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WESTERN INFLUENCE: SUFISM IN CHINA

What is to be done, O Muslims? For I do not recognize myself. I am neither Christian nor Jew, nor Gabr nor Muslim; I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea; I am not of Nature’s mint, nor of the circling heavens.

I am not of India, nor of China, nor of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsin; I am not of the kingdom of Iraqain, nor of the country of Khurasan.

My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless; ’Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved. I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one; One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.

The Sufis have relinquished the form and husk of knowledge, they have raised the banner of the eye of certainty.

Thought is gone, and they have gained light; they have gained the throat (essence) and the sea (ultimate source) of gnosis. Death, of which all others are sore afraid, the perfect Sufis hold in derision.

None gains the victory over their hearts; the hurt falls on the oyster shell, not on the pearl.

Hidayat Allâh and Sufism’s Entrance into China

In the early seventeenth century, a Central Asian preacher named Muhammad Yûsuf crossed the Pamirs into Altishahr, where he engaged in

2. From the Mathnawi of Jalal ad-Din Rumi, vol. 1, 3492–96, trans. in Iqbal, Life and Work, 192.
religious and political disputes with local leaders and with distant kinsmen who belonged to a rival faction. Encouraged by his success among the Chaghadayid rulers of Altishahr, he traveled eastward, acquiring disciples in Turfan and Hami, then crossed the Ming frontier into the Gansu corridor to Suzhou—only a few years later Ding Guodong’s bastion—where he won the allegiance of the local Muslim scholars, who were Chinese speakers. After a successful sojourn in the country of the Salars, he returned to Altishahr and there was poisoned by his rivals and died in 1653.

His son, called Khoja Åfaq (or Åpāq) in Central Asian sources, but known to the Chinese as “Hidayat Allāh (Xidayetonglahei), twenty-fifth generation descendant of the Prophet,” moved even more effectively through northwest China in the 1670s. Taking advantage of the relative order and freedom of movement provided by Qing hegemony, Khoja Åfaq visited Lanzhou, Didao, Xining, and probably Hezhou, and had a profound effect on both Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Muhammad Yūsuf and Khoja Åfaq were Sufis, leaders within a movement that changed the entire Muslim world between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. Usually called “Islamic mysticism,” Sufism gave

3. Altishahr (Tur. “six cities”) denotes the western rim of the Tarim Basin, also called Kashgaria, Tianshan nansh (the route south of Tianshan), and eastern Turkestan. Modern Chinese sources anachronistically call it “southern Xinjiang” (Xinjiang nansh or Nanjiang), but I prefer the more local and more politically neutral term.

4. Fletcher, “Naqshbandiyya,” 10–13. In several footnotes Fletcher presents evidence from Turkish and Persian manuscript sources on Muhammad Yūsuf’s preaching inside the Ming frontier, including his conversion of the Salars and the ʿulamā'-yi Tunganiyyān (Chinese-speaking Muslim scholars) to Sufism. (Tonggan, or Donggan, remained a regularly used Turkic appellation for the Chinese-speaking Muslims into the twentieth century.) Chinese oral and written sources differ in many details from this account; Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan... suyuan, chap. 2, sect. 2 and 3, gives 1622 as the date of Muhammad Yūsuf’s death, does not mention his having preached in Suzhou, and gives his son all the credit for enlisting the Salars among their followers. Fletcher noted the possibility that many of the acts attributed to the father or son may have been conflated with the other.

5. This account is based largely on Fletcher, “Naqshbandiyya,” and on Fletcher’s “China’s Northwest.” His sources include Trippner, “Islamische Gruppen,” but he notes that Trippner’s account is based on very incomplete evidence and contains many errors.

6. Sufism in general has proven frustratingly difficult to define in theological, intellectual, or sociopolitical terms. Geertz, Islam Observed, 48, notes that “this term suggests a specificity of belief and practice which dissolves when one looks at the range of phenomena to which it is actually applied. . . . Sufism, as an historical reality, consists of a series of different and even contradictory experiments, most of them occurring between the ninth and nineteenth centuries, in bringing orthodox Islam (itself no seamless unity) into effective relationship with the world.” The great Islamicist Marshall Hodgson called Sufism “spiritual athleticism,” saying of early Islamic mysticism that it “provide[d] an esoteric form
voice to an aspiration to personal or collective unity with the Divine that had existed among Muslims almost since the rise of Islam itself. Its name, derived from the Arabic word suf, meaning “wool,” indicates another crucial facet of Sufi belief and practice—ascetic self-denial. The “original” Sufis wore coarse woolen garments and practiced austerities as varied as breath control, fasting, chanting, eremitic withdrawal from the world, and meditation in the hope of achieving a higher state of religious consciousness and communion with God.

**Gedimu and Tariqa**

Like all religious movements, Sufism did not remain long unified. Its teachers in every period drew diverse methods and theological conclusions from their own mystical experiences and from their sociopolitical contexts. The greatest of them founded Sufi “paths” (Ar. sing. tariqa, pl. turuq), which gradually became agents of social transformation as well as more literal “ways” to religious fulfillment. This could happen because

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of piety among them, which allowed those of them who were so inclined to explore hidden meanings and personal resonances not allowed for by the soberly public Shari’ah [law]” (The Venture of Islam, vol. I, 393–94). Later in his history, however, Hodgson (with many other historians) notes that Sufism came into far closer intimacy with Islamic law in many parts of the Muslim world. The Indian reformer Ahmad Sirhindi, for example, “tried to reconcile the very personal mystical experience, to which Sufism gave a place, with an intensely social activism such as the Islam of the Shari’ah demanded” (vol. 3, 85). I present a rudimentary and far too rigid explanation of Sufism here as an aid to readers who may not be familiar with it. The definition’s utility will decrease as my narrative progresses, as we become more specific in a northwest Chinese context.

7. Scholars of comparative religion have found similar impulses within most traditions, including the Jewish and pre-Islamic Arabian religions from which Islam derived. Indeed, Sinophone Muslims, when reaching for a terminology to explain Islam in Chinese, found an easy translation for the “Sufi way.” They call tariqa, its mystical impulse, Dao cheng, “vehicle of the Dao,” a combination of the Daoist “Way” of meditative asceticism with the Buddhist notion of yana, a means by which human beings may transform themselves. This use of cheng moves away from the original Sanskrit meaning (suspiciously close to Dao itself) toward a concrete, instrumental metaphor of transportation along the Way. The other stages of Islam’s three-fold path—shari’a law and haqiqa, the perfected Unity with the Divine—are called the “vehicle of the teaching” (Ch. jiaocheng) and the “vehicle of perfection” (Ch. zhicheng). The names of these progressive stages, shari’a-tariqa-haqiqa, both in transliteration and in translation, have become standing terms among northwestern Sufis. The resonance between Daoist and Sufi ideas, obvious even from a superficial reading of Rumi’s verses at the head of this chapter, has been studied intensively by scholars of religion. See, for example, Izutsu, Sufism and Daoism. I am grateful to Prof. Indira Peterson for her Sanskritist’s insights.
Islam does not dictate or provide any central institutional authorities beyond the Caliphate, the direct succession to the Prophet's political leadership. Each community's mosque functions autonomously, its leaders and teachers linked to others by personal relationships, inquiring of great teachers regarding legal and religious questions but not subject to any formal authority.

In contrast, Sufi paths could establish centers of authority for their adherents and command their obedience even from a distance. The *shaikh*, either the founder or his successor, carried a special burden of religious charisma (Ar. *baraka*), which endowed him with both spiritual and secular power. This *baraka*—transferred from generation to generation in a spiritual genealogy (Ar. *isnād* or *silsila*)—inherited in the founder, his successors, and in their tombs. The domed tombs (Ar. *qubba*, Per. *gunbad*, Ch. *gongbei*) of Sufis came to be distinguishing marks of their ever-widening presence in Muslim life from Spain to China. At these places their followers sought inspiration through prayer, or God's favor through the *shaikh*'s intercession. Each Sufi community was led by religious professionals appointed or ordained by the *shaikh*, thus creating a tight network of influence and control. Sufi paths and their associated tombs thus provided foci of organization, worship, and loyalty more effective than the earlier noninstitutionalized ideals of the universal Muslim community and the constrained localism of community-based Gedimu mosques.

The existence of many paths, however, fostered rivalry among Sufis for religious authority, which in many cases led to worldly power and wealth. From their inception, Sufi orders (as the paths are usually called in English) competed not only for the religious adherence of ordinary Muslims but also for the allegiance of powerful families and for the donations and pious endowments that would establish the *shaikhs* as wealthy, secular leaders. Each teacher possessed secret initiation rituals.

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8. See Gladney, “Muslim Tombs.”

9. Like religious movements elsewhere in the world, the Sufi paths found what we call “religious” and “secular” power to be inextricably intertwined: “Its leaders may use it at different times and places for varying purposes; its adherents use it for other ends. . . . It has a useful social role to play besides its purely spiritual or quietistic mystical functions. An order may become involved in politics; it may provide medical or psychiatric help for its members, or it may become concerned with magic or astrology. For these purposes, it may include within its ranks remarkable magic-makers or miracle-mongers. The order is often directed by a highly charismatic personality . . . whose personal attraction for the common man, or for persons in other parts of society, contributes to the fluctuations of the popularity of the order and to the size of its membership” (Martin, “A Short History,” 276). Marxist scholars in China have naturally paid considerable attention to the economic aspects of Sufi organization. For a useful summary, see Yang Huaihong, “Dui xibei,” 287–89.
passed down through the *sisila*, with which to transmit the original founder's *baraka* and include new followers within the order. As the orders grew, they relied increasingly on a claim of descent from the Prophet, which made each *shaikh* also a *sayyid* and thus required a hereditary chain of succession.\(^{10}\) Though the founders of these institutions may have been ascetics, their successors and relatives often became men of great wealth and high political position.\(^{11}\)

*Shaikhs* and their representatives (called variously *khalîfa* and *ra'îs*) moved along trade routes, staying both in established Muslim communities and among non-Muslims who seemed amenable to conversion. They persuaded new followers with a variety of techniques, including eloquent sermons, magical wonders (Ar. *kariimat*), lectures on sacred texts, and the collective repetition of mantralike “remembrances” (Ar. *dhîkr*) of God. This last-mentioned practice, strongly resembling Amitabha-centered Buddhism in its rhythmical meditative repetitions (either vocal or silent), led to the achievement of trance states and direct, personal connection to the Divine. Sufism thus provided a new expression of religious passion for its adherents; a new set of exclusive, even esoteric, techniques for their enlightenment; and a new institutional framework, the *tariqa*. Within its network, adherents (Ar. sing. *murîd*) could be connected to other Muslim communities and leaders could achieve new wealth and power.

By seeking and accepting initiation into a Sufi order, a *murîd* also pledged his loyal support to his *shaikh* and his successors. Within Islamic communities this intimate link gave the leader unprecedented power, that of personal veneration and unquestioning obedience.\(^{12}\) A charismatic Sufi leader could command a disciplined, organized following that extended far beyond a single congregation and did not depend on the goodwill of local community elders. Many *shaikhs* moved often, gathering adherents in various villages and towns, linking them together

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\(^{10}\) The status of *sayyid*, denoting prophetic descent, carries a great weight of religious (and often secular) authority in most Muslim communities. Difficult to demonstrate (to an academic's satisfaction) at a remove of tens of generations, this claim nonetheless is often made and sustained with oral genealogical evidence.

\(^{11}\) Fletcher, “Naqshbandiyya,” 9, for example, notes a political maneuver by a Sufi order in Altishahr. The grand master of a Naqshabandi order, Ishâq, named the secular ruler of the entire region, Muhammad Khan, as his successor within the order, thereby unifying religious and political leadership in a single man. Muhammad Khan achieved titles of great import in Sufi theology, *qutb* (mystical axis) and *ghawth* (mystical helper of the age), assuring his descendants a central position in the region for many generations.

in a solidarity of personal loyalty. This system stood in strong contrast to non-Sufi Gedimu communities, in which elders directed local affairs in consultation with religious professionals employed by the mosque. The Sufi hospice (Ar. zāwiyah, Pers. khāqa, Ch. daotang) served as a religious and social center alternative to the community-based mosque: “There they [the shaikhs] instructed and housed their disciples, held regular dhikr sessions . . . and offered hospitality to wandering Sufis. . . . These institutions, which had some of the same functions as a European monastery, became basic centers of social integration.”

Sufi institutions, ideas, and politics varied widely in differing contexts. Fletcher has demonstrated beyond doubt that Chinese Muslims did maintain connections to “the West”—the world of Islam—and that religious and political currents continued to flow across the permeable frontiers of China and its Islamic neighbor states. Since Sufism first came to China from Central Asia, as a foundation for understanding its historical place in northwest China we must examine briefly the role that the shaikh and tariqa played in eastern Turkestan.

Though mysticism seems ideologically to encompass a private, non-communicable religious experience, Sufi orders were never reluctant to take part in politics. The most important tariqa in Central Asia, the Naqshabandiyya, “rejected religious quietism and accelerated their missionary efforts in search of political support, particularly among the nomads, whose military strength dominated Central Asia’s politics.” Conversion of non-Muslims to Islam was as central a concern to Sufis as to non-Sufi Muslims, and Sufi preachers persuaded members of many cultures—Tibetan, Mongol, Turkic, and Chinese—of Islam’s rectitude, with some success.

Sufism moved from western Turkestan eastward, both in early centuries and during the Ming and Qing, allied with the sultans and kings of both the oases and the nomads. In the late Ming and early Qing, these were the Uiguristan Moguls, the Kashgari khojas (Persian for a religious and political leader), and the amirs of Ferghana and Kokand. Indeed, in the seventeenth century even non-Muslim rulers such as the Oirat Mongol hegemon Galdan were willing to use Sufis—in his case, the same Khoja Afaq as came to China—as clients on the throne of Kashgar. The entrance of Sufism into northwest China therefore created a politically charged atmosphere, one in which Central Asian rivalries might be

played out in a very different sociocultural setting. Instead of a world of Muslim rulers vying for hegemony, the political environment in which Sufis in China lived was overwhelmingly dominated by non-Muslims. Sufi orders' struggles with one another therefore had very different effects in Gansu than in Kashgar because of the former's more distant, potentially hostile relationship to secular political power, a power that was inevitably non-Muslim.

As we have seen in the cases of Ma Shouying and Milayin/Ding Guodong, state domination of the northwest could be challenged only by the very daring, and only at a time of disorder, military weakness, or administrative malaise sufficiently profound that an uprising might succeed in toppling the legitimate authority of the throne (Ma Shouying) or placing an alternative leader in its place (Milayin and Zhu Shichuan). The arrival of Sufi orders provided a means of mobilization, a network of solidarity, that had never been present among Chinese Muslims before. Initially, however, they did not challenge the state, for they had to establish themselves in a sufficient number of communities, with sufficient adherents, to ensure their own survival, stability, and prosperity. Khoja Āfaq set in motion the career of a crucial figure in that process—Abu 'l-Futūh Ma Laichi, the founder of the Khafiya suborder of Naqshabandi Sufis in Gansu.

Ma Laichi and the Rise of the Menhuan

Khoja Āfaq's strain of the Naqshabandiya, called the Āfaqīya in his honor, stressed thaumaturgic wonders, study of the Mathnawi of Jalal ad-Din Rumi, a renewal of faith, and adherence to Muslim law. In their meditative practice, followers performed the Sufi remembrance in silence, the "remembrance of the heart" common to most Naqshabandis, earning themselves the appellation of Khafiya (Ch. Hufeiye or

16. At the opening of this chapter (second extract) I have cited a fragment of this giant mystical poem, written in Persian but available in a Turkish translation; it was enormously popular among Sufis in Central Asia as well as in the Muslim heartlands. With its multilayered complexity of image and intellectual depth, it has been the subject of endless debate and interpretation by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, vol. 2, 244-54, presents a brief but rich description and analysis, while Iqbal, Life and Work, chaps. 4-6, discusses the poem in light of its author's religious and philosophical life. One of Joseph Fletcher's manuscript sources has Muhammad Yüsuf (or perhaps Khoja Āfaq) telling a Chinese disciple to preach to his congregation upon the Mathnawi every Friday and Monday ("Naqshbandiyya," 13).
Hufuye), “Silent Ones.” Khoja Âfaq followed his father to northwest China in search of initiates in order to compete for power with other members of his family in Altishahr, a common phenomenon in the intense politico-religious rivalries of Central Asia, often based on hereditary succession to the leadership of Sufi orders and thus to secular power.

Finding willing converts in Gansu, Khoja Âfaq made three visits to Xining, a polyethnic entrepot that had been an important stop on one route of the Silk Road and is now the capital of Qinghai Province. Muslims from all over the region converged on Xining to hear the famous Sufi's preaching; he worked wonders and taught the *Mathnawi*. Ma Tong claims that his visits resulted in the formation of nine Sufi institutions in Gansu, but Fletcher notes only three significant followers. Both agree that the most politically active new group stemmed from Khoja Âfaq’s initiation of Ma Taibaba, a rather retiring Islamic teacher from Milagou. Though Ma Taibaba undertook no innovations or organizing, he did appoint as his successor his most brilliant student, Abu ’l Futûh Ma Laichi.

According to his spiritual descendants’ account, Ma Laichi’s birth,
connections

education, and spiritual initiation were all linked to Hidayat Allah. Both Ma Laichi’s grandfather (Ma Congshan) and father (Ma Jiajun) concerned themselves with military affairs, the former as a general under the Ming and the latter as a graduate of the military examination under the Qing. Ma Jiajun went into business rather than seeking an official position. Wealthy and childless at forty, he traveled from his home in Hezhou to Xining to request that the famous Khoja Āfāq intercede with God to grant him a son. Having recited the petitionary prayers, the Khoja told Ma Jiajun that he should marry a young woman “awaiting faith” in his home town. This non-Muslim woman, twenty-six years old and still single, had been engaged to a number of men, every one of whom had died before the marriage could be performed. Protected by the Khoja’s promise, Ma Jiajun married her, and she bore a son. According to Khafiya legends, when Ma Jiajun’s business and property were destroyed by a fire not long after, he gave his son the name Laichi, “Arrived Too Late.”

In his new poverty, Ma Jiajun could not afford to continue in Hezhou, so he turned to itinerant tea-peddling along the roads from Hezhou to Xining. Unable to keep his young son with him, he sent the boy to a friend in Milagou, who placed him in Ma Taibaba’s Koranic school to receive his education. Ma Laichi proved a prodigy, mastering the Islamic curriculum before his eighteenth year and receiving both his Sufi initiation and ordination as an ahong from his teacher, who handed on to him the initiatory baraka of Khoja Āfāq. For thirty years Ma Laichi worked as a teacher and preacher in the Hezhou region; then in 1728 (according to Ma Tong) he undertook the rigors of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Sources differ widely on both the chronology and the locations of Ma Laichi’s sojourn in the Muslim heartlands. Some accounts have him study in India, others in Bukhara, still others in Yemen. They agree, however, that he remained in some center of Muslim learning, probably more than one, for many years and returned to China bearing a deep desire to reform Islam in his homeland. He also brought books with him, some of them standard (a Koran, for example), but others new to

20. Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan . . . shilue, 223–24, narrates the miraculous story, giving Ma Laichi’s childhood Islamic name (Ch. jing ming) as Abuduli-Halimu (‘Abd al-Karim?).

21. This succession by discipleship, on grounds of learning or other merit, was certainly possible within Sufi orders, though the Āfaqīya in Central Asia tended toward hereditary succession.
northwest China, especially the volume of "scriptural extracts" called Mingshale or Mingsha'er in Chinese, which he had received from his teacher.22

Because so few Muslims from China could go on the pilgrimage or undertake to read and explain the holy texts in their original languages, Ma Laichi possessed tremendous prestige upon his return to Gansu. His charisma and his message won many Muslims, both Chinese- and Turkic-speaking, to his version of Sufi ritual practice; and his thaumaturgic skill awed even non-Muslims into conversion. To this day, communities of Muslim Tibetans, Mongols, and Monguors in Qinghai Province venerate him as their spiritual master, the one who converted their ancestors to Islam.23 Wherever a saint such as Ma Laichi settled, disci-

22. The description of Mingshale as jing jieju (scriptural extracts) may be found in the Daqing lichu shilu (Qianlong) 290:24b. Fletcher, "Naqshbandiya," 17–18, analyzes this text’s name syllable by syllable and hazards a guess that it was a sharh (commentary) on a collection of prophetic writings such as Ibn al-’Arabi’s Fusus al-hikam. Lacking the text itself, we can only speculate. Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan ... shilue, 225–26, relates an oral account of Ma Laichi’s travels and studies. Beginning in 1728, he went via Canton (where he studied for three months with a famous ahong), then embarked with four companions for Yemen, where he visited many mosques and met with the great scholars. In Mecca for the pilgrimage, he took as his teacher the head of the Khafiya ziiwiya, one Muhammad Jibuni Ahmad Agelai (Fletcher has “Ajilai”). He then traveled to Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo; he “studied” (was initiated into?) the Naqshbandiya, Qadiriya, and Suhrawardiya Sufi paths. In an unidentified place, he took as his teacher the Mawlana Makhdum, whom Fletcher also mentions, surmising that he was probably an Indian, though he might have been teaching anywhere in the Muslim world. Before Ma Laichi’s return to China, Mawlana Makhdum bestowed upon Ma Laichi the name Abu l-Futuh, and Agelai gave him eight gifts: a sword, a seal, the text Mingshale, a mawlid (a poem commemorating the birth of Muhammad), eighty volumes of kitab (writings), a prayer carpet, a woolen garment, and a “Ka’aba cover.” He arrived in China, via Hong Kong, in 1734. Fletcher, “Naqshbandiya,” 16, gives an entirely different itinerary, though naming the same teachers, and has Ma Laichi back in China by 1705, which seems very early and does not accord with events in his life that may be more surely dated.

23. Some Tibetans of Kargang, in the region of Bayanrong north of the Yellow River in modern Qinghai Province, confirm orally what Joseph Trippner found in the work of Ma Zikuo—that Ma Laichi lived among them and converted their ancestors to Islam by a variety of techniques, including debating a local rimpache (“incarnation,” often misconstrued as “living Buddha” in both Chinese and English) on theological matters (Trippner, “Islamische Gruppen,” 154–55, and also Li Gengyan and Xu Likui, “Yisilan jiao zai Kaligang”). The one Muslim clan among the Monguors (called Turen before 1949 and Tuzu now), the Ye family, lived in the same region (Schram, The Monguors, vol. 1, 32). The Tuomao, a Mongolian-speaking group who live north of Kokenor in Qinghai, may also have joined the Khafiya under his influence. Though their oral histories as summarized by Li Gengyan and Xu Likui do not mention Ma Laichi, they hold firmly to the Khafiya as “their” solidarity (Li and Xu, “Qinghai diqu”). Ma Tong claims that the Baoan (Bonan), a
ples would gather, and his participation in any dispute would give weight to the side he supported. In the 1740s a conflict had arisen in the Hezhou and Xunhua regions over the breaking of the Ramadan fast at the end of each day. Should one pray first, then eat (houkai), or eat first, then pray (qiankai)? Ma Laichi threw his considerable influence behind those who ate first, the qiankai faction. The controversy grew increasingly bitter, and a houkai leader, Ma Yinghuan, brought suit against Ma Laichi in 1747.

Ma Yinghuan's lawsuit, in a Qing court, illustrates the difficulty of resolving complex conflicts in Chinese Muslim communities. Elsewhere in the Muslim world, where "secular" authority would also be Muslim authority, the state's jurisdiction would be somewhat less problematic. Groups in conflict might request a judgment from a famous scholar rather than resort to the law courts, but even in cases of irreconcilable conflict, the legitimacy of Islamic state authority and of the statutory and moral status of the shari'a would be agreed upon, even if the particular results were not. But in Gansu, neither faction in a dispute would recognize the authorities cited by the other, and the state, being non-Muslim, would not act on the same grounds as would Muslim legal institutions. Therefore, Ma Yinghuan's action, which explicitly recognized the legitimacy of the Qing legal system to resolve disputes within northwestern Muslim society, demonstrates the degree to which the Muslims of the northwest belonged to China. The suit between qiankai and houkai set a precedent in which religious conflicts between Muslims could be submitted for judgment to the secular authorities.

It also established parameters of legal controversy within the Qing code and judicial system. Ma Yinghuan accused Ma Laichi of xiejiao (heterodoxy) and huozhong (deluding the people), the former a very serious crime. He claimed that Ma Laichi had founded Mingshahui small Mongolian-speaking group from Tongren County, south of Xunhua, also became Muslims under Ma Laichi's influence (Zhongguo Yisilan . . . shilue, 227).

24. According to Fletcher, Ma Laichi had attained the degree of wali, usually translated as "saint," under Mawlana Makhdum's tutelage ("Les 'voies,'" 16).

25. A brief account of the case may be found in the Xunhua ting zhi of 1844, 8:16b–17a, which Mu Shouqi copies into GNQL at 18:37b–38a. Trippner, "Die Salaren," 264, claims that a similar case of dispute between qiankai (fore-breakers) and houkai (after-breakers) had been brought to court as early as 1731, but official sources do not record it. It probably represents an error for the well-documented case of 1747, since at least one of the litigants' names is identical in the two accounts.

26. The statute regarding xiejiao may be found in de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution, vol. 1, 137–47, with the main statute at 137–38. Based on the Chinese state's
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(Bright Sand Societies), at whose meetings initiates had sand blown into their ears. His intention clearly lay in associating Ma Laichi’s Khaffiya Sufis with Daoist or Buddhist groups, always suspect in China for their bizarre ritual practices and propensity for sedition. A Qing court might well have found merit in such a line of argument, for Ma Laichi’s group must have appeared innovative and divisive when viewed from a legal culture that valued conservatism and harmony, while its Sufi practices, however calmly these Naqshabandīs may have undertaken them, were certainly unlike those of Gedimu communities. But the governor-general, Zhang Guangsi, dismissed the case against Ma Laichi, charging Ma Yinghuan with slander and ordering him punished according to the fanzuo rule, which stipulates that a false accuser could receive the sentence his victim might have been given had he been found guilty. The qiankai and houkai adherents were forbidden to conduct funerals together and ordered to respect their ancestral religion without conflict.

This verdict hardly settled the matter. Ma Laichi’s entry into the public world of Gansu Muslim religious politics had generated division and conflict, and neither side would give up the struggle. Most texts cite ritual, liturgical, or magical practices (such as sand-blowing) as the overt reasons for conflict, but the charismatic hajji from Hezhou had clearly stepped on sensitive toes in the social and economic realms as well. His conversion of the Salars, in particular, made Gansu people

experience with Buddhist and Daoist groups perceived as potentially subversive, it concentrates on activities associated specifically with them, some of which also point directly at Muslims as well, especially Sufis. For example, the statute forbids meetings that take place at night, which of course are necessary for Muslims during Ramadan and Sufis as part of their dhikr practice. The supplementary statutes forbid writing charms, preparing sacred writings (especially esoteric, encoded texts), and collecting contributions, among many other things. Ironically, these statutes, invoked against Sufis in the eighteenth century, specify banishment to Xinjiang and enslavement to the bēng (who were Sufis) or to other Muslims as fit punishment for the practice of xiejiao (Lipman, “Statute and Stereotype”).

Iwamura, “Chūgoku Isuramu,” compares the status of the Sino-Muslim communities to that of secret societies, firmly lodged within Chinese society but nonetheless segregated.

27. Nakada, Kaisai, 88, where his source is the edict cited above in note 19. This “Bright Sand” business, quite common in Chinese accounts, derives from the characters used in the transliteration of the name of Ma Laichi’s text, the Mingshale. Some versions of this title use the characters for “bright sand” (ming sha), while others use a different ming to indicate the sinister “dark sand.”

28. According to Nakada, whose source is contemporary to the trial, it was Governor-General Zhang who heard the case. Xunhua ting zhi, 8:17a, names Gansu governor Huang as the presiding justice.
nervous, as that Turkic-speaking people, living astride the Lanzhou-Xining and Hezhou-Xining roads, had a reputation for bellicosity. Other Gansu people feared that, should Salars be unified under a single leader in a Sufi order, rather than divided into small, mosque-based gong communities under several Qing-appointed tusi, they would pose a dire threat to public safety. Indeed, when large-scale hostilities did break out in Gansu in the 1780s and 1890s, the Salars and the Khaifya were intimately involved in their inception. Hidayat Allah had apparently had great success among them, and so did Ma Laichi.

Ma Laichi's innovations did not stop with initiation into the Khaifya. Building on the models available within the Âfâqiya, the Central Asian Sufism so intimately linked with the political lineages descended from the Makhdûm-i A'зам, Ma Laichi established hereditary succession as the principle for transmission of baraka within the Khaifya and the centrality of gongbei, the tombs of a Sufi order's deceased leaders, in the ritual lives of adherents (see plate 11). His son, Ma Guobao, followed him as shaikh, thus ensuring that the family's accumulated wealth would not dissipate nor its religious power wane. He and several others initiated in the line of Hidayat Allah are credited by Chinese sources with founding the first menhuan, the Muslim saintly lineages of northwest China.

Menhuan, an entirely local term, probably derives from menhu, "great family," or "official family," but it has come to refer exclusively to northwestern Chinese Sufi solidarities whose leadership remains within a single lineage. Though far from unusual elsewhere in the Muslim world, the idea of hereditary succession to religious, social, and political authority fell on particularly fertile ground in China. Sufi orders often transmitted charisma in hereditary lines, but nowhere else did they have the comprehensive model of the Chinese corporate lineage (jiazu) to follow. Holding common property, diversifying in trade and other eco-

29. The tusi system, which boasts considerable antiquity, allowed indigenous non-Chinese-speaking peoples of the frontier to govern themselves under lineages given patents of office by the Chinese state. For the workings of the tusi system among the Salars, see Mi Yizhi, Salazu, 55–70, and for the system in general, She Yize, Zhongguo tusi; and Zhang Jiefu, "Qingdai tusi."

30. Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia," 74, briefly reviews the history of the Makhdûm-zâdas, stressing their claim to prophetic descent and thus the centrality of genealogy—hereditary succession—within their dynasty and their Sufi traditions. Fletcher correctly notes that this type of transmission of baraka may be found in Sufi orders all over the Muslim world, though not in every one.

31. See, for example, Ewing, "The Politics of Sufism."
nomic activities, and participating actively in politics, the *menhuan* used strategies evolved by the Chinese *jiazu* for survival and advancement in the rapidly changing world of late imperial China. As a unique blend of Sufi and Chinese forms, the *menhuan* combined the appeal of prophetic descent with Chinese notions of family structure and socioeconomic competition. Deriving legitimacy from two of the worlds that met on this frontier, the *menhuan* proved to be a powerful new instrument of local elite control.

The lineage basis of the *menhuan* also provided rich ground for conflict. Ma Laichi was not the only founder (Ch. *daozu*) authorized by Hidayat Allāh. The initiate Ma Shouzhen returned from Xining to Didao, on the Tao River, and his lineage became the core of the Mufti (Ch. Mufuti or Mufouti) *menhuan*, which engaged in feuding with the Khafiya at Xining in the nineteenth century. Ma Zongsheng ('Abd ar-Rahmān), a well-known Hezhou *ahông* received Hidayat Allāh’s initiation and instruction and became the *daozu* of the Bijiachang *menhuan*; his tomb is located west of the city. And others followed, taking advantage of the effective serendipity that united *jiazu* and *tariqa* in this context. Unlike earlier Islamic institutions, *menhuan* could grow by gaining adherents in many communities, contiguous or not, so they competed with one another for initiates in all the Muslim regions of Gansu. Both numbers of members and their wealth could contribute to a *menhuan*’s rise, for even poor families could provide young men to serve as students and as guards for the *shaikh*.

32. Ma Tong argues that *menhuan* differed from other Chinese and Muslim groups in their unique combination of Sufi religious impulses, esoteric seeking of the Way under the guidance of a *shaikh*, and the establishment of lineages as the focus of loyalty (*Zhongguo Yisilan . . . suyuan*, 45–47). None of these features, however, distinguishes the *menhuan* entirely from Sufi orders elsewhere in the Muslim world; its unique character derives rather from its adoption of corporate lineage forms from the Chinese sociopolitical environment.

33. Because of the *menhuan*’s centrality in northwest China after the 1740s, contemporary Sino-Muslim scholars have produced a huge literature describing, categorizing, and analyzing both the institution and its historical evolution. Based on late Qing and Republican period local wisdom, Chinese scholars often hold that there were “four great *menhuan*,” though their lists often differ. Actually, there were (and are) dozens, great and small. Apart from Ma Tong’s two books, both cited above, see Jin, “Sufei pai”; Guan and Wang, “Huasi menhuan”; Rehaimude, “Sufei pai”; and Yang Huazhong, “Dui xibei.” Foreign scholars, too, have found the *menhuan* crucial, e.g., Dru Gladney (“Muslim Tombs”) and Nakada Yoshinobu (Kaikai minzoku, chap. 4).

34. Ma Tong, *Zhongguo Yisilan . . . suyuan*, chap. 2. The Mufti *menhuan* leadership also took a militant anti-Qing stand in the 1895 uprising; see chap. 4, this volume.

35. Ibid., 214–21.
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By the mid-eighteenth century northwest China had received from Central Asia a new religious and social form, the Sufi order, which stimulated a strong drive to political activism, Muslim legalism, community solidarity, and horizontal competition. Combined with the Chinese corporate lineage both socially and ideologically, the Sufi menhuan became competitive economic institutions as well. The coming of Sufism from the west inclined Gansu Muslims toward their religion’s heartlands in Central and West Asia, but their adaptation took place in a culturally Chinese context. In the Qing period new pressures also arrived from China’s great cities in the east, where powerful currents were developing that would tie Sino-Muslims more tightly to the linguistic and intellectual culture of their homeland.

EASTERN INFLUENCE: THE HAN KITAB

Islam with Chinese Characteristics

Human affairs are reciprocal and complementary. The influence and permeation of Chinese Islam by Confucian thinking seems to have given late Ming and early Qing Islam, which was tending toward decline, a transfusion of fresh, new blood, a new vitality presented to the Muslim scholars. A group of Sino-Islamicists [Yisilanjiao Hanxuejia] sprang forth. They used Confucian language and Confucian ideas systematically to study, arrange, and summarize Islamic religious doctrine; they constructed a complete Chinese Islamic intellectual system, writing a set of Chinese-language [Hanwen] Islamic works with a uniquely Chinese style. These works are called by the Muslims in China the Han kitab—that is, the Chinese canon—and they have had a definite influence in Sino-Muslim society.36

Over the course of the Ming period, as the Muslims of China became more exclusively Sinophone, intellectuals among them worried that they might lose their faith, their values, and their uniqueness by losing

36. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun. When I penned the clever heading for this extract, thinking to play on the current Chinese state’s claim to have invented “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” little did I know that it had already been used by a Chinese scholar (see Cong Enlin, “Zhongguo tese”). The extract is from Feng Jinyuan, “Cong Zhongguo,” 280.

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the ability to read their sacred texts. In Shaanxi and Gansu, this anxiety led to the strengthening of mosque-based education in Arabic and Persian, which, as we have seen, spread all over China through the posting of northwestern-trained abong. But the anxiety was also keenly felt in the substantial and more acculturated Muslim communities of China’s large eastern cities. Relatively few Muslims from Nanjing, Beijing, or even Guangzhou could go on the hajj or study abroad, their abong could not interpret the holy books profoundly, and their differences with their non-Muslim neighbors grew less distinct. The intellectually inclined among them studied the Confucian classics and sometimes succeeded in the civil examinations, but Islamic learning could not thrive in their isolated environment. Islamic intellectual decline might have been remedied by a new infusion of enthusiasm, knowledge, texts, or leaders from the Muslim heartlands, but those routes were blocked by a Ming policy that forbade, or at least discouraged, maritime trade and contact.

Though Muslims had lived in China since the Tang, and many had become scholars of Chinese learning, none had written Islamic texts in their native language, Chinese. Though this may seem surprising after eight or nine centuries of presence, we know that Arabic and Persian remained inviolate languages of religious transmission within Islam, so undertaking that work in another written idiom would certainly have required a pressing need, individual courage, and an innovative spirit. In the mid- and late Ming, anxiety over the survival of Islam in China among the Sino-Muslim elite created precisely the conditions for that innovation, but only where Chinese learning among Muslims had progressed to the point that literati who knew both Arabic and Chinese could contemplate translating texts and ideas from one idiom into the other—that is, in the eastern cities and in Yunnan.

Linked to and influenced by new movements in Central Asia, Muslims in Gansu, on China’s northwestern cultural frontier, became Sufis, joined mystical orders, and created the menhuan. Closer to China’s heartland, Shaanxi Muslims advocated jingtang jiaoyu to ensure that the sacred languages would survive another generation. But in Suzhou (Jiangsu Province), Beijing, and especially Nanjing, Sino-Muslim literati created a new genre of texts, the Han kitab, their content accurately reflected by their half-Chinese, half-Arabic name—the Sino-Islamic can-

37. This Suzhou is the famous lower Yangzi cultural center, not the frontier city in the Gansu corridor that had been one of Ding Guodong and Milayin’s bases in 1648.
By no means all alike, these books reflected their authors' surroundings, religious convictions, and intellectual preferences.

Wu Sunqie, from Jiangning, may have passed the official examinations to the level of xiucai, but he withdrew from the search for public office and turned to studying the Islamic curriculum during the Ming-Qing transition. Achieving an advanced level, he became an Islamic teacher in Suzhou, where he undertook the translation of the *Mirsad al-ibad* into Chinese, an effort that required five years and the intimate involvement of his brother, who was possibly more competent than Wu Sunqie in either Chinese or Arabic prose.

The *Mirsad*, a thirteenth-century text by Abū-Bakr 'Abd-Allāh, traces the soul's journey from its original home, through the present life to the world to come. Clearly of Sufi origins, in Wu's hands it became a manual for proper Islamic belief and behavior, including sections on creation, worldly obligations, good and evil, and methods of self-cultivation for various classes of society. In northwest China Sufis arrived in person, bearing the *tariqa* as a vehicle of religious and social organization and their own charismatic leadership for mobilization. In east China Sufism arrived as philosophical texts, not especially distinguished from other Islamic books and quite separate from any social or political forms.

According to one biography, Wu did not wish to impose any changes at all on the *Mirsad*. Rather, he used a rigid method of precise translation, commenting only on philology or grammar. After the book's

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38. Some of the earliest reliable editions of these texts, tracked through the world's libraries by Donald Leslie and analyzed in his invaluable *Islamic Literature*, have been published in a collection of facsimiles by Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe in Yinchuan. Aside from that excellent compendium, they are generally available only in printings from the late Qing and Republican periods, many of which are not as accurate as the earlier woodblock editions. I have been able to use a few of the earlier editions, but most of the following account is based on quotations from secondary sources. Full-scale study of these texts has been undertaken by Chinese scholars such as Feng Zenglie and Na Guochang, but Western and contemporary Japanese scholars should certainly begin this work as well, for it provides an extraordinary view into the minds of Muslim intellectuals self-consciously explaining their faith in the idiom of classical Chinese, and thus a subtle description of the relationship between the two parts of Sino-Muslim identity as these particular men experienced and explained it. The understanding of these texts among contemporary Sino-Muslims is far from unified; they are even called by two different names. In the northwest, they are called the *Han kitab*. Elsewhere in China, especially among intellectuals, the genre is known by the purely Chinese title *Zhongwen Yisilanjiao yizhu* (Chinese-language Islamic translations and commentaries).

connections, members of his family added a commentary at the beginning of each section, making the text much easier to use. So concerned was Wu about the possible misuse of his text that he forbade its publication, so it survived only in manuscript form until the end of the nineteenth century.40

Working at the same time as Wu Sunqie, perhaps even earlier, Zhang Zhong (also called Zhang Shizhong) of Suzhou wrote two important books on Islamic philosophy. He based his most important work, the Guizhen zongyi, on the discourses of an Indian Muslim scholar, a Sufi whose name appears as Ashige in Chinese. They met in 1638, and Zhang followed his teacher all over east China. In both Ashige’s discourses and his own commentary, Zhang focuses on the difficult notions of faith (Ar. īmān) and obedience to God as the core of Islam: “In Islam, the crucial thing is acknowledging God; the key to acknowledging God is īmān.”41

In Zhang’s book we find the first articulation of what would become a crucial principle among Sino-Muslims: In order to know God, we must know ourselves. Compatible both with orthodox Islam (especially with Sufi introspection and quietism) and with Chinese notions such as xiushen (self-cultivation) and yangqi (cultivating the vital essence), this psychological, self-disciplined religious ideal appealed to a broad range of Sino-Muslim thinkers and practitioners over the centuries.

After Ashige left China, Zhang Zhong journeyed to Yangzhou, where he met regularly with three Muslim disciples, who questioned him on religion. Together they studied a text rendered in Chinese as Shuaisuli or Lusuli, but which Leslie lists as Chahar fasl.42 Zhang helped them to translate the text and commented on it. After their teacher returned to Suzhou, the students collected his translation and commentary in the Sipian yaodao, divided into four sections: īmān; God and Islam; prayer and its rules; and “sacred behavior,” including ablutions and specific commandments. Though he had not adhered as rigidly as Wu Sunqie to an ideal of translation, Zhang Zhong nonetheless took Arabic texts and the teachings of Ashige as the core of his writing, adding his own ideas in the form of commentary rather than structuring the entire discourse in self-consciously Chinese ways.

Wang Daiyu (1570s–1650s?), a Muslim of Nanjing, published the Zhengjiao zhenquan (A true interpretation of the orthodox teaching) in 1642, making it the earliest extant work of its kind, though he probably

40. Bai, Huizu renwu zhi (Qingdai), 42–43.
41. Ibid., 37–41.
42. Leslie, Islamic Literature, 23.
was not the first to undertake the explanation and justification of Islam in Chinese or the translation of Arabic and Persian texts.\textsuperscript{43} Wang's preface provides us with the earliest statement of why Sino-Muslims needed this type of book. His self-justification describes his motivation and defines his audiences:

My ancestors came from Arabia as presenters of tribute to Ming Taizu. They could determine the profundities of astronomy and could correct the errors in the calendar. In surveying the Nine Heavens above and penetrating the Nine Depths below, they surpassed all previous ages without the slightest error. They gladdened the emperor's heart, and he felt that if they had not had a true learning, they could not have accomplished this. He appointed them to the Astronomical Bureau, granted them the right to reside here [in Nanjing] and exemption from the corvée, and allied them with China forever. In the last three hundred years, though we have had time enough to become accustomed to the place, still we have not dared forget our origins.

In my youth, I did not study the learning of the Confucians, so as I grew up, though I had rudimentary literacy, I could not be more than a sometime clerk. As I matured, I grew ashamed of my mediocre attainments, so I began to explore nature and principle and the annalistic accounts and on the side turned to the various philosophers. As I came to some understanding of the general meaning, I felt that their argumentation was perverse and their Way erroneous and mutually contradictory in places. Compared to Islam [Qingzhen], they seemed as night and day. Though not wanting to speculate, I absurdly wished to leave worthy writings for posterity, to clarify [this matter] and arrive at correct [understanding]. So I met with the various thinkers and initiated much debate; though they persevered, they could not compete [with me], and I left them always in the wrong. Of those superior men who willingly submitted, every one regretted that there existed no complete guidebook to the Correct Teaching [Islam]. So whenever I had been among them, I went home and noted down what had been said. Furthermore, in leisure hours, I unsystematically organized my notes and collected them into several [categorized] sections. There was too much to keep, so I had to cut it back, and the result was forty chapters. The principles and Way [discussed] therein are all

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 21, lists three Islamic works in Chinese with prefaces dated before the Zhengjiao zhengquan, but none is extant; all are known only through Liu Zhi's preservation of their prefaces or postscripts.
based entirely on reverence for Scripture, with reference to the commentaries, and I have not dared to interpolate my own personal feelings, to add or subtract, or divide the various scholars.44

Wang maintained the fundamental truths and superiority of Islam, and certainly did not intend to toady or to flatter the Confucians, but he nevertheless wrote his treatise in a self-consciously Confucian vocabulary. The concepts and arguments of Song and Ming lixue, the orthodox Neo-Confucianism associated with the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi and legitimized by the state, constituted the only acceptable philosophical discourse available to him outside the Arabic and Persian texts that took Islam’s verities for granted. He could not write about Islam using the vocabularies associated with Buddhism or Daoism—God forbid!—for that would accomplish neither of his purposes. As he notes in his preface, he wished to communicate the truths of Islam to Muslims literate only in Chinese (“still we have not dared to forget our origins”). He had also to demonstrate the moral qualities of Islam to non-Muslims for whom the Neo-Confucian conceptual framework represented the sole path to ethical or even logical rectitude (“everyone regretted that there was no complete guidebook to the Correct Teaching”).

Wang’s Zhengjiao zhengquan contains twenty brief essays on philosophy and religion, and twenty on ritual and laws. Rather than translating a text or compilation of texts from Arabic or Persian, Wang organized his thinking both in conventional Muslim categories and by Chinese themes that his non-Muslim interlocutors suggested. His initial chapters, on the unity of God and on creation, include quotations not only from the Koran but also from Chinese texts, including the Laozi, to prove that Islamic monotheism can be defended within—indeed can improve and complete—the Chinese tradition. In syntax reminiscent of the Four Books,45 he writes: “If one does not comprehend the true Unity [of God], then the root will not be deep; if the root is not deep, the Way will not be fixed; if the Way is not fixed, then faith will not be profound—lacking unity, depth, and profundity, how can their Way long endure?”46

44. Wang Daiyu, Zhengjiao zhengquan, 16. This translation owes much to the skill of Daniel Gardner, to whom many thanks.
45. The Great Learning (Da xue), The Doctrine of the Mean (Zhong yong), The Analects (Lun yu), and Mencius (Mengzi). Wang’s syntax is especially reminiscent of the powerful parallel sentences that lie at the core of the Da xue text.
46. Ibid., shang, “Zhenyi,” 19.
In his sections on ritual and practice, Wang justifies, often in a prickly and aggressive fashion, Islamic religious life as against the claims not only of Confucian philosophy but also of Chinese popular religion. His arguments sound as if they really were transcribed from conversations in which he held his own against non-Muslim debaters. For example, in his section on geomancy, he answers the criticism that Islam ignores human feelings by burying the dead without a coffin:

They say, “Orthodox Islamic law is far too sharp and harsh. In embalming and burial, this teaching does not allow the use of a coffin or outer coffin, and that does not accord with human feelings.” I reply, “Not using coffins attains to two [high] principles: one is nature, and one is purity. By nature, I mean that the origin of humankind is earth, so going back to the root, returning to the origin, that means returning to the earth, and we call that nature. As for purity, when we bury human flesh and blood in the great earth, it can be transformed and become earth. . . . How can this not be pure? . . . The dead are without [worldly] knowledge, so even a gold inner coffin and a jade outer coffin cannot benefit them.”47

In the Zhengjiao zhenquan Wang Daiyu presents his own strongly held opinions, calling on both Chinese and Islamic canonical texts to support him, arguing forcefully for Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy in a language shaped by the Chinese elite’s moral concerns, which often differ sharply from those of Muslim theologians, logicians, and legalists. In a closely argued section, he equates the Five Pillars of Faith of Islam with the Five Virtues of Confucianism, calling them both Wuchang, the Five Constants. Subtly including a Confucian virtue in the description of each Islamic obligation, he makes good Chinese sense of the fundamental Muslim duties: creed (ren, benevolence), charity (yi, righteousness), prayer (li, propriety), fast (zhi, knowledge), and pilgrimage (xin, faith in humankind).48

Wang’s books were reprinted in many editions and have remained popular among Sino-Muslims, but they did not have the desired impact on non-Muslim thinkers. Islam’s outlandish origins, its denial of some basic and obvious truths of Chinese religion, and, perhaps most important, its assertion of Tianfang (Arabia) as a radiating center of civilization prevented its being taken seriously by most Chinese intellectuals.

47. Ibid., xia, “Fengshui,” 132.
Wang never claimed Arabia as the sole source of revelation or enlightenment; like other Sino-Muslim authors, he cited the classical prediction that a sage would arise in the east (Confucius) and another in the West (the Prophet Muhammad). But so strong was the commitment of China’s non-Muslim literati to the exclusive centrality of China to Civilization that even parallel or coequal cultural truths expressed in literary Chinese could not be accepted. Within the intellectual world of the Sino-Muslims, however, Wang occupies a crucial place as the innovator who made possible several genres of Islamic writing.

Though the works of Wu Sunqie, Zhang Zhong, and Wang Daiyu all have come to be included within the *Han kitab*, the Chinese Islamic canon, clearly they had very different purposes and methods in presentation of Islamic content to a Chinese-literate audience. Wu wanted to present a Middle Eastern text, a Sufi philosophical treatise, in a Chinese version as close as he could to the original, with little commentary. Zhang based himself on his teacher’s discourses and created a general book of Muslim knowledge as the basis for writing his own comments on Islamic ideas and practice. Wang Daiyu, the most innovative, utilized the entire Neo-Confucian philosophical discourse in order to criticize some of its fundamental concepts and to justify Islam in his own prose. All three acted within a Muslim world in which Arabic and Persian no longer sufficed for Islamic education, and in a Chinese world that demanded of Muslims that they be participants in a universal moral discourse, not immoral foreigners. Their successors continued to respond to those dual pressures and created a substantial Sino-Muslim literature.

The Flowers of Sino-Muslim Scholarship: Ma Zhu and Liu Zhi

Born in 1640 in Baoshan County, Yunnan, Ma Zhu studied primarily the Confucian curriculum as a child. His father, who died when the boy was only seven, had been a classical scholar, and his mother encouraged him to follow in the examination pathway. Passing his *xiucai* exam at sixteen, he obtained a position under the last claimant to the Ming throne, the Yongli emperor (r. 1644–62), whose court had been pushed southwestward into Yunnan by the Qing invaders. Unlike his royal employers, Ma Zhu successfully weathered the Qing conquest, and by 1659 he had published his first book and obtained a teaching position.

49. Lynn Struve has translated a vivid account of life in that pathetic and roving court by one of its eunuchs (*Voices*, chap. 15).
His essays were well known all over the province by 1665. But as Wu Sangui, a Chinese general in the Qing army, began the political maneuvers that would bring him into direct conflict with the Manchu court, Ma Zhu decided to move to Beijing in 1669.

In the reviving Muslim community of the early Qing capital, Ma turned toward Islamic studies and spent over a decade immersing himself in the languages and texts of his religion. As he probed deeper into Islam, he realized how useful it would be if the new Qing imperium recognized the faith officially. Trading upon his putative descent from Sayyid Ajall Shams ad-Din (in the fifteenth generation) and therefore from the Prophet Muhammad (in the forty-fifth), he used official connections to request that his status as sayyid be sanctioned by the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661–1722). Though he failed to obtain imperial recognition, he did communicate to fellow Muslims how important it was for the Qing state to place an imprimatur on Islam’s presence in China.

To forward that ambition, he spent much of his time in Beijing compiling his research results into a comprehensive guide to Islamic thought and practice, the Qingzhen zhinan (Compass of Islam), one of the most popular and massive of the Han kitab texts. Then, in 1684, with manuscript in hand and family (his wife and two sons) in tow, Ma Zhu set off on a journey that would take him to most of the important Muslim communities in China, except Gansu. In four years on the road, he visited Nanjing and the other Muslim centers of central China, the major cities of the Yangzi valley, Shaanxi, and finally Sichuan on the long road home to Yunnan. Wherever he stopped, he met with famous ahong and local scholars to show them his book, asking them for instruction and gathering prefaces, essays of greeting, and postfaces by the dozen. When he got home, he set about revising the text to include all their suggestions, criticisms, and addenda, a process that took another fifteen years and more.

Ma’s book circulated in a variety of manuscript editions, which he distributed along his route, long before it was ever published. The final version of the Qingzhen zhinan was complete by 1710. The main portion of the book, in eight juan (volumes), includes sections on orthodoxy and orthopraxy, some addressing the issues and problems of Chinese Muslim society more practically and concretely than did Wang Daiyu’s Zhengjiao zhenquan. The two new juan written in

50. Bai, Huizu renwu zhi (Qing dai), 44–45.  
51. Ibid., 48, where the anonymous author notes particularly the section of juan 8 titled Jiaotiao bakuan. Ford, “Some Chinese Muslims,” 148, discounts Ma’s originality and dismisses his work as a repetition of Wang Daiyu’s.
Yunnan consisted of a set of queries and responses, like Wang Daiyu’s, and a record of Ma Zhu’s successful campaign against some of the Sufi teachings and “heterodox” practices that were being taught in Yunnan at that time, having been introduced from India. The final *juan*, *Zuodao tongxiao* (A public denunciation of the perverse way[s]), narrates Ma’s opposition to the Qalandariya (Ch. Gelandai), unconventional Sufis who had converted many Yunnanese Muslims to their own versions of mystical practice. Ma Zhu found their doctrines and behavior abominable, violating both *shari’a* law and the core morality of Confucianism, and he recommended (and obtained) official persecution of them.

Ma Zhu, possessing a classical Chinese education, skill at Islamic philosophy, and motivation to obtain state validation, undertook to connect China’s Muslim communities to one another by actually traveling among them. Much of his career, including his lengthy sojourn in Beijing and possibly the composition of the *Qingzhen zhinan*, stemmed from his ambition to become the empirewide leader of the Qing’s Muslims by having himself proclaimed an official, state-sanctioned *sayyid*, thus making himself the Muslim analogue to the descendants of Confucius. He failed in that mission, but that should not discount his success in composing a lengthy and popular work or in carrying news and scholarly currents among the scattered Sino-Muslims.

The most famous of all the Sino-Muslim writers, Liu Zhi (also called Liu Jielian and Liu Yizhai), remained all of his life in the narrow corridor between the lower Yangzi valley and Beijing. A native of Nanjing like Wang Daiyu, Liu came from a family schooled in both Islam and the Chinese classics. His father had met with Ma Zhu and added a dedicatory poem to the *Qingzhen zhinan* but had never attained his desire to make his own contribution to the Chinese discussions of Islamic philosophy. His son, however, received an education that enabled him to surpass his father by far. Beginning with eight years of Confucian schooling, he then concentrated on the Arabic and Persian curricula for six years. After that, he spent another four years reading widely in Buddhist, Daoist, and “Western” (Ch. Xiyang) writings, which at that time meant the Roman Catholic and scientific treatises of Matteo Ricci and his successors, probably available in a private library in Nanjing. He is said to have studied geography, astronomy, psychology, and other subjects that had been important to Muslims in China.

As far as we know, the only pilgrimage Liu Zhi ever undertook was to Qufu, in Shandong, to visit Confucius’ grave.
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over the centuries. Competent in all the necessary languages and canons, Liu Zhi set out to stabilize and confirm Islam’s intellectual position in China by writing its history, clarifying its doctrines, and equating its truths and profundities with those of the Confucianism that dominated the philosophical discourses of his day (see plate 12).

The author of many books, of which at least ten are extant, Liu Zhi achieved considerable fame and moved in exalted circles for part of his life. He had some of his books presented to the throne and included in them prefaces by non-Muslim officials ranked as high as vice-minister. These encomiums did not simply increase sales or circulation. By distinguishing Islam clearly from Buddhism and Daoism and by placing upon Liu’s books the firm imprimatur of the state, they ensured that the works, and Islam itself, would be regarded as compatible with Qing intellectual orthodoxy by the strict and wary censors, always on the lookout for subversive religious doctrines:

After discussing the Muslim religion with Liu [Zhi], [the vice minister of the Board of War] found that it upheld the Confucian principles of loyalty to the sovereign, respect by sons for their fathers, brotherly love, and so forth; the Muslims’ religion, he added, was not to be spoken of in the same breath as heretical and vicious sects.

The vice-minister’s words, written in 1710, might have helped to protect Muslims as a group and Islam itself from persecution seventy years later, when some Muslims—Sufis in the northwest—did in fact turn violently against the Qing state.

Liu’s well-known works include a biography of the Prophet, its basic text translated from the Persian and supplemented by a wide variety of important inscriptions, legends, and scholarly studies relevant to the study of Islam in China. This book preserves many otherwise unavailable translations.

53. Several authors have located collections of Arabic and Persian works that Liu Zhi used, to a total of sixty-seven titles, most of them religious in character. Ford, “Some Chinese Muslims,” 131, notes that the relative rarity of Muslim books in China forced Liu to use a Shi’i version of the Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet) as well as a number of Sufi texts, though Liu himself was certainly not a Shi’ite nor did he belong to a Sufi order. In “Islam littéraire chinois” Françoise Aubin argues that all the writers of the Han kitab were Sufi adepts, steeped in mystical doctrine, especially that of the three stages toward ultimate apprehension of God, shari‘a-tariqa-haqiqa. More research in the texts, and more discussions of definitions, will be needed to determine whether these writers may be accurately described as Sufis.

54. Several citations from Liu’s works may be found in Ford, “Some Chinese Muslims,” 149–52.
able primary texts in a sort of Sino-Muslim encyclopedia. Aiming at Sino-Muslim schools as well, he wrote a primer for children, an Arabic language handbook, and a treatise on the Five Pillars of Faith. He also composed two descriptive texts on Islam: the *Tianfang xingli* creates a complete philosophical and religious system combining Islamic and Confucian ideas in a systematic whole, while the *Tianfang dianli* presents Muslim ritual and other religious and secular behavior as entirely compatible with the highest standards of Chinese society.

The *Tianfang dianli* became Liu Zhi’s most famous work because it was the only Muslim book to be included in the *Siku quanshu*, the giant effort initiated by the Qianlong emperor to locate, compile, judge, and censor all extant literature. Though the compilers’ comments on the book were negative—“The style of this work . . . is extremely elegant, but if the base is wrong to start with, fine words avail nothing”—its very inclusion guaranteed its unique status among the *Han kitab* and Liu’s elevation to the highest ranks of Sino-Muslim intellectuals.

The *Tianfang dianli* does contribute to our understanding of Islam’s course in China by providing a wonderfully symmetrical analysis of the relationship between Islam and Confucianism. Liu begins by claiming that “the Ways of the Hui [Islam] and Ru [Confucianism] have the same original source, and from the start their principles [li] were identical.” Knowing well the Confucian stress on ethical behavior and his Islamic texts’ more intense focus on theology and humankind’s relationship with God, Liu divides the Dao in two, claiming that the Tiandao (Way of Heaven) is most effectively expressed through Islam, while the Rendao (Way of Humankind) may be found in the Confucian canon and the practices of its followers. Like Wang Daiyu, Liu places Islam’s Five Pillars of Faith parallel to a Chinese group of five, but he chooses not the Five Constants but the Five Relationships (Wugang), which form the basis of Confucian interpersonal ethics. By creating this ethical parallelism, Liu Zhi placed Islam and Confucianism on an equal footing: “The sacred book . . . is the sacred book of Islam, but principle (li) is the same principle which exists everywhere under Heaven.”

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55. For citations and textual variations, see Leslie, *Islamic Literature*, 46–53. Liu’s family apparently thought him eccentric because he sought neither success in the examination system nor a position as *ahong*, but only studied and wrote. Later in life he lost his friends, and was quite alone when he completed his life of the Prophet.
56. This account relies heavily on Feng Zenglie, “Liu Zhi.”
In its substantive chapters the *Tianfang dianli* progresses from the abstract and cosmological to the practical, from sections on original teaching and true dominion to the Five Pillars, the Five Relationships, collective prayer, and life-cycle rituals. Often criticized by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as too Confucian, too conciliatory to China's hegemonic philosophical discourse, Liu actually walks a line between Wang Daiyu's feisty defense of Islamic uniqueness and the writings of entirely acculturated scholars from ex-Muslim families, which are indistinguishable from non-Muslim texts.

Of course, many abong continued to maintain that only Arabic and Persian could be appropriate vehicles for Islamic scholarship, but Liu Zhi and his predecessors had struck a powerful chord among the Sino-Muslim elite. Their works provided both a revivalist impulse, kindling a new interest in Islam among Muslims more oriented toward the Confucian classical curriculum and the examination system, and a propaganda tool for enlightening non-Muslims as to Islam's high moral standing. "Use Confucianism to transmit Islam" could become an effective Muslim technique only when a sufficient number of Muslims in China had become illiterate in the sacred languages but literate enough in Chinese to handle complex philosophical and ritual texts. Despite the scorn of Muslim traditionalists, who called them antiscr iptural and perverters of customs, the writers of the *Han kitab* brought to the fore elements of their faith that resonated most harmoniously with the dominant political and moral philosophy of Qing China.60

As Qing rule grew more stable and more repressive in the eighteenth century, Muslims in eastern China could ill afford to alienate the officials. Rather, they provided an intellectual justification by which Muslims could live comfortably in China, remain Muslims, and still participate in the larger culture within which they constituted a minority. This strategy, so obviously different from that of the Sufis, grew out of the context of the eastern cities (even the Yunnanese Ma Zhu did his research and writing in Beijing), where the non-Muslims constituted an unassailably vast majority.

This contrasts sharply with the northwest. There the abong had more power, and intellectual life (in any language) was less easily available, as were books. Very few men could follow the examination system path,

60. As Aubin states, many of the *Han kitab* texts emphasize the Three Vehicles of increasingly esoteric Sufi knowledge. I would argue that their authors chose these particular concepts in part because they work so well in a culture devoted to self-cultivation as humankind's highest activity. See Li Xinghua, "Zhongwen Yisilanjiao," 282.
and far fewer Muslims could read Chinese. In Gansu the presence of large, successful Muslim communities, antagonistic perceptions of cultural Others, and a rowdier, more militarized atmosphere stimulated Sufi orders to create solidarities of Muslims based on loyalty to a shaikh and a desire for widespread self-defense. The spark that touched off long-lasting violence was the arrival of another Sufi order, the Jahriya, in the person of another pilgrim returned from Yemen, Ma Mingxin.

NAQSHABANDĪ REVIVALISM IN CHINA

On July 25, 1946, the Rev. F. W. M. Taylor wrote to his fellow missionary, Claude L. Pickens, Jr., to clarify a “chain of succession” for the Jahriya Sufis of Ningxia, who, he reported, called themselves “dervish,” a common Turkic appellation for Sufis. Taylor had worked among the northwestern Muslims for many years, unsuccessfully arguing the virtues of Christianity against their stubborn adherence to their ancestral religion. He had sent an earlier version of the silsila to Samuel Zwemer, Pickens’s father-in-law and the dean of Muslim studies among the American Protestant missionaries, but it had included errors. Unlike virtually every other such document from China, this silsila included the generations before the order’s arrival in China; it thus constituted the starting point for Joseph Fletcher’s detective work to uncover the origins of Naqshabandī revivalism in China. The Arabian generations (in Taylor’s imperfect romanization) were:

1. Uways-al-Qarani
2. Jami
3. Sheikh Muharyindi
4. Abu Uesaidun (Yezid)
5. Junayd
6. Tajr
7. Dahawandini, i.e., Naqshband, who died in A.H. 791–A.D. 1389
8. Zayn
9. Abu Duha Halik

After years of effort, in the late 1970s Fletcher finally discovered the identity of the last two men on this list, thus demonstrating conclusively what was already recorded within the Jahriya suborder but unknown

outside it—that the Jahriya Sufis of Gansu were Naqshabandīs, that
their Sino-Muslim founder had studied in Yemen, and that they were
intimately connected to Sufi revivalism all over the Muslim world. Re­
search done in China has since deepened that connection, and an Arabic
document from within the Jahriya has largely confirmed it.62

Ma Mingxin and the Jahriya: The Arabian Connection

All over the Muslim world, the great wave of Sufism changed its char­
acter during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Renewal (tajdid)
movements grew from West Mrica to China, advocating purification of
Islam from local cultural accretions and from the abuses (social and
economic, as well as theological) possible within Sufi orders. In many
parts of Asia, the Naqshabandi order stood at the forefront of this new
movement, epitomized by the career of Ahmad Sirhindī, the Mujaddid
i-Alf i-Sānī (Renewer of the Second Muslim Millennium), in India in
the early seventeenth century.63 This Sufi revivalism reached northwest
China most dramatically in the person of 'Azīz Ma Mingxin (1719–81), a
Gansu Naqshabandi who, like Ma Laichi, had studied for many years
in Mecca and Yemen.64 His teachers there came from the school of
Ibrāhīm ibn Hasan al-Kūrānī, one of the best-known Sufi revivalists of
the Arabian peninsula. Among several generations of disciples, al­

62. Ma Xuezhi, Zhehelinye daotong shi, a translation of about one-third of the Arabic
original, existed only in an “informal” version in 1984. I was thus able to read it, but not to
copy or retain it. The text includes stories of the Chinese shaikhs of the Jahriya, the
miracles they worked, and their victories over their Muslim and non-Muslim enemies.
The section on Ma Mingxin makes it clear that he studied in Yemen; Ma Tong, Zhongguo
Yisilan . . . shilue, 364–65, concurs, identifying Ma Mingxin’s teacher as Muhammad
“Bulu Seni,” probably a mistransliteration of Muhammad 'Abd al-Bāqī b. az-Zayn, the
father of the az-Zayn discussed below. Ma Tong’s silsila also includes ‘Abd al-Khāliq,
though in a different position in the list, an inconsistency possibly due to his oral sources,
as compared to Fletcher’s written Arabic documents. Ma Xuezhi’s abridged Chinese
version has now been supplanted by a complete translation of the text, called Rashūh
after its first Arabic word. Done by two Jahriya ahongs and the famous Sino-Muslim novelist
Zhang Chengzhi, the published translation is an important addition to our primary
sources on Sufism in China. The reference to Ma Mingxin’s sojourn in Yemen may be
found in Guanli Ye, Reshihaer, 10.

63. For a review of Sirhindī’s career, politics, theology, and disciples, see Khan, The
Naqshbandis, esp. 40–98; and Friedman, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī.

64. Ma Mingxin had several names, both Arabic and Chinese, and scholars disagree as
to which one(s) might be most authentic. According to Ma Tong, he came to be called
‘Azīz only after his return from Arabia; his Islamic given name was Ibrāhīm. He also had a
Sufi name (Ch. daohao), Wiqäyat Allāh (Zheguye Yisilan . . . shilue, 363).
Kūrānī’s intellectual and spiritual descendants included the leaders of socioreligious movements in Sumatra, Java, north India, Arabia, China, and west Africa, evidence of the remarkably open communication among international Sufi elites during this century.

Joseph Fletcher has demonstrated how two Naqshbandi Sufis from China, Ma Laichi and Ma Mingxin, obtained quite different versions of their order’s tradition, though they both may have studied within the same schools in the Middle East. 65 As we have seen, Ma Laichi had returned to China as a practitioner of the silent dhikr characteristic of the Naqshabandi order. Ma Mingxin, a decade or two later, studied with the next generation of Yemeni teachers, who taught that the dhikr of God could be chanted aloud as well. His teacher, ʿAbd al-Khāliq b. az-Zayn al-Mizjājī, participated in a scholarly world much more receptive to new forms of remembrance, and he himself is reported to have taught both the silent and the vocal dhikr to his disciples. 66

The dhikr was certainly not the only contentious issue among the Naqshabandīs of Yemen in the early eighteenth century; tajdid—commitment to political, social, and religious renewal of Islam—divided them even more profoundly. Among the students of al-Kūrānī, especially in the second generation, were fundamentalists who shook the Islamic world with their negative evaluations of contemporary practice. Muhammad Hayāt as-Sindī, for example, who was one of ʿAbd al-Khāliq’s teachers, also included among his disciples Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. The latter became the most famous anti-Sufi, anti-accretion polemicist of his generation in Arabia and founded a movement that still reigns supreme in the Arabian peninsula. Indeed, “Wahhabi” became synonymous for European scholars with the most intolerant, most reactionary revivalism of the modern period. Activist revivalists such as Shāh Wālī Allāh of Delhi, Muhammad as-Samman, and ʿAbd ar-Raʾūf as-Sinkīlī of Sumatra all partook of the same atmosphere as Ma Mingxin. For them, as for Ahmad Sirhindī, politics and social reform constituted a crucial focus for Naqshabandīs. 67

66. Ibid., 30, esp. n.48.
67. It may seem contradictory that Muslim leaders educated within Sufi orders would have become anti-Sufi activists, but by this point in Muslim history virtually every major teacher belonged to one or more orders, so that “Sufi” could encompass the entire, vast variety of Muslim intellectual and political life, including anti-Sufism. In China the range was narrower, but “Sufi” could still include both the well-organized, military-minded Gansu menhuan and solitary Sino-Muslim intellectuals, such as Liu Zhi, in Nanjing or Suzhou.
Trained with budding revivalists from all over the Muslim world, Ma Mingxin returned to China in 1761 intending to purify Islam, establish Koranic orthopraxy, and purge the faith of accretions from the surrounding culture. Like all mainstream Naqshabandīs, he held the observance of Islamic law, *shari‘a*, to be central to Muslim orthopraxy. According to Ma Tong’s oral sources, Ma Mingxin’s reformist program included unimpeachable Sufi and Sunni tenets: opposition to religious leaders’ accumulation of wealth through donations; opposition to grandiose mosques and elaborate decoration; emphasis on emotion in mystical practice, including the use of music; and advocacy of Sufi succession by merit rather than heredity. Though a Naqshabandi like Ma Laichi, Ma Mingxin did not practice the silent *dhikr*, the “remembrance of the heart” characteristic of most Naqshabandi groups. Rather, he and his followers chanted the vocal remembrance called *jahr* (Arabic for “aloud”), from which his suborder took its name, Jahriya. This vocal *dhikr* was often accompanied by rhythmic swaying, hand movements, even ecstatic dancing.

Ma Laichi and his disciples and descendants, resting on the Āfâqī tradition of Central Asia and their own local self-interest, disapproved of Jahri rituals and deeply resented the presence of a rival for religious hegemony in the northwest. By the late 1760s, with Jahriya and Khafiya adherents active all over Gansu, deep, long-lasting conflict within the northwest’s Muslim communities began to complicate the already difficult relationship between Muslims and the Qing state.

69. Algar, “Silent and Vocal,” 44–46, attributes the use of vocal *dhikr* by Naqshbandīs to the practice of multiple affiliation, but also to the existence of a secondary line of spiritual descent within the order, one that justifies *jahr* through the Prophet’s initiation of Ali b. Abi Talib. Though he does not believe *jahr* proper to Naqshbandīs, Algar nonetheless admits that it can be of benefit to its practitioners, if done with good intention. Ma Tong notes that precisely during the period of Ma Mingxin’s pilgrimage, via Central Asia, the Qarataghlīq (Black Mountain, Ch. Heishan) Sufis were in ascendance on both sides of the Pamirs. The Heishan, whom Fletcher (“Naqshbandiyya,” 10, n3) identifies as the Ishāqiyā, also used the vocal *dhikr*, so Yemen would not have been the only place Ma Mingxin could have practiced this particular ritual innovation. Ma Laichi would not have received the same influences, since his suborder was so closely identified with Khoja Āfāq and the Baishan, the Ishāqiyā’s sworn rivals.

70. Another popular Sufi order, the Qādiriya, arrived in the Hezhou region in the early Qing, its Chinese founders initiated by a peripatetic Arab missionary who styled himself Khoja ‘Abd Allāh (Ch. Huazhe Abudu Donglaxi), a twenty-ninth-generation descendant of the Prophet. (Khoja is not an Arabic title, but ‘Abd Allāh is reported to have studied all over the Muslim world, from Medina to Baghdad and India, so he might
When Sufism first arrived in China, many local Muslims had opposed the new wave, finding its meditative forms and pursuit of the esoteric Way incompatible with their conventional Gedimu lives. But the Central Asian and Chinese Sufi missionaries such as Hidayat Allah, Ma Laichi, Ma Mingxin, and Khoja 'Abd Allah had powerful advantages in the symbolic capital they brought from the Muslim heartlands. Many had been to Mecca, and at least two claimed Prophetic descent, attributes embodying very high status in the Muslim communities of the Qing empire. They knew Arabic and Persian well, which most Gedimu clergy did not, having been educated entirely within the local jingtang and madrasas. The Sufis’ possession of “pure” texts from West Asia, and their ability to interpret them, added to their influence on potential converts to the Sufi ways. Some of them also became adept at thaumaturgic wonders, which swayed people toward conversion to the path both by direct observation and by the powerful voices of embellishment and rumor.

Conflict among Sufis

Charismatic shaikhs such as Ma Laichi and Ma Mingxin obtained substance and standing in their communities once sufficient numbers of local Muslims had committed themselves to their respective paths. Ma Laichi used his personal magnetism and the organizational innovation of the intercommunity Sufi order to amass great wealth from the donations and tithes of initiates. Property donated in pious endowment, often land but also flocks, swelled his fortune and made it permanent. This wealth, of course, was no longer available to the conventional mosques or to other Sufi orders. Sufi elites, beginning with the Khafiya but later including the Jahriya as well, competed with one another and have picked it up elsewhere.) Though very important in the history of Sufism and the menhuan system in China, the Qadiriya did not play a prominent part in the violence of the mid-Qing and will therefore not be discussed here (Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan... suyuan, 82–92). Since the Qadiriya did not practice hereditary succession to the baraka of the shaikh, the term menhuan seems inappropriate, but Chinese sources regularly include the Qadiriya within that category. I am grateful for this information to the current Qadiriya shaikh Yang Shijun ahong, a 92-year-old celibate who has lived all his life within the order, based at the Dagongbei complex in Hezhou. Yang laorenjia, as his followers call him, graciously spent two hours with me in May 1996, telling me stories of Khoja 'Abd Allah's visits to Hezhou, the founding of the Qadiriya, and the past century of Gansu Muslim history. Like his predecessors, he will choose his successor from among his disciples, who live with him and study religion as their sole occupation.

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with Gedimu institutions for the resources of their communities, for property, money and religious authority, for the status attached to Islamic learning and orthopraxy, and for congregational decision-making power.

The most divisive conflicts, which produced long-term and disastrous consequences for the Muslims of the northwest, occurred not between Sufi orders and Gedimu congregations but between rival Sufi orders. The Khafariya and Jahriya came to be personified in their leaders, who preached what Gansu Muslims heard to be different messages, practiced what they observed to be different rituals, and advocated different social and political ideals. Khafariya Sufis claimed to find Jahriya practices superstitious, heterodox, and sometimes—as in the case of rhythmic motion during vocal dhikr recitation—downright immoral. Ma Mingxin, on the other hand, criticized the excessive contributions demanded by Ma Laichi’s successors for their religious services, the emphasis on veneration of saints and tombs, and the development of hereditary succession within the Khafariya. This last became a central issue as Khafariya shaikhs, beginning with Ma Laichi himself, passed the baraka of the saint down to their sons, an act with great socioeconomic significance. Hereditary succession led directly to the formation of menhuan, of which Ma Laichi’s Huasi menhuan was the first.

In addition to differences over ritual minutiae, which provided many of the overt issues in conflict between Khafariya and Jahriya, Ma Mingxin, bearing al-Kūrānī’s political and religious commitment to Islamic renewal, gave the Jahriya a far more militant attitude toward reform of Muslim practice and toward the non-Muslim state. Ma Laichi’s Khafariya, in contrast, tended to follow the political traditions of Khoja Āfāq in cooperating with state authority—Khoja Āfāq had, after all, ruled Kashgar under a non-Muslim imprimatur from Galdan. During the years after Ma Mingxin’s return to Gansu in 1761, the rivalry between Khafariya and Jahriya escalated into open and violent feuding, for all of these Muslim communities were armed. Indeed, the martial arts were known to be a Muslim specialty in the northwest. The militarization of Qing society, sometimes perceived as beginning only in the 1790s, began earlier and proceeded more rapidly on the northwestern frontier. Borderland people, both for protection and for hunting, possessed weapons, including firearms, and trained their sons to use them. Each mosque community, especially those in areas of mixed Muslim and non-Muslim settlement, developed at least some paramilitary capacity.

Single villages or local alliances prepared hilltop forts and stockades against attack, as did their non-Muslim neighbors. Sufi orders, larger and supralocal, organized their own militias on a wider scale, with more effective centralized command coming from the headquarters of the shaikh.

From the 1760s on Muslim communal violence and the state’s reaction to it dominate the historical record of northwest China. The Khafiya tended to ally with the state and remained the “established” Sufi order, given the positive appellation Old Teaching to honor its pro-Qing stance. Both officials and non-Jahriya Muslims labeled the Jahriya with the pejorative epithet New Teaching and consistently described it as threatening and heterodox. With its militant commitment to Islamic renewal, the Jahriya frightened local officials by “creating” numerous violent incidents between Muslims. Official fear increased when Khafiya adherents attacked the Jahriya in lawsuits and in the streets. The sanguinary results will be described below.

Sino-Muslim scholars have not yet successfully dealt with the root causes of violence between competing Sufi orders in eighteenth-century Gansu. Why did advocates of silent and vocal dhikr confront one another with fatal consequences in northwest China? In Arabia, after all, Sufis could and did practice both types of remembrance without any apparent contradiction or conflict—indeed, an individual could be initiated into two orders that differed in the matter. The answers, therefore, must lie in northwest China, not in Islam itself, in the characteristics of Gansu Muslim society and its history, not in any inherent qualities of Sufism, Naqshabandism, or Islamic doctrine. We are now prepared to examine a wide variety of possible causes: local ecologies, local eth-

72. A great deal has been made of this Old Teaching vs. New Teaching dichotomy within Sino-Muslim studies, including attempts to find a single movement or organization or theology to which the terms might be attached. A close examination reveals a bewildering variety of usages. “Old Teaching” has been used to describe non-Sufi Gedimu communities (early 18th cent.), Gedimu plus the Khafiya (late 18th–mid-19th cent.), or all nonfundamentalist groups (Gedimu, Khafiya, Jahriya, and the other menhuan) as opposed to the New Teaching, which has meant the Khafiya, Jahriya, Ikhwan, Xidaotang, and others. Saguchi, “Chūgoku Isuramu no kyōha,” notes that “New Teaching” was even used to describe reformist attempts in eastern China in the eighteenth–twentieth centuries. Whenever one of these words turns up, we must probe carefully into the local context to discover the points of contention and the leaders/organizations in conflict rather than assigning some absolute meaning to either term. The Chinese officials and Muslim leaders who used them were neither ethnographers nor Islamicists but rather politicians, using loaded terminology to make polemical points. The words “liberal” and “conservative” in American political discourse have similar power, variation, and ideological vagueness.
nographies, pressures internal to the northwestern Muslim communities, and influences from both local non-Muslim society and the Qing state.

The immediate proximity of the Gansu corridor to Hami had facilitated Sa'id Baba's aid to Milayin's rebels back in the 1640s. During the century following Meng Qiaofang's massacre at Suzhou, religious leaders continued to move between northwest China and Central Asia, creating far more durable, institutional connections. As we have seen, from the 1650s to the 1780s the Muslims of the northwest received two new ways of conceiving of Islam, of themselves, and of their place within Chinese culture and society. They came more or less simultaneously, one from the west and one from the east, bringing new ways of belonging, both to China and to the Muslim umma, but also the possibility of new and much wider conflict. From the Muslim lands, Sufism spread to the Qing empire as it had to most of the Muslim world, through the charisma of powerful saints who both initiated Muslims into their institutions and converted non-Muslims to their version of Islam.

In contrast, Sino-Muslim intellectuals in eastern cities, trained in both the Islamic and the Confucian curricula, produced synthetic analyses of Islam (including Sufi ideas) in the vocabulary of conventional Neo-Confucianism. Both of these visions of Sino-Muslim society—revivalist and militant, emphasizing tension (from the Muslim heartlands), and syncretic and adaptive, emphasizing compatibility (from the major Chinese cities)—continue to enliven Sino-Muslim life to the present day. Their contradictions, internal and with one another, represent symbolically the difficulties of being both Chinese and Muslim. As Sino-Muslims came to understand the possibilities for unity inherent in

73. I have separated “western” and “eastern” Islamic influences on northwest China too radically here. The two currents, Sufism and the Han kitab, actually shared many ideas, even some texts, as Françoise Aubin has made clear in “En Islam Chinois” (esp. pp. 493–515). Sufi texts had been available to Muslim scholars in China (in Arabic and Persian of course) long before Wang Daiyu and his colleagues undertook to render Islamic ideas into Chinese. We have seen that Liu Zhi embedded many mystical notions in his descriptions and justifications of Islam. According to Ma Tong, (Zhongguo Yisilan ... shilue, 387), Ma Mingxin had read Liu Zhi's works and admired them enough to say, “Jielian [Liu Zhi] planted the flowers, and I reap the results.” (This saying will turn up again, altered to fit the circumstances, in chapter 5.) However, given its obviously Arabian origins, it would be an exaggeration to claim that Ma Mingxin’s Jahriya was somehow an indigenous, synthetic Sino-Islamic movement. Nor have we any evidence that Sufi orders, as distinct from Sufi ideas or texts, made their way to eastern China at any time before the early nineteenth century.
these two modes, or decisively selected one over the other, they created many individual and collective solutions to that dilemma. External factors were also clearly at work. The corruption of the Qing court, especially the Qianlong emperor’s favorite Heshen and his cabal, caused a degeneration of local government in late-eighteenth-century northwest China. A major financial scandal among provincial officials in Gansu revealed widespread malfeasance on the frontier. In addition, the qiankai-houkai disturbances had called official attention to the danger of internecine quarrels within Muslim communities, and the state was keeping a more-than-usually watchful eye on Hezhou, Xunhua, and Xining. In this atmosphere of suspicion, corruption, and prejudice against Muslims, the Qianlong emperor tried to implement the policies handed down to him by his father.

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY TRANSFORMATIONS

The Muslims of every province, as well as the brigands of Hebei . . . and Anhui . . . all form bands to feud and kill. In such cases, if there are some who call themselves “hired guns,” employed for violent action . . . their sentences of military exile should be raised by one degree.74

The arrival of Sufi orders in northwest China did not utterly transform local society. The agricultural and pastoral economies continued to evolve in their long-standing patterns, transportation remained slow and uncertain at times, and wool and leather goods were carried from highland to valley, while pots, tea, and grain moved the opposite way. Chinese, Turks, Tibetans, and Mongols of many faiths and in many combinations met on the grasslands, on the roads, and in the markets to haggle and deal, to intermarry, and sometimes to fight. In that local context, Sufi religious solidarities became wealthy saintly lineages, menhuan, which competed for power and disrupted local order precisely at a time of rapid change in the Qing empire. With the Khafiya and Jahriya orders present and growing in Gansu, in the second half of the eighteenth century, let us now examine the larger world of the Qing, to discover the external pressures that impinged on Gansu in this crucial period.

The Conquest of Xinjiang

For over a century after their invasion of China proper, the Manchu Qing extended their empire westward and northwestward. This period of conquest, which created the “China” we now recognize, culminated in the complete subjugation of eastern Turkestan and Zungharia. Though the Kangxi emperor had defeated Galdan’s Zunghars, it was left to his grandson, the Qianlong emperor, to finish off indigenous resistance and foreign invasions, all led or inspired by Sufi shaikhs. With the final defeat of the Âfaqî branch of the Makhdûmzâda khojas, a Naqshabandi lineage descended from Khoja Âfaq and thus related to the Khafiya of Gansu, by 1759 the Manchus controlled the vast sweep of territory from the Altai all the way to the southern side of the Tarim Basin, and west as far as the Pamirs.

The Qing government’s strategic purposes in taking and holding this enormous and potentially very expensive territory included preventing an alliance between Mongolian (including Zunghar) rulers and those of Tibet and “controlling” the potentially violent Kazakhs who lived west of Zungharia. Beyond occupation by about twenty-five-thousand troops of many cultures, the Qing governed the “New Dominion” (Ch. Xinjiang) with a light hand, desiring not assimilation of the predominantly Turkic-speaking Muslim population to Chinese or Manchu ways but rather cooperation in maintaining an orderly society and commerce in this buffer zone. North and east of the Tianshan, direct military government and substantial Chinese (Muslim and non-Muslim) in-migration gradually transformed Zungharia into a polyethnic agricultural-pastoral region. In Altishahr, south of the mountains, local hereditary leaders administered a lenient tax system with appropriate corruption, while sojourning Chinese and Central Asian merchants kept the goods flowing despite a (generally ignored) ban on their permanent settlement. All over Xinjiang merchants from Shanxi, Jiangnan, and the northwest, including many Sino-Muslims, found profitable markets for both staples and luxury goods, which they exchanged either for cash or for jade, the territory’s main export to China proper.

75. For a summary of Xinjiang’s government, economy, and society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Fletcher, “Ch’ing Inner Asia.”

76. The first century of Qing rule in Xinjiang, especially its economic and social history, is described with clarity and accuracy in Millward, Beyond the Pass. James Hevia (Cherishing Men, chap. 2) discusses Qing overlordship in Inner Asia primarily with reference to Tibet, but his arguments apply largely to Xinjiang as well. The most comprehensive published work on Xinjiang in this period may be found in two books by Saguchi Tôru: Jûbachi-jûkyû seiki and Shinkyo minzoku.
We can only speculate as to the effects of these remarkable conquests on the Muslims of northwest China. By ending a century of warfare in Turkestan and including the entire region in their empire, the Qing had opened up a new domestic arena for Sino-Muslim economic enterprise and cultural exchange. Though they regulated the activities and settlement patterns of Chinese in Xinjiang, the Manchus certainly enabled northwestern Muslims to escape from sometimes dire conditions in Gansu, to seek a better life on the newly available Zungharian arable, which they could not have done under the Ming. The Qing also drew on the resources of the northwest, both products and people, to supply and transport the enormous quantities of material needed by the armies that took and then garrisoned the New Dominion. All Gansu Muslims—including muleteers, caravanners, purveyors of food and fodder, livestock breeders, and farmers—could profit from producing, brokering, and hauling military supplies.

But the demise of independent Islamic political power east of the Pamirs had the same effect as the even more expansive rise of Europe had elsewhere in the Muslim world—it caused Muslims to question their own rectitude in the face of non-Muslim political power. Renewal movements, not coordinated or united across the Islamic world, nonetheless reacted to similar phenomena in similar ways, especially when shaped by the hierarchical, intercommunity potentials of the Sufi orders. Thus we may find both the militance of Ma Mingxin’s Jahriya and the compliance of Ma Laichi’s Khafiya comprehensible in the face of overwhelming Qing military might and political control. The Khafiya accepted the obvious domination of the dynasty to thrive under its expanded rule, while the Jahriya demanded reform and renewal of Islam to counter the triumph of Qing—that is, non-Muslim—hegemony.

Qing Maladministration

Just as Qing power was most convincingly displayed in Central Asia, the seeds of disaster were sown within the bureaucracy in Beijing and all over China proper. The corruption and maladministration usually associated with Heshen and his followers touched the northwest early and hard. We cannot easily ascertain the relationship between the greed of officials and conflict in society at large, but the two coincided with dire results in mid-Qianlong period Gansu, as the Grand Council noted:

[In Gansu] the Fan [Tibetans] and Muslims live intermingled, and You favor them with “impartiality and equal benevolence.” You do not
set up distinctions and categories or forbid their customs, so all can imbibe Imperial Virtue and be steeped for generations in the court's favor. That the rebellious Muslims could dare such reckless behavior is beyond reason and principle. If we seek the cause, it lies in the Gansu officials, high and low, who fabricate "disasters" and injure the people in their boundless greed. The severity of years of accumulated offenses finally broke down Heaven's harmony, created malign energy, and led to this poisonous calamity and military burden. As we read Your Majesty's edicts to local officials, [we recognize that] Your Majesty long ago understood and revealed this.

The actions of the rebellious Muslims will be described in the next chapter, but we must first examine what the officials were doing that might have stimulated or at least aggravated their anger.

Beginning in the 1770s Gansu Province's revenues began to disappear into officials' private purses in very large quantities. The Qianlong emperor's investigators discovered three main types of corruption: direct embezzlement of grain from the ordinary land tax and ever-normal granaries; embezzlement of a portion of funds requested for the construction of new granaries; and, most spectacularly, conversion into cash and embezzlement of donations, which were legal only in grain, from purchasers of examination degrees. This last method was extended by a system of false reporting in which those districts with high donation rates would also be slated to receive high levels of "famine relief," whether they experienced famine or not. The "relief" was, of course, pocketed by local officials in collusion with the provincial treasurer. In a province as poor as Gansu, one might expect only paltry amounts to be available from these sources, but the provincial treasurer, Wang Danwang, made millions of taels from his various schemes, while his subordinates and

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77. "Malign energy": the Chinese word *qi*, usually translated as "vital essence" or, to follow Daniel Gardner, "psychophysical stuff," in this phrase approximates the 1960s locution "bad vibes."

78. *Qinding Lanzhou jilue*, 153, the Grand Council's appendix to an edict of July 9, 1781. This officially sponsored compendium of documents was compiled by the staff of Agui, the imperial commissioner deputed to subdue the rebellious Muslims of Gansu in the 1780s.

79. Many of the sources for this case may be found in the *Qinding Lanzhou jilue*, as its prosecution was both contemporary to and causally linked by analysts in Beijing with the Muslim rebellion of 1781. The best secondary analysis and compendium of sources may be found in Yang Huaizhong, "Shiba shijii."
local officeholders all over the province cleared from a few thousand to a hundred thousand each.

Not only Qing Grand Council members but also contemporary scholars have concluded that the corruption of Qing officialdom had a great deal to do with rapidly increasing violence in society after the mid-Qianlong period. The analytical vocabularies of Confucianism, Marxism, and the liberal social sciences have all been employed to describe the connections, but often without reference to the complexities and eccentricities of specific local systems. Certainly the extraction of millions from the Gansu economy by Qing officials had a deleterious effect on ordinary people’s lives, especially when grain prices and supplies were so shamelessly manipulated by the state’s functionaries. But that does not necessarily lead to the formation of secret societies, heretical sects, or rebellious bands. After all, similar corruption took place in Zhejiang—Wang Danwang had been transferred there before his arrest and prosecution—without the kind of results that occurred in Gansu. That is, the financial despoliation of the region by Qing officials played a part in alienating the Muslim population from the state, but was not in itself sufficient to cause widespread violence. Qianlong’s officials had, despite his ancestors’ and his own admonitions, also created conscious policy toward Muslims as a group that encouraged communal violence in the northwest by encouraging officials to discriminate against them.

Muslims in Qing Law

In 1730 Lu Guohua, the chief prosecutor of Shandong, memorialized requesting that Islam be banned from the Qing empire, for its customs were different and deluded the people. The Yongzheng emperor (r. 1722–35) entirely rejected Lu’s view, reiterating what his father had often stated: Muslims living under Qing rule fall within the bounds of civilization, among the emperor’s own children, and are to be treated with the same benevolence as all his subjects. The differences between min (non-Muslim Chinese) and Hui consist only of “native customs handed down by ancestors from generation to generation,” not heterodoxy or treason:

Why should the Muslim people alone be provoked and made the subject of criminal charges? If the Muslim people indeed transgress, laws and statutes exist under which they will certainly be punished. . . . Henceforth, when the Muslims have basically done nothing wrong but officials, whether high or low, seize on the pretext of minor differences
in customs in order to memorialize wildly, I shall certainly administer severe punishment. 80

This evenhanded stance on the part of the early Qing emperors boded well for Muslims all over the empire, had local officials been willing or able to enforce their sovereign’s will. But memorials such as those of Lu Guohua, and many others, indicate that the Qing employed many men strongly prejudiced against Islam—indeed, against all “different” teachings—and that imperial impartiality faded rapidly beyond the emperor’s own gaze. The emperor’s officials saw themselves as defenders of the entire Qing order—its law, ideology, customs, language, and more—against any barbaric Others. They probably also faced considerable pressure from local non-Muslims, including gentry, to protect local society from the ferocious and criminally inclined Huihui. It is nonetheless significant that no large-scale Muslim violence against the state or its local officials occurred for over a century after Milayin and Ding Guodong’s rebellion was crushed in 1648—not until the mid-Qianlong period.

Like his father, the Qianlong emperor often repeated the time-honored nostrums of imperial benevolence, specifically endorsing the view of a Shaanxi official who found Islam harmless and Muslims to be law-abiding subjects. 81 Even during the literary inquisition, when he might have been expected to be particularly sensitive to unusual or potentially heterodox doctrine, he ruled openly and straightforwardly that there was nothing inherently subversive about Islam. By 1782 “Muslim violence” in Gansu had caused great anxiety and expense for the court, and in that same year a Cantonese Muslim seminarian named Hai Furun was arrested in Guangxi. The literary inquisition was in full swing, and the prefect impounded all his Muslim texts for

80. This rescript, found with Lu’s memorial in the Yongzheng Shilu, 94:4b–5b, is widely cited in works on the Chinese Muslims, including Leslie, Islam, 124, and Saguchi Tōru, “Chūgoku Musurimu,” 127. This translation is Leslie’s.

81. Bi Yuan, the acting governor of Shaanxi, reported on the reaction of the Xi’an Muslim community to violence by Jahriya Muslims in neighboring Gansu: “The Hui of Shaanxi feared that they might be dragged in and were inevitably plunged into some apprehension.” To defuse the situation, Bi proclaimed the emperor’s impartiality to the local Muslims: “As for those who just perform their religious rites normally and break no law, new provisions to deal with them are unnecessary and should be avoided so as not to alarm and spread doubt among the people” (Leslie, Islam, 127, citing an edict found only in Liu Zhi’s encyclopedic biography of the Prophet, not in any official Qing compilation. The translation is Joseph Ford’s).
examination and indictment. Hai’s books included Arabic and Persian “scriptures,” which the officials of course could not read, and a number of Han kitab by Liu Zhi. Zhu Chun, the Guangxi chief inspector, memorialized that the Chinese texts were “presumptuous and reckless . . . containing more than a few wild and deviant passages,” and he recommended harsh punishment.82

In a pair of firm edicts that summer, the Qianlong emperor denied Zhu’s charges, analyzing Islam as a harmless religion, albeit a foolish one, and insisting that Muslims deserve the same protection as other subjects of the empire:

The sacred texts which they regularly recite consist of books handed down from of old containing no really scurrilous or plainly seditious language. Furthermore, the phrases in these books to which Zhu Chun has drawn attention are on the whole crude expressions which cannot be described as violent and rebellious. These are simple, ignorant Muslim people, faithful to their religion . . .

The sacred books which they revere are household knowledge among the Muslims. There is no difference here with the Buddhists, Daoists, and Lamas. Surely they could not be exterminated and their books burned.83

Clearly the emperor had no intention of discriminating against Islam itself, or against law-abiding Muslims in his domains, so he chastised Zhu Chun for overzealousness, and Hai Furun was released unharmed. The emperor saved his ire for what he perceived to be the cause of violence by Muslims—the “New Teaching” of Ma Mingxin, that is, the Jahriya.

But Qianlong could not control the anti-Muslim sentiments or practices of his officials in the field any better than his father had been able to do. Indeed, under Qianlong and his successors, even the statutes of the dynasty began to reflect the perception that Muslims are somehow more violent and ferocious than other subjects. The distinctions between Hui and min in criminal law were subtle but real indicators of prejudice on the part of the Board of Punishments and its magistrates. The first statute directed specifically at activities by Muslims dates from

82. Zhu’s memorials may be found in the collection Qingdai wenziyu dang (1938), cited in Ma Ruheng, “Cong Hai Furun,” 8–12.
83. The edicts may be found in the Qianlong Shilu, and are cited by both Ma Ruheng and Leslie, Islam, 128, from which this translation is taken.
Qianlong 27 (1762), demanding that Muslim jiaozhang (religious professionals) report any untoward activity in their communities and specifying punishment for local officials who do not report Muslim criminal acts.

The first case invoking this statute came at the end of that same year, when a local Shandong official reported that Muslims, rude and brutal, had formed a secret party to become bandits (Ch. feitu). He requested severe punishment from then on for such “crowd-gathering collective crimes.” The Board of Punishments, with the emperor’s permission, approved banishing Muslim thieves found with weapons in groups of three or more, with no distinction between leaders and followers, to the southwest frontier regions as guards. Similar crimes by non-Muslims would be distinguished by whether they had succeeded in stealing anything, and if so, how much, while leaders and followers would be punished differently.84 But official (and unofficial) assumptions about the Muslims’ fierce natures argued against making such fine distinctions in cases involving Huihui, and the Board’s discriminatory precedents and decisions gradually accumulated.

Beginning in the 1770s the Qing annals contain reports of Muslim street brawling, feuds (Ch. xiedou), and other forms of collective violence. Metropolitan officials became quite suspicious of Muslims in general, so when the Board of Punishments received a Shandong report of a murder case involving Muslims, they created a new Muslim-specific statute. Dowou (brawling) was the category: If more than three armed Muslims kill a person, the perpetrator should be punished under the ordinary regulations, and the rest should be banished to the southwest as guards. If they are not armed, then the sentence should be reduced one grade, to one hundred blows and three years of servitude. If ten or more are involved, even if they are not armed, and if someone is wounded, they should be sentenced under the statutes for collective armed brawling. These punishments are one to several grades heavier than those meted out to non-Muslims for the same offenses.85

The trend was clear. The Qing state gradually created a body of law that distinguished Muslims as a special category of persons who, if they violated the criminal law, should be dealt with more harshly than others. Strongly reminiscent of the discriminatory behavior we have seen in Ming period officials, this prejudicial treatment helped to create an atmosphere within the government ranks that militated against the im-

84. Kataoka, “Keian shiryō,” 4, citing the Da Qing lüli genynan, 64.
85. Ibid., 19, citing the Da Qing lüli genynan, 83.
partiality proclaimed by the emperors. These regulations remained well within the Qing system of precedents, but their proclamation certainly demonstrated to Muslims all over the empire that they were to be treated differently by their magistrates. By the Daoguang period (1821–50) the statute cited at the beginning of this section made perfect sense in its equation of all Muslim offenders with the most feared, most violent members of non-Muslim society, the fierce brigands of Anhui and Hebei. Reacting to increasing disorder, the Board of Punishments later added the bandits of Henan to the list.

Militarization and Local Violence

As a final factor in this history of external influences on mid-Qianlong Gansu, we must cite the violence that struck more and more Chinese locales during and after the 1770s. Much more obvious after the Qianlong emperor’s abdication and the White Lotus uprisings (post-1795), the degeneration of local order had nonetheless already begun, as had the defensive, militarizing reaction of local elites and their self-defense associations.86 The Wang Lun uprising of 1774 is usually held to have been the first major outbreak in China proper, though Turkestan rebellions had taken place following the Qing conquest of Xinjiang in the 1760s, and the Muslim uprising of 1781 followed seven years later.87

China’s elite has, for millennia, claimed a harmonious and peaceful character for Chinese society, a Confucian vision in contrast to the barbaric Others that surround it. Violence within the empire could be laid to the continuing existence of evil men and evil ideas, both of which could and should be extirpated by a virtuous state. Thus, even when its officials killed Muslims wholesale or created discriminatory statutes, the Qing state continued to claim that it need only do away with the “weed” Muslims and leave the good ones in peace. An alternative construction of outsiders, that of bestial and irredeemably savage Others, could be used to justify full-scale interstate warfare (as against Galdan or the Makhdimzada khojas), but had to be tempered when conquered peoples became children of the emperor, their leaders made subordinate lords. Both of these views of social disorder blinded central and local officials to the multiple causes of local violence, to the complex combinations of antagonism among “different” people at the local level, feuding

86. Kuhn, Rebellion and Its Enemies.
87. Naquin, Shantung Rebellion.
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within Muslim communities, and socioeconomic dysfunction that had begun to plague Gansu in the mid-eighteenth century.

No single innovation, invasion, or domestic development triggered the violence that rocked Gansu in 1781 and 1784. The Qing state’s inept military reaction, eventual brutal pacification, and proscription of the Jahriya (called New Teaching) took place in a context shaped in part by the changes described above. The conquest of Xinjiang, corruption of the Qing administration, legal discrimination against Muslims, and the gradual increase in violence in society at large all played their part in causing the outbreak led by Su Forty-three (Su Sishisan), which opened a sanguinary century and a half of killing by and of Muslims in northwest China.