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The Prophet's *Dao* along the Yalu: Muslim Histories in Northeast Asia

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Abstract

The study reinscribes Northeast Asia onto our historical awareness of the global geographies of Muslimness. It highlights the dynamic and uninterrupted presence of Muslims in this part of the world since the thirteenth century, appearing recurrently as the upholders of (non-Muslim) *dominus mundis* and, more mundanely, as settlers, pilgrims, refugees, and prisoners of war. In sketching out a holistic narrative of the Muslim *longue-durée* in Northeast Asia, the paper argues in favor of the longstanding rootedness of Islam in the region. It also attempts to weave together the various micro-histories of Muslims in Northeast Asia into an integrated whole, providing a macro-narrative that re-imagines the region as a space that is part and parcel of global Islamdom.

Introduction

A century ago, the pan-Ottoman turned pan-Arab intellectual Shakib Arsalan observed in his commentary to *Hadir al-'Alam al-Islami*, that the "Muslims of China are as if they were not part of this world as the information about them is sparse and the narrations surrounding them are contradictory."[1] In a similar vein nearly half a century later, the late historian of the Qing frontiers Joseph Fletcher stated that due to a scarcity of material the Muslims (of China) appeared as if beyond the pale of history.[2] In the decades following Arsalan's perceptive comment, the knowledge about Islam and Muslims in China – whether by Chinese, Japanese, or Western scholars – has grown and flourished (invigorated no doubt by Fletcher's contributions to the field).[3] Under the ethnographic and historical scrutiny of the myriad agents of empires, missionizing religions, post-colonial nation states, and modern academia, the Muslims of China have not only been incorporated "into the world" and made legible but now command – for both fortunate and tragic reasons – considerable global attention.[4]

Yet, I would argue that Arsalan's comment still holds true with respect to the Muslim presence in China's Dongbei or Northeast (comprised of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang).[5] It also applies to Northeast Asia more broadly – an

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(1) Lothrop Stoddard (tr. 'Ajjaj Nuwayhidh), *Hadir al-'alam al-islami II*. (Beirut: Dar al-fikr, 1971), 219.

(2) Isenbike Togan, "The *Khafi*, *Jahri* Controversy in Central Asia Revisited," *Naqshibandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity*, edited by Elisabeth Ozdalga. (Istanbul/ Curzon: Swedish Research Institute,1999), 19.

(3) Talk by Alimu Tuoheti, "The Trilogy of the Academic History of Islamic Studies in China" held at the China Center, University of Oxford, February 19, 2021.; Wai-Yip Ho, "From Neglected Problem to Flourishing Field: Recent Developments of Research on Muslims and Islam in China," *Concepts and Methods for the Study of Chinese Religions: Vol. I*, edited by André Laliberté and Stefania Travagnin. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 93-114.

(4) "Search results for Xinjiang," *Made in China Journal*, accessed October 4, 2021, https://madeinchinajournal.com/?s=Xinjiang

(5) The Dongbei has been referred to varyingly in imperial sources as Guandong ("east of the pass"), Guanwai ("beyond the pass") – in both instances using the Shanhai Pass in Qinhuangdao as a demarcating line – and Dongsansheng ("three provinces of the east"). Manchuria, a place name widely adopted in Western and Japanese colonial vocabularies, has also been used to designate the region. For more information, see Mark Elliott, "The limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 59:3, 2000, 603–646.

area that encompasses the Dongbei, the Korean Peninsula, and the Russian Far East.(6) That is not to say the neglect is abject and total; for example, there exists a sizable body of scholarly works on Islam in the Dongbei in the Chinese language. However, much of it narrowly focuses on either the developments in the Qing era or the patriotic roles played by Muslims within the confines of the minzu "nationality/ethnicity" paradigm in the anti-Japanese war of resistance and founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).(7) In the seminal classics on Islam in China by the historians Bai Shouyi and Ma Tong, the Xibei or Northwest (comprised of Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang), Henan, and Yunnan feature extensively while the Dongbei is largely absent; this underscores its relative marginalization.(8) Similarly, English- and French-language literatures by scholars and Christian missionaries have favored the histories of Islam(s) and Muslims in "China proper" over those in peripheries like the Dongbei. With the exception of works associated with the Japanese imperial enterprise in Northeast Asia, the existing body of scholarship has been mostly fixated on the cosmopolitan entrepots of Guangzhou and Quanzhou, the imperial capitals of Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) and Nanjing, and the frontier cities of Hezhou (present-day Linxia), Lanzhou, and Kasghar.(9)

The Dongbei's absence in academic texts is understandable: historically, the region has not had a large Muslim presence and, therefore, lacks venerable centers of Islamic learning and pilgrimage of its own.(10) According to data

(6) The Russian Far East typically refers to the Far Eastern Federal District, which contains over eleven federal entities. Of interest to this study are the areas of Khabarovsk, Primorsky, and Sakhalin.

(7) Several works from this literature relevant to this topic will be cited throughout this paper. On the origins and application of the minzu paradigm see Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to terms with the nation: Ethnic classification in modern China*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2011).

(8) Bai Shouyi, *Zhongguo yisilan shi cungao*. (Yinchuanshi: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1983); Ma Tong, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilve*. (Yinchuanshi: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2000).

(9) Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "Follow the white camel: Islam in China to 1800" in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Volume 3: The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, edited by David Morgan and Anthony Reid. (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 409–426.

(10) With the exception of a Jahriyya site in Jilin discussed below.

drawn from a study by Yang Wenjiong, there were approximately 514,000 Huizu residing in the Dongbei during the 2000 national census.(11) This accounts for just 5.2% of the PRC's total Huizu population and between 0.34% and 0.63% of Dongbei's total population at the provincial levels. While Huizu as a minzu identity does not necessarily correspond to an Islamic religious affiliation in all cases, it is a sufficient approximation of Muslimness, and indicative, in this instance, of the small demographic size of Muslims in the Dongbei. The British missionary Marshall Broomhall guessed that the "Mohammedan population of the whole of Manchuria may not be less than 200,000" – a reasonable figure in light of the most recent census.(12) Republican (Chinese) and Cold War sources, which usually inflate the number of Muslims in China, cite wide-ranging population estimates for Muslims in the Dongbei of between 500,000 and 5,000,000.(13) The size of Muslim communities elsewhere in Northeast Asia are equally small, constituting less than 1% of the total population of both the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and between 1.5% and 2% of the population across the various federal entities of the Russian Far East.(14)

Responding to this relative neglect, this study aims to reinscribe Northeast Asia onto our historical awareness of the global geographies of Muslimness. It

(11) Yang Wenjiong, "Huizu renkou de fenbu jiqi chengshihua shuiping de bijiao fenxi," *Huizu Yanjiu 4*, 2006, 88–97.; As the paper deals with Muslim communities across different temporal and spatial contexts, different terms – as they emerge from the sources – will be used. This approach has been adopted and justified in other works such as Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998): xxii-xxv.

(12) Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem*. (Newington Green, London: China Inland Mission, 1910), 214.

(13) Muhammad Tawadu', *Al-sin wal Islam*. (Cairo: Dar al-tiba'a wal nashr al-islamiyya, 1945), 147-148; Ibrahim Xiong Zhenzong, *Matha hadatha lil muslimeen fi dhil al-sin al-shuyu'iyya*. (Beirut: 1962), 13.

(14) Pew Research Center, "South Korea," *Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project*, accessed October 4, 2021, http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/south-korea/religious_demography#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010; Timothy Heleniak, "Regional Distribution of the Muslim Population of Russia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 47:4, 2006, 438–439.

seeks to highlight the dynamic and uninterrupted presence of Muslims in this part of the world since the thirteenth century, appearing recurrently as the upholders of (non-Muslim) *dominus mundis* and, more mundanely, as settlers, pilgrims, refugees, and prisoners of war. In sketching out a holistic narrative of the Muslim *longue-durée* in Northeast Asia, the paper argues in favor of the longstanding rootedness of Islam in the region and, more importantly, weaves together the various micro histories of Muslims in Northeast Asia into an integrated whole. The scholarship on Muslims in the Dongbei and the Korean Peninsula, for instance, remains sharply demarcated by national boundaries and centered around the nation state, ironically reproducing in a linguistic, geographic, and national sense the divide created by the Yalu River (literally in Manchu the "boundary between two fields").(15) In creating a dialogue between the sources (and secondary works), a richer narration of Muslims in Northeast Asia comes to the fore, and the macro ebbs and flows of Islam are brought into sharper relief.

Pax Mongolica and the First Flowering of Islam

The introduction of Islam to Northeast Asia was intertwined with the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century. In the course of defeating the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115–1234) that reigned over much of the Dongbei, as well as vassalizing the Goryeo dynasty (918–1392) of Korea, the Mongols deployed troops recruited from the Muslim-populated territories of the Qara Khitai, also known as the Western Liao dynasty (1124–1218), that had been subjugated during Genghis Khan's (r. 1206–27) earlier expansionary campaigns.(16) There is evidence that Huihui-ying "Muslim military camps"

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(15) Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland: Territorial Boundaries and Political Relations between Qing China and Chosŏn Korea, 1636–1912*. (Oakland: University of California, 2017), 10.

(16) The territories ruled by the Western Liao (including the Tarim Basin and Central Asia) were Islamicized by this time. For an excellent detailed study on the Qara Khitai, the Sinicized non-Han conquest-regime that ruled these territories, see Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

were established throughout the region by the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), a practice characteristic of Mongol rule elsewhere in China.[17] More interestingly, one strand of scholarship has speculated that Sarta-qorci, the general entrusted by Ogedei Khan (r. 1229–41) to oversee the pacification campaign against Korea in 1231–34, might have been a Muslim himself.[18] In that sense, the invasion echoed (and inverted) the battle of Talas in 751, which pitted the Tang (618–906) armies led by the Korean commander Go Seonji (Ch. Gao Xianzhi) against the forces of the ascendant Abbasids in their violent encounter in Central Asia.

Although the military role played by Muslims in the Mongol conquest is circumstantial and debatable, it is certain that many foreigners from Central and West Asia, the so-called semuren "assembled people," were appointed as administrators and darughachi "governors" to rule the region in the name of the imperial court in Khanbaliq (also known as Dadu; present-day Beijing). The *Xin Yuanshi* mentions several Huihui personages that assumed official positions in Liaoning and Heilongjiang such as 'Ala ul-Din (Ch. Laowading), Sayfuddin (Ch. Saipuding) and Hasan (Ch. Asan).[19] Some of these officials became the ancestor-progenitors of Huizu lineages in Fengtian (also known as Shengjing under the Qing; present-day Shenyang) and Jinzhou that still exist today.[20] Moreover, there are textual sources that suggest conversions to Islam were taking place among the Mongol and Tungstic populations there during the late Yuan period of the mid-fourteenth century.[21] Despite evidence of an early Muslim presence in the Dongbei however, archaeological remains of

(17) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," *Huizu Yanjiu* 3, 1992, 10.

(18) Gari Ledyard, "The Mongol Campaigns in Korea and the Dating of 'The Secret History of the Mongols,'" *Central Asiatic Journal*, 9:1, March 1964, 3 (footnote 6); Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims and the Hui Hui Community of Korean Medieval Times," *Acta Via Serica*, 2:1, June 2017, 89-90.

(19) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 11.

(20) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 11.

(21) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 17.

mosques from the Yuan era have yet to be uncovered as the historians Song Guoqiang and Cai Yizheng point out. [22] This, in turn, raises questions about the actual density and spread of early Muslim communities in the region.

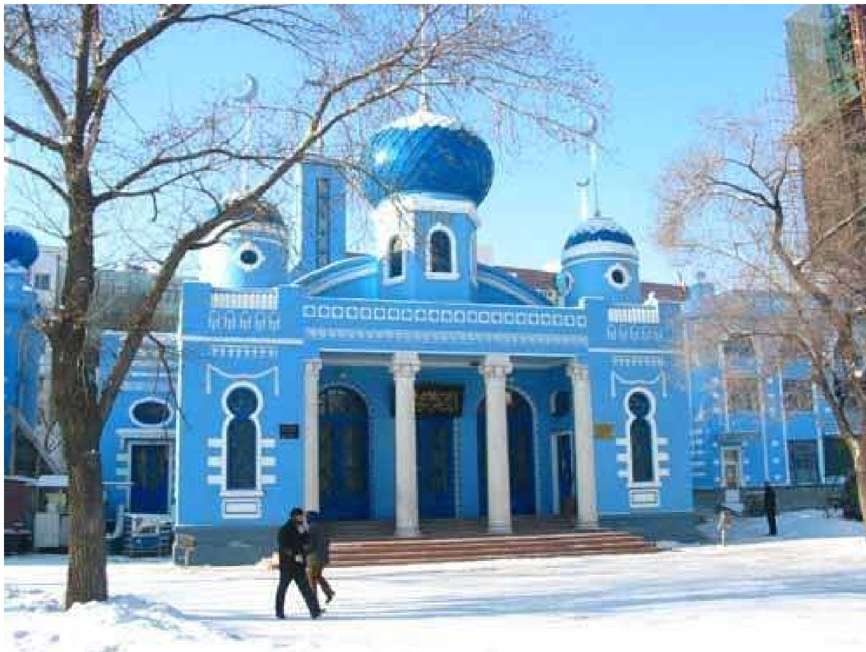

Figure 1. Daowai Mosque in Harbin, Heilongjiang.[23]

The changes wrought by the Mongol conquests transformed not only the Dongbei but the Korean Peninsula as well. Prior to the thirteenth century, local kingdoms and principalities maintained limited and indirect commercial contact with West Asia. This is shown by the discovery of Sassanian glassware, tapestries, and musical instruments in excavated Korean tombs.[24] In the ninth century, Arabo-Persian geographic works and travelogues mentioned Silla (or

(22) Song Guoqiang and Cai Yizheng, "Liaoning huizu laiyuan fenbu he juzhu tedian," *Jinzhou Shiyuan Xuebao* 1, 1990, 58.

(23) For source of image see "Zoujin haerbin fengge jiongyi de si daqingzhensi, ganshou bu yiyang de huizu wenhua," *Minzu yuansu wenchuang pingtai*, June 12, 2017, http://www.minzuwc.com/article/content.html?id=426

(24) Hyunhee Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic worlds: cross-cultural exchange in pre-modern Asia*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 205 (ft.17).

Basilla; 57 BCE–935) as a destination for adventurous Muslim merchants.[25] This literature, especially in its later iterations, also made fantastical claims of early Muslims, identified as partisans of the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law Ali bin Abi Talib, as having sought refuge under the Silla dynasty in the aftermath of the Umayyad takeover. However, Korean sources such as the *Goryeosa* are silent about such an exodus; only the solitary trader or envoy from Daesik (Ch. Dashi), the lands of the Arab Caliphate(s), makes the occasional appearance in them – and mostly from the eleventh century onwards.[26] Historians speculate that such early travelers departing from Guangzhou (Ar. Khanfu), in southern China, first made an overland journey to the port cities of Mingzhou (present-day Ningbo) and Dengzhou (present-day Penglai), after which they sailed across the Yellow Sea and disembarked at Ongjin along the western coast of the Korean Peninsula before continuing by ferry or foot to Gaeseong, then the capital of Goryeo (918–1392).[27]

The integration of Korea into the Mongol imperium by the 1230s brought an unprecedented influx of Muslims (Kr. Hoehoe) into its urban centers: soldiers, ortoq "contracted" merchants, retainers of Mongol nobility, as well as darughachi (including one who was appointed in Pyongyang).[28] The semuren class hailing from Central and West Asia amassed considerable influence in

(25) The Illkhan vizier and author of *Jami' al-Tawarikh* Rashid al-Din al-Hamadani was one of the first in the Islamic hinterlands to use the term Goryeo, instead of Silla, to refer to Korea. See Hyunhee Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic worlds,* 135; Hee Soo Lee, "Early Korea-Arabic Maritime Relations Based on Muslim Sources," *UNESCO*, October 3, 2021, https://es.unesco.org/silkroad/sites/default/files/knowledge-bank-article/early_korea-arabic_maritime_relations.pdf

(26) Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims," 85–86.

(27) Yoon Kyung Sun, *Islam in Korea.* (Hartford, Connecticut: The Hartford Seminary Foundation, June 1971), 21–27.

(28) Among the retainers one can count the chamberlain of the daughter of Kublai Khan, Khutugh beki, who married the Goryeo King Chung-yeol. The still-existing progeny of this chamberlain, the Deoksu clan (at present 25,000–30,000 strong), and among whose number would emerge many Confucian literati officials and even a seventeenth century Queen-Dowager, no longer retain any affiliation with Islam. See In-Sung Kim Han, "Muslims in Medieval Korea: Personal Encounters with Connected World," n.p., accessed October 4, 2021, https://www.islamawareness.net/Asia/KoreaSouth/ks_article101.pdf, 5.; Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims," 91, 94, 96–98; Peter Yun, "Mongols and Western Asians in the Late Koryo Ruling Stratum," *International Journal of Korean History* 3, 2002, 51–69

Goryeo, founding powerful clans and participating in court politics, attending royal banquets and New Year celebrations, and even conducting Islamic ceremonies (Ch. Huihui lisong, Kr. Hoehoe yesong). Such events may have involved a recitation of the Quran and du'a "supplication" at the royal court.(29) The Muslim presence was large enough to warrant the erection of a "ritual palace" (Ch. ligong, Kr. yegung) or mosque in Gaeseong, and believers were documented as propagating their faith among local non-Muslims.(30) Not all the semuren were adherents of Islam, however; Michael Brose discusses in beautiful detail the Xie clan, a scholarly and well-acclaimed family of Buddhist Uyghur origin from Qara-khoja/Gaochang that supplied the Goryeo and Choseon (1392–1897) courts with multiple generations of faithful and orthodox Neo-Confucian literati-officials.(31)

This mass movement of people, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, contributed to a cosmopolitan efflorescence in Korea, and closely tied the peninsula to the continental networks and mobilities that spanned much of the Mongol world-empire. A Muslim tombstone discovered in Guangzhou of one Ramadan son of 'Alauddin, a darughachi of Yuan-ruled Guangxi, identified the deceased as a subject of Goryeo.(32) With itinerant and well-connected peoples came the spread of new ideas, innovations, and goods. Arabo-Persian astronomical scholarship was well-received in Korea, as in China, and the Islamic calendar (Ch. Huihui li) emerged as an established standard in East Asia for several centuries to come.(33)

(29) Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims": 92–93, 101–102.

(30) Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims":102-103; In-Sung Kim Han, "'Look at the Alcohol if You Want to Know the Country': Drinking Vessels as a Cultural Marker of Medieval Korea," *Acta Via Serica* 4:2, December 2019, 34.

(31) Uyghur was used widely in the Goryeo court both among semuren and Korean officials, an importance it acquired from its utility as one of the primary languages of diplomatic communication with the Yuan. See Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims," 89.; Michael C. Brose, "Neo-Confucian Uyghur Semuren in Goryeo and Joseon Korean Society and Politics," *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China,* edited by Morris Rossabi. (Singapore: ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2013), 178–199, 187.

(32) In-Sung Kim Han, "Objects as History: Islamic Material Culture in Medieval Korea," *Orientations* 44:3, April 2013, 62–70.

(33) The dominance of the Islamic calendar would endure until the arrival of the Jesuits in Ming China in the sixteenth century. See Shi Yunli, "The Korean Adaptation of the Chinese-Islamic Astronomical Tables," *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 57:1, January 2003, 25–60.

The technique for distilling ‘araq, a popular drink enjoyed across West Asia and much-prized by the Mongol armies, arrived in Korea at around this juncture, giving rise to the alcoholic beverage soju, ubiquitously consumed across the peninsula today.[34] The scholar In-Sung Kim Han has observed the existence of Islamic influences on architectural styles and artistic products.[35]

This cosmopolitan moment, embodied by the semuren class, is also traceable in Korean medieval popular culture. Take, for example, the ballad "Turkish Bakery" – much loved by the Goryeo monarch Chung-yeol (r.1275–1308). Its opening lines focus on a foreign shopkeeper – possibly Muslim? – as the first in a series of lecherous men to harass a young damsel (he is succeeded by the chief priest of a temple, a well-dwelling dragon, and an innkeeper):

I go to the Turkish shop, buy a bun,
An old Turk grasps me by the hand.
If this story is spread, abroad,
You alone are to blame, o little puppet.
I will go, yes, go to his bower:
Compact and close no place was more. [36]

The end of Mongol rule over East Asia by the late fourteenth century augured a conservative cultural backlash by the cosmologically Sino-centric and Confucian Ming (1368–1644) and Choseon regimes, which sought to expunge the legacies of their former Yuan sovereigns. Under the founding Hongwu Emperor (r. 1368–98), decrees mandating intermarriage and the adoption of Chinese names, as outlined in the *Da Minglü*, were imposed on the descendants of the semuren class, and religions such as Manicheanism and Nestorian Christianity were banned outright as heterodoxies.[37] In a similar spirit, King Sejong (r. 1418–50)

(34) In-Sung Kim Han, "'Look at the Alcohol if You Want to Know the Country,'" 39–40.
(35) In-Sung Kim Han, "Muslims in Medieval Korea," 11–13.
(36) Peter H. Lee, "Introduction to the Chang'ga: the Long Poem," *Oriens Extremus* 3:1, 1956, 102, 107.
(37) Donald Leslie, *The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: The Case of Chinese Muslims*. (Canberra: Australian National University, 1998), 15; Jiang Yonglin, *The Mandate of Heaven and the Great Ming Code*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 91–92, 125.

of Choseon promulgated a decree in 1427 that read:

> Since the Hoehoe wear different costumes (with clothing and headgear), people consider them as not belonging to our people and avoid marrying them. Having become this kingdom's subjects, our way of clothing must be followed in order to remove [the] difference of the Hoehoe. This would naturally lead to intermarriage. Furthermore, the Hoehoe should be forbidden to do their way of 'rites' during the Great Assembly of the Court.(38)

The Ming-Qing Imperiums and the Consolidation of Islam

The Muslim presence on the Korean Peninsula dissolved under the weight of state-mandated assimilation and geographic isolation in the fifteenth century. Suggestive of this development was the unfamiliarity displayed by Choseon envoys to the Ming court when encountering the customs and rituals of Muslims in Beijing.(39) On the other side of the Yalu, however, Islam persisted and even thrived. In the 1380s, the Dongbei was wrested from the remnants of the Yuan dynasty and brought to heel under the Ming regime through the exertions of General Feng Sheng (d. 1395) who, much like the founding Hongwu Emperor of the dynasty he served, was suspected of being a Muslim; Huizu clan lineages in Shenyang, Liaoning and Dachang in Hebei, all claim to be descended from him.(40) Whatever Feng Sheng's religious affiliations or background, there is sufficient evidence to show that the

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(38) Quoted in Hee Soo Lee, "The Socio-economic Activities of Muslims," 103.

(39) In-Sung Kim Han, "Muslims in Medieval Korea," 9.

(40) Claims of Muslimness have been made about other Ming generals, such as Chang Yuchun, Tie Xuan, and Mu Ying. For a discussion on the Hongwu Emperor and his alleged Islamic background, see Zvi Ben-Dor, "The Marrano Emperor: The Mysterious Bond between Zhu Yuanzhang and the Chinese Muslims," *Long Live the Emperor!: Uses of the Ming Founder Across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, edited by Sarah Schneewind. (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008), 275-308.; Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 11–12; "China's Islamic communities generate local histories: the case of Dachang," *China Heritage Newsletter 5*, March 2006, http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?searchterm=005_dachang.inc&issue=005

pacification and garrisoning of the Dongbei relied on troops partially drawn from Muslim semuren communities in Henan, Hebei, and Shandong.(41) These soldiers, joined by merchants and migrants from elsewhere, constructed some of the earliest known mosques in the Liaodong Peninsula.(42) The Muslim presence here was further buoyed by local conversions to Islam. A record tracing the ancestry of the Gao family lineage in Shenyang narrates how their progenitor-ancestor embraced the faith during the reign of the Jiajing Emperor (r. 1521-67):

> Our (grand) ancestor's style name is poor-relief master, who befriended a turban-wearing cleric. The turban-wearing cleric admired our ancestor's benevolent behaviors and persuaded (him) as such: 'The master's [your] heart filled with the desire to help people perfectly matches our ancient teaching to help the poor.' Our ancestor gave up Buddhism and embraced the ancient teaching of the Huihui of the Western Regions.(43)

The rise of the Late Jin (1616–36) or proto-Qing state, which was itself based in the Dongbei, drew upon the martial traditions of local Muslims there. The Ming General Tie Kui (a self-proclaimed descendant of Tie Xuan, of presumed Muslim background), defected to the Qing (1636-44–1911) and was recorded as having overseen the re-building of Shenyang's South Mosque (established 1403; rebuilt 1627–36).(44) Some Dongbei Muslims also fought under the banners of the Qing armies that crossed the Shanhai Pass and invaded the Ming domains in the early seventeenth century: their modern-day descendants, some of whom have settled as far away as the southern port of Guangzhou, continue to celebrate the northern origins of their ancestors.(45)

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(41) Song Guoqiang and Cai Yizheng, "Liaoning huizu laiyuan fenbu he juzhu tedian," 58.

(42) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 12.

(43) Quoted in Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 18.

(44) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 12.

(45) Bao Yanzhong (editor), *Guangzhou yisilanjiaoshi*. (Guangzhou: Guangzhoushi yisilan xiehui, Guangzhoushi huizu lishi wenhua yanjiuhui, 2014), 113.

Qing rule, which spanned nearly three centuries, changed the character of the Muslim presence in the Dongbei. This was partially a matter of policy (or rather, its failure): unlike the Ming, which was concerned with reinforcing and populating the frontiers against the incursions from the steppes, the Qing sought to limit population inflows from the interior of China.[46] The policy was driven by a number of considerations; as a non-Han conquest regime, the Qing ruling class maintained its self-coherence and instilled fear among its subjects by upholding markers of ethnic differentiation.[47] This principle of governance was reflected in ethno-territorial separation, embodied by the seclusion of the bannermen and their families in Manchu cities (Ch. Mancheng) located within Han urban centers or designated bannermen territories on the borders of the state. The Dongbei, as the sacred origin of the Aisin Gioro royal household and host to an important network of bannermen garrisons in Jilin and Heilongjiang, was a major site of such ethno-territorial separation. Throughout this area, the movement of non-Manchu/Tungusic/Mongol peoples was heavily controlled.[48]

Adding to the Dongbei's strategic value to the Qing was its importance as a source of wealth for the royal treasury due to an abundance of ginseng, pearls, fur, and sable.[49] The early conquests of Nurhaci (r. 1616-26) were largely fueled by profits from the ginseng trade.[50] Safeguarding the state monopoly and limiting (illegal) private involvement was therefore of vital interest. Closely connected to this was the desire of the Qing court, given Choseon's

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(46) Under the Shunzhi Emperor (r. 1643–1661) settlement of the frontiers was the operative policy, but this would be reversed under his successors. See Takako Ueda, "Chinese Migration in Northeast Asia, 1860–1945," *Chinese and Indian Merchants in Modern Asia: Networking Businesses and Formation of Regional Economy,* edited by Choi Chi-cheung, Takashi Oishi, and Tomoko Shiroyama. (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 313.

(47) Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2001), 4–6.

(48) Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way,* 8–9, 45–47, 94.

(49) Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland*, 2.

(50) Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland*, 9.

tributary status, to avoid tensions that might arise from imperial subjects violating the border along the Yalu in search of ginseng. These considerations led to the construction in the late seventeenth century of the Willow Palisade (Ch. liutiaobian) – a semi-natural barrier comprised of ditches and levees – that effectively divided the Dongbei into discrete cultural and economic areas by separating the Chinese-influenced Liaodong Peninsula from the Jurchen and Mongol princely and bannermen holdings to the north.(51) The demarcation may be the reason why over half of the present-day Huizu population in the Dongbei resides in Liaoning Province.(52)

The Qing dynasty's centuries-long attempt to discourage migration from the interior proved to be a futile and unsustainable endeavor. For many generations of migrants, the risks associated with violating the imperial interdict was diminished by the oscillating stances of successive rulers, which culminated in the abandonment of all restrictions in the final year of Xianfeng Emperor's reign in 1861.(53) By the opening years of the twentieth century, the policy pendulum had all but swung in the opposite direction: the imperial court, faced with Russian and Japanese expansionism along the frontier, was actively encouraging the settlement of (taxable) subjects in the Dongbei.(54)

Failure to limit population inflows was also a function of the unwillingness of the local gentry to comply with the imperial court's policies. Many turned a blind eye to, perhaps even abetted, illegal population movements in the hope of attracting migrants-turned-tenants to till the largely uncultivated (and lightly populated) lands beyond the Willow Palisade.(55) By the nineteenth century, the region had become a heavily Chinese demographic and cultural space despite

(51) Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland*, 5.

(52) Yang Wenjiong, "Huizu renkou de fenbu jiqi chengshihua shuiping de bijiao fenxi," 88–89.

(53) Ma Na, "Shilun heilongjiang huizu de laiyuan," *Heilongjiang Minzu Congkan* 3:14, 1988, 49–50.

(54) Ma Na, "Shilun heilongjiang huizu de laiyuan," 50.

(55) Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800," *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 10 Late Ching, 1800–1911, Part 1*, edited by Denis Twitchett and John Fairbank. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 40.

the measures in place, and the previous spatial-cultural distinctions maintained by the Qing began to lose their relevance.(56)

Photos by *Rev. F. W. S. O'Neill.*

CHINESE MOSLEMS AT WORSHIP IN MANCHURIA.

The upper picture shows the leaders in the front with different head-dress. In the lower picture all the heads are bowed towards the floor. The Kiblah or prayer niche, indicating the direction of Mecca, can be plainly seen.

To face page 188.

Figure 2. Congregational Prayer at a Dongbei Mosque(57)

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(56) Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800," 39–41, 47.

(57) Figure 2 appears to show a Jahriyya congregation based on the style of their pointed-skullcaps. This is therefore a possible photo of a mosque in Jilin or Qiqihar. For source of image see Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China*, 189.

Muslims took an active part in the repeated waves of illegal and semi-illegal migration into the Dongbei during the Qing era.[58] This is evidenced by the proliferation of mosques and prayer halls: the scholar Na Xiaobo identifies a total of 48 built under Qing rule.[59] The majority of these structures were erected in the nineteenth century, a consequence of not only the relaxation of imperial policy noted above, but of the turbulence that marked the twilight decades of the dynasty. Natural disasters ranging from droughts to floods caused by the Yellow River's shifting course, particularly in 1851–59 and 1875–77, uprooted the peasantry in rural areas.[60] The extensive devastation inflicted by the iconoclastic and Christian-influenced Taiping Rebellion (1850–64) and the intensification of violence that afflicted village life in the Huabei (Northern China), also propelled these movements.[61]

While the migration of Muslim peasants escaping famine and upheaval to the Dongbei were a concrete manifestation of the Qing court's policy failure, other Muslim influxes resulted from the overt exercise of imperial authority. Over the centuries, many Muslims condemned as criminals or rebels were exiled to the frontiers and reduced to slavery or bond service for the bannermen armies stationed there.[62] This practice first began with the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661-1722), who exiled Muslim officials, soldiers, and their families from Southern

(58) Muslim populations in most major townships in the Dongbei, according to available records from the late Qing, did not exceed 2,000 people. They were engaged in multiple professions, including husbandry, fur-trading, and hospitality, with Shandongese Muslims apparently running a network of inns across the region. See Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 17; Song Guoqiang and Cai Yizheng, "Liaoning huizu laiyuan fenbu he juzhu tedian," 69.

(59) Na Xiaobo, "Dongbei diqu huizu yuanliu kaoshu," 12–14.

(60) Yu Ye, Fang Xiuqi, and Mohammed Aftab U Khan, "Migration and reclamation in Northeast China in response to climatic disasters in North China over the past 300 years," *Regional Environmental Change* 12, 2012, 193–206.

(61) Takako Ueda, "Chinese Migration in Northeast Asia, 1860–1945," 325, 331-332; For information on the militarization of village life due to environmental factors and the emergence of offensive/defensive adaptive survival strategies among villagers there, see Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and revolutionaries in North China, 1845–1945*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1980), 10–151.

(62) Many slaves were emancipated by their banner masters as providing for them proved too great an economic burden to bear. It became typical for slaves to either buy their freedom or be manumitted outright by their new owners. While some returned to the interior, many former slaves remained in the Dongbei. See Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800," 46.

China to the region as punishment for participating in the Three Feudatories Revolt (1673–81).[63] The Qing annals are replete with similar cases, especially during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735-96), as Jonathan Lipman notes.[64] There are records of Turkic Muslim vassals of the Dzunghars from the Tarim Basin being deported to the Dongbei in 1755 and 1760 during the Qing conquest of what would later be known as Xinjiang; likewise, Muslims from Qinghai and Gansu accused of banditry and membership in heterodox cults – including one curious instance from Hezhou (present-day Linxia) involving a self-declared reincarnation of the Maitreya Buddha in 1777 – were sent to the region.[65]

The Qing court appears to have utilized exile as a strategy for managing the sectarian conflict that cyclically erupted between the Khufiyya and Jahriyya Naqshbandi menhuan "spiritual solidarities" (Ar. tariqa) in Gansu from the 1780s onwards.[66] From the late eighteenth century, adherents of the Jahriyya menhuan, identified in the lexicon of the state as followers of a xinjiao "new teaching," were violently dispersed across the imperial frontiers – to Xinjiang, Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangdong, as well as to the Dongbei. A prominent illustration of this from the reign of the Jiaqing Emperor (r. 1796–1820) is the exiling of Ma Datian, the third shaykh or wali of the Jahriyya, (known by the honorific Qutb al-'Alam and the Quranic name Muhammad Jalal). He was sent to Heilongjiang in 1817 and died en route near Chuanchang, now Jilin city.[67] The *Daotong Shichuan*, a hagiographic history of the Jahriyya published in 1934, includes the following narration of Ma Datian's "beatitude" (Ar. karama) and burial:

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(63) Na Xiaobo and Ma Xiurong, "Qingdai dongbei diqu de musilin 'qixiaren'," *Huizu Yanjiu* 3, 1994, 19-20.

(64) Jonathan N. Lipman, "'A Fierce and Brutal People': On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law," *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, edited by Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 93–94.

(65) Na Xiaobo and Ma Xiurong, "Qingdai dongbei diqu de musilin 'qixiaren'," 20.

(66) Na Xiaobo and Ma Xiurong, "Qingdai dongbei diqu de musilin 'qixiaren,'" 20–21.

(67) "Ma Datian," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, July 7, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/error.html?status=404&uri=/item/%E9%A9%AC%E8%BE%BE%E5%A4%A9

> On the mawla's arrival in Chuanchang... an imam Li of a study hall in Chuanchang dreamt that the Holy Prophet was holding his hand; waking up, he felt deeply perplexed. The next morning, he heard that a shaykh from Lanzhou exiled for his teachings had arrived yesterday…he immediately left to seek out [this shaykh], and finally saw in that inn [where Ma Datian was] the [visage of the] Prophet Muhammad [peace be upon him] from his dream...later the mawla raised the issue of [finding] a burial site with imam Li.(68)

The site chosen by the imam, who was later inducted into the "high and honored" menhuan of the Jahriyya, eventually became known as the Chuanchang qubba (Ch. gongbei), one of the only mazars "shrines" for a Muslim saint in the Dongbei, see Figure 5. It remains to this day a destination for Jahriyya pilgrims from Ningxia, Gansu, and Xinjiang who commemorate the shaykh's passing each year on September 6th.(69) Some supplicants travel further to Qiqihar to visit the graves of Ma Datian's closest disciples who accompanied him into exile: this perhaps explains why the Western Mosque (Ch. Xisi), part of the old Bokui Mosque complex in Qiqihar, established in 1684, was associated for some time with the Jahriyya menhuan.(70)

As the Jahriyya pilgrimage circuit shows, the Dongbei was not isolated from the wider religious and cultural universe inhabited by Sinophone Muslims. While the region did not boast any major seats of Muslim learning of its own, it was in sufficient proximity to others in Beijing and Tianjin, Cangzhou in Hebei, and Jining in Shandong. Ahongs "imams," and itinerant malas "students," in the Dongbei were likely connected to the transregional and intergenerational networks of Islamic scholarship oriented around these places and overseen by

(68) *Daotong shichuan*. (Zhongguo xuanyang yisilan, 2013), 90–91.

(69) The gongbei was damaged during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and rebuilt in 1980.

(70) "Bokui qingzhensi," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, July 9, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%8D%9C%E5%A5%8E%E6%B8%85%E7%9C%9F%E5%AF%BA?fbclid=IwAR05fNfCgcfOvlb05pgpSMmfgyjBI5GbszwJPxJLXbk2GY7tHBYURu1_WwQ

the great figures of the Han Kitab tradition, such as Hu Dengzhou (1522–97) and Chang Yunhua (also known as Chang Zhimei, 1610–70).(71)

Chang Yunhua's mosque-based "scripture-hall education" style (Ch. jingtang jiaoyu), also known as the Shandong or Eastern Road (Ch. donglu) school, emphasized the study of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese texts and gained a widespread following throughout the Huabei – including the Dongbei.(72) Its popularization was likely facilitated by the Shandongese background of many of the Muslims who settled in the region. It can also be attributed to the influence exerted by some of Chang Yunhua's later disciples, such as Chang Jie (1717–1801) who taught for extended periods there.(73) Its influence was long-lasting. A mosque at the market town of Faku near Shenyang abided by the rigorous method of the Eastern Road; Marshall Broomhall observes in the early twentieth century that it carried out a "course of study [that] lasts for ten years, and as many as ten Arabic commentaries on the Koran have to be studied before the Koran itself."(74)

Beyond the intimate bonds of faith and learning, Muslims in the Dongbei also preserved and participated in versions of the Chaquan martial arts tradition that originated from Shandong. Among the most well-known masters of the region from the late Qing and early Republican eras were Zhao Xichuan (d. unknown) and Liu Baorui (1896–1969), nicknamed the "Fearless of Shenyang."(75) These, much like other Muslim Wushu masters such as Wang Ziping (1881–1973), are remembered in folk tales for their prowess and triumphs over foreign colonial adversaries as well as for their iconic roles during the Boxer Rebellion (1899–

(71) Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 49–51.

(72) Feng Feng, "Huabei yisilanjiao chuantong qimeng jiaoyu kaocha," *Huizu Yanjiu* 1, 2017, 127–132.

(73) One source claims that Chang Jie went as far as Hegang, Heilongjiang See "Jingtang jiaoyu zai shandong de zuoyong he yingxiang," *Sufei Luntan (Forum*), April 11, 2011, https://china-sufi.com/archiver/tid-50356.html

(74) Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China,* 241.

(75) "Liu Baorui (zhongguo dangdai wushujia)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, July 14, 2021 https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%88%98%E5%AE%9D%E7%91%9E/2645282

1901).[76] Narratives also point to an undercurrent of Muslim participation in this pivotal uprising, albeit one that was exaggerated by European observers who, terrified by the tenacity of the Gansu-born Muslim troops that besieged Beijing's Legation Quarter under General Dong Fuxiang (1839–1908), feared a fanatical "Muhammadan plot" to oust them from China. Such imperial panics, familiar in other contexts such as India, East Africa, or the Philippines, led the German Kaiser Wilhelm II (r. 1888–1918) to request that the Ottoman Caliph Abdulhamid II (r. 1876–1909) dispatch a mission to dissuade the Muslims of the Qing imperium from participating in the rebellion.[77]

In contrast to the Mongol and Ming eras, few Muslims assumed positions of high authority in the Dongbei under the Qing. There were nevertheless exceptions to this overall loss of status, the most remarkable being General Zuo Baogui (1837–94), a contemporary of the Xibei Muslim father-and-son Commanders Ma Zhan'ao (1830–86) and Ma Anliang (1855–1918).[78] Unlike the two Mas, Zuo's fortunes were wholly unfettered by the revolts of his co-religionists or the patronage of non-Muslim war masters such as Zuo Zongtong (1812–85).[79] Born to an impoverished rural family in Shandong, the young Zuo Baogui had a run-in with officials that led to his forced conscription into the Jiangnan army, which was engaged in suppressing the Taiping and Nian Rebellion (1851–68). He rapidly ascended the ranks, winning several honors from the court throughout the 1850s and 1860s (including the endorsement of the Empress Dowager Cixi, r. 1861–1908), and in 1880 was finally entrusted with the command of the Fengtian army in the Liaodong Peninsula.

(76) "Wang Ziping (zhongguo jindai wushujia)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, July 14, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%8E%8B%E5%AD%90%E5%B9%B3/62809

(77) Hee Soo Lee, "The 'Boxer Uprising' in China and the Pan-Islamic Policy of the Ottoman Empire from a European Perspective," *Acta Via Serica* 3(1), June 2018: 103-117.

(78) "Zuo Baogui," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, September 1, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%B7%A6%E5%AE%9D%E8%B4%B5/416750

(79) "Zuo Zongtong (zhongguo wanqing zhengzhijia, junshijia, minzu yingxiong)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, September 1, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%B7%A6%E5%AE%97%E6%A3%A0/66874

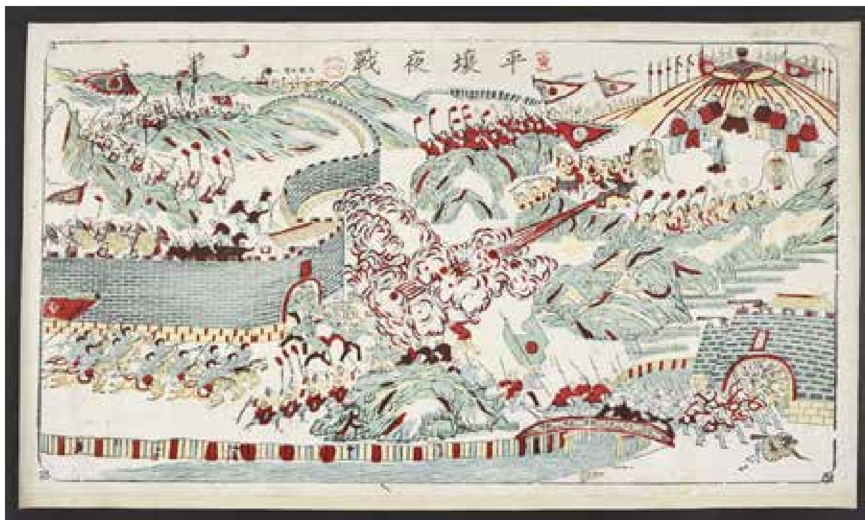

Figure 3. The Night Battle of Pyongyang by an unknown [Chinese] artist (1894); The Chinese troops defending the city are holding banners emblazoned with the character signifying Zuo Baogui – the general is depicted as overseeing the progress of the battle in the upper-right corner of the painting.(80)

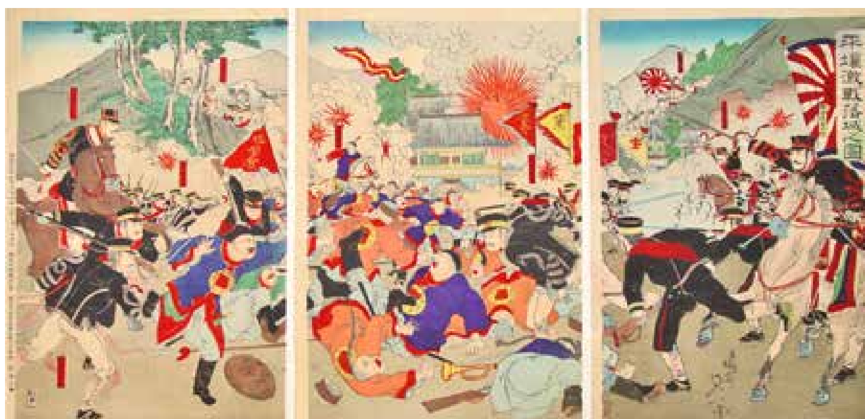

Figure 4. Battle of Pyongyang by Watanabe Nobukazu (1894); Zuo Baogui appears in the middle left on horseback, leading his troops while other Qing commanders flee in terror.(81)

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(80) For source of image see "[China] The night battle of Pyongyang," *British Library*, accessed July 19, 2021, https://www.jacar.go.jp/jacarbl-fsjwar-j/gallery/images/zoom/16126.d.4/16126.d.4_(30)_B20102-53.jpg

(81) For source of image see "Japanese Color Woodblock Print Illustration of the Fierce Battle at the Surrender of Pyongyang Fort by Watanabe Nobukazu, 1894," *The Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints*, accessed July 19, 2021, http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/artists/watanabe-nobukazu-1872-1944-/scene-of-the-fierce-battle-at-the-occupation-of-pyongyang-fort-in-the-sino-japanese-war

Over the next two decades, Zuo Baogui operated as the *de facto* resident military-governor of the region and extended ample patronage to many local mosques and religious sites in the Dongbei as well as Hebei and Shandong.(82) In 1894, he was instructed by the court to advance into Choseon territory in order to repulse an invasion by Meiji Japan. At the siege of Pyongyang Zuo quarreled with his colleagues Ye Zhichao (1838–1901) and Nie Shicheng (1836–1900) – who leaned toward retreat – and insisted on attacking the enemy head on. He carried out a ritual ghusl "washing," or wudu "ablution," before his arrayed Muslim soldiers, perhaps in order to shore up morale, and vowed to seek out martyrdom in defense of the dynasty. He was later killed by an artillery barrage.

As a figure of sacrifice and loyalty, Zuo has been commemorated by diverse actors: the Qing government erected a tomb for his official robes in Pingyi, Shandong; the Japanese conquerors, impressed by his bravery, built a stela in his memory and commissioned several woodwork paintings about him.(83) Present-day PRC organizations such as the Islamic Association of China continue to celebrate him as an aiguo aijiao "nation-loving, religion-loving" patriot.(84) Zuo is also claimed to be a venerated figure in Korean folklore, appearing as a ghost riding a white stallion by Pyongyang's northern Chilsongmun (Ch. Qixingmen) Gate.(85)

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(82) "Qingzhensi," People's Government of Harbin Hulan District, March 25, 2018, http://www.hulan.gov.cn/art/2018/3/25/art_14048_397137.html; "Yingkou qingzhen xisi," *Baike*, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%90%A5%E5%8F%A3%E6%B8%85%E7%9C%9F%E8%A5%BF%E5%AF%BA.; Tian Dingli, "Zuo baogui yu liaonan huizu junmin," *Liaoning Shifan Daxue Xuebao* 5, 1988, 86-87; Zhou Chuanbin, "Zuo baogui yu difangzhen qingzhensi," *Zhongguo Musilin* 5, 1993, 14-15.

(83) "Zuo Baogui," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*.; "Japanese Color Woodblock Print Pyongyang Chinese Generals Capture and Surrender by Nagashima Shungyo, 1894," *The Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints*, accessed July 19, 2021, http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/artists/nagashima-shungyo-active-1882-1905/pyongyang-chinese-generals-surrender

(84) "Yangzhoushi yixie juxing 'jicheng yinglie yizhi hongyang aiguo aijiao' youfen huodong," *Islamic Association of China*, April 8, 2018, http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/news/local/201804/08-11902.html

(85) "Zuo Baogui," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*.

The Regimes of Modernity and the Second Flowering of Islam

The nineteenth century, invigorated by newly unleashed capitalist and imperialist processes, was defined by the international circulation of peoples, goods, and ideas like never before.[86] Beginning in the 1850s, Tsarist Russia, faced by intensifying competition with the other great powers, exiled hundreds of forced laborers to the Far Eastern peripheries of its empire in order to consolidate its hold over the region and accelerate the pace of colonial development there. Among the condemned were Muslim subjects from Western Russia, the Caucuses, and Central Asia who would go on to build some of the very first Muslim religious sites in northern Sakhalin (1901) and Khabarovsk (1908).[87] In 1890, the Russian playwright Anton Chekov visited the frontier towns of Sakhalin and interviewed many of the convicts and settlers who inhabited them. The material he gathered was initially published in parts and later edited into one of his finest works, *Sakhalin Island*. In it are vivid descriptions of mining communities, many with sizeable Muslim minorities that had erected small mosques for worship, followed self-appointed mullahs, and maintained polygamous practices.[88]

Following the disastrous Jiawu War (1894–95) with Meiji Japan, the defeated Qing authorities granted Tsarist Russia the rights to build the Chinese Eastern Railway linking Siberia to Vladivostok, a network that was to snake through the Dongbei. The line's completion in 1902 enabled the arrival of many immigrants and refugees from the Russian hinterlands.[89] Among them

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(86) For a great source discussing how Muslims in various locales were impacted by the changes unleashed in this era, see James Gelvin and Nile Green (editors), *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*. (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2019).

(87) A source, parts of which were generously translated to the author by Dr. Ruslan Yusupov, notes that the majority of exiles were Sunni of the Hanafi and Shafi'i madhaabs "legal schools." There also existed a small minority of Twelver Shi'ites who briefly had a mosque of their own in northern Sakhalin. See Alexei Starostin and Rezida Pavlinova, "The Muslim population of Sakhalin in the materials of the First General Census of the Russian Empire in 1897," *Minbar Islamic Studies* 13:1, 2020, 38–62.

(88) Anton Chekov, *The Island: A Journey to Sakhalin*. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), 48–49, 139, 261, 301.

(89) Takako Ueda, "Chinese Migration in Northeast Asia, 1860–1945," 319–327.

were groups of Tatars, who in the space of just ten years would become a large, yet dispersed, diasporic network in Northeast Asia, with settlements in Harbin in the Dongbei; in Seoul, Pusan and Daegu on the Korean Peninsula; and on the Japanese Home Islands, in Tokyo, Kobe, and Nagoya.[(90)] The Tartars established ethnic and religious associations, printing houses, schools, and mosques – all material expressions of their community's urban orientation and prosperity; the Byzantine-styled Tatar Daowai Mosque, shown in Figure 1, is part of their legacy. It was built in Harbin in 1897 and is still in use among local Muslims in the PRC.[(91)] In some cases, Tatar – as well as Bashkir – communities served as enforcers of an aspirational (yet ultimately frustrated) imperial order in the Far East; one estimate claims that Muslims made up nearly a fifth of all Tsarist forces engaged in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and were led by commanders who shared their faith.[(92)] Some of the latter were even awarded medals for valor and bravery displayed during the conflict.[(93)]

The changes wrought by capitalist and imperialist processes not only affected the demographic and religious compositions in Northeast Asia by introducing new Muslim elements, but also upended existing orthodoxies among well-established local Muslim communities there. Abdurreshid Ibrahim

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(90) Ma Te, "The Fast-Fading Memories of Harbin's Migrant History," *Sixth Tone*, September 27, 2017; Other Muslims, as well as Ashkenazi Jews, would join Dongbei-based communities as refugees fleeing Tsarist, and later Bolshevist, persecution in the 1910s and 1920s. Some of these refugees were former participants in the Basmaci uprisings in Central Asia. Large-scale White Russian diasporas would also follow in their footsteps with the conclusion of the civil war in Russia in 1922. For an excellent source on the Tatar diaspora in Northeast Asia with a particular focus on Korea, see Merthan Dündar, "Articles Published about Korean Turco-Tatars in the Magazine Yanga Yapon Muhbiri (New Japanese Courier)," *Acta Via Serica* 3:2, December 2018, 181–196; Nile Green, *Terrains of exchange: Religious economies of global Islam*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2015, 239.

(91) "Daowai qingzhensi," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, July 16, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%81%93%E5%A4%96%E6%B8%85%E7%9C%9F%E5%AF%BA/16973163?fromtitle=%E5%93%88%E5%B0%94%E6%BB%A8%E9%81%93%E5%A4%96%E6%B8%85%E7%9C%9F%E5%AF%BA&fromid=8709165

(92) Salavat Iskhakov, "The Impact of the First World War on Bashkir and Tatar Muslims (1914–1918)," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 141, June 2017, http://journals.openedition.org/remmm/9857

(93) Robert D. Crews, "The Russian Worlds of Islam," *Islam and the European Empires*, edited by David Motadel. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 44.

(1857–1944), a Jadidist Tatar scholar and political activist, travelled by train through the Dongbei in 1908–09 as part of his journey to Meiji Japan.[94] In the travelogue *'Alam Islami*, Abdurreshid Ibrahim describes with dismay the conditions of the Sinophone Muslims he encountered during a week-long stay in Qiqihar.[95] As he saw it, this community of laborers, handicraftsmen, and a few wealthy merchants, was living in squalor, filth, and superstition – in sharp contrast to the seemingly united, pious, and educated state of the Tatar immigrants of the Dongbei.[96] Its members failed to uphold the obligatory practices; used the hongbao "red packets" in offering sadaqah "charity"; placed incense within mosque grounds; and wore white cloth during funerals: they were, for all intents and purposes, indistinguishable from their non-Muslim Han neighbors.[97] "In truth," he laments, "the days I spent in Qiqihar were heavy days indeed."[98] Later exposed to similar scenes in Harbin, the scholar proclaimed that if the affairs of the "six million Muslims of Manchuria" were not addressed through the help of foreign Muslims such as the Sublime Porte (Ottomans) "the arena would be dominated by the [Christian] missionaries."[99]

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(94) For an excellent source on Abdurreshid Ibrahim's travels through China, see Noriko Yamazaki, "Abdürreşid İbrahim's journey to China: Muslim communities in the late Qing as seen by a Russian-Tatar intellectual," *Central Asian Survey,* 3:33, 2014, 405–422.

(95) Given Abdurreshid Ibrahim's descriptions, it seems that the Muslims he encountered were Qadim (Ch. Gedimu) of the Hanafi madhaab who made use of fiqhi "jurisprudential" texts such as *Muktasar al-Qaduri* (from the eleventh century). During his trip, he visited two mosques which were probably the Eastern and Western Mosques (the latter of which was frequented by the Jahriyya), both part of the Bokui Mosque complex. Each had a number of malas studying under local ahongs.

(96) The Tatars do not appear to have had much contact with Sinophone Muslims, perhaps due to existing linguistic and socio-cultural barriers. This was not unusual; they are reported to have had limited interactions with their co-religionists from elsewhere within the Russian empire itself, including those of the newly conquered territories in Turkestan. There were some exceptions following the Japanese occupation of the Dongbei in the 1930 however, with some Tatar and Baskhir leaders pressed by the local authorities into gathering information on, and reaching out to, Sinophone Muslim communities. See Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 91–93; Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the world of Islam: the writings of Selçuk Esenbel*. (Kent: Global Oriental, 2011), 12.

(97) Abdurreshid Ibrahim, *al-'Alam al-islami fi awal al-qarn al-'ishreen: muslimu turkistan wa saybirya wa manguliya wa manshuriya*, trans. Ahmed Mutwali and Huwayda Fahmy. (Cairo: al-majlis al-'ala lil thaqafa, 1998), 246, 248, 250.

(98) Abdurreshid Ibrahim, *al-'Alam al-islami*, 249.

(99) Abdurreshid Ibrahim, *al-'Alam al-islami,* 268

Chinese Republican era Sinophone Muslim elites and ahongs of the early twentieth century shared Abdurreshid Ibrahim's concerns and worked to pedagogically transform the communities under their ministry and care.[(100)] Wang Jingzhai of Tianjin (1880–1949), an Azharite graduate who taught at the modernist Chengda Shifan School in Beijing and was an editor of the *Yiguang* journal, spent several years in the Dongbei.[(101)] He officiated as an ahong in Andong (present-day Dandong) in 1928, and later in Harbin at the Daowai Mosque in 1929–32. Influenced by the Ikhwani (Ch. Yihewani) leader Ma Wanfu's (1849–1934) call for orthopractic renewal, Wang Jinzhai promoted the veneration of the Quran and rectification of erroneous customs throughout the region and beyond.

The Tatar diasporic networks were not immune to such developments, being impacted by not only Russia-centered Jadidist ideas but also modernist-scripturalist ones from elsewhere around the globe. For example, in 1938 Muhammad 'Abdulhayy Qurban Ali (1889–1972), wrote a letter to Muhammad Sultan al-Ma'sumi al-Khujandi (1879-80–1961-62), a Makkah-based Central Asian scholar and teacher of Ma Debao (1867–1977), shaykh of the Xibei Salafis, to enquire if it was obligatory to adhere to any single madhaab "legal school."[(102)] This led al-Khujandi,

(100) Dongbei Muslims were engaged in various reform efforts of their own; for example, the Bokui Mosque in Qiqihar saw the founding in 1905 of a mutual help organization for education, the first ever in Heilongjiang. This may account for the presence of modern schools observed by Abdurreshid Ibrahim, which some Muslims enrolled their children in. See "Bokui qingzhensi," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*.

(101) "Wang Jingzhai nianpu," *Light of Islam (Hong Kong),* October 30, 2009, http://www.hkislam.com/e19/e/action/ShowInfo.php?classid=40&id=4010

(102) Qurban Ali is a Baskhiri Islamic scholar who was earmarked to become the mufti "head jurist" of Tsarist Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent civil war forced him east where he fought with the White Russian forces until he settled in the Dongbei, and later in Japan in the 1920s. He played a major role in opening several schools (most notably in Shenyang); as well as the Tokyo Grand Mosque (established 1938); and the Islamic Printing House, which published some of the first Qurans in Japan. Despite his nearly two-decades-long collaboration with the Japanese, he was exiled from the Home Islands and, following the end of the Second World War in 1945, was arrested by the Soviets. See Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the world of Islam,* 11-12, 103-104.; Muhammad Sultan al-Ma'sumi al-Khujandi, *Hadiyat al-sultan illa muslimi bilad al-yaban: hal al-muslim mulzam bi itiba' madhaab mu'ayan min al-madaahib al-arba'a?.* Jam'iyat ihya al-turath al-islami, no date: 3–4.

who was strongly opposed to taqlid "imitation," to issue a long epistle entitled *Hadiyat al-Sultan illa Muslimi Bilad al-Yaban*, arguing against such adherence. Similar exchanges between East Asia and the Middle East became increasingly common in the age of steam and print: in Guangzhou for instance, the ahong Ma Ruitu (1895–1944) corresponded with Rashid Rida (1865–1935) of *al-Manar*.[103]

These discursive communications were further strengthened by the growing number of Muslims from the Dongbei who took advantage of new travel possibilities created by steamships to make the arduous journey to the Hijaz and complete the fifth pillar of the faith: the Hajj. Curiously, one Christian missionary recounts that "in Manchuria the Mohammedans who have been to Makkah paint their beards red as a sign of distinction."[104] This constitutes a possible case of cultural diffusion in which some Sinophone Muslims of the Dongbei adopted the predominantly Arab and South Asian practice of dyeing their beards with hinna in emulation of the Prophet. It should be noted that while a growing number of Sinophone Muslims sought out Makkah in their westward journeys, some of their co-religionists increasingly travelled in the opposite direction: anti-colonial activists, missionaries or even simple tourists journeyed east in search of the emerging qibla "orientation" of modernization and anti-Western resistance, Meiji Japan.[105] Northeast Asia, with its proliferating network of railways and ports, became a major transit point for travelers such as the Prince (and one-time regent) Muhammad Ali Pasha Tawfiq (1875–1954) of Khedivate Egypt, who

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(103) Leo Halevi, "Is China a House of Islam? Chinese Questions, Arabic Answers, and the Translation of Salafism from Cairo to Canton, 1930–1932," *Die Welt des Islams*, 59:1, 2019, 33–69.

(104) Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China*, 251.

(105) For scholarship discussing such east-ward travellers, see Michael Laffan, "Making Meiji Muslims: the Travelogue of 'Ali Ahmad al-Jarjawi," *East Asian History* 22, 2001, 145-170; Nile Green, "Anti-Colonial Japanophilia and the constraints of an Islamic Japanology: information and affect in the Indian encounter with Japan," *South Asian History and Culture*, 4:3, 2013, 291–313; Ulrich Brandenburg, "Imagining an Islamic Japan: pan-Asianism's encounter with Muslim mission," *Japan Forum* 32:2, 2020, 161–184.

toured the region around the same time as another famous fellow-traveler did, Abdurreshid Ibrahim.[106]

These diversifying forms of interaction served to remold Muslim solidarities and pieties in the twentieth century, giving rise to a new consciousness of the Muslim World that was increasingly co-opted by various powers, such as imperial Japan, where pan-Asianist discourses and identities were also emerging and spreading.[107] In Tokyo, foreign policymakers of a pan-Asian and pan-Islamic persuasion saw the Muslim communities of Northeast Asia as useful in furthering a range of foreign policy aims, including counteracting Soviet expansionism and Western propaganda, creating inroads into China, and generating demand for Japanese products in Muslim-majority countries as well as colonized peripheries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The global Islamicate, embracing a wide array of down-trodden and subjugated peoples, was thus re-imagined as a strategic resource for a post-Western Japanese-dominated Asia.

Japan's utilization (or exploitation) of Muslims for imperial ends gained traction following its invasion of the Dongbei in 1931 and its establishment of the puppet-state of Manchukuo the following year.[108] This process relied on the ethnographic work conducted by scholars like Tanaka Ippei (1882–1934), a convert to Islam and translator-commentator of the works of the Qing Muslim literati Liu Zhi (1670–1739) as well as diasporic activists such as Muhammad 'Abdulhayy Qurban Ali or Abdurreshid Ibrahim, which was funded by the influential South Manchuria Railway Company (Mantetsu), itself closely tied to the Japanese imperial army.[109] Knowledge production was thus directed at serving the imperial enterprise; it was used to identify and win over local

(106) For the Prince's experiences and observations, see Muhammad Ali, *al-Rihla al-yabaniya*. (Cairo: Hindawi, 2013).

(107) For an illuminating discussion on how the notion of a Muslim World came into being, see Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

(108) Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the world of Islam*, 65–66.

(109) Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the world of Islam*, 35–36, 67, 100–104.

Muslim notables and form acquiescent institutions, such as the Federation of Manchurian Muslims, in order to forge compliant and loyal constituencies for the empire.[110]

However, Muslim responses to these developments were far from uniform as Kelly Hammond shows in her work *China's Muslims and Japan's Empire*.[111] While some acceded to imperial overtures and cooperated willingly, others were ambivalent or resisted the invaders outright. The Muslim Manchu General Ma Zhanshan (1885–1950) from Heilongjiang oscillated between fierce confrontation and brief interludes of accommodation with the Japanese, including accepting at one point a temporary appointment as Manchukuo's Minister of Defense.[112] Others of Muslim background joined the underground as cadres and guerrilla fighters associated with Communist Party of China (CPC). The famed Henanese General Yang Jingyu (1905–40) – of contested Muslim origin – led Red Army elements in the Dongbei throughout the 1930s; his execution by the Japanese, after a dramatic last stand, was later valorized by the PRC authorities when they renamed Mengjing county in Jilin (near the DPRK border and the site of his death) after him.[113] Other notable CPC recruits from Muslim backgrounds in the Dongbei include Ma Jun (1895–1928), a native of Jilin and a revolutionary who was executed by the warlord Zhang Zuolin (1875–1928). Ma Jun's life has been honored in recent years in biopics made to coincide with the one hundredth anniversary of the CPC's founding.[114]

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(110) Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the world of Islam*, 35.

(111) Kelly Hammond, *China's Muslims and Japan's Empire: Centering Islam in World War II.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

(112) "Ma Zhanshan (zhongguo kangri aiguo jiangling, minzu yingxiong)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, August 28, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%A9%AC%E5%8D%A0%E5%B1%B1/3596.; Gu Wenshuang, "Dongbei huizu de kangri jiuwang douzheng," *Heilongjiang Minzu Congkan 1*, 2004: 67-69.

(113) "Yang Jingyu (kangri minzu yingxiong)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, August 28, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9D%A8%E9%9D%96%E5%AE%87/298347

(114) "Ma Jun (2019nian Han Chifei daoyan de dianying)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, August 28, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%A9%AC%E9%AA%8F/23296419.;

In the mid-twentieth century, the defeat of imperial Japan and the subsequent Marxist-Leninist takeovers precipitated great change for the Muslims of Northeast Asia. By the late 1950s, "foreign" Muslim communities such as the Tatars were effectively forced out of the Dongbei, while Sinophone Muslims were subjected to growing religious restrictions that culminated with the total suppression of their faith during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Yet, even amid these conditions, some of Muslim background were able to carve out spaces of their own; of these a few were able to amass considerable power, and in the case of Hui Liangyu (b. 1944) reach the highest echelons of the Leninist system. Entering the ranks of the CPC in 1969, Hui Liangyu became a full member of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee in 2002 and served as Vice Premier in 2003–13.(115) Unsurprisingly, his identity as a Huizu minority leader has been celebrated by various organs of the party-state, including the Islamic Association of China.(116) In the post-Maoist years, the relaxation in state policies vis-à-vis religion enabled a broad revival of Islam in the region. This was reflected in the restoration of mosques and religious sites, including the abovementioned Chuanchang gongbei; the establishment of new institutions of learning, such as the Islamic Scriptural Academy of Shenyang (e. 1982); and the growth and diversification of Muslim pieties and religiosities, which could be observed in the ever-thickening circuits of – both national and global – pilgrimage, charity, education, and commerce.(117) As elsewhere in the PRC, the Muslims of the Dongbei enjoyed a renaissance (of a sort) over the past forty years.

The mid-twentieth century juncture is sometimes imagined as signaling the return of Islam to the Korean Peninsula since its disappearance in the

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(115) "Hui Liangyu," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, August 28, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%9B%9E%E8%89%AF%E7%8E%89

(116) "Zhongguo yisilanjiao xiehui juxing guerbangjie zhaodaihui Hui Liangyu zhuhe," *The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China*, November 6, 2011, http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2011-11/06/content_1987094.htm

(117) "Shenyang yisilanjiao jingxueyuan jianjie," *Islamic Association of China*, July 27, 2012, http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/zjjy/xylist/2/jianjie/201207/27-2726.html

fifteenth century, primarily through the proselytizing efforts of Turkish troops who fought under the flag of the UN in the Korean War (1950–53).(118) These soldiers and their accompanying chaplains worked with a small group of Korean converts to lay the foundations of the ROK's early Muslim community, inaugurating some of the first post-Japanese imperialism mosques (beginning with a tent mosque in the capital) and religious organizations in Seoul, Busan, and Daejeon.(119) It was, in fact, the converts who initiated contact with the Turks. The collected accounts of figures such as Kim Jin-gyu (a graduate of Peking University and one of the first Korean pilgrims to Makkah in 1959); Du Young Yoon (the elected first imam of the community); and Jun Kil Suh, show how these men went to the Dongbei in the 1930s and 1940s as employees of Japanese-owned firms, and were exposed to Islam through their interactions with local Sinophone Muslims.(120) Although all of these figures formally embraced the faith in 1950s and were recognized as the founding fathers of the ROK's earliest (modern) Muslim community, they were likely not the first group of converts from the peninsula in the twentieth century; all of them recall encountering practicing Korean Muslims during their time in the Dongbei.(121)

The ROK's industrial takeoff under General Park Chung-hee (r. 1963–79) propelled further growth and diversification of Korea's Muslim presence.(122)

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(118) Incidentally, this was not the first time Turkish soldiers had found their way into Northeast Asia. During the Great War (1914–18), the Tsar's armies captured many enemy combatants along the Galician and Caucasus fronts and sent them to camps dispersed across the Russian hinterland as far as Omsk, Irkutsk, and Vladivostok. Some of the prisoners, (mostly Austro-Hungarians and a few Ottoman subjects) escaped into the Dongbei, where they were detained in provisional camps in Harbin and Qiqihar as the Beiyang government declared war on the Central Powers in 1917. See Yucel Yanikdag, "Prisoners of War (Ottoman Empire/Middle East)," *International Encyclopaedia of the First World War*, October 8, 2014, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/prisoners_of_war_ottoman_empiremiddle_east; Matyas Mervay, "Austro-Hungarian Refugee Soldiers in China," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 12:1, 2018, 53.

(119) Yoon Kyung Sun, *Islam in Korea*, 48.

(120) Yoon Kyung Sun, *Islam in Korea*, 39–43, 46.

(121) Yoon Kyung Sun, *Islam in Korea*, 40–41.

(122) Jeeyun Kwon, "The Rise of Korean Islam: Migration and Da'wa," *Middle East Institute*, May 19, 2014, https://www.mei.edu/publications/rise-korean-islam-migration-and-dawa

Hundreds of thousands of laborers left Korea for the oil-rich countries of the Gulf, and some – despite being largely isolated from the national population in work camps – likely ended up embracing Islam.[(123)] Meanwhile, foreigners from Muslim-majority states in South, Southeast, and Central Asia travelled in the opposite direction, forming a steady trickle into the ROK from the late 1960s onwards and reaching a population some 100,000 by 2014.[(124)] Unlike their Goryeo-era Muslim forerunners, who arrived on the Peninsula as agents of imperial authority, some of these modern sojourners came as du'at "missionaries," distributing Qurans and scholarships, or as students seeking to learn from Korean modernity. More common still were blue-collar laborers, attracted by the country's relaxed visa regime.[(125)] The precarious and alien status of the latter is fictionally encapsulated in the character of 'Abdul Ali, a debt-ridden Pakistani laborer who appears in the Netflix-produced Korean-hit show *Squid Game*.

The successive decades-long waves of immigration have been accompanied by the spread of material and discursive cultures of global Islam and, in turn,

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(123) Hyeju Jeong, "Hyundai, Made in Jubail: Cold Wars, Business Networks and States behind Saudi Mega-City," *Middle East Institute* (National University of Singapore), 190, October 2, 2018; In the early twenty-first century, a similar phenomenon of conversion could be observed among Chinese workers in the Gulf. See Mohammed al-Sudairi, "China as the New Frontier for Islamic Daʿwah: The Emergence of a Saudi China-Oriented Missionary Impulse," *Journal of Arabian Studies* 7:2, 2017, 225–246.

(124) An additional 45,000 indigenous Korean Muslims are presumed to exist. Together, the total Muslim population in the ROK is estimated to be at around 150,000, although this figure is likely out of date. See Jeeyun Kwon, "The Rise of Korean Islam."

(125) Yoon Kyung Sun, *Islam in Korea*, 48–59; Yan Matusevich, "From Samarkand to Seoul: Central Asian migrants in South Korea," *Eurasianet*, May 17, 2019, https://eurasianet.org/from-samarkand-to-seoul-central-asian-migrants-in-south-korea; Comparable developments have taken place in Siberia and the Far East since the 1990s, as internal immigrants from Muslim-majority areas in Russia as well as those from the newly independent Central Asian states have flocked to these regions (although the demographic impact has been balanced out by outward immigration). Facing government and public resistance, some of these new communities have struggled to establish religious spaces of their own. In cities like Vladivostok, with a Muslim population approaching 15,000-20,000, there are no mosques, but rather two musallas "prayer areas" and no halal-certification regime to serve the dietary needs of the faithful. Information taken from an interview with a local community leader *via* Zoom (Valdivostok), April 25, 2021.; see also Russell Working and Nonna Chernyakova, "Muslims under fire in Russian Far East," *The Japan Times*, August 7, 2000, https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2000/08/07/commentary/world-commentary/muslims-under-fire-in-russian-far-east/

the introduction of new modes of practice, identity, and style across the nascent Korean Islamic landscape. These range from the Saudi-funded Seoul Central Mosque (established in 1976), or in the appearance of Twelver Shi'ite Husseinyas.(126) In tandem with this process, the Korean Muslim population has grown by virtue of intermarriage and conversion. A new generation of Korean du'at has come to the fore moreover, made up of digital missionaries educated in the Arabian Gulf or South Asia who use platforms such as YouTube to proselytize.(127) In all, a vibrant twenty-first century Muslim community has firmly planted itself in the southern part of the Peninsula. Its presence has elicited reactions that range from celebrating diversity and religious toleration to fear and xenophobia.(128) The uproar surrounding the arrival of Yemeni war refugees on Jeju Island in early 2018 is indicative of the ongoing tensions and dislocations afflicting contemporary Korean society over the growing visibility of Islam(s) and Muslims among them.(129)

Yet, what is forgotten in this story of Islam's return to the Korean Peninsula are the Muslims north of the 38th parallel. During the Korean War, Muslim citizens of the PRC were mobilized across the country to participate in the 'Support Korea, Resist America' campaign, and some even served in the People's Volunteer Army. In Dandong, the main entry point into the territories of the newly founded DPRK, mosques were delegated with ensuring a steady supply of halal foodstuffs for Muslim fighters and carrying out funerary rites

(126) Doyoung Song, "'Ummah' in Seoul: The Creation of Symbolic Spaces in the Islamic Central Masjid of Seoul," *Journal of Korean Religions*, 7:2, October 2016, 37–68; "Shafaqna reports: A rare look into life of South Korea's Shias," *Shia News Association*, August 28, 2019, https://en.shafaqna.com/109895/shafaqna-reports-a-rare-look-into-life-of-south-koreas-shias/

(127) Jeff Sung, "Young Muslims become flag-bearers of Islam in South Korea via social media," *Arab News*, May 18, 2019, https://www.arabnews.com/node/1498891/world

(128) "Muslim-friendly Travel," *VisitKorea,* August 13, 2021, https://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/ATR/muslim_intro.jsp; Gi Yeon Koo, "Islamophobia and the Politics of Representation of Islam in Korea," *Journal of Korean Religions*, 9:1, April 2018, 159–192.

(129) Jeeyun Kwon, "South Korea's 'Yemeni Refugee Problem,'" *Middle East Institute*, April 23, 2019, https://www.mei.edu/publications/south-koreas-yemeni-refugee-problem#:~:text=South%20Korea's%20experience%20with%20the,the%20visa%2Dfree%20entry%20system.&text=There%20have%20been%20strong%20public,war%20and%20health%20crisis%20there.

for those who died on the front.[130] General Peng Dehuai (1898–1974) had to request that the central authorities dispatch someone with the ability to communicate with more than 200 Turkish troops captured by PRC forces in the early stages of the conflict. The Lanzhou-based Wang Hongdao (1899–1968), an Azharite-trained Turkish-speaking Islamic scholar and Republican era diplomat, and a disciple of Wang Jingzhai, was sent in response.[131] While mainly entrusted with carrying out thought work on Muslim prisoners of war, Wang is recalled as having succeeded in convincing the camp authorities to erect a prayer site for them and also resolved their difficulties in obtaining halal food, increasing their allotments of eggs when mutton or beef was unavailable.[132]

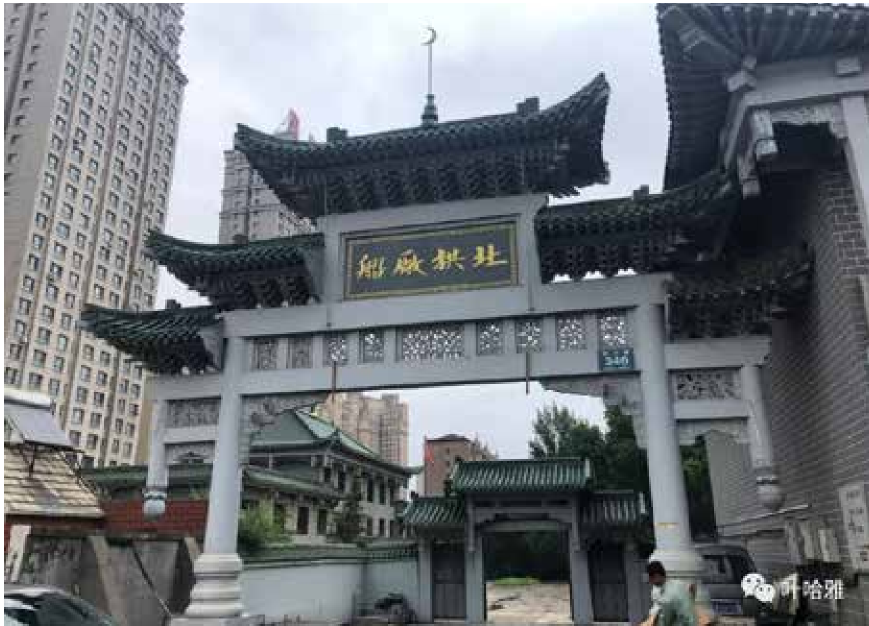

Figure 5. Entrance to the Chuanchang gongbei in Jilin.[133]

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(130) "Dandong huizu zai kangmei yuanchao shiqi de gongxian ji qishi," *Islamic Association of China*, September 28, 2020, http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/zjjy/yjdt/rdyj/202009/28-14378.html

(131) "Ma Hongdao (zhongguo yisilanjiao xiehui musilin xuezhe)," *Baidu Encyclopaedia*, August 3, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%A9%AC%E5%AE%8F%E9%81%93/2067134

(132) Shan Shengkui, "Huiyi ma hongdao jiaoshou," *Huizu Yanjiu*, 1997, 96.

(133) Image originally obtained through Wechat (Yehaya) and then *Sohu*, accessed March 5, 2021, https://www.sohu.com/a/324862147_99950194.

The DPRK, in a more muted mirror image of the ROK, developed a Muslim presence of its own, albeit on a smaller and more concealed scale. From the late 1950s, and accelerating in the 1960s and 1970s, Pyongyang normalized its relationship with a number of newly independent, Muslim-majority states such as Algeria (1958), Egypt (1963), Indonesia (1964), Syria (1966), Iraq (1968), Pakistan (1972), Iran (1973) and Libya (1974), as well as revolutionary groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO, 1966) and the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (1970).(134) While diplomatic ties were initially mediated through Beijing-based representations, formal missions with accredited diplomats from Muslim-majority states were gradually opened in Pyongyang. Mustapha al-Safarini (b. 1950), who was fluent in Chinese and was dispatched by the PLO for guerrilla training in Maoist China as a young man, served as an ambassador to the DPRK in 1983–92 before assuming a similar posting in the PRC in 1992–2002.(135) These diplomats and their families constituted the core of a small Muslim community in the DPRK that was also comprised of students and employees of the few foreign companies allowed to conduct business there, such as Egypt's Orascom Telecom.(136)

A handful of foreign experts contracted to provide language instruction and editorial work were likewise part of the Muslim presence in the DPRK. As competition with the ROK over international legitimacy intensified, the Arabic language gained newfound importance, as it did in the PRC following the

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(134) Daniel Wertz, JJ Oh, and Kim Insung, "DPRK Diplomatic Relations," *The National Committee on North Korea Issue Brief*, August 2016, 8–9.

(135) "Mustapha al-Safarini," *'Areq*, accessed July 18, 2021, https://areq.net/m/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%89_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A.html

(136) Muhammad-Hasan Nami (b. 1953) was a military-attache at the Iranian embassy and one-time Minister of Communication and Information Technology under the Ahmadinejad presidency. He obtained a doctorate in state management from the Kim Ill Sung University. See "Zindikinameh: Mohammad-Hassan Nami (1332–)," *Hamshahri*, February 26, 2008, https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/201062/%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%DA%AF%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%DB%B1%DB%B3%DB%B3%DB%B2; Muhammad Abu Layla, "10 masriyun ya'ishun fi korya al-shamaliya…matha yaf'aluna hunak?" *Sawt al-Umma*, October 9, 2017.

Bandung Conference of 1955, as a medium of state propaganda and outreach. From an early period, it became one of the main foreign languages (joined later by Persian and Urdu) taught at the University of Foreign Studies in Pyongyang to future diplomats and minders of government-organized tours.[137] Although much of the teaching was assigned to local academics, including remarkable individuals such as the Peking University-trained spy-scholar Chong Suil (b. 1934), foreigners probably provided some language instruction services for short durations.[138] Foreign Arabic-speaking revisers and language polishers were also hired by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, which from the 1960s onwards produced copious amounts of literature directed at the Arab world, a legacy that continues to the present with the publication of the monthly magazine *Koriya al-Yaum*.[139] According to one source, a Lebanese national carried out Arabic-language polishing in the late 1980s.[140]

The formation of a Pyongyang-centered Muslim community has naturally generated various religious needs of its own. With no accessible local mosques in the DPRK, prayer rooms located in embassy grounds have become vital spaces for communal ritual practice and prayer. A particularly visible instance is that of the Ar-Rahman Mosque inside the Iranian diplomatic compound, which

(137) Minders typically accompany foreign visitors to the DPRK on government-organized tours. Similar to the PRC (where itineraries have included the Dongbei industrial-belt cities during the Maoist era), visitors to the DPRK are taken to see factories, cultural palaces, and other symbols of socialist modernity. Some visitors from the Arab world have written about their experiences. See Ahmed Hamroush, *Masri fi vietnam wa korya wa al-sin*. (Cairo: muasasat akhbar al-yaum, no date). For information on the experiences of travellers in China during the Cold War, see Mohammed Alsudairi, “Arab encounters with Maoist China: transnational journeys, diasporic lives and intellectual discourses,” *Third World Quarterly* 42:3, 2021, 503–524.

(138) In the 1980s and 1990s, Chong Suil dissimulated in the ROK as a Muslim (half-)Middle Eastern academic by the name of Muhammad Kkansu. He became one of the country’s most famous scholars on the Silk Road, a reputation he maintained even following his arrest and release. See Theodore Jun Yoo, “Muhammad Kkansu and the Diasporic Other in the Two Koreas,” *Korean Studies* 43, 2019, 151.

(139) The magazine was originally called *Koriya al-Jadida*. This follows the same pattern observed with the still-existent *al-Sin al-Yaum* from the PRC, which was known as *al-Sin al-Jadida*. For a selection of Arabic-language DPRK literature, see “Matbu’at korya,” *Dar al-nashr bilughat al-ajnabiya fi jumhuriyat korya al-dimuqratiya al-sha’biya*, accessed September 8, 2021, http://www.korean-books.com.kp/ar/

(140) Andrew Holloway, *A Year in Pyongyang*. (Unknown: The Nihilist Amateur Press, 2011), 16.

has become a site for ecumenical gatherings of Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims on occasions such as Eid al-Fitr.[141] The lack of halal meat has also posed challenges: in addition to provisions brought by diplomatic staff, Dandong, which overlooks the Yalu dividing the PRC from the DPRK and boasts a small Sinophone Muslim community, has become an important supply node for Muslims in Pyongyang.[142] As a consequence of the size of the community, the DPRK authorities, unlike their counterparts in the PRC, display greater unfamiliarity with Islamic conventions. In one recorded anecdote, they refused to postpone the time of a state banquet so that invited Muslim diplomats could break their Ramadan fast, among other *faux pas*.[143]

Epilogue: Northeast Asia within Islamdom

As the agents, subjects, and victims of non-Muslim imperial orders that struggled to seize control of Northeast Asia, Muslims have over this *longue-durée* emerged as a constituent part of the political and social fabric of this geographically expansive region. They have participated, willingly or otherwise, in empire-building and state-building projects as conquerors, imperial enforcers, exiled settlers, and even activist-propagandists. In turn, they have brought with them diverse linguistic, cultural, and spiritual traditions of their own, transforming the religious landscape and co-existing (in apathy, acrimony, or harmony) with alternative visions of Muslimness. The Muslim presence in Northeast Asia reflects a remarkable dynamism that has fluctuated with the ebb and flow of succeeding orders: under the Mongol hegemony, Muslims were part of the privileged and powerful semuren classes that upheld the integrity and coherence of the empire; under the Ming-Qing

(141) Chad O'Carroll, "Iran Builds Pyongyang's First Mosque," *NK News*, January 21, 2013; Jaka Parker, "Eid Al-Fitr in North Korea | Muslim in North Korea," *YouTube*, June 26, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLw1v-xQA7I&t=38s

(142) From notes taken by Mohammed Alsudairi, during visit to Dandong, PRC, July 24–25, 2018.

(143) Andrew Holloway, *A Year in Pyongyang*, 2, 69, 92.

imperiums, they were gradually reduced to marginalized "familiar strangers," who disappeared altogether in the Choseon realm.[144] Yet, under the regimes of modernity and associated processes of globalization and capitalist integration in the nineteenth century the Muslim presence underwent a rebirth; even in contexts where the modern state has suppressed or maintains a high-degree of control over the religious sphere, as is the case in the PRC, DPRK, and Russia, Muslim communities have proliferated and embraced new forms of religiosity and expression. Despite maintaining a faint footprint that barely registers on the censuses of various states, the Muslim presence in Northeast Asia – as this paper has shown – is variegated, rich, and intimately connected to the wider world; it is part and parcel of global Islamdom, albeit a long-neglected part.[145]

(144) The phrase is borrowed from Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers.*

(145) For a rich and interesting discussion (in the form of a special edition) that speaks to this conclusion, see Matthew Erie and Allen Carlson, "Introduction to 'Islam in China/China in Islam'," *Cross-Currents: East Asia History and Culture Review* 12, September 2014, https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-12

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