MA FUXIANG (1876-1932) AND THE MUSLIM WARLORDS OF THE NEW CHINESE NATION

Our Party [the Guomindang] takes the development of the weak and small and resistance to the strong and violent as our sole and most urgent task. This is even more true for those groups which are not of our kind [Ch. fei wo zulei zhe]. Now the peoples [minzu] of Mongolia and Tibet are closely related to us, and we have great affection for one another; our common existence and common honor already have a history of over a thousand years. . . . Mongolia and Tibet's life and death are China's life and death. China absolutely cannot cause Mongolia and Tibet to break away from China's territory, and Mongolia and Tibet cannot reject China to become independent. At this time, there is not a single nation on earth except China that will sincerely develop Mongolia and Tibet.

Becoming a Warlord

Like the 1895 anti-Qing leader Ma Yonglin and many other young Hezhou Muslim men, Ma Qianling, a small merchant and farmer, fought against the Qing under Ma Zhan'ao. After the surrender in 1872 he received a Qing reward and prospered in trade, returning to the military life only briefly when he and Ma Zhan’ao had to drive out a remnant group of diehard Muslim rebels from the Hezhou hills in 1877. He had four sons with his three wives, one of whom was a convert to Islam, and he gave the boys auspicious Chinese names—Fucai (Happiness and Wealth), Fulu (Happiness and Emoluments), Fushou (Happi-

1. This phrase from the Zuo zhuan (4th cent. B.C.E.) appears in many accounts of Chinese attitudes toward other peoples and cultures. The original reads, “If [they are] not of our kind, their hearts must be different” (Ch. Fei wo zulei qi xin bi yi).
2. Ma Fuxiang, Meng Zang, 1–2.
ness and Longevity), and Fuxiang (Happiness and Good Omens). Ma Fuxiang, the youngest, was born in 1876 in a small town near Hanjiaji, in Hezhou prefecture.

Like many elite Sino-Muslims, he received a dual education in the Confucian and Muslim traditions, reading both the Koran and the Spring and Autumn Annals (which he preferred to the Four Books). As an adult, Ma Fuxiang grew very fond of elegant prose and calligraphy, but in his youth he had ambitions closer to his roots. His older half-brother Ma Fulu excelled in military exercises, so under the influence of Yang Changjun's 1889 visit to Hezhou to review his troops, Ma Fuxiang joined his brother in the martial arts hall. After three years of local training, he and another brother, Ma Fushou, attended military school.

When the 1895 violence broke out, Ma Fuxiang was twenty and full of martial vigor. Allied with the Qing through their father, he and his brothers all opposed the plans of Ma Yonglin and the rebellious Muslims of their home district, so they joined the Qing army commanded by Tang Yanhe. Ma Anliang's brother Ma Guoliang, Ma Fulu, and Ma Fuxiang commanded the Qing troops that held Jishi Pass against an advancing column from Xunhua and earned province-wide fame. When Tang Yanhe's forces were ambushed and defeated at Shuangcheng, the Ma brothers fled south with their general, then back to Lanzhou. Yang Changjun rewarded them for their steadfast loyalty to the dynasty and sent them toward Hezhou with Dong Fuxiang. They earned Dong's praise during the reconquest of their home district, then participated in the massacre of rebel Muslims in Maying, Milagou, and other Hezhou towns, delivering thousands of severed heads and ears to their superiors. According to Ma Tong's oral sources, Hezhou Muslims said of Ma Qianling's sons that their offices were built of Muslim heads, and Ma Anliang's red cap was dyed with Muslim blood.

After victory in 1896 Ma Fuxiang continued his martial education and earned the military juren degree in 1897, while Ma Fulu became a military jinshi. Nothing prevented these young Muslim soldiers from serving under Qing generals—their father had, and the increasing militarization of the whole Qing empire pressed them toward enlistment with the

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3. Much of the chronological material in this section is taken from He Yan, “Ma Fuxiang,” Ma Fuxiang's academic proclivities are discussed on p. 33.
4. Ma Fuxiang, Shuofang dao zhi of 1926, 28.21a–21b. Ma Fuxiang sponsored the writing of this gazetteer and listed himself as its general editor, so its accounts may be regarded as his own.
5. Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yislanshilue, 245.
most powerful commander, whatever his place of origin or religion may have been. In Gansu that was their own general Dong Fuxiang, so Ma Fulu and Ma Fuxiang, along with many other young men of their lineage, went with him to Beijing as junior officers when his army was transferred to the metropolitan defense force in 1898. They fought against the foreigners during the Boxer uprising, and Ma Fulu died in the battle for the legations, as did four of his cousins. Ma Fuxiang took over his brother’s unit, bringing his Gansu braves home as part of the imperial family’s escort on their flight to Xi’an. He received substantial rewards, including an appointment as garrison commander in eastern Gansu. Through the emperor and empress dowager’s personal favor, powerful appointments followed at Xining, then in Xinjiang. For ten years he increased his military strength and established political connections all over the northwest, trading on his own military reputation, his brother’s, and his father’s.

In addition to his loyalty to the Qing state, Ma Fuxiang conceived a strong attraction to Confucianism and Chinese culture. His study of the classics, both in Gansu and in Beijing, led him toward a Confucian-Islamic synthesis. Relying on the translations and commentaries of the *Han kitab*, Ma affirmed the compatibility of Confucian morality and Islamic religion. He combined this ideological persuasion with a realistic assessment of the military and political position of Gansu in the Qing state, forging a lifelong commitment to Muslim participation in the political system of the Qing and then Republican China. Political loyalism also dovetailed neatly with Ma’s desire to make money from connections between the northwest and central China. He joined a non-Muslim gentryman to set up one of Gansu’s first modern industries, a match factory, and took a financial interest in the Tibet-to-Tianjin wool trade.

His love of Chinese culture, including the arts of calligraphy and elegant conversation, certainly influenced his political and social choices. In a memoir one of his young secretaries remembered that Ma Fuxiang enjoyed hobnobbing with high Guomindang officials, an advantage in his career. The Muslim general also made a study of Daoist religion and ancient Chinese texts and set up filial stone steles in memory of his deceased ancestors. His last consort, the daughter of a Lanzhou Muslim official, was famous for her Chinese calligraphy, a very unusual accom-

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plishment for a Gansu Muslim woman and very appropriate for a companion to Ma Fuxiang.\(^9\)

The intimate relationship between Muslim leadership in Gansu and the Qing state found expression in the provincial leadership’s reaction to the Wuchang incident, the dramatic beginning of the revolution of 1911. Both Governor-General Changgeng and Shaanxi Governor Shengyun were loyal Manchu servants of the dynasty, so they determined to oppose the rising tide of anti-Qing activism and republicanism.\(^{10}\) Ma Anliang, more conservative than Ma Fuxiang, shared their support of the imperial order and occupied a crucial role in their military plans. The most immediate threat lay in the revolutionary army of Zhang Fenghui in Shaanxi. The Qing loyalists had to choose between entrenching themselves as a Gansu “western bastion” or striking eastward against Zhang. With Ma Anliang in command, they chose belligerence. Ma proposed raising twenty battalions of loyal Muslim braves, so Changgeng called a special meeting of provincial leaders to discuss the matter. They shilly-shallied, anxious about the arming of Muslims even for such laudable motives. Ma’s demonstrated loyalty carried the day, but Gansu gentry and common folk remained leery of Muslims bearing weapons, even under a dynastic banner.\(^{11}\)

Ma Anliang attacked Shaanxi successfully, and Yuan Shikai took the invasion seriously enough to alert eastern troops to move against him. As Ma approached Xi’an, however, an intermediary convinced him that the emperor’s abdication was real, that the Qing state had declined irreversibly, and he withdrew. Declaring his support for the Republic, Ma Anliang virtually ended northwestern resistance to the new government and earned himself the same chance his father, Ma Zhan’ao, had earned in 1872, after the battle of Taizisi. In company with many Qing provincial officials, he consolidated his local power and remained a mediator and broker in communal relations and local government, promoting the careers of numerous Muslims in provincial and local offices.\(^{12}\) The diehard Manchu Shengyun kept up the good fight; as late as

9. One of Ma Fuxiang’s filial steles may be found in the courtyard of the provincial museum in Yinchuan, Ningxia. The text is carved in both standard characters and in the Han dynasty clerical script at which Ma fancied himself expert. On his youngest wife, see Ma Tingxiu, “Ma Fuxiang shishu.”

10. Shengyun had become acquainted with Ma Fuxiang when the latter escorted the imperial family to Xi’an in the aftermath of the Boxer debacle.

11. Yu, “Xinhai geming.” See also Ma Peiqing, “Changgeng Shengyun,” 190–97. All of that issue of *Gansu wenshi ziliao xuanji* is devoted to the 1911 Revolution in Gansu,
1918 he was reported as still trying to persuade Ma Anliang to stage a Qing restoration. 13

Sources differ as to Ma Fuxiang’s reaction to the invasion of Shaanxi in 1911, but all agree that he did not participate. Defending his local allies from Changgeng and Shengyun’s reactionary violence, he joined with non-Muslim gentrymen to declare provincial independence and nominate candidates for local offices. 14 After the emperor’s abdication Ma Fuxiang became a member of the Gansu Provincial Assembly. 15 For his cooperation, and because of his strong army, he received a vice-commander’s post at Ningxia, on the Gansu-Mongolian border, from the Republican government of Yuan Shikai. Beginning from that base, he expanded his power in northern Gansu until his army dominated not only Ningxia itself but Suiyuan Province (western Inner Mongolia), Alashan, and the rich plains on the east side of the Huang, between the river and the Ordos desert. That frontier assignment provided him with the military and economic foundation to become a senior member of the “Ma family warlords,” three Gansu Muslim lineages that dominated the northwest from Ningxia (Ma Fuxiang’s family), Xining (Ma Qi’s family), Hezhou, and the Gansu corridor (Ma Anliang’s family) through much of the Republican period. 16

In the northwest, with its long-standing militarization, communal strife, and extreme poverty, “banditry”—that is to say, organized violence and robbery by groups of armed men—became an important secondary occupation for many farmers and townsmen. Though many of his troops and officers had probably been “bandits” at one time or another, Ma Fuxiang’s desire for standing within the China-centered state caused him to oppose banditry. Serving in the “legitimate” military, uniformed and sanctioned by a political power regional or national, Ma Fuxiang gained a high reputation by battling against “bandits” around Ningxia and to the north. He captured a Mongol who had taken royal titles in 1913 at Baotou and, four years later, he defeated and executed Daerliuji, a Mongol prince who proclaimed himself emperor including articles on the anti-Manchu uprising at Ningxia, the brief independence movement at Qinzhou (Tianshui), and the telegrams sent by Changgeng and Shengyun to the Grand Council during the crisis.

16. For an abbreviated genealogical chart of the Ma lineages and a brief account of their rise to power, see Lipman, “Ethnicity and Politics.”
and invaded Ningxia. Both Ma Fuxiang’s oldest son Ma Hongkui and nephew Ma Hongbin (his late, heroic half-brother Ma Fulu’s son) took detachments out to the Gansu corridor and to Suiyuan to capture or neutralize “bandits.”

_Becoming a National Figure_

Ma Fuxiang emerged from this chaos of the early Republic as ruler of Ningxia and leader of a fairly cohesive, well-organized military command centered on his Muslim cavalrymen. In politics as well as military matters, he had followed Ma Anliang, whose father had been his father’s superior officer, so after Ma Anliang’s death in 1918 the role of mediator between Muslims and non-Muslims fell, at the provincial level, upon Ma Fuxiang. His base at Ningxia gave him a comfortable distance from the dirty politics of the provincial capital, and his cavalry gave him the clout to argue his points against the Muslim and non-Muslim generals who fought over the northwest for the next twelve years.

The most fundamental conflicts among the Gansu militarists, as elsewhere in China, involved control over territory and taxation of its population. Governor Zhang Guangjian, President Yuan Shikai’s appointee, had contended with Ma Anliang for Gansu’s economic resources, but he had no choice but to allow Ma Fuxiang relative independence in Ningxia. On the other side of the province Zhang seized the administration of Hezhou, the Muslim center of Gansu, for the provincial government at Lanzhou. In opposition, the often-divided Muslim garrison commanders managed a measure of unity, the result of which was a 1920 telegram to the central government (such as it was) in Beijing demanding Zhang’s removal. The economy of Zhang Guangjian’s parts of Gansu had eroded, so he chose peaceful retirement, leaving Beijing with a choice to make. Ma Fuxiang might well have been the next governor, for he had served loyally, had fought for the Republic, and had a solid base of support among the Muslims. If power, competence, and experience mattered, he should have been appointed.

But the non-Muslim reaction to his consideration, when it was first rumored, was widespread and strong. A Muslim provincial commander (Ch. _dujun_) meant a Muslim-dominated province, with the terrifying Muslim soldiery in control. For people imbued with decades of fear and centuries of memory of Muslim violence, that would have been an

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17. Chen Shaoxiao, _Xibei junfa ji_, 5.
intolerable threat. Telegrams flowed to Lanzhou and Beijing, particularly from eastern Gansu, protesting against Ma's candidacy in the strongest terms, even citing the old slogan “Chinese and Muslims are eternal enemies” (Ch. Han Hui shi chou).\textsuperscript{19}

Convinced that Ma’s appointment would be inappropriate, Beijing selected Lu Hongtao, Zhang Guangjian’s assistant, as dujun. Lu’s inheritance was a disastrous economy; a weak provincial army; an empty treasury; and a social fabric shattered by opium, drought, unstable currency, and military disunity. The dujun’s authority reached no farther than his most distant loyal garrison, and Gansu lay under the sway of eight regional military commanders (Ch. zhenshoushi), four Muslims and four non-Muslims. As a part of the “nation,” the Chinese Republic, Gansu remained passive and profoundly conservative, only very gradually taking up any of the challenges of modernity. Many Lanzhou and county-level elites felt strong pangs of regret when the government defeated, captured, and executed a Qing restorationist who raised an army in 1920 and attacked the provincial capital.\textsuperscript{20}

Lu Hongtao had no better fortune than his predecessor in balancing the competing forces in Gansu. When he left the province in 1925 the petty warlords of eastern Gansu, all non-Muslims, were engaged in inconclusive battle with the Lanzhou authorities. President Duan Qirui appointed the famous “Christian general” Feng Yuxiang as military governor of the northwest in 1925. Feng had heard of Ma Fuxiang’s success against bandits and appointed Ma as his codirector of northwestern border defenses, a title that again “legitimized” Ma’s already-existing power. Ma used Feng’s influence to obtain national-level civil and military posts, including that of national aviation commander.\textsuperscript{21} All of the Gansu Muslim militarists found the presence of Feng’s powerful Guominjun (National People’s Army) tolerable as long as Feng and his Gansu general Liu Yufen directed their attacks eastward, toward the non-Muslim eastern Gansu warlords or Shaanxi. But the Muslims’ goal of using Feng to maintain order while enjoying discreet independence could not be realized. Feng and Liu needed to bleed Gansu dry of revenue and manpower in order to participate in major campaigns against Zhang Zuolin, dominant warlord of north China. The imperatives of battle did not allow the existence of independent military power

\textsuperscript{19} GNQSL 30.21b.
\textsuperscript{20} GNQSL 30.20b.
in Feng’s rear, nor could he allow the province’s revenues to fall into potentially hostile hands.

In 1927–31 the cumulative effects of long-term militarist exploitation, drought, earthquake, famine, and ethnic hatred brought on another round of savage local warfare. Taxed beyond the limit by their government(s), pressed into service as soldiers or transporters, robbed, beaten, and brutalized, the ordinary people of Gansu now had to cope with slow death by starvation and clear natural signs of Heaven’s displeasure.22 The Muslim militarists could gain from this horror if they could direct its violent results against Feng Yuxiang or other local rivals. Most actively anti-Feng was Ma Tingrang of the Gansu corridor, Ma Anliang’s third son. He made careful arrangements for delivery of a large shipment of Manchurian arms from Zhang Zuolin, Feng Yuxiang’s most powerful enemy, and prepared to move against the Guominjun when the weapons arrived in 1927.

Another young Muslim officer also moved against the Guominjun, though with far less thorough preparation. Ma Zhongying was a cousin of Ma Qi, the Muslim commander at Xining. He left that city with a few foolhardy companions in 1928, intending to attack Hezhou and rid Sino-Muslim country of the outside troops. In those times of extraordinary misery and deprivation, his activist, violent call drew thousands of followers from Huangzhong and Taoxi. Ma Zhongying’s Gansu campaigns lasted three years and included three sieges of Hezhou and raids from the upper Wei valley to the Gansu corridor, from the Sichuan border to Ningxia.23

Ma Fuxiang, eager to increase his influence, sent one of his sons to try negotiations at Hezhou during Ma Zhongying’s sieges.24 Ma Fuxiang also joined other Muslim gentry, including Ma Yuanchao of the Jahriya, in writing to Muslims all over the province, exhorting them to keep the peace.25 But neither the Guominjun nor the “legitimate” local Muslim leaders could maintain order in Gansu, so Ma Fuxiang sought allies outside the province, to stabilize his power and to rid the area of Feng by political alliance rather than military force. By mid-1927 the effectiveness

22. Kang, Xibei zuijin shinian, a northwestern “modern” gentryman’s account of his region’s travails, lists dozens of incidents of sickening violence perpetrated by all sides during the 1920s. A shorter, but equally graphic list may be found in GNQSL 31.49a–50a.  
23. Fan Manyun, “Liu Yufen”; and Linxia Huizu Zizhizhou Wenshi Ziliao Weiyuanhui, ed., Ma Zhongying. The results of Ma Zhongying’s raid on Old Taozhou after the failure of his final encirclement of Hezhou are discussed later in this chapter.  
25. GNQSL 31.31a.
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of the Northern Expedition against the southern warlords and the Communists had been demonstrated. Guomindang (Nationalist Party) army commander Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) grew rapidly in power and status, moving toward decisive confrontation with the northern warlords after his victorious march to the Yangzi. Building on three years of gradual approach to the Guomindang, Ma Fuxiang broke openly with Feng Yuxiang, using nationalistic rhetoric to justify a new alliance with Jiang Jieshi. All warlords traded in these sentiments of "for the people" and "unify the nation" to justify their militarism, but this new sloganeering, however superficial, had special significance when it came from a Muslim. For Muslims, even more than non-Muslims, this explicit nationalism contrasted with dynastic loyalty, Islamic isolationism, and Gansu regionalism and meant the end of the imperial era—a new stage in the slow, murky dawning of the polyethnic Chinese nation-state.

Ma Fuxiang was the first Gansu Muslim warlord to join the Guomindang, and he achieved national recognition through national alliances. In the wake of Feng Yuxiang's departure and the creation of Qinghai and Ningxia as independent provinces in 1928, Ma participated in the reorganization of Gansu's provincial government. In his combination of national, regional, and local power and interests, he resembled the Muslim examination graduates of the past, who had left their homes to take official posts elsewhere in the empire, leaving their relatives to safeguard their local interests and to ensure their gentry status for another generation. Ma Fuxiang rose rapidly in the official titles competition of the Guomindang: he served as mayor of Qingdao, governor of Anhui, member of the Guomindang Central Committee, member of the State Council, and chair of the Mongolia-Tibet Commission of the Guomindang government.26 Playing the militarist politics of the day with considerable skill, he helped to arrange the defeat of Feng Yuxiang and the surrender of several of Feng's subordinates, including Ma's own son Ma Hongkui. Though Ma Fuxiang never held an active civilian post in Gansu after moving east as a Guomindang leader, he nonetheless exercised a lively and direct interest in the northwest, keeping in close touch with his subordinates in Ningxia.

Ma Fuxiang also took the lead in establishing national Muslim organizations sponsored by the Guomindang. Until the 1920s only the Jahriya—never the Chinese state or any transregional party—had undertaken to unify the Muslims of China institutionally. With a national

26. See Boorman, Biographical Dictionary, main entry under Ma Fu-hsiang; and Zhang Wei, "Gu Guomin zhengfu."
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(rather than imperial or regional) government finally in power after 1928, Muslims had to be actively incorporated into the citizenry and organized in legitimate special-interest groups with nationally known, easily identifiable leaders, rather than being identified as legally different or potentially subversive. The state supported these groups with money and with recognition of their leaders as symbolically influential political figures. Wealthy and well known, Ma Fuxiang had long taken an interest in Muslim educational institutions and had established a public library in Ningxia. As early as 1917 he had gathered investors and spent his own money to sponsor a Mongolian-Muslim normal school and a number of Muslim elementary schools throughout the territory under his control (see plate 18). Immediately after his removal to the east as a Guomindang official, Ma Fuxiang joined Muslim gentry from several provinces in founding the China Islamic Association (Zhongguo Huijiao Gonghui), and he served for a while as titular director of instruction at the Islamic secondary school in Beijing.

North Chinese Muslim intellectuals and progressive ahong had established the Chengda Normal College in Jinan, Shandong, in 1925. This first national institution of higher learning for Muslims in China offered a combined Chinese, “modern” (i.e., Western), and Islamic curriculum. Because of his Confucian and Muslim educations, Ma Fuxiang sympathized with this movement and participated actively, especially when the May Thirtieth troubles brought Ma Songting ahong and the Chengda College to Beijing. 27 Never forgetting his early intellectual growth under the influence of the Han kitab, Ma Fuxiang invested in new editions of many major texts, including most of the books mentioned in chapter 3. His efforts enabled Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, and especially Liu Zhi to find new audiences among twentieth-century Sino-Muslims, and some previously unpublished texts were brought to light.

Ma Fuxiang belonged to the new age of nationalist Confucianism, the “revolutionary conservative” ideology that sought to change China’s institutions, national strength, and domestic order while preserving its cultural values and elite traditions. He enjoyed socializing with non-Muslim gentry and Guomindang leaders but was also careful in advancing the careers of promising young Muslims who wanted to emulate his worldly success. 28 Non-Muslim allies praised him for his guojia yizhi, his “national consciousness,” which they distinguished from the stereotypically “different” Muslim consciousness as well as

27. Ma Songting ahong, “Zhongguo Huijiao.”
from provincial militarism. In public they admired his Islamic-Confucian synthesis, publicized through his reprint projects of both the Han kitab and Chinese classical works. They felt comfortable with his advocacy of national unity, as all of them strengthened their local bases in their home provinces.

In 1932 Ma Fuxiang—a rising star in Guomindang central councils, a crucial power broker in the northwest, the best-known Muslim in China—suddenly took sick and died while traveling from Hankou to Beiping. He left behind a wide variety of projects to forward his ambition of achieving a true Sino-Muslim synthesis, the full integration of the Sinophone Muslims as citizens of the Chinese Republic and participants in Chinese culture. He had planned with Ma Zhenwu, head of one branch of the Jahrīya in Ningxia, to translate the Koran into Chinese. In 1931 he had taken a leading role in proposing formation of the Muslim Educational Progressive Committee (Huimin Jiaoyu Zujin Weiyuanhui), to be sponsored by the central government. When it came into existence in 1933, that organization promoted Chinese education among Muslims. In his military days Ma Fuxiang had led troops to kill coreligionists who opposed what he saw as the Gansu Muslims' best interest, a stable position in a strong Qing state. By the end of his life China had changed radically and the Muslim militarist had become an educator, provincial gentryman, and Guomindang official, protecting his territory and his family's interests while working toward an active role for Gansu and China's Muslims in a strong nation-state. Ma Fuxiang worked all his life to include himself among those who "are of our kind," the Chinese. His son and nephew, both staunch supporters of the Guomindang and enemies of the Communists, ruled Ningxia—most local people say very badly—for the remainder of the Republican period.

MA YUANZHANG (1853–1920)
AND THE REVIVAL OF THE JAHRIYA

Ma Guanglie [Yuanzhang] does not look upon other religions with hatred; in fact, he joined [his forces with] the militia to pursue bandits. He may be called a man with national minzu consciousness29

29. GNQSL 28.26a.
Syncretic assimilation to the new China of the late Qing and Republic could be expected from Ma Fuxiang, the son of Ma Zhan’ao’s lieutenant, for a segment of the Gansu Muslim elite identified with the Khafiya had sought accommodation since before the 1780s rebellion. But no one, least of all Gansu non-Muslims, expected the head of the Jahriya to entertain such notions. Oft-proscribed since Su Forty-three’s violence of 1781 and central to the uprising of Ma Hualong, the Jahriya, under its condemnatory label of “New Teaching,” still inspired fear all over the province. Despite the slaughter at Jinjipu, the order revived under the leadership of a new jiaozhu, Ma Yuanzhang. He continued his predecessors’ devotion to Jahriya solidarity, but his exposure to Chinese society, his broad education, and the changing times altered his perception of the place of the Muslims, including the Jahriya, in China, and he did not act as many of his predecessors had acted.

We have seen the influence of Sufism and the tariqa fall on northwest China, with deadly results—conflicts within Muslim communities leading to Qing military intervention, rebellion, and massacre. We must not forget that between, or even during, those warlike events, Sufism as a religious system, as faith and practice and intellectual-emotional experience, played a central role in the lives of its adherents. Though the syncretic texts of the Han kitab were produced in eastern China, not in the much larger but less literate world of the northwestern Muslims, Ma Tong’s oral histories have revealed that a rich religious and cultural life also animated the Sufis of Gansu. The ahong read and interpreted the sacred texts, teachers and ordinary folk told tales of miracle-working Sufis and evil enemies, and everyone “remembered” the glories of their own virtuous ancestors, shaikh and daozu, embellishing the past to suit their circumstances. The tombs of the daozu and his successors provided an especially moving religious environment, as did the periodic collective celebrations (Ch. ermanli, Ar. al-'amal) of the Prophet or of the shaikh, occasions for renewing solidarity and offering gifts. As it did for Sufis elsewhere in the world, the daotang provided not only a locus for community organization, which it surely did, but also a hospice, a place of religious refuge. Françoise Aubin has brilliantly reconstructed the Jahriya religious life in China, focusing on the relationship of saint to follower, the importance of the collective dhikr recitation, and the
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excitement of understanding the proper approach to the divine. During the life of Ma Yuanzhang, the religious and intellectual power of Jahriya Sufism in Gansu reemerged from the bloodshed and chaos of the nineteenth century into a new relationship with Chinese culture.

According to his great-grandson, Ma Yuanzhang was a direct descendant of Ma Mingxin. When Agui defeated Su Forty-three and the New Teaching in 1781, he sentenced all of Ma Mingxin’s surviving family to exile in Yunnan. There the survivors joined the large and active western Yunnan Muslim community, proselytizing the Jahriya and serving as the jiaozhu’s representatives in the southwest. Ma Yuanzhang’s father, Ma Shilin, journeyed from Yunnan to Ningxia twice to visit Ma Hualong, once staying two years in Tongxin, south of Jinjipu, as an ahong. When Du Wenxiu set up his Muslim-dominated Pingnan state in Yunnan in the 1850s, Ma Shilin joined him as a garrison commander and civil official. He held his fortress of Donggouzhai for over a year against a Qing siege, then committed suicide in defeat. His sons had been sent to Sichuan for safety, Ma Yuanzhang among them. They disguised themselves as merchants and traveled to Gansu, arriving about a year after the fall of Jinjipu and the death of their shaikh (see plate 19).

When Ma Mingxin returned to Gansu from Yemen in the 1760s, he had severely criticized the Khafiya for allowing Ma Laichi’s son, Ma Guobao, to succeed to his father’s baraka as shaikh, rather than selecting the most meritorious disciple of the late master. During the decades between Ma Mingxin’s execution and Ma Hualong’s ascendancy at Jinjipu, that high-principled stand had eroded, as it had elsewhere in the Muslim world, in favor of the hereditary charisma of a saintly lineage. Ma Mingxin’s two direct successors to the shaikh’s position, the second- and third-generation masters of the Gansu Jahriya, were indeed chosen by their predecessors or by the high-ranking initiates for their Koranic scholarship, knowledge of Arabic and Persian, and piety. But the fourth master, Ma Yide (late 1770s–1849), was the son of the third, and from that generation onward the Jahriya moved toward the common pattern of Sufi suborders in northwest China, that of the menhuan. Though the transformation was not complete until Ma Yuanzhang’s

32. This chronology of Ma Yuanzhang is based on: Ma Chen, “Ma Yuanzhang”; Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan . . . shilue, 419–29; and Kawamura, “Ba Genshô.” Descent from Ma Mingxin made Ma Yuanzhang’s aspiration to the now-hereditary leadership of the Jahriya legitimate.
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lifetime, the crucial first step had been taken with Ma Yide’s succession in 1817.

With proper devotion to the now-hereditary Jahriya chain of succession, Ma Yuanzhang tried to find any remnants of Ma Hualong’s family who had survived the massacre at Jinjipu. He discovered two of Ma Hualong’s grandsons, Ma Jincheng and Ma Jinxi, living under Qing guard in Xi’an. Both boys had been sentenced to castration when they reached twelve years of age, and Yuanzhang arrived too late to effect a rescue of the older son, who suffered the penalty for his grandfather’s rebellion. But when the unfortunate boy was sent to Kaifeng as a slave after his punishment, Ma Yuanzhang placed disguised Jahriya members near him, and they cared for him until he died in 1890. Ma Yuanzhang did manage to have the second grandson rescued uncastrated from confinement and smuggled through a series of Muslim homes to the small but prosperous Muslim community of Hangzhou, in the lower Yangzi valley. Working as a leather merchant, Ma Yuanzhang moved all over eastern China, visiting Jahriya Muslims in a dozen provinces and gaining fame as a trustworthy ahong, returning to the northwest to live only after the 1895 violence had ended.

Ma Yuanzhang established his base in and around the town of Zhangjiachuan, in the eastern part of the province, where Zuo Zongtang had relocated thousands of Shaanxi Muslims after the great rebellion. Far from the feuds and violent histories of Hezhou, Didao, Xining, and Ningxia, Zhangjiachuan became an all-Muslim enclave. No non-Muslims lived within miles of the place, except for a few artisans who were careful to follow the strictures of Muslim dietary law. The Jahriya controlled the town and the nearby valleys, and there Ma Yuanzhang undertook his work of community building, aiming toward agricultural self-sufficiency, commercial success, religious education and expression, and an end to feuding.34

Devoted to the revival of his order, Ma Yuanzhang also directed his

34. Iwamura, “Kanshuku Kaimin no niruikei,” 144–47. Zhang Yangming, Dao xibei lai, devotes an entire chapter to his stay in Maluzhen, Zhangjiachuan’s market. One English account of the place exists, by an incredulous Rodney Gilbert, who combines in his brief article the language of light-hearted travel with that of “Hordes of Semi-barbaric Mohammedan Fanatics.” His description, shorn of its more fanciful elements, reveals a tightly organized community, devoted to its leader and to acts of charity, thoroughly Chinese and Muslim. Gilbert found the community’s focus on Ma Yuanzhang, with whom he had a cordial conversation, to be shocking and potentially dangerous, at the same time remarking that the aged religious leader was devoted to Chinese republicanism and had sent his son to work in Lanzhou (“Remarkable Development”).
efforts toward Muslim solidarity in general. Centering his personal and religious life in the Jahriya—he married a woman from Ma Hualong’s family—Ma Yuanzhang nonetheless cultivated friendships with non-Jahriya Muslims and with influential non-Muslims as well. He obtained a classical Chinese education, taking three northwestern Hanlin scholars and a member of the Manchu ruling clan as his teachers. Skilled in both Chinese and Arabic calligraphy, he scattered ceremonial scrolls and inscriptions around the northwest. He made three complete copies of the Koran in his own handwriting and composed essays and poems on topics as diverse as the nature of prayer and the obligations of patriotism. His followers venerated their jiaozhu and made pilgrimages to his daotang, practices common to Sufis all over the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Dong Fuxiang, the Gansu general and military superior of Ma Fuxiang’s family, could not hold national office after the Boxer debacle. In European minds, he had been the most intractable, most reactionary of the Qing loyalists, and his Gansu Muslim troops had been the most steadfast against the foreign armies during the siege of the legations at Beijing. As one of the besieged wrote:

Those to the north and west—all Kansuh men under Tung Fuhsiang—remain[ed] sullen and suspicious. From other directions, and especially on the east, where Jung Lu’s troops were posted, it was possible to obtain supplies (small, but welcome) of eggs and vegetables, the sellers being smuggled through the Chinese soldiers’ lines in spite of the prohibition of their officers, and it was from this side that the messengers came with all later letters. They declared, in fact, that they could not get through the troops on our western side without being shot.

An international clamor for Dong’s execution produced prevarication from the Qing court, which did not want to punish him for having done

35. One of Ma’s Hanlin teachers was Liu Erxin, a Lanzhou Confucian scholar ferociously loyal to the Qing. In 1911 Liu founded the Confucian Society, a conservative group that spread rapidly among the gentry. He consciously took Zeng Guofan as his model and proposed firm allegiance to the classical curriculum from his seat in the Provincial Assembly. See Yu, “Wusi yundong,” 102; Ma Chen, “Ma Yuanzhang,” 292; and Zhao Songyao, “Gansu Ziyiju,” 54.
37. Tan, The Boxer Catastrophe, 114, citing the papers of the British minister, Sir Claude MacDonald.
his job so loyally. Under pressure, the Qing stripped him of his rank, though not his command, and banished him to a remote province—Gansu, where his continued prestige and influence remained a source of anxiety and gall for the European community in China until his death.38

Dong Fuxiang remembered Ma Hualong and Jinjipu very well, and he desired to control the economic resources of northern Gansu, so he resented the successful revival of the Jahriya.39 Rumors flew that he planned to use his local militia to exterminate the Jahriya, so Ma Yuanzhang had to respond. Times have changed, he wrote to Dong, this is not the Tongzhi period, and you are not Zuo Zongtang. If you dare to move against the Jahriya, Muslims all over the country will report your treachery to the foreigners, and you will be finished.40 Ma Yuanzhang had already used his Manchu contacts to obtain a pardon for Ma Jinxi, so Dong knew that Ma might do as he threatened. Aware of his own unpopularity with the Europeans and the Qing’s promise to punish him, Dong backed down, and the region remained at peace. After decades of discrimination and turmoil, the Jahri Muslims could once again wear their distinctive white caps on the streets of Guyuan or Haicheng and do their business unafraid, thanks to Ma Yuanzhang (see plate 20). His reputation as a shanren, a saint, grew apace, and pilgrims flocked to Zhangjiachuan.

Coming to Terms with New China

Anti-Manchu violence broke out at Ningxia in 1911, led by the powerful Gelaohui secret society.41 The provincial government sent Ma Qi to restore order, and the revolutionaries sent Yu Youren to Zhangjiachuan to see Ma Yuanzhang, to persuade him not to support the Qing. Yu advocated anti-Manchu revolution and left books for Ma to distribute, but Ma did not wish to endanger his relationship with the provincial capital and its distant Qing masters. He sent the eastern Gansu Muslim militia, under one of his sons, to help Ma Qi fight against the Gelaohui,
including its Muslim members, at Ningxia. After the failure of Shengyun, Changgeng, and Ma Anliang’s invasion of Shaanxi in 1912, Ma Yuanzhang adapted rapidly to the “Republican” (that is, warlord) administration and the devolution of power to the local level. Ma recognized that Yuan Shikai’s government, which could appoint the highest provincial officials, held one key to Gansu’s stability.

When the powerful, peripatetic general Bai Lang invaded Gansu with tens of thousands of “bandit” troops in 1914, Governor Zhang Guangjian had just been appointed by the central government, and real power still lay in local hands, not in Lanzhou. Ma Jinxi, Ma Hualong’s pardoned grandson, was arrested and accused by eastern Gansu gentry of collusion with Bai Lang. Ma Yuanzhang went directly to Lanzhou, to Zhang Guangjian, whom he was able to bribe to release Ma Hualong’s remaining descendant. In the early Republic, unlike the mid-Qing, the provincial government could use the Jahriya to cooperate in maintaining social order. From 1911 on ambitious power holders in northern and eastern Gansu sent emissaries to Zhangjiachuan rather than risk disaffection of the Jahriya. Ma Yuanzhang had achieved legitimacy for himself and his once-proscribed order. His militia could not prevent Bai Lang from taking Zhangjiachuan, but they fought in the unsuccessful defense of Tianshui and gained reknown and non-Muslim gratitude for their leader.42

Ma Fuxiang and the other Gansu militarists found governor Zhang Guangjian’s domination in Lanzhou both irritating and expensive. By 1916 they were already arguing for a local duJun, under the slogan “Gansu people should govern Gansu” (Ch. Gan ren zhi Gan). Calling on Ma Yuanzhang as a fellow Muslim and a fellow provincial, Ma Fuxiang, who desired the position of duJun himself, asked his support for a message to Yuan Shikai. Instead of cooperating with his coreligionist, Ma Yuanzhang telegraphed Beijing that Zhang remained the best man for the job. He earned Ma Fuxiang’s enmity, but he gained stature and influence in Lanzhou and east China by this apparently selfless, “patriotic” act. When Ma Yuanzhang visited Lanzhou in 1918, the people welcomed him warmly and hung out scrolls and banners: “A man of all quarters, a boat for all waters!” (Ch. Dong nan xi bei ren, Jiang he hu hai chuan) (see plate 21).43

On December 16, 1920, a massive and devastating earthquake struck the Haicheng-Guyuan region of eastern Gansu. Because so many of

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42. “Gansu dudufu dang’an,” 262 ff.
43. Ma Chen, “Ma Yuanzhang,” 301.
the residents of that loess country lived (and a few still live) in man-made caves carved horizontally into the steep hillsides, whole villages were buried alive that night. Entire mountainsides slid into valleys, rivers were obstructed and flooded the low-lying areas, and massive cracks in the earth swallowed fields and farms. Estimates of the death toll, always suspect in China, ranged as high as two hundred thousand. A quarter-mile of the Xi'an—Lanzhou highway, along which Zuo Zongtang had planted two continuous rows of willow trees, moved overland to lodge forlorn on a newly created hill.

That earthquake also killed Ma Yuanzhang and one of his sons, both crushed by the collapse of a mosque near Zhangjiachuan. Already in his mid-sixties, he had devoted his life to reviving the Jahriya, but not in its old form and not with its old purposes. Under his leadership the order no longer functioned as the New Teaching—the fundamentalist, anti-assimilationist, anti-menhuan institution created by Ma Mingxin and his disciples in the eighteenth century. Indeed, it had already lost the New Teaching name to a new sub-group within the Khafiya during the 1895 troubles. The Jahriya under his leadership had become another menhuan, split by factional strife, led by wealthy patriarchs and dedicated to conservative goals within Chinese society—Islamic spiritual growth and Muslim economic success. Instead of dying for the Jahriya and Islam, his followers learned to read Arabic and Chinese and undertook commercial ventures all over north and west China.

This new legitimacy and cooperation were not solely results of the fall of the Qing, though the Republic and its decentralized power structure made Ma Yuanzhang a particularly attractive ally for the Gansu provincial leaders. The new impulses also grew from the new imperatives China brought to its frontiers in the late nineteenth century and from the growing dependence of the northwest on China proper, fostered by the modern growth of the Chinese state and economy. In the mid-Qing a New Teaching leader could be only a feitu, an illegitimate antistate

44. Zhao Shiyin, “Gansu dizhen jianzhi,” 259–67, contains numerous published accounts of the quake’s damage and local attempts to aid the suffering and homeless. For an English-language account and some extraordinary photographs, see Close and McCormick, “Where the Mountains Walked.”

45. So firm were Euro-American images of Muslims that missionary accounts of Ma’s death claimed that he was on the verge of a new “Mohammedan rebellion” when providentially killed by the earthquake. One even reported that killing had already begun in the towns of eastern Gansu. Given the above narrative of Ma Yuanzhang’s life to this point, these notices reveal only the fear and prejudices of their writers, not Ma Yuanzhang’s activities or condition in 1920.
bandit. By the early Republic, Gansu non-Muslims could call Ma Yuanzhang a *shanren*, and Gansu gentry could praise his “national ethnic consciousness” as they praised Ma Fuxiang’s. Ma Yuanzhang responded by publicly proclaiming his loyalty to China, even if that involved political opposition to Muslim countries. When the Ottoman government allied with Germany, technically China’s enemy in the first World War, Ma telegraphed Beijing:

We are the same as the Han except in religion. We are not united in any way politically with Arabia. Our lives, livelihoods, and graves are in China. Why should we harm our country for some foreigners? Though there were Han-Muslim killings in the Qing, since the Republic we have kept the peace and done our duty, not opposing the government or secretly plotting. We have been good citizens among the Five Nationalities!46

The revival of the Jahrtya did not produce simple, positive results. Ma Jinxi, Ma Hualong’s grandson and former castrato-in-waiting, considered himself to be the heir to the *baraka* of the Jahrtya *jiaozhu*. Ma Yuanzhang, on the other hand, had led the suborder’s rise from the ashes of Jinjipu and had married a woman from Ma Hualong’s lineage in order to tie himself closer to that source of legitimacy. Though he never openly challenged Ma Jinxi’s claim to Ma Hualong’s mantle, he claimed Ma Mingxin’s for himself, thus splitting the seventh generation of Jahrtya masters into two sometimes-rival factions. Ma Yuanzhang’s, based around Zhangjiachuan, has come to be called the Shagou lineage, from the site (near Ningxia) of one of his two *gongbei* (see plate 22). Ma Jinxi, who returned to the Ningxia region, set up his headquarters near Jinjipu, and his lineage has come to be known as the Banqiao, after its location. In the eighth generation, which followed, no fewer than six Jahrtya leaders claimed legitimate descent from Ma Yuanzhang, while two of Ma Jinxi’s sons competed within the Banqiao family. In short, the Jahrtya became a *menhuan*, with all of the centralizing and fragmenting possibilities of that complex institution and its commitment to stability and continuity within Chinese society.47

The career of Ma Yuanzhang, like that of Ma Fuxiang, illustrates an important but ironic theme of modern Chinese history. At its edges, a new nation must assert both political and cultural sovereignty, and

convert what had been frontier buffer zones for an empire—those governed by Qing period *tusi*, for example—into integral parts of the homeland, demarcated by national boundaries. This was the substance of Gu Jiegang's message in 1938—that the border and the frontier must be the same line. But that process took a long time, including the Qing conquest of the northwest and then eastern Turkestan; Agui's subjugation of Su Forty-three and Tian Wu; Zuo Zongtang's carefully planned reconquest of the whole northwest; the creation of Xinjiang as a province; and Dong Fuxiang's cooptation of Ma Anliang and his Muslim cavalry to defeat Ma Weihan, Ma Yonglin, and the other rebels of 1895. All of these military acts forwarded the political incorporation of the northwestern frontier into a Chinese-dominated nation-state, centered in the east.

The irony lies in the gradual *disintegration* that characterized political China as a whole during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Qing and then Republican governments struggled to hold at the center, as secessionist movements broke off large chunks of the empire, as the entire political fabric unraveled after 1916, the northwest drew closer to China. Ma Fuxiang, Ma Yuanzhang, and many other northwestern Muslims played roles in that conflicted but nonetheless clearly centripetal movement. By accepting the legitimacy of the Qing and Republican states and actively supporting them, working with or even becoming officials, building their own communities as part of the Chinese nation, these new leaders ensured the inseparable bond between their poor, battered region and the New China a-borning in its cultural centers back east.

**MA QIXI (1857–1914) AND HIS SINO-ISLAMIC COLLECTIVIST MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN GANSU**

In 1914, after Ma Anliang murdered Ma Qixi, more than forty young women of the Xidaotang were kidnapped to Hezhou, where they were imprisoned in a cart shop before being bestowed upon men. Two *ahong* from another *menhuan* just happened to be walking by the shop gate and saw what was going on, so they could not help but ask, "You say that your Xidaotang is an orthodox Way, but everyone says you're heretics! What the ear hears may be groundless, but what the eye sees is true, so we'll test you today. Can you answer?" Then the two *ahong* started quizzing them about faith, the six articles of faith, and the five divine
commandments, and then moved on to the interpretation of each part of the Koran, *shari' a*, the Three Vehicles [of Sufism], and more. Those young women, using both Arabic and Chinese, cited the scriptures and quoted the texts, answering every question smoothly and fluently. The two *ahong* were deeply moved, and they ran to Ma Anliang and said, “You’ve made a grave error! Their religious solidarity is a true one.” And they demanded that the imprisoned Xidaotang women be released.48

On the inside, communist; to the outside, imperialist [Ch. *Nei gongchan, wai diguo*].49

*Local Leader, National Vision*

Ma Yuanzhang rebuilt the Jahriya, using its already established networks, its interprovincial trade, and its tradition of internal cohesion in the face of social, religious, and political hostility. His expertise in Chinese calligraphy, social relations, and politics earned him the admiration of Qing officials and local gentry, while his Islamic learning, Arabic calligraphy, and ability as a mediator won him the respect and obedience due from *menhuan* adherents to a successful *jiaozhu*. Around Zhangjiachuan, he tried to built a self-sufficient refuge, a place where Muslims could live, not detached from Chinese society but far enough from the real dangers of ethnic strife and prejudice. He also shared with Ma Fuxiang, the cosmopolitan Guomindang warlord based at Ningxia, the need to relocate the Sino-Muslims politically in the rapidly changing world of New China. At home in Gansu, both of them had to deal with Ma Anliang, whose military and political power, based at Hezhou, dominated the region. All players in Gansu public life knew that Ma Anliang would use his cavalry and his close relationship to the Lanzhou authorities against any opposition, a willingness displayed most vividly in his violent attack on the Xidaotang, an apparently innocuous Muslim group based at Old Taozhou.50

49. This proverbial description of the Xidaotang appears in many articles on the subject, e.g., the comment of Gu Jiegang’s companion in his northwestern mission (Wang Shumin, “Xidaotang,” 123).
50. Old Taozhou refers to the *jiucheng*, the more ancient and strategically located of two walled towns in the county, both now called Lintan. New Taozhou, for a long time the administrative seat of the county, lies twenty miles to the east, closer to the northward bend of the Tao River and to China.
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The Xidaotang grew and thrived in the multicultural atmosphere of a trading town on the frontiers of cultural China and cultural Tibet. There, Muslim merchants of many languages and backgrounds, non-Muslim Chinese from many centers, and Tibetans both sedentary and nomadic met to exchange goods. Wealthy in peacetime, vulnerable in wartime, Old Taozhou had been a meeting ground of cultures since the Six Dynasties period (c.e. 220–589), when it was established to guard the border with the Tuyuhun, who were finally driven out by the Latter Zhou. A millennium later Mu Ying, one of Zhu Yuanzhang’s close associates, brought an army to subdue the “eighteen lineages of the Tufan” in 1379. Many of his Muslim soldiers stayed at Taozhou, building the town’s first mosque and setting up in trade between the nomads and the sedentary population of the Tao valley, Hezhou, and points north and east. 51

As discussed above, Taozhou did not share the internecine Muslim battles of suborders and menhuan that brought fire and sword down on Xining, Xunhua, Ningxia, and Hezhou after the 1760s. Its Muslim community remained primarily Gedimu, organized in mosque-based local solidarities dedicated to local action through their elites, the Hui gentry—which included abong, merchants, military examination graduates, and landowners. Far from any direct connection with Central Asia, balanced between Tibet and China, Taozhou’s Chinese-speaking Muslims were more oriented toward China than toward the Muslim heartlands. They claimed descent from Nanjing natives among Mu Ying’s Muslim troops, so their culture remained more “eastern,” more associated with China proper than with the frontier. 52 Two suborders of the Khafiya, the Huasi and Beizhuang menhuan, sought initiates in the town with some success and were able to establish mosques, but neither serious religious disputes nor violent lineage feuds broke the relative peace of the Taozhou Muslims.

Ma Qixi was born into the family of a Taozhou abong of the Beizhuang menhuan. In the early stages of his education, he showed great promise as a scholar, so his father made a fairly unusual choice for a Gansu man of religion. He sent his eleven-year-old son to study with a non-Muslim, a local examination graduate, at his private academy. Amazed by the boy’s precocious intellectual skills, the teacher introduced his student to a more prestigious instructor, the locally famous senior licentiate Fan Shengwu, whose school convened at New Tao-

51. Taozhou ting zhi of 1908, 106. See also Zhang Tingyu, Ming shi 2.15b.
52. Guan, “Xidaotang,” 76.
Following the conventional curriculum for civil service candidates, Ma Qixi placed second in the Taozhou examination, then fourth at the prefectural examination in Gongchang, achieving both the praise of his teacher and the civil rank of *xiucai*, rare for a northwestern Muslim.

Though he had spent much of his time on the standard Neo-Confucian texts, Ma Qixi had also read widely in the *Han kitab* and found there the core of Sino-Muslim knowledge. In his analysis, neither the Confucians nor the Daoists had the highest learning. Rather, Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi, and the others had synthesized the universal Confucian discourse of virtue, morality, nature, and principle with the glorious monotheism of Islam to produce the true way. Acting on his conviction that Sino-Muslims should use Chinese culture as their medium for understanding Islam, Ma Qixi returned to Old Taozhou and opened his own school, the Gold Star Hall (Ch. Jinxing Tang), at a *gongbei* of his own Beizhuang *menhuan*. There he taught Islamic religion, the Chinese curriculum, and the *Han kitab* to a devoted following, which slowly grew to over one hundred students. His students learned the standard vocabulary of *xiushen*, individual cultivation of the inherently virtuous self, but they did so in order to comprehend God’s commandments and the model life of the Prophet.

Clearly differing with his ascetically minded, Central Asian influenced Sufi colleagues in the Beizhuang *menhuan*, Ma broke with his original solidarity and became an independent instructor, focusing on Liu Zhi’s works. The Sufis of the Khafiya called him heterodox, even a nonbeliever, for his worldly success and his unconventional curriculum; they even went so far as to forbid their followers any meat slaughtered by Ma Qixi or his followers. Since Taozhou’s Muslim communities had not been riven by religious conflict before this point, all disturbances could conveniently be blamed on him and his (yet again) New Teaching. By 1902 the strife was sufficiently severe that Beizhuang and Huasi adherents went to court, charging Ma Qixi and his followers with heterodoxy, and the Taozhou subprefect proscribed Ma’s teaching and convicted his followers, a number of whom were jailed or beaten.

55. Details of the suit, including the defendants, their sentences, and the verdict’s reversal by a higher court, may be found in “Ma Qixi xiansheng,” 131–32. This account, very sympathetic to the Xidaotang, was written by an anonymous Muslim associated with the solidarity.
the verdict was reversed a year later, Ma set up a mosque in Taozhou, and the resulting furor threatened to escalate into violence. Taking his cue from Laozi, the legendary Daoist sage who went west beyond the pass, Ma Qixi set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1905 with two disciples.

The three Chinese pilgrims never reached their goal. Trapped by local and regional wars and unsettled political conditions in Russian-dominated Central Asia, Ma spent three years in Samarkand, studying and teaching (his adherents say) among the Baishan suborder of Sufis. After one of his companions died, he returned to Taozhou, more convinced than ever that he should teach Chinese Muslims to understand Islam through Chinese culture, precisely the formula proposed by the authors of the Han kitab. Again opening a school, this time he called it the Xidaotang, which could be translated either as Western Hospice or Hall of the Western Dao. Under that name, and in conformity with Ma’s unique vision of Sino-Muslim life, the new solidarity flourished. Because of his strong attachment to Chinese culture, Ma Qixi also paid close attention to political developments within China, so when the Qing fell in 1912, the men of the Xidaotang cut their queues and the women unbound their feet.

Establishing the Collective

Appropriate to a young man raised in a mercantile atmosphere, Ma Qixi practiced and taught a very worldly, as well as religious, Islam. He emphasized social practice and economic life, the organization of Muslims for material and spiritual success. To that end, he made the Xidaotang into a collective corporate enterprise in which economic, cultural, and religious life were combined. The capital for this venture came from the possessions of his own family and those of his followers.

56. Baishan (White Mountain), a term common in Sino-Muslim accounts of Central Asian Islam, probably refers to the Āfāqiya, the Naqshabandi suborder associated with Khoja Āfāq and therefore with the Khafīya. That solidarity is called Aqtaghīlq, also meaning White Mountain, in Turkic sources. Despite Ma Qixi’s difficulties with the Khafīya in his home town, he had been raised within that suborder and probably felt most comfortable with its rituals and texts in the foreign atmosphere of Samarkand (Fletcher, “Naqshbandiyya,” 10, n3).

57. The former translation is the more likely, since dao tang (Sufi hospice) was already an established term among Gansu Muslims and Ma Qixi’s mosque lay west of Taozhou’s wall. But the ambiguity may well have been intentional, since Ma Qixi’s Dao, Islam, came from the west, from Tianfāng, from Arabia.
Anyone who entered the Xidaotang as an “inner” (full) member donated all property, personal goods, and wealth to the collective treasury, which the leaders then invested in a wide variety of activities. Beginning with Taozhou’s specialty—trade between pastoral Tibet and agricultural-artisanal China—the Xidaotang expanded into agriculture, livestock raising, forestry, and processing. The Xidaotang’s trading company, under the corporate name Tian Xing Long, became an important player in the production, concentration, brokering, transport, and sale of goods ranging from grain and vinegar to jade and rare medicaments.

Initial resistance to Tian Xing Long’s success came, of course, from its local competitors, chief among them the Huasi menhuan’s Yi Xing Gong company, headed by a Taozhou Muslim gentryman. In Huasi perceptions, not only did the Xidaotang teach heterodoxy and lure adherents away from the menhuan, it also deprived the established company of revenues and trade. Unfortunately for Ma Qixi and his followers, the Hezhou warlord and Huasi adherent Ma Anliang had invested heavily in the Yi Xing Gong—one source says to the amount of thirty thousand taels of silver. Apart from the obvious economics, Ma Anliang had a variety of reasons to hate, or at least mistrust, Ma Qixi and the Xidaotang. Within the Gansu Muslim institutional world, Ma Anliang supported the Huasi menhuan, which had opposed Ma Qixi’s “innovations.” Allied with the most conservative Manchu ex-governors, Ma Anliang might well have found the Xidaotang’s advocacy of Republican loyalty galling. Most telling, the Hezhou warlord certainly wanted to control the commerce of the Taoxi region, a rich source of revenue that was flowing increasingly into the collective coffers of the Xidaotang. Ma Anliang found his solution in the invasion of Gansu by the Bai Lang army in the spring of 1914.

Bai Lang, a talented and charismatic military man from Henan, combined the career and romantic imperial aspirations of a roving brigand with the nationalist politics of the early Republican period. He was denounced as a bandit, touted as a social revolutionary, and widely perceived as the immanent emperor of a new dynasty, an impression he did not hesitate to exploit. He worked for the restoration of the Qing, then accepted the Republican governorship of Henan, and ended by comparing himself to Liu Bang, the founder of the Han dynasty. His campaigns in Henan, Anhui, Hubei, and Shaanxi have been well studied, but the end of his military success, namely his defeat in Gansu, has

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not.未能通过合围在西安的围攻，如刘邦所做，白朗的军队在从陕西进入甘肃时，其兵力达到顶峰，可能多达万人，前往四川寻找新基地。六周后，他们从甘肃以一盘散沙的兵团形势撤出，向东逃往家乡。这种戏剧性变化是当地顽抗部队顽强抵抗，中央政府追捕部队在南向通道成功阻塞，四川军队封锁的结果。白朗的最后落脚点是老洮州。

在1914年春季攻占了东州的白朗，在于甘省级部队沿主要西安-兰州高速公路进行的一次重要战役中，败在了甘省级部队手下。他后转向南，发现白水河在藏区融雪期无法通过，通往四川的通道被四川军队封锁。在中央军和甘省级部队身后，他只好向北移动至民州，他的士兵在城内抢掠、强奸、杀人。他无法遵循原计划，白朗被困于一条死胡同，他无法后退或向南，马安良的军队在直接通往兰州的制高点下堵住了道路。老洮州-合州道路提供了唯一的逃路。

白朗的军队在打败了藏区的包租后，向新、老洮州进发，都得到了不同的结果。新洮州没有抵抗，只是略作抢劫。老洮州的士绅和民团准备保卫坚固的城墙，而西达特长老们在西峰山的营垒内安营固守。未能遵循原计划，白朗被困在了洮县——他无法重新走回西部，或者向南，马安良的军队在直接通往兰州的制高点下堵住了道路。老洮州提供了唯一的逃路。

59. 两份有用的英文资料有关白落英是赫尔，"The White Wolf";和佩里，"Social Banditry Revisited." 既没有涉及甘州的战斗，白朗对北方中国的成功进军也停止了。白朗的姓氏意味着"白"，而他名字的变音又是"狼"。

60. 吞卫县的投降是地方士绅迎请白朗，将他和他的军官们安顿在当地的学校，给了他们一顿饭。白朗的良知不允许他破坏这个贫穷而有礼貌的地方，所以他给指挥官捐了一大笔款子来买书给孩子们（GNQSL 28.2.i.b）。

61. 基督夫人，一个传教士的妻子，差点儿让贞操保全，许多当地的妇女就没有那么幸运了。她的日记可以在《北华早报》，1914年6月27日，和一个更阴暗的版本在法雷尔，《在屋檐下》，卷2，75-76。

62. 一位传教士作家声称，西达特长老自己买到了现代武器，用经商的利润购买，通过汉口和192
Descending from the east in the last week of May, Bai confronted the Old Taozhou coalition with overwhelming numbers. Knowing the town’s wealth and its Muslim majority, the Henan and Shaanxi troops destroyed the city with a brutality unprecedented in their long march. After a brief battle, the invaders broke the defenders and began a thorough pillage of the walled city, which lay empty even a year later:

The chief feature was the fact that the four walls enclosed nothing but a mass of ruins, the town having been burnt out by the White Wolf [Bai Lang] rebels the year before; we saw many a ruined city in Kansu in the course of our travels—indeed, in that province ruins are the rule rather than the exception—but nothing so utterly and completely destroyed as Old T’ao Chou.63

Reginald Farrer, who was collecting wildflowers in the Tibetan mountains during the battle, heard about it from Mr. Christie and Mr. Purdom, who were in Taozhou only a few days after:

Tao-jo was taken by storm, and the Wolves immediately set themselves deliberately to destroy every living thing within its walls, not only the men and women, the cattle and horses, but down to the very dogs and cats in the lanes. The gates were stacked up to their arches with carrion, and the streets a chaos of corpses.64

The Muslims of the town, many of them Huasi and Beizhuang adherents, held out in one of the large mosques but, facing defeat, either immolated themselves or were burned to death by Bai Lang’s men. Between eight thousand and sixteen thousand people died in the sack of Taozhou, a high percentage of them Muslims.65 Even sources favorable to Bai Lang call the massacre a mistake, and some do not mention it at all.66

The social origins of many of Bai Lang’s men may hold a clue to the

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63. Teichman, Travels of a Consular Officer, 135.
65. Pei Jianzhun, “Bai Lang rao Long,” 40, reports the higher figure. Most sources lie in between the two.
horrific violence visited on the Taozhou Muslims. They were members of the Gelaohui secret society, which, in the volatile atmosphere of Henan and southern Shaanxi, had become virulently anti-Manchu and anti-Muslim. Contemporary Chinese scholars join Farrer and the correspondent of the *North China Herald* in chorus, accusing Ma Anliang of treachery against his compatriots at Taozhou, of refusal to do battle with Bai Lang. But Ma Anliang’s main purpose lay in protecting Hezhou, and beyond it Lanzhou, not the small towns of southern Gansu, and his immobility in the face of an invading army ten thousand strong is certainly understandable, if not forgivable. Passive though it was, his strategy worked. Blocked on the north by Ma’s defensive posture at Hezhou, the Bai Lang army had no route except to return eastward via Minzhuo. The Tibetans had destroyed the floating bridge over the Tao, and the crossing drowned many of Bai’s men. The southern Gansu towns, already pillaged once, held out more effectively than they had before, and the supplies, the loot, and even the food were gone. Bai’s career was over, his army a disorganized and hungry rabble splintering and running for home, never to reunite as an effective fighting force. Bai himself was driven to suicide shortly after, but one of his commanders became governor of Shaanxi, and others reintegrated themselves into their home districts.

And the Xidaotang? They held their suburban fortress against an assault by Bai Lang’s men and actually left their redoubt to attack the looting invaders, against considerable odds, the day after the city was taken. Retreating further into Tibetan territory with their families, they suffered only minor losses in battle and preserved their strength. And there lay Ma Anliang’s opportunity, for he could easily give public credence to the rumors that Ma Qixi had struck a deal with Bai Lang, the murderer of so many Muslims and helpless civilians of all communities. Ma Yuanzhang had resisted Bai Lang in eastern Gansu; Ma Anliang himself had held firm; the Khafiya martyrs of Taozhou had died nobly; but Ma Qixi, he accused, had treacherously sold out. Claiming to be pursuing bandits, in mid-June Ma Anliang sent a battalion to Taozhou, where they entered the Xidaotang compound at Xifeng Mountain and captured twenty-five men, including Ma Qixi, his two

67. Reginald Farrer observed the Gelaohui as a menacing presence in Fengxiang a few weeks before the Bai Lang invasion of Gansu (*On the Eaves*, vol. 1, 84.).

68. For Ma Yuanzhang’s mustering of the Jabriya militia against Bai Lang, see GNQSL 28.25b. For Ma Anliang’s use of the rumor of Ma Qixi’s connection to Bai Lang, see Guan, “Xidaotang,” 85.
younger brothers, his son, and other leaders of the solidarity. Taking them to a nearby riverbank, Ma Anliang's men shot them all.69

So personal a vision and leadership as Ma Qixi's might have been irreplaceable, but he had built an institution sufficiently coherent that his successors were able to carry on. For five years after the killings, Xidaotang adherents poured out the collective's wealth in lawsuit after lawsuit, at Lanzhou and then at Beijing, to bring the crime home against Ma Anliang. Each suit was referred back to Zhang Guangjian at Lanzhou, and each time he decided not to interfere. Even after another, smaller massacre of Xidaotang men at Taizi (now Hezheng) during a memorial service, the provincial authorities did not or could not act to censure the powerful Muslim militarist.70 Finally, following Ma Anliang's death in 1919, the Muslim general Ma Lin brought the Lanzhou authorities and the Xidaotang together to negotiate at Hezhou, and Ma Qixi's solidarity was recognized as a legal Muslim institution rather than a renegade gang.

*Fish and Meat: Staying Alive in the 1920s*

After its legalization, the Xidaotang had to survive the privations and politics of Gansu in the warlord period. The province had always been poor—had long suffered under the tyranny of a harsh environment, strong military presence, and heavy official exactions—so the 1920s did not bring new kinds of suffering, just more of the old ones. The absence of effective government combined with nature's eccentric depredations to bring the whole region the hardest and poorest of times. Opium cultivation on a vast scale deprived many counties, even multicounty regions, of their grain supplies; multiple currencies made even the simplest market transactions into elaborate calculations; major earthquakes reduced wide areas of eastern Gansu (1920) and the eastern part of the Gansu corridor (1927) to rubble; and drought brought multiprovince famine in the late 1920s.71

Even in those awful times, the Xidaotang achieved commercial and

69. The anonymous author of "Ma Qixi xiansheng" (p. 134) writes: "On the nineteenth day of the intercalary fifth month, the warlord Ma Anliang, of the hate-filled movement, used the excuse of clearing out bandits and, without public documents, without legal warrants, shot the master to death. Those who followed him included his brothers, Qijin and Qihua, his son Longde, his nephew Xilong, and [many others]."

70. For a brief account of this incident, see Min, "Hezheng Taizijie," 170.

71. For detailed descriptions of these and other privations, see Lipman, "The Border World," chap. 5.
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...religious success. The Xidaotang was known as one of the “three great families” of southern Gansu, in company with Yang Jiqing (the Tibetan tusi at Choni) and the chief rimpoche of the great lamasery at Labrang. At its core lay about four hundred “inner” adherents who lived collectively in a huge compound at Taozhou, administering their commercial empire and common wealth. Each male member received an assignment according to his abilities, so the solidity made best use of the masculine talent at its disposal. Another one thousand or so adherents lived away from Taozhou, working on the road or at production, processing, and sales enterprises. The Xidaotang bought agricultural land, pastureland, and forest land, all of which they put to profitable use, becoming self-sufficient producers of grain, large-scale traders in livestock, and exporters of wood products. Some Muslims chose not to become fully collectivized members, preferring to remain as private entrepreneurs, working for the Xidaotang but retaining their own possessions; one survey estimated their numbers at around 3,500, for a total of around five thousand members in the entire organization. This large, well-integrated collective structure clearly had very positive benefits, for the solidarity thrived even in the 1920s.

It did not escape unscathed, however, from the warlord battles that plagued the region. After Feng Yuxiang took titular command of the northwest, local commanders of all ethnicities scrambled to accommodate his powerful outside army. Hoping to drive Feng away from Taoxi and Huangzhong, Ma Zhongying, the Little Commander (local Ch. Ga Siling), a Xining Muslim adventurer from Ma Qi’s family, raided the entire Hezhou region in the late 1920s, attacking Hezhou three times, and then fled southward toward Taozhou with thousands of young Muslim men, eager to plunder. Ma Zhongying’s troops clashed with local Muslims and with the Tibetans in and near Old Taozhou, so the Xidaotang members abandoned their shops, warehouses, and homes.

72. Guan, “Xidaotang,” 89, citing “an investigation.”
73. The European adventurer Sven Hedin wrote a book about Ma Zhongying’s campaigns in Xinjiang, giving him the name Big Horse, but he was always known as the Little Commander in Gansu, for he began his campaign against Feng Yuxiang’s Guominjun at the tender age of seventeen (Hedin, The Flight of “Big Horse”). After three years of peripatetic campaigning in Gansu, with no apparent effect on the Guominjun but devastating consequences for much of the province, he entered his forces into the factionalist politics of Xinjiang, described (more accurately than Hedin could) in Forbes, Warlords and Muslims, chaps. 3–4. Ma Zhongying fled to the Soviet Union in 1934, at twenty-three years of age, and no one knows what became of him (Fan Manyun, “Liu Yufen,” 110–27).
fleeing into Tibetan territory for their lives. The Xidaotang central compound became Ma Zhongying's headquarters.

In three years of complex fighting, the Xidaotang lost a large portion of its wealth, but none of its cohesion or political savvy. Even while its headquarters lived in exile among the Tibetans, branches continued to do business, and a new office opened in Zhangjiakou (Chahar's entrepot, northwest of Beiping).75 When peace returned after 1932, the solidarity's leaders forged closer ties with the new rulers of the northwest, the Guomindang, and once again thrived. Like Ma Fuxiang, they saw their best advantage in alliance with the Guomindang's national power, which would allow them considerable local autonomy while encouraging peace and order for their commerce. When war with Japan broke out, the Xidaotang was in an ideal physical and economic position to provide the Nationalist government in Chongqing with the Taozhou region's special products, especially leather. Ma Mingren, third jiaozhu of the Xidaotang, traveled to Chongqing in 1941 and was introduced to President and Commander-in-Chief Jiang Jieshi by Bai Chongxi, the Muslim general from Guangxi Province.76

At its height around 1946 the Xidaotang had retail shops or agents in Chengdu, Songpan (Sichuan), Xi'an, Zhangjiakou, Beiping, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Inner Mongolia. In southern Gansu, it possessed two thousand draft animals, seven thousand mu (over one thousand acres) of land, five ranches with three thousand head of livestock, thirteen forestry stations, eighteen water-powered mills, two brick and tile kilns, two oil presses, and shops for making leather, flour, and vinegar. Members traded cloth, metalware, grain, flour, oil, sugar, medicine, and tea to the Tibetans, in exchange for wild animal pelts, rare medicines (especially musk), hides, and wool. They took cattle to Minxian, horses to Shaanxi, coral and jade to Inner Mongolia. In 1927 they had founded a joint company with a Beijing firm to sell borderland goods in Beijing and bring metropolitan products to southern Gansu.77

Being a Muslim and a Chinese

So engaged was the Xidaotang in business and politics that we might forget its religious and intellectual character. As one of modern China's most successful collectives, it merits recognition and study as a socioeco-

76. Guan, "Xidaotang," 94.
nomic institution, but it also stands out as a Muslim solidarity. Apart from confirming an ordinary Chinese stereotype, shared by the Muslims themselves, that Sino-Muslims are inherently and uniquely good at trade in the marketplace, the history of the Xidaotang also reveals the flexibility of Chinese culture as a medium for the transmission of Islam (see plate 23).

Ma Qixi and his successors led conventional Muslim religious lives—that is, they (and some of their followers) conducted five daily prayer services, gave sermons on Friday, fasted during Ramadan, and so on. Their religious innovations lay in establishing the centrality of China in their interpretation and transmission of Islamic meaning. By relying on Liu Zhi and the other Han kitab writers, they enabled their adherents to study and comprehend Islam within China, self-consciously “using Chinese culture to enhance Islamic truths.”78 One of Ma Qixi’s surviving texts, a commentary on Liu Zhi’s philosophy, succinctly elucidates the Sino-Muslim synthesis, in both language and substance: “The way in which the Five Pillars [of Islam] order a person’s life is by controlling the self and expelling the selfish, reviving the true luminous virtue [Ch. ming de], so that one might return to the state of perfect impartiality.”79

Unlike the Khafiya and Jahriya, the Xidaotang did not bring any new texts from Arabia, nor did it create any new rituals that became bones of contention. Rather, the solidarity placed its greatest emphasis on education, conducted both in Chinese and in the Islamic languages, in contrast to the jingtang jiaoyu of other groups and times. Xidaotang members, male and female, received a fine Muslim education, as the anecdote at the head of this section on Ma Qixi reveals. Because Ma Qixi and his successors emphasized the Han kitab, they also learned to read Chinese at a very high level, and many also studied Tibetan in order to succeed in the solidarity’s frontier commerce. The Xidaotang established schools almost immediately upon its founding, and many of their young people went on to high school in Lanzhou, and even to university, not a common achievement among the education-starved Gansu Muslims.80

Xidaotang schools thus combined secular education in Chinese texts, Islamic education in Arabic and Persian, and Sino-Islamic education in the Han kitab, giving their students an unprecedented advantage in the context of China’s expanding involvement on its frontiers. They certainly did not neglect their religion, for Ma Qixi himself claimed that

79. Guan, “Xidaotang,” 81. Thanks to Dan Gardner for his perfect impartiality.
80. Ma Fuqun, “Xidaotang Ma Qixi,” 144–53.
Islam's truth lay at the foundation of all truth, and Xidaotang Muslims paid close attention to their Islamic duties. But Ma Qixi's emphasis on the Han kitab, for which the Xidaotang received the sometimes pejorative nickname Hanxue pai (the Chinese studies faction), distinguished them from other northwestern Muslims. Drawing on a saying attributed to Ma Mingxin, Ma Qixi recognized both the Sufi and the Han kitab influences that shaped him and his movement: "Jielian [Liu Zhi] planted the seeds, Guanchuan [Ma Mingxin] opened the flowers, and I reap the fruit." With the solidarity of a kibbutz, the success of a commercial corporation, a serious Islamic heritage, and strong motivation to be self-consciously Chinese, the Xidaotang members adapted quickly to China's rapidly impinging modernity.

As has been noted above, in this period of its greatest modern disintegration, when central power had virtually ceased to exist, China expanded outward through militarism and modernism, cultural centralization without a political center, to incorporate its frontiers more effectively than the Qing had been able or desired to do. Ma Fuxiang, Ma Yuanzhang, and Ma Qixi all felt that pressure in different ways, and all worked to ensure the success of their communities—defined as lineage, religious solidarity, local community, region, or the Sino-Muslims as a whole—drawing closer to New China. One measure of their devotion to this goal lies in their decisions to pursue Chinese calligraphy as an art, as a cultural expression, as a means of social communication with elite non-Muslims. Ma Fuxiang became known for his prefaces, Ma Yuanzhang for his letters and essays, and Ma Qixi for his ceremonial scrolls (Ch. duilian).

Our final Muslim leader, Ma Wanfu of the Dongxiang, took the opposite tack and tried to protect Islam and Muslims in China by an older strategy, by purifying religion and practice through "authentic" texts and rituals brought from Arabia. The fate of his fundamentalist venture will serve as the last chapter in this history, for it, too, could not escape the acculturating power of New China as a nation-state. Though Ma Wanfu himself never became a calligrapher, the second generation in his solidarity included a number of men who did.

81. Zhu Gang, "Zhongguo Yisilanjiao," 104, writes: "Xidaotang adherents prayed all the time. Especially when they were working for the good of the jiaomen, or when they met with difficulty in any activity, they would chant the Kalima of praise [the profession of faith, 'There is no God but God, and Muhammad is God's Prophet'], rhythmically and in unison. This sound often became an encouragement for people, a mantra to encourage them to brave any hardships."

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MA WANFU (1853–1934)
AND THE RISE OF THE CHINESE IKHWAN

Oh God! Help our government and nation, defeat the invaders, and exterminate our enemies. Protect us from the evil deeds done by the violent Japanese. They have occupied our cities and killed our people. Send upon them a furious wind, cause their airplanes to fall in the wilderness, and their battleships to sink in the sea! Cause their army to scatter, their economy to collapse! Give them their just reward! True God, answer our prayer! Amen.83

The Early Life of Ma Wanfu, Hajji

We have seen Islamic currents from West and Central Asia arrive in Sino-Muslim communities in successive, intermittent waves. The first, the early transmission of Islam, based in sojourning merchant enclaves, lasted from the seventh century to the fourteenth, with a tremendous boost from the transregional, unifying force of the Mongol conquest. The Ming period, one of relative isolation from West Asia, saw the growth of an indigenous Islamic tradition in Chinese, including jing-tang jiaoyu and the early Han kitab. The second wave, that of Sufism and the tariqa, lasted from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and culminated in the formation of the menhuan in the northwest. Non-Sufi (Gedimu) communities continued to exist, of course, and constituted the mainstream of Sino-Muslim life outside the northwest and parts of Yunnan.

This influx of Sufi ideas and institutions had a complex and subtle relationship to the violent changes going on in Qing China, changes that brought some Sino-Muslims to oppose the ruling dynasty (Ma Mingxin, Ma Hualong, Du Wenxiu), others to defend it (Ma Guobao, Wang Dagui, Ma Anliang). With their non-Muslim neighbors, all of them felt to varying degrees the effects of dynastic decline and the encroachments of Euro-American political and economic expansion. Precisely during a period of intense foreign pressure on the Qing, the 1890s, a third wave of Islamic influence, scripturalist fundamentalism, lapped up onto China’s inland frontier. Calling itself names familiar to historians of the Muslim heartlands, this new movement became powerful through allies as unlikely as Muslim militarism and Chinese national-

83. See Ye Zhenggang, “Ningxia Yiheiwani,” 319, for a reproduction of the prayer in its poster form.
Sufism had come to China through two types of leaders. Some, such as Hidayat Allah (Khoja Afqi) of the Naqshbandiya, were West and Central Asian Muslims who traveled to China as missionaries. Others, such as Ma Laichi and Ma Mingxin, were Chinese Muslims who went west on the hajj, to seek texts, inspiration, and teaching in Muslim centers. A major intellectual and religious movement of the Muslim world, scripturalist fundamentalism, arrived late in the nineteenth century by both of these means, with Sino-Muslim pilgrims playing the greater role in its transmission. Chinese Muslim narratives concentrate on one man, Hajji Guoyuan (1853–1934), whose Chinese name was Ma Wanfu and whose Muslim name was Nuhai, as the primary carrier of these new ideas.\(^8^4\)

Ma Wanfu was called Guoyuan after his native town, in the eastern subprefecture (Dongxiang) of Hezhou. Like many Muslims of that region, Ma Wanfu spoke a Mongolic language as his native tongue. People of the Dongxiang also had a reputation as a tightly knit, impenetrable, and intransigent ethnic community. Local non-Muslims feared them, as they did the Salars, as violent and unpredictable, saying that they stuck together and enjoyed a good feud. Ma Wanfu’s father and grandfather belonged to the same Beizhuang menhuan as Ma Qixi, founder of the Xidaotang. Ma Tong, who conducted field research there during the 1950s, records that Beizhuang adherents claim religious descent from an Afghan Sufi living in Yarkand during the eighteenth century. Several heads of the menhuan had gone to Xinjiang to seek inspiration, and the leader during Ma Wanfu’s early years had made the pilgrimage to Mecca.\(^8^5\)

Ma Wanfu’s father and grandfather were local religious professionals, so he began his study of Arabic and Persian at an early age and performed brilliantly. At only twenty-two he was initiated into the order (“donned his cloak”) and ordained as a religious teacher.\(^8^6\) During almost two decades of teaching in Gansu, Ma Wanfu became less

\(^8^4\) Chronological accounts of Ma Wanfu’s life may be found in Ma Kexun, “Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Yiheiwanipai”; Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan... shilue, 127–54; and Bai Shouyi, “Ma Wanfu.”

\(^8^5\) Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan... shilue, 277–93, 487.

\(^8^6\) The use of the term “donned his cloak” (Ch. chuanyi) for initiation into a Sufi order is general throughout the Muslim world.
and less satisfied with the texts and practices of the communities in which he worked. Finally, in 1888, he took to the road with his teacher and a wealthy Muslim provincial graduate (Ch. juren) named Ma Huisan, and together they undertook the rigors and dangers of the journey to Mecca. There Ma Wanfu entered a religious academy and pursued advanced studies in Islamic languages, law, and liturgy for four years.

Here we must discuss briefly the political and religious situation on the Arabian peninsula during Ma Wanfu's sojourn there in the 1890s. The coastal plain and the holy cities lay under the rule of Ottoman governors, while the interior was turbulent with the struggles that eventually brought the Ibn-Sa'ud family to power. Since the late eighteenth century an alliance in the arid Najd Desert had united the political ambitions of the Ibn-Sa'ud clan and the religious claims of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his successors. Sometimes powerful enough to conquer the coastal plain, that alliance during the 1890s had been driven back on its desert bases, but it continued to exert strong religious influence while in political eclipse.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb belonged to the small, fundamentalist Hanbali school of jurisprudence, which advocated the strictest monotheism, demanded adherence to "original" Koranic principles and opposed later interpretations and individual judgment. In particular, 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers found Sufism, with its mystical doctrine of human unity with the Divine, heterodox and abhorrent. The veneration of saints and tombs, especially if taken to the point of worship, repelled them as a polytheistic accretion on the pure monotheism of Islam. Willing to go to war in defense of this fundamentalist purity, 'Abd

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87. See chapter 3 for 'Abd al-Wahhāb's intellectual and religious relationship to the revivalist impulse of Ma Mingxin and the Chinese Jahriya: Joseph Fletcher, by brilliant detective work and with conscious irony, linked Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb not only with Sufism but even with Chinese Sufism. Their connection lies in the life and teaching of Ibrahim b. Hasan al-Kurānī (1616–90), a Naqshabandi Sufi as well as an initiate of other orders. Al-Kurānī and his son, Abu 't-Tāhir Muhammad al-Kurdi, taught Muslims from all over the world, including Shāh Wāli Allāh of Delhi and Muhammad Hayār as-Sindī, also an Indian, who was Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's teacher. Among al-Kurānī's other students we find az-Zayn b. Muhammad 'Abd al-Baqī al-Mizjājī (d. 1725), a Yemeni Sufi who, probably through his son, 'Abd al-Khāliq (d. 1740), taught Ma Mingxin, the founder of the Chinese Jahriya. The fact that al-Kurānī and his son actually came from Kurdistan and taught the vocal dhikr to their Sino-Muslim students led Fletcher to name a section of his last paper "The Remembrance of the Kurds and Hui," the only legitimate usage of that dreadfu pun, common among English-speaking cognoscenti of the Sino-Muslims, that I have ever found ("Naqshbandiyya," 24–29).
al-Wahhāb and his successors claimed unique truth for their version of Islamic practice, condemning other Muslims as deviants or even as nonbelievers for dissenting. This attitude, often erroneously generalized to include all Muslim fundamentalism, came to be called “Wahhabism” by European scholars and was perceived to lie at the root of Muslim violence all over Asia in the nineteenth century.

In Arabia from 1888 to 1892, Ma Wanfu absorbed a variety of religious teachings, which certainly included fundamentalist ideas such as those of 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Though influenced by them, Ma did not live under Sa'udi rule in Mecca, nor did he ever publicly renounce the Hanafi school of jurisprudence in which he had been educated. Rather, he came to perceive his mission to be one of sweeping reform, not doctrinaire conversion to Hanbali practice. During those years, he also befriended and guided a number of Chinese Muslims who came on the pilgrimage. Among them were ten abong from the Dongxiang, who returned to China with an abiding admiration for Ma Wanfu and became the core of his scripturalist movement after his return. Persuaded by one of his teachers that his work lay in China, not in further study, Ma Wanfu took ship in Arabia in 1892 and arrived in Guangzhou that same year.88

Few Chinese Muslims could undertake the hajj, primarily because of their poverty and the distance and danger involved. The holy books and liturgical texts they used, therefore, contained numerous errors, for they were damaged or poorly copied by ill-educated abong and not regularly replaced or replenished by books from the Muslim heartlands. Muslims thus regarded returned pilgrims, especially teachers bearing “authentic” texts and capable of Islamic textual scholarship, with special veneration, as we have seen in the cases of Ma Laichi and Ma Mingxin. So it was with Ma Wanfu:

[On his way home from Canton] Ma Wanfu was in Laohekou, Hunan, during Ramadan and stayed at the mosque there. The local Muslims expressed a warm welcome for this returned pilgrim, both a hajji and a teacher. The local imām allowed him to lead prayers, and during the evening service he bowed four times, then sat and read the hymns of praise aloud. The local people and the imām said, “Since Waqqas Baba taught us here, we have always bowed twice and then read the hymns of praise. On what do you base your four bowings?” He

88. Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yisilan ... suyuan, 182.
answered, “On the scriptures.” . . . He stayed more than a year [to teach] and left a lasting impression on the local Muslims.89

Imbued as he was with reformist, even fundamentalist ideas, Ma Wanfu must have been a formidable figure despite his youth, threatening to contemporary practice and therefore to established institutions. In highly acculturated Hunan, there would have been none to dispute him, but Gansu’s Muslim elite, with a deeper and stronger tradition of Islamic expertise, would not acquiesce so quickly.

Upon his return to the northwest in 1893, Ma Wanfu accepted an appointment as teacher and imām in the home village of Ma Huisan, his pilgrimage companion. Because of his presence, that small mosque became an important center of learning in the Dongxiang region, and teachers from all over Gansu flocked to study with Hajji Guoyuan. Lacking inspired teachers and eager to study authentic texts from Arabia, these men became his disciples, joining him and his “ten returned pilgrims” in a new movement. Borrowing from the desert-dwelling followers of ibn-Sa’ud, Ma Wanfu called himself and his students Ahl as-Sunna (Ch. Aihailisunnai), the Kinsmen of the Tradition. Later, perhaps after ‘Abd al-‘Aziz’s success in unifying Arabia under his rule and under Wahhabi religious domination, the distant Chinese Muslims borrowed another name for themselves, the triumphant al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Ch. Yiheiwani), the Muslim Brotherhood, to signify the unity of all Muslims. That name denoted the fundamentalist, scripturalist impulse, which had such wide-reaching effects all over the Muslim world.90

Text and Context: The Diffusion of the Ikhwan in China

Specific cultural contexts determined the reception and use of that fundamentalist impulse within Muslim communities, as they always do

89. Ma Kexun, “Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Yiheiwanipai,” 445–46. The Waqqas Baba upon whom the Hunan Muslims call for the legitimacy of their practice was a Companion of the Prophet, perhaps his maternal uncle, Sa’ad Waqqas, who looms large in Sino-Muslim legends of their own origins. Scholarly opinion has rejected all of the tales of his mission to China as fantasy, but they have great power among the Sino-Muslims to this day. For a summary of the texts and stories, see Leslie, Islam, chap. 8.

90. Contrary to some Muslim and non-Muslim images, the effects of Islamic fundamentalism are not always and everywhere the same, any more than are those of Christian fundamentalism. See Geertz, Islam Observed, chap. 3, for an extended comparison of the results of the scripturalist impulse in Indonesia and Morocco.
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with religious, political, or academic innovations. China’s “Wahhabis,” as their enemies called them, must therefore be studied both as bearers of ideas present elsewhere in the Muslim world and as participants in specifically Chinese, especially northwest Chinese, communities and events. The fate of Ma Wanfu’s Ikhwan presents a compelling case for this approach. Within one generation of its fundamentalist, antiacculturationist founder, the movement had become an ally of Chinese nationalism, a tool of an acculturating Muslim elite, and an important bridge between Muslim communities and the burgeoning Chinese nation-state.

Ma Wanfu, opposed to Sufism and to all external influences on Islam, refused to learn to read and write Chinese, forbade his children to learn Chinese, and insisted upon Arabic and Persian education as the foundation of Muslim orthopraxy. He spoke Chinese, but his academy and his movement were based on the purity and distinction of Islam, its sacred languages, and its adherents among the nonbelievers. Like the Hanbali reformers of Arabia, Ma Wanfu also claimed a special truth for the Ikhwan among Muslim teachings. His frequent use of the slogan “Venerate the scriptures, reform the customs” (Ch. Zunjing gaisu) led to his movement’s being called the “scripturalist faction” (Ch. zunjing pai).

Ma Wanfu’s program for reform of Islam in China had ten basic tenets, most of them dealing with liturgical practice and directed against Sufism.91 They were perceived as a full-scale attack on established ways among the northwestern Chinese Muslims, against both Sufi and Gedimu practice. They focus particularly on the menhuan, which had accumulated wealth and high status through hereditary succession to the leadership of Sufi suborders. The performance of the veneration rituals at tombs, for example, and the great memorial festivals for saints and shaikhs were occasions for massive contributions by members of Sufi orders to their leaders, who would lose that income if Ma Wanfu’s program were put into practice. Ma Wanfu also recommended that Muslims read the Koran themselves, which would deprive religious professionals of the income obtained by reading sacred texts on behalf of congregation members at times of religious significance. One of the Ikhwan’s favorite slogans, “If you read scripture, don’t eat; if you eat, don’t read scripture” (Ch. Nianle buchi, chile bunian), aimed to end the practice of feeding the imām or abong in exchange for the reading of scripture. Indeed, paying religious professionals to undertake tasks originally required of all Muslims struck Ma Wanfu as a forbidden Chinese

91. Ma Tong, Zhongguo Yislan... shilue, 131.
accretion. Even the wearing of coarse white mourning clothes (Ch. daixiao) by Muslims seemed to him a violation of Islamic distinctiveness and a degradation of Islam.

In Ma’s design, the Kinsmen of the Tradition had to be radically separated from non-Muslims, and their common orthopraxy and knowledge of texts had to produce an upsurge of unity. Given the sweeping character of his reform proposals, we should not be surprised that he met with considerable resistance. Though he attacked Gedimu customs as well as Sufism, immediate and powerful opposition came from the menhuan. Their leaders saw the Ikhwan as a serious threat to their dominance; as zealous teachers flocked to the Dongxiang to study with Ma Wanfu, his enemies planned to neutralize his influence. In 1895–96 tens of thousands died as internecine Muslim strife brought down the wrath of the Qing state once again on Hezhou, Xunhua, and Xining. Responding, as had Ma Yuanzhang, to the disastrous results of disunity, Ma Wanfu came to a very different conclusion. Declaring that his objective was the unification of all Muslim religious factions in northwest China, he argued that shedding blood for Islam in a war against nonbelievers constituted noble martyrdom (Ar. shahid, Ch. sheixe).

Since Ma Wanfu directed his movement primarily against the menhuan, as well as supporting the anti-Qing struggle, he alienated important Gansu leaders, especially Ma Anliang, who also opposed Ma Qixi’s Xidaotang with such deadly purpose. Trained in both the Muslim and Chinese curricula, Ma Anliang had been raised by his father, Ma Zhan’ao, to be a bridge between Islamic culture and Chinese culture, between Qing power and their family’s control over the Hezhou region. As Ma Wanfu began to build his movement, Ma Anliang responded with confrontation and repression, using his army to enforce his interests in religious as well as political life. In acute danger, Ma Wanfu fled to Shaanxi—not westward but eastward, away from the Muslim heartlands—where Gedimu communities welcomed him more readily than did the strongly Sufi centers of Gansu. For the next ten years the reformist hajji wandered as an exile, sometimes back in Gansu, sometimes in Shaanxi or even in Xinjiang, but never far ahead of Ma Anliang’s pursuit. Despite living and working under cover, Ma Wanfu still managed to maintain his ambition to defeat the menhuan and institute a reform of Muslim religion and daily life.

Finally, in 1917, Ma Anliang caught up with Ma Wanfu, then living in Hami. In that chaotic, decentralized period following the fall of the Qing, Ma Anliang and Zhang Guangjian, the non-Muslim governor of Gansu, combined to request the aid of the non-Muslim warlord of
Xinjiang, Yang Zengxin, in doing away with the Ikhwan. Ma Anliang and Yang Zengxin had fought together against Muslim rebels in 1895, while Ma Wanfu had encouraged those same insurgents, so Ma Anliang could call on both comradeship and desire for revenge in seeking a non-Muslim’s help in apprehending the renegade Ikhwan leader. Arrested by Yang Zengxin’s constabulary and chained in a prisoner’s cart, Ma Wanfu and his son were shipped eastward along the ancient Silk Road toward certain death at Lanzhou.92

**Alliance with Ma Qi**

At this point an ironic and dramatic twist of politics intervened in what might otherwise have been a very short history of scripturalist fundamentalism in northwest China. One of Ma Anliang’s sometime allies among the Muslim generals of Gansu, Ma Qi, had for some time worked to create an independent territorial base at Xining, at the cultural edges of both China and Tibet, on the vital Tibet–Mongolia road. After the fall of the Qing, Ma Qi obtained dominion over Xining and built up his family’s strength and fortune in that isolated but relatively productive region. Despite his prosperity, however, Ma Qi could not match Ma Anliang’s military power or his religious and political connections. Searching for means to encroach on his ally-rival’s power, Ma Qi discovered Ma Wanfu’s predicament and decided to enlist the Ikhwan to his advantage against Ma Anliang’s Huasi menhuan.

Ma Qi sent a military force through the Biandu Gorge to the main highway. They easily overwhelmed the guards and brought the Ikhwan leader to Xining, where he resided for the rest of his life, depending entirely on the patronage of Ma Qi and his descendants. Ma Qi, for his part, promulgated the Ikhwan’s religious tenets as his own. He instituted strict antiopium prohibitions, for example, and reduced the power of menhuan within his territory. He did not, however, take Ma Wanfu’s entire separatist program to heart. He continued to participate in the China-orientated militarist system, to make allies and enemies among Muslim and non-Muslim generals, and to involve himself in the nationalist struggles of the 1916–30 period of disunion. Ma Qi thus began the process that was to transform the Ikhwan from a radical fundamentalist group to a much less divisive, much more China-centered reformist movement.

After all, the Ikhwan, however appealing it may have been to reli-

gious professionals eager to transcend their imperfect texts, had not succeeded in drawing much loyalty away from established institutions. Even the Gedimu communities of Shaanxi, where Ma Wanfu had worked for many years, had not become hotbeds of scripturalist radicalism. The fundamentalist Ikhwan could not succeed to any great extent in communities that perceived themselves as respectably and correctly Chinese, and most Muslim communities in the northwest either did or wished to appear as if they did. In addition, the solid networks of the *menhuan* and the centuries-old traditions of the Gedimu held great power among Sino-Muslims. The leadership of men such as Ma Anliang and Ma Qi was grounded in their proven ability to protect their communities from the Qing state, from violent coreligionists, and from communal antagonists such as Tibetans and non-Muslim Chinese. Ma Wanfu and his disciples could not replace these established leaders until they joined their banner to Ma Qi’s secular power, but in order to serve his purposes, they had to dissociate themselves from a separatist message and embrace a more socially conservative platform acceptable to their patron (see plate 24).

Once that happened, the Ikhwan’s advantages as an advocate of Muslim unity became clear. In light of their obvious rivalries with one another, the *menhuan* could not claim to be promoting unity, and Gedimu mosques lacked intercommunity connections. The Ikhwan, therefore, filled an important gap in northwestern Muslim life after 1917, calling for Islam in China to become a coherent and unified force but gradually reducing its potentially separatist demands. So successful was Ma Qi in promoting and using the Ikhwan that Ma Fuxiang’s family at Ningxia also decided to identify with its aims and take advantage of the inherent legitimacy of its call for Muslim unity. Though they continued to be members of their family’s original *menhuan*, Ma Fuxiang, his son Ma Hongkui, and his nephew Ma Hongbin all encouraged the Ikhwan in their territory, which stretched from the Mongolian desert almost to the Wei River valley.93

*The Ikhwan and Chinese Nationalism*

In its association with Ma Qi, Ma Fuxiang, and their successors, the Ikhwan dropped much of its fundamentalist program, at least parts that impinged on the world of politics. Indeed, following its need to be politically reliable among these rather conservative Muslim warlords, the

Ikhwan eliminated any reference to 'Abd al-Wahhab from its teachings. Claiming to continue the Sunni, Hanafi teachings universal among Sino-Muslims, the Ikhwan dissociated itself consciously from the Hanbali movement of the Saudi Arabian Ikhwan while retaining its anti-Sufi, exoteric religious perspective. As an example of this transformation, let us consider the career of Hu Songshan (1880–1956), an Ikhwan teacher who became an important figure during the war against Japan. The son of a northern Gansu abong who belonged to a Khafiya menhuan, Hu Songshan was raised to continue his father's work and allegiances, but by his eighteenth year he had already surpassed his father and taken a new teacher, Wang Naibi of Haicheng. Advancing rapidly in his studies, Hu became Wang's favorite pupil and joined his teacher in reading the “new” texts made available through Ma Wanfu's Ikhwan. 

Deeply moved and convinced of the necessity to reform the menhuan system, Hu rushed through the remainder of Wang's curriculum and returned to Ningxia at the age of twenty-one to become the first Ikhwan abong in that heavily Muslim region. He persevered despite attacks from local menhuan adherents, including physical violence. Within ten years the Ikhwan had a stable membership in Tongxin County, and a number of teachers promulgated Hu Songshan's version of Ma Wanfu's scripturalist message. He opposed all cash payments to religious professionals for services rendered, striking at the economic base of the menhuan system. He opposed expensive and wasteful religious rituals, especially those surrounding funerals, and particularly vilified the obviously Chinese wearing of white mourning garments. Finally, he opposed Sufism in its entirety, the veneration of saints, meditation at tombs, and the mystical doctrine of unity with God. In order to demonstrate his devotion to the Ikhwan's stand against menhuan, Hu Songshan took dramatic action and destroyed his own father's gongbei, built at Tongxin after 1899.

The course of Hu Songshan's life might have resembled Ma Wanfu's more closely had he gone to Mecca earlier in the century. But Hu delayed that obligation until 1925, when he was forty-five years old. His experience changed his perspective on Islam, on China, and on the role of the Ikhwan. Unlike Ma Wanfu, Hu Songshan suffered prejudice through his long round-trip pilgrimage not because he was a Muslim but because he came from China. He concluded from this painful lesson

94. Ma Tong, “Alabo de Wahabiyapai.” I am grateful to Prof. Ma for allowing me to cite this paper.

95. For Hu's life, see Ye Zhenggang, “Ningxia Yihewani,” 308–25; Mian, Ningxia, 120–24; and Ma Tong, Zhongguo Tislam ... shilue, 146.
that only a strong China could give the Sino-Muslims the individual and collective freedom to practice their religion and guarantee their status and safety outside China’s borders. So he became a fervent Chinese patriot. After returning to Ningxia he continued to preach the Ikhwan’s doctrine, but he added to it strong doses of current events and advocacy of Chinese unity in the face of imperialist threats and domestic warlordism.

During the 1930s, as he observed the national and international scene, Hu continued to believe that only Chinese national strength could save the Muslims of China, and that only modern education and science could engender national strength. He thus agreed with the many members of the Gansu Muslim elite—including Ma Fuxiang, Ma Yuanzhang, Ma Qixi, and their successors—that Muslim schools must teach Chinese and modern subjects such as science and foreign languages, as well as the Islamic curriculum. Committed to this idea, Hu Songshan gave up his post as an abong to become the principal of the new Sino-Arabic Middle School (Ch. Zhong-A Zhongxue) established by the Muslim gentry of Wuzhong County, near Ningxia.

After the Japanese invaded China proper in 1937, Hu Songshan espoused the Chinese nationalist cause even more fervently. He decreed that every morning’s required prayers would be accompanied by the salute to the flag and an exhortation to national pride and patriotism. When he delivered the Friday sermon in the school’s prayer hall, he invoked Koranic authority to urge sacrifice in the anti-Japanese struggle. To spread his message more widely, he penned a prayer in Arabic and Chinese (translated at the head of this section), had it printed bilingually, and posted it in all mosques, schools, and Muslim gathering-places in the area. We see in this prayer an intimacy with China-as-home combined with faith in God that is not often found in the liturgies of dispersed Islam. It resembles closely the vernacular “prayers for our country” said in Diaspora synagogues, after the Enlightenment and the French Revolution brought citizenship and civil rights to some Euro-American Jews. The author of this plea was as clearly Chinese as he was Muslim, and his membership in a putatively fundamentalist movement only underscores the importance of that combination.

Truly, the Ikhwan had come far from Ma Wanfu’s original purposes. Instead of resistance even to becoming literate in Chinese, Hu Songshan and other Ningxia Ikhwan teachers translated important Muslim texts into Chinese. Hu Songshan followed the Neo-Confucian Muslim authors of the Han kitab by composing a “Muslim Three-Character Classic” as a primer for Sino-Muslim students in their study of Islamic
faith, ritual, and daily life. Though Ikhwan mosques, like Gedimu mosques in northwest China, did not have any overarching institutional unity, they did improve upon Gedimu fragmentation by holding major religious ceremonies at larger, central mosques called haiyisi. These mosques invited Ikhwan adherents from surrounding smaller communities, generating some supralocal solidarity. The Ikhwan was also held together by the oppositional quality of its religious ideas, by common use of the specific texts Ma Wanfu had brought from Arabia, and by the consciousness of purity and rectitude that belongs to reformers.

Hu Songshan cannot be considered a “typical” Ikhwan teacher, for he stood out by his liberal attitude toward modern ideas and practices. He allowed photographs to be taken of himself and his mosque, he encouraged the students in his school to practice sports, and he attempted to discover a Muslim cosmology compatible with modern science. A tireless promoter of Muslim unity in a strong China, he studied the Chinese classics in order to urge solidarity between Muslim and non-Muslim for nationalist goals. In doing so, he unified the goals of the apparently irredentist Ikhwan with those of the Han kitab: to make Islam comprehensible, moral, and effective within a Chinese political, intellectual, and cultural world without compromising its core principles. In apparent contradiction to Ma Wanfu, his anti-Qing, antiassimilationist teacher, Hu Songshan joined his life and work to those of Ma Fuxiang, Ma Yuanzhang, and Ma Qixi, all of whom tried to make a safe place for Islam and Muslims in modern Gansu. Ma Fuxiang chose involvement in national politics and the Guomindang, Ma Yuanzhang the revival of a transformed Jahriya, and Ma Qixi the creation of an entirely new solidarity, the Xidaotang. All of them became leaders of solidarities coping with the problem of being a Muslim in China. The variety of their solutions, even in a single province in the northwest, reveals the hitherto hidden complexity and richness of the Sino-Muslim world.

96. Sources favorable to the Ikhwan credit them with this innovation, but Gao, “Linxia Qingzhen,” 197–200, claims that they were created at Hezhou by Ma Zhan’ao and Ma Anliang to maintain control over the Muslims more effectively than did smaller, scattered mosques.