the Department of Education to organize a series of touring lectures at every one of the nation’s Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes. They also organized a series of touring lectures on ideological and political education for teachers of senior and junior secondary school classes in Southern Xinjiang’s three prefectures. Among the 8,500 teachers trained in relevant policies, 70 administrative cadres were selected to assist participating inland senior secondary schools in the management of students. Efforts were also made to provide career consultation to the first group of students graduating from the Inland Xinjiang Senior Secondary School Classes, and to strengthen the moral education and ideological and political education of students at regional senior and junior secondary schools, in order to ensure their healthy development.

6. Strengthen the instruction of moral, ideological and political education in schools. Uphold the security and stability of all schools in order to ensure the further development of Xinjiang’s education system.

The autonomous region has emphasized and improved the establishment of Party and League organizations in all levels of schools. The relevancy and timeliness of moral education and ideological and political education were strengthened in order to uphold the stability of all schools. The region emphasized the ideological and political education of cadres in Xinjiang’s education system. It trained cadres as educational administrators. With attention and support from state and regional Party committees, the region launched various training seminars to enhance the educational administrative work in departments at all levels. A strong environment for moral education was created for Party committees, governments, educational administrative departments and schools at all levels as well as throughout society.

Under the correct leadership of the autonomous region’s Party committee and government, and due to the hard work of the teaching and administrative staff and students, the region’s education system has effectively defended itself against the assaults of the three forces of ethnic separatism, religious extremism and terrorism both within and outside of the nation. Throughout the years, all schools have insisted on abiding by the guiding principle of upholding stability. They have fully rectified campus order, purified the teaching platforms, and strengthened the construction and management of teaching materials for political and ideological subjects. They
have also developed a wide range of educational activities to promote the construction of spiritual civilization and campus cultural themes. Thanks to these efforts, the ideological and political awareness of all teachers and students is being continuously upgraded. This has not only helped in upholding the stability of the autonomous region’s education system, it has also played an important role in promoting ethnic unity and ensuring the stability of all of the nation’s border regions.

7. **Work hard to resolve education-related problems and difficult issues of public concern.**

The insurance system for the budgets and financial capacity of compulsory education is now well-equipped. The 2008 funds for the systematic protection of compulsory education in rural areas reached 1.501 billion yuan, an increase of 390 million yuan from the previous year. Also in 2008, the operating expenses for primary and junior secondary schools were increased to 225 yuan and 375 yuan per year per student, respectively. (In accordance with this, the operating expenses for counties and towns were increased to 240 yuan and 390 yuan, respectively.) Subsidies for the living allowances of boarding students with financial difficulties were increased to 500 yuan per primary school student per year, and to 750 yuan per junior secondary school student per year. All of Xinjiang’s 2.39 million rural students under the compulsory education age are now able to enjoy the benefits of the “two exemptions” policy, which covers their tuition and book fees. A total of 249,400 impoverished boarding students are able to receive subsidies for their daily living; these students account for 86 percent of Xinjiang’s boarding students, an increase of 39,400 from 2006. In September 2008, the project of exempting all tuition fees in cities was launched. A total of 100 million yuan was invested by the state, regional and local governments, so that nearly 620,000 students in 441 primary and secondary schools in cities across Xinjiang no longer need to pay tuition fees.

**Provide financial sponsorship for students in tertiary institutions and secondary vocational schools.** In the spring semester of 2008, a total of 180,300 impoverished students in Xinjiang’s tertiary institutions and secondary vocational schools received a series of scholarships and financial sponsorships from the state, worth 153 million yuan in total. After the Sichuan earthquake, the autonomous region’s Party committee and government decided to provide subsidies for daily expenses to tertiary and secondary vocational students whose families were affected by the natural disaster. Each student received 500 yuan as a living allowance and was exempted from paying tuition fees. The autonomous region’s education department further issued the “Urgent Notice on the Acceptance of Some Students under the Compulsory Education Age from Sichuan’s Disaster Zones to Study in Xinjiang.” The notice said that students under the compulsory education age who arrived from Sichuan to depend on their relatives and friends in Xinjiang should enter appropriate local schools as soon as possible, and that they should be treated equally.

**Increase the intake of students through the university and college entrance examination.** In 2008, a total of 167,300 students attended the university and college entrance examination in Xinjiang. This not only represented an increase of 13,200 from the previous year, it also set the record for the most students attending the ex-
amination. In 2009, tertiary institutions within and outside the autonomous region are planning to recruit 91,742 students. The implementation of web-based scoring for all subjects in every language is continuing. Tertiary institutions are implementing the “Sunshine Project,” which aims to considerably reduce cheating.

8. Increase funding to clearly improve the development of education.

The government in Xinjiang provides major financial input for the development of education. According to the government’s financial planning, Xinjiang’s education budget has grown from 13.219 billion yuan in 2005 to 19.291 billion yuan in 2008, with a growth rate of 20.8 percent per year. Included in this financial planning are operational expenses for education, which have grown from 10.257 billion yuan in 2005 to 15.542 billion yuan in 2007, with a growth rate of 23.1 percent per year. In 2008, Xinjiang’s education budget accounted for 80.6 percent of its total financial input towards education. The trend to ensure yearly increases in overall financial input towards education is maintained.

Using the analysis methodology stipulated in the “National Educational Reform and Development Program,” a comparison was conducted between Xinjiang’s education budget and its overall financial expenditure. Xinjiang’s financial income has grown from 22 billion yuan in 2005 to 369 billion yuan in 2008, with a growth rate of 29.5 percent per year. The autonomous region’s financial expenditure has grown from 553 billion yuan to 870 billion yuan during the same period, with a growth rate of 25.4 percent per year. In regards to Xinjiang’s operational expenses for education, its growth rate was 6.4 percent lower than that of the region’s financial income and 2.3 percent lower than that of the region’s financial expenditure. Furthermore, in terms of the growth of educational expenditure per student, from 2005 to 2007, the autonomous region’s yearly operational expenses for education has grown from 2,376 yuan to 3,571 yuan per primary school student, with a growth rate of 50.3 percent; from 2,603 yuan to 4,342 yuan per junior secondary school student, with a growth rate of 66.8 percent; from 4,523 yuan to 6,357 yuan per senior secondary school student, with a growth rate of 40.5 percent; and from 8,717 yuan to 9,681 yuan per tertiary student, with a growth rate of 11.1 percent. Xinjiang’s educational expenditure makes yearly gains in accordance with the yearly growth of the education budget.

While the government in Xinjiang provides major financial input, many channels are used to raise funds for the development of education. This has clearly improved conditions. The state and the autonomous region have enhanced their fiscal transfer systems for education in order to increase financial input in impoverished areas. From 2006 to the first half of 2008, a total of 2.446 billion yuan were invested in basic construction for Xinjiang’s fundamental education, including 1.674 billion yuan from the state and 772 million yuan from the autonomous region. Through the implementation of important projects such as “Maintenance of Primary and Secondary School Buildings in RuralAreas,” “Construction of Boarding Schools in Rural Areas,” “Reconstruction of Second-Degree Dangerous Buildings” and “Reconstruction of Junior Secondary School Buildings in Rural Areas,” conditions for the development of all kinds of education in Xinjiang were fundamentally improved. In 2007, the total size of Xinjiang’s secondary school buildings reached 11.63 million square meters,
an increase of 1.26 million square meters from 2005. The total size of primary school buildings reached 9.07 million square meters in 2007, an increase of 800,000 square meters from 2005. The average building size per student in these two cases witnessed an increase of 0.9 square meters and 0.6 square meters, respectively.

Although considerable achievements have been made in education in Xinjiang, due to geographic limitations and various historical reasons, controversies and problems still exist. There is an evident imbalance in the development of education within the autonomous region, with a lack of necessary teaching facilities in some rural schools and an evident backwardness in the development of education in Southern Xinjiang. There are also difficulties in the promotion of bilingual teaching. The training of teachers and students is not yet compatible with the new trends of economic and social development in Xinjiang. The development rate of preschool education in Xinjiang is lower than the national average, and the development rate of senior secondary school education is also lower than the national average rates for China and other nearby countries. There is still a structural shortage of teachers.

DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN XINJIANG

1. The enrollment rate at all levels is still low. There is a need to upgrade the overall educational level.

The enrollment rate of children between three and six years of age in Xinjiang is only 26.14 percent, which is 14 percent lower than the national average age of 40.8 percent. The enrollment rate of junior secondary school graduates in senior secondary schools is also lower than the average rate of the nation and the rates of the other western provinces and regions. The tasks needed to augment and upgrade compulsory education are daunting, as there are still considerable gaps between urban and rural areas, between regions, and between schools. There is a lack of educational development in rural areas, with an evidently low enrollment rate among adolescents of junior secondary school age. There is a shortage of high-quality educational resources in primary and secondary schools in urban areas, with a prominent phenomenon of favored schools. Although Xinjiang currently boasts more than 1,000 teaching posts, the region still needs fundamental solutions to problems such as the wide scattering of primary and secondary schools across rural areas, their small size and poor layout, and a lack of teaching quality and high student performance. The gross enrollment rate of senior secondary school graduates in tertiary institutions in Xinjiang is 12 percent lower than the national average rate; it is also lower than the national average rates of nearby countries such as Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Finally, the gross enrollment rate in institutions for higher education in Xinjiang is also lower than the national average rate.

The development of education across the autonomous region is inconsistent, with an evident backwardness in Southern Xinjiang. In 2005, the enrollment rate of junior secondary school graduates in senior secondary schools in Xinjiang was 40.70 percent, with the enrollment rate in Southern Xinjiang clearly lagging behind that of the rest of the autonomous region. In 2006, the enrollment rate of junior second-
ary school graduates in senior secondary schools in Xinjiang was 48.72 percent, but
in Southern Xinjiang’s three prefectures it was only 23.29 percent. The promotion
rate of junior secondary school graduates in these three prefectures is lower than
Xinjiang’s average rate of 25.43 percent. Particularly in Hotan, the promotion rate
of junior secondary school graduates is only 16.86 percent. More than 80 percent of
these graduates are unable to continue their studies and end up entering the society
with no career skills, becoming easy targets for various hostile forces. The develop-
ment of education in Southern Xinjiang is clearly very poor. In Hotan, the average
size of school buildings per primary school student is only 2.72 square meters, and
the average size of school buildings per secondary school student is only 3.01 square
meters, both of which are far lower than Xinjiang’s average rate. The delayed develop-
ment of education in Southern Xinjiang’s three prefectures is constraining the full-
scale coordinated development of education in Xinjiang overall.

2. The lack of primary and secondary school teachers and the structural imbalance within Xinjiang’s education system are still prominent.

The overall quality and teaching strength of Xinjiang’s primary and secondary
school teachers, particularly those in rural areas, have yet to satisfy the demands of
quality education. These teachers have high academic qualifications but low practical
teaching standards. There is a shortage of teachers, a lack of quality teaching and an
imbalance in the distribution of educational resources across different geographical
areas and disciplines. There is uneven distribution of these resources across different
ethnic groups and between urban and rural areas. The ratio of substitute teachers in
schools in rural areas along the border is still very high, and the quality and teaching
strength of these teachers have yet to satisfy the demands of quality fundamental
education in these areas.

3. There is still a lack of development in vocational education.

The level of development in Xinjiang’s vocational education, particularly among
secondary schools, is still very low. Its scale is very small. In 2008, a total of 65,600
students enrolled in secondary vocational schools. The total number of secondary
vocational students in Xinjiang in that year was 146,400, which accounted for only
26.7 percent of Xinjiang’s total number of secondary school students. Meanwhile,
the conditions for the development of secondary vocational schools are very poor,
with a severe lack of practice and training facilities; some local vocational students
have to practice their skills by working for street vendors. There is also a shortage of
qualified teachers, with only 27 percent of all appointed teachers being “bi-qualified,”
which leads to the low quality of vocational education. Furthermore, due to a series
of language barriers, minority graduates of vocational schools have difficulties find-
ing employment. While the average employment rate of secondary vocational school
graduates in Xinjiang is approximately 77 percent, that of minority graduates is even
lower. This has a serious impact on the willingness of the general public to undertake
vocational education. Finally, there is a lack of support for Xinjiang’s impoverished
vocational students. There is a severe shortage of public investment in vocational
schools and the average income of rural residents is very low; these factors leads to a high ratio of impoverished students. This creates difficulties in reducing the cost of vocational educational operations and it has a serious impact on the development of vocational education in Xinjiang.

4. The tasks to stabilize the development of higher education and to further enhance its structure and quality are daunting.

Currently, the structure and quality of Xinjiang’s higher education system are not compatible with the new trends in the region’s economic and social development. With the implementation of the Strategy of Developing China’s West and the modification of other strategies of national development, Xinjiang is to become an important base for China’s development of energy resources and chemical industries and its opening up to the outside world. It is to become a major contributor to China’s economic growth, which will increase demand for individuals with professional training and qualifications. Although the various indicators of Xinjiang’s development of human resources, including the ratio of the number of individuals with tertiary education level or above to the total population, are above the national average, there is a severe shortage of trained people required for the region’s industrial development. The education system has yet to meet the demands of economic and social development, particularly the needs of newly emerging industries, in the autonomous region. In general, the conditions for the development of higher education in Xinjiang are very poor, with low standards and a lack of capability to train students. The percentage of teachers in Xinjiang with a master’s degree or above was only 27.42 percent in 2008, lower than the national average ratio of 39.64 percent. There is a clear backwardness in the development of the disciplines compatible with Xinjiang’s needs. Finally, many minority students lack proficiency in languages, mathematics, physics and chemistry, so it is often difficult for them to do advanced study in the science and engineering disciplines required by the economy. They are left with limited employment options.

5. Promoting the use of Mandarin among minority students and enhancing bilingual teaching are still difficult.

It is still difficult to promote bilingual teaching. There is a severe shortage of qualified Mandarin teachers, particularly in Southern Xinjiang. In Hotan and in other counties and towns, some Han Chinese cadres are appointed as Mandarin teachers. The standards of existing bilingual teachers are generally very low, and our investigations indicate that most minority bilingual teachers in primary and secondary schools in rural areas cannot speak Mandarin properly; some of them are even unable to conduct basic communication in the language. Due to a lack of Mandarin teachers, there are not enough bilingual courses to satisfy the needs of the general public. It is therefore impossible to develop coherent bilingual teaching from the preschool level.

Xinjiang’s numerous minority groups require a variety of bilingual teaching materials. The cost of developing these materials is very high, and the current content of these materials is rather irrelevant to local life, with a lack of variety in the teaching methods. There is an urgent need to develop bilingual teaching resources and au-
dio-visual materials that are compatible with the needs of students from all minority groups. Furthermore, the environments in which the languages are used have a considerable impact on the development of bilingual teaching. There are numerous concentrated areas of minority groups in Xinjiang. This is particularly true in Southern Xinjiang, where more than 93 percent of the total population has a minority ethnic background. Primary and secondary schools are established for the teaching of specific languages; communication among different minority groups leads to an inappropriate environment for minority students to study Mandarin. These problems have a direct impact on the effects of bilingual teaching. If they cannot be solved in time, the willingness of the general public to undertake bilingual education will definitely be affected.

Finally, there are difficulties in the development of bilingual preschool education. The conduct of bilingual education at the preschool stage plays a crucial role in the establishment of a solid foundation in the use of Mandarin and the improvement of the quality of bilingual education. However, as preschool education is not compulsory, there are still difficulties in the promotion of bilingual preschool education in the autonomous region. There is a lack of educational conditions for meeting the needs of preschool children and other operational problems.

6. Limited financial input cannot satisfy the needs of educational development.

There have been various degrees of improvement in Xinjiang’s allocation of budgets for education, the growth rate of its recurrent income when compared to the previous year, and the growth rate of its expenditure on education when compared to the growth rate of its general income. However, the autonomous region’s income is rather small, with its growth rate rather limited when compared to the national average. Hence the general conditions for the development of education in Xinjiang are rather poor, and the quality of education needs to be enhanced. In 2005, the average size of school buildings per primary school student was 3.86 square meters, which was far less than the national average of 5.34 square meters. Most rural schools lack necessary teaching facilities. In Southern Xinjiang’s inferior natural environment, vast barren deserts and long borderlines help make the costs of educational development rather high. In most regions, the construction of fundamental educational facilities and other general conditions cannot satisfy the demands of educational development and efforts to continue improving the quality of education. There is a common shortage of venues and equipment for the conducting of scientific experiments and other practices, as well as a lack of facilities for the teaching of music, physical education and the arts. Particularly in rural schools, there are not only buildings of low quality but also some that are considered dangerous. The living conditions of teachers in rural areas are very poor, with a severe lack of dormitories and basic services. Teachers face daunting challenges, as there is often great geographical distance between teachers and students.
AFTERWORD

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From 28-29 September 2010, the Ethnic Minority Group Development Research Institute (EMGDRI) within the Development Research Center of China’s State Council hosted a capstone conference on the 2008-2009 “Muslims and a Harmonious Society” series. The conference featured nearly 40 governmental and nongovernmental experts from three western Chinese provinces, as well as an American delegation of experts. The resulting comparative discussion was frank and wide-ranging, with all parties agreeing on the need for such a high-quality and ongoing discussion.

Upon the conference’s conclusion, the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) and EMGDRI noted several principles that emerged from this summary discussion of the project, among them:

- In the 21st century, there is no global challenge that any single entity, state or non-state, can successfully address on its own—as a result, amidst the broad range of actors present at the table of international relations, the question for each will not be “if” they partner with others present, but “when”;
- Religion is a critical factor in policy and governance analysis—a factor that must be respected, especially in areas with high concentrations of ethno-religious minorities, if effective social development is to take place;
- If religious extremism in all forms is a threat to the stability and success of social development, then religion must be a part of the policy solution to this threat; and,
- Well-educated religious leaders can enhance local stability by preaching the virtues of citizenship as consistent with faith, encouraging moral lives that seek to serve the less fortunate in society even as such people serve as a moral bulwark against the corruption that sometimes comes with the transition to a market economy.

Afterword
In summary, when religious traditions possess theological training schools where future faith-leaders are equipped to relate to their congregations, teaching them the best of the faith and respect for other people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, the particular religion will be honored and society will be strengthened (preventing religious extremism as a result).

In addition, both EMGDRI and IGE agreed on the value of examining a broad range of issues in determining the factors and conditions that enable social harmony among ethno-religious minorities through inclusive development. These factors/conditions include:

- Public and private secular education
- Overseas religious education
- Secular education for women
- Bilingual education
- Governance of local-level religious institutions
- Balancing the requirements of religious belief and national citizenship
- Social conditions that lead to localization of religion
- State-religion relations at the local level
- Impact of public historical narratives on religious communities
- Interaction of geographic factors and state-religion relations
- Religiouosly-oriented businesses

Finally, as an indication of their ongoing interest in these issues, EMGDRI and IGE concluded the conference by signing an agreement to deepen the research of the "Muslims and a Harmonious Society” project. This agreement provides a roadmap through which both parties will continue to partner in their methodical examination of how education can help/hinder social development, particularly among religious communities.