THE CONUNDRUM OF COLLABORATION: JAPANESE INVOLVEMENT WITH MUSLIMS IN NORTH CHINA, 1931-1945

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that Chinese Muslims living under occupation who collaborated with the Japanese were actively involved in creating an on-going dialogue between the Japanese Empire and the Chinese Nationalists about strategies for managing minority populations on the mainland. The dissertation describes some of the ways which the Japanese transformed the social and political milieu in which Islam operated in North China and argues that the Japanese approach ultimately shaped the minority policies of both Nationalist and later Communist governments in China. More broadly, the dissertation demonstrates that twentieth-century projects of nation and state building in China have shaped (and reshaped) people’s understanding of the place of Islam in Chinese society and the place of Muslims from China in the Islamic world.

The dissertation contributes to the scholarship on Modern East Asia in three ways. While the idea of wartime collaboration of Chinese with the Japanese continues to be an important area of research, I draw attention to a historically important minority group in China who made the choice to work with their Japanese occupiers. By showcasing the experience of Muslims living under occupation, my work refutes claims that there was anything resembling a cohesive Muslim resistance during the war. Secondly, the dissertation contributes to the on-going demystification of war in twentieth-century China by bringing to light some of the everyday experiences of Muslims living under occupation. Thirdly, by focusing on Japanese policies, Nationalist responses and Chinese Muslims themselves, the dissertation examines hitherto unconsidered political and social outcomes of WWII for minority populations in China. Taken as a whole, the project adds to both the understanding of the experiences of war in East Asia and to re-thinking the place of Muslims from China in the broader nexus of global Islam in the twentieth-century.

KEYWORDS: China; Islam; Ethnicity; Nationalism; Japan; Imperialism; China War; Pacific War; WWII; Pan-Islamism; Pan-Asianism.
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**INTRODUCTION**

**MINORITY REPORT: WHY THE HISTORY OF MUSLIMS LIVING UNDER JAPANESE OCCUPATION MATTERS**

“The Japanese have spent a vast amount of propaganda energy upon the Muslims in China. They have directed their activities towards two objectives: the inducement of the Muslims, as part of a larger Islamic world, to join in the cherished Japanese scheme of hegemony over Greater East Asia; and encouragement of separatist tendencies in the Muslim minority groups, thus exploiting the “divide and conquer” technique to weaken China as a whole.”

This dissertation argues that Chinese Muslims living under occupation who collaborated with the Japanese Empire were actively involved in creating an on-going dialogue between the Japanese imperial government and Chinese Nationalist policy-makers about strategies for managing minority populations on the mainland. Using a wide range of Japanese and Chinese sources from archives and libraries across China and Japan, as well as materials from the Library of Congress, National Archives and Research Administration. Office of Strategic Services—Research and
the British Archives at Kew, and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA),
the dissertation describes some of the ways which the Japanese transformed the social and
political milieu in which Islam operated in North China. It also argues that the Japanese approach
ultimately shaped the minority policies of both Nationalist and later Communist governments in
China. More broadly, the dissertation demonstrates that twentieth-century projects of nation and
state building in China have “shaped and reshaped people’s understanding of the place of Islam”
in Chinese society.² By fostering the idea of difference in Muslims through the enforcement of
segregation, the promotion of educational reforms, the sponsoring of hajjis, the emphasis of
origin myths that cast the Muslims in China as separate and distant from the Han, and the
demonization of the Nationalists and the Communists, the Japanese imperial government created
an atmosphere in occupied China where certain groups of Muslims began to understand
themselves more as part of a larger community of global Muslims. The consciousness of
Muslims from China was explicitly shaped and formed through interactions with the Japanese
imperial government from late 1920s, if not before.

The dissertation contributes to the scholarship on Modern East Asia in three ways. While
the idea of wartime collaboration of Chinese with the Japanese continues to be an important area
of research, I draw attention to a historically important minority group in China who made the
choice to work with their Japanese occupiers, due both in part to the atmosphere created by the
Japanese imperial government and for Japanese purposes. By showcasing the experience of

Khalid contends that the changing role of Islam in society was heavily influenced by the state in post-
Soviet Uzbekistan.
Muslims living under occupation, my work refutes claims that there was anything resembling a cohesive Muslim resistance during the war. Some recent scholars present Sino-Muslims from China as unwaveringly patriotic and unified in their resistance against the Japanese. However, I argue that the nationalist rhetoric of inclusiveness and resistance to the Japanese during WWII denies agency to the Muslims who were working in concert with the Japanese imperial government throughout the war in the creation of modern ethno-national sentiments. Secondly, my work contributes to the on-going demystification of war in twentieth-century China by bringing to light some of the everyday experiences of Muslims living under occupation. It is concerned with how the war affected the lives of those who lived through it by treating the Japanese occupation as an integral part of modern Chinese history, rather than a “peripheral story.

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3 Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997). Lipman coined the term ‘Sino-Muslim’ to emphasise that many Islamic communities have been in China for hundreds of years and are influenced by Chinese culture. The term ‘Sino-Muslim’ also distinguishes them from non-Chinese speaking Muslim minorities in China, like the Uyghurs.

4 Both Mao Yufeng and Masumi Matsumoto portray all Chinese Muslims an integral part of the Nationalists resistance campaigns. Mao’s work is examined more thoroughly in Chapters one and four of this dissertation. Masumi Matsumoto, “Sino-Muslims’ Identity and Thoughts during the Anti-Japanese War: Impact of the Middle East,” *Nihon chūgokugakkai nenpō / Annals of the Japan Association for Middle East Studies* 18, no 2 (2003): 39–54. Her article attempts to reinforce the idea that there was a unitary Chinese nation that resisted the Japanese. In this article she explains that one distinguishing characteristic of the Hui among the other minorities in China is that they “have maintained strong nationalism and allegiance toward China,” (39). She extends these assertions to Hui resistance of Japan, and says that the Japanese Empire was unsuccessful in its efforts to recruit Muslims because they were “extremely patriotic toward their homeland China during the Anti-Japanese War,” (40). In another article, Matsumoto argues that the “Hui as a whole have tried to remain loyal to the Chinese State and its rulers” (117). Her conclusions are based on the narrow reading of one Nationalist-sponsored journal, *Yuehua*. For more please see: Masumi Matsumoto, “Rationalizing Patriotism Among Muslim Chinese: The impact of the Middle East on the *Yuehua* journal” in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, and communication*, edited by Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (New York: Routledge, 2006): 117-142; Mao Yufeng, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 70, no. 2 (May 2011): 373-395; Mao Yufeng. “Between the Nation and the Umma: Sino-Muslims in Chinese Nation-Building, 1906-1956,” (George Washington University, 2007).
Thirdly, by focusing on Japanese policies, Nationalist responses and Chinese Muslims themselves, the dissertation examines hitherto unconsidered political and social outcomes of WWII on minority populations in China. Taken as a whole, the project contributes to understanding the experiences of war in East Asia and to re-thinking the place of Muslims from China within the broader nexus of global Islam in the twentieth-century.

From the late nineteenth century, emerging nationalisms in China and the threat of outside aggression problematized the identity and loyalty of Muslim populations in the region. In China, the Japanese began asserting themselves through linkages and contacts with Muslims, and by the China War (1931-1945) they were actively co-opting and working with Muslims. Probing further into Japan’s quest to legitimize itself as a member of the international community, especially within the Islamic sphere, this dissertation explores the dynamics of the interactions between Muslims in China and the Japanese imperial state, questioning where expressions of nationalism, transnationalism, internationalism and imperialism intersected and overlapped. The relationships between Chinese Muslims who collaborated with the Japanese highlight the ways that ethnic and religious nationalisms were being invented and expressed across borders and boundaries in the early twentieth century.

By 1937, the Japanese were deeply involved with the Muslim populations living in occupied China. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War signaled a shift in the Japanese

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6 William Kirby made the argument in 1997 that the history international relations during the Republican Era needed to be contextualized within the larger geopolitical situation of the world. William Kirby, “The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations at Home and Abroad in the Republican Era,” The China Quarterly 150 (June 1997): 433-558.
approach as they began to wield more power over Muslim populations who came under their direct control. The Japanese had two main objectives regarding Muslim populations in North China: to facilitate their engagement with broader networks of Muslims throughout the colonized world, and to foster both dissent and division throughout China by appealing to disenfranchised minorities. In this dissertation I uncover and explore some of the policy successes and failures of the Japanese empire regarding Muslims in North China. Many of the issues that both the Japanese and the Nationalists struggled with in the 1930s and 1940s were, as Lin observes of Tibet, “the same issues that later confronted Mao Zedong’s Communist regime” in the 1950s.7 Muslims throughout the mainland were working toward the same goals: implementing educational reforms, creating relationships with Muslims beyond the borders of China, and legitimizing their place within their communities. However, they often achieved these goals with the support of different political backers. Japan presented itself as the benevolent power that would help Muslims achieve the position in society they deserved, and Muslims in China worked with them to achieve many of the goals and reforms that had been on their agendas since the 1911 Revolution or before. For the most part, the loyalties of Muslims who decided to stay in areas under occupation after 1937 lay with their communities, their religion, and their families. The Japanese were able to capitalize on this and gave Muslims a chance to remake themselves, albeit with Japanese input.

The Japanese offered Muslims in China with the chance to help them create an idealized version of Muslims that the Japanese could then present to the rest of the world as an example of their successful developmental policies and support for Islam. But Muslims also used this vision

7 Lin, Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier, 3-4.
to their own advantage: The ability of Muslims to get what they wanted out of the Japanese inversed the power structure between colonizer and colonized in a dynamic way: the Japanese empire needed Muslim communities in North China as much as Muslim communities needed them and this reciprocal relationship might not have been one of equality, but it was surely not one sided.\(^8\)

This overlay of the Japanese imperial project on top of pre-existing loyalties and identity allowed Muslims to occupy a liminal space where they could manipulate their Chinese, Muslim, local, and intellectual identities in ways that served their own interests. The Japanese, for their part, could emphasize inclusion or exclusion of Muslim communities within China, just as the Muslims themselves could do, depending on the situations they faced, the people they met, and the ways that they hoped others would see them, and what they hoped to get out of the Japanese. Sometimes emphasizing their own “backwardness” and “traditionalism” was beneficial to Muslims, who then got what they wanted by showing that they bought into the transformative power of the Japanese Empire: engaging with the categories and structures of the Japanese imperial state, Muslims played a role in shaping them. Emphasizing their religiosity and piety was a way to ensure the Japanese would support them because the Japanese needed devout

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\(^8\) Terry Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). The Japanese colonial project dealing with minorities was in many ways different from the Soviet incorporation of Muslim minorities. The Soviets were, of course, concerned with “Sovietization” and casting Islam as a backwards religion that was holding minorities back from full membership in the Soviet Union. The Japanese, on the other hand, emphasized the religiosity of Muslims and promoted Islam as a way to make connections between themselves and Muslims throughout the colonial world. While Adbeed Khalid has recently argued in a lecture about his forthcoming work, the Soviets were interested in emphasizing similarities between Soviets, the Japanese focused on cultivating difference and things that distinguished religious minorities living in North China from the Han Chinese.
Muslims to support them, at least outwardly. On a broader level, the project is about the interaction between Muslims and the state, and the changes that came about to society in North China partly because of the Japanese occupation. As the Japanese introduced Muslims to new technologies and presented them with new opportunities, Muslims began to rethink their place in China and their place in the larger community of believers.

Examining linkages between the Japanese and Muslims in China presents an opportunity to think critically about the ways that an occupying power can shape national discourse. In this case, the Japanese imperial government and their agents were the primary agent shaping the ways that Muslims from North China living under occupation understood their religion in relation to the rest of the world for almost ten years. By contributing to the ongoing discussion about collaboration during the China War, this dissertation shows how Japanese imperial rhetoric, much like the Nationalist and a Communist rhetoric directed specifically at Muslim populations, shaped religious and ethnic nationalisms in China during and after the war. It also underscores how much of the anti-Japanese nationalist propaganda directed at Muslims coming out of Kunming and Chongqing during the war was in dialogue with the Japanese campaigns among Muslim communities living under occupation in North China. Sino-Muslims continued to practice Islam throughout the war, and they also expressed, learned about and shared their impressions of the war through theological explanations and religious expressions.

By taking into consideration the perspective of Sino-Muslims, collaboration can be examined from new angles. In many Muslim journals published in China in the 1930s and 1940s, for example, the war and the occupation are written about as they related to Islam: there is less appeal to the Chinese nation-state and more emphasis on justifying collaboration or resistance
theologically. In some cases, these journals draw analogies between the situation in China and other places in the Islamic world, such as Morocco, Turkey and India. These parallels resonated with their Muslim audiences in a way impossible for non-Muslim readers, and served to strengthen the ties between Sino-Muslims and Muslims in other countries rather than to their Han Chinese neighbors.

Another aim of the dissertation is to shed light on the historical memory of wartime collaboration by bringing Muslims into the dialogue, and shows that their motivations, methods, and justifications for working with the Japanese were often vastly different than those of their Han neighbors. During the China War, Muslims in China were in a precarious position, and their loyalties to the Chinese nation were tested as those of Han were not. Nationalism and anti-Japanese foment as espoused by the Nationalists and the Communists was a powerful force, but the nation they envisioned at the time often held little appeal for many Muslims. Sino-Muslims thought harder and longer about the benefits to working with the occupiers: in China, conflicting loyalties, old grudges, the seemingly empty nationalist rhetoric of inclusiveness, the staunchly anti-religious fervor of Communism, not to mention Han chauvinism and the organizational ineptitude of the GMD and the CCP, all factored into Muslim choices of whether or not to work with the Japanese. Examining collaboration between Sino-Muslims and the Japanese Empire also allows us to think critically about how collaboration is about compromise on the side of both the occupier and the occupied. The Japanese imperial officials on the mainland did not always get to pick whom they got to work with, and vice-versa, but many minorities saw working with the Japanese as an opportunity to have input into the ways that they imagined themselves fitting into their communities throughout and after the war.
One more goal of the dissertation is to explore the wide variety of intellectual trends regarding the tensions and intersections between expressions of ethnic nationalisms and the evolving meanings of “China” in the 1930s and the 1940s. In conjunction with these trends, the Japanese and the Nationalists both deployed Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian rhetoric to appeal to Muslims in China. This put Muslims in an exceptional position, often culminating in the juxtaposition of these two ideologies. The Japanese were promoting the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere among Muslims in China, while also trying to forge connections between Muslims in China and the Middle East: they were not able to do this with non-Muslim groups throughout East Asia. A lot of work has been done on the history of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism. However, few scholars have looked at how both of these wartime ideologies were being used simultaneously to appeal to Muslims in China and then interpreted and deployed by Muslim communities.

The final aim of this dissertation is to contribute to recent scholarship that explores the multiplicity of narratives in order to demonstrate the complexity of wartime history. The events of the war beyond China were central to how both the Nationalists and the Japanese jockeyed politically vis-à-vis one another and in relation to the other international players. Often the larger diplomatic maneuverings of the European powers overshadowed Nationalist and Japanese ambitions. Until the signing of the Cairo Declaration in December 1943, the Nationalists lacked

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9 For example: Kobayashi Hajime 小林元, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō” 日本語と回民児童 Kaikyōken 回教圏 57 (1940); “Dai ajia sensō to kaikyō” 大亜細亜戦争と回教 Kaikyōken 回教圏 6, no. 1 (1942).
the manpower or the authority to recover areas occupied by the Japanese.\textsuperscript{10} Before that, the Nationalists were disillusioned with the international situation, especially after the Soviet Union and Japan signed a neutrality pact on April 3, 1941. In this pact, both parties agreed to “maintain peaceful and friendly relations between them and mutually respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the Mongolian People’s Republic” in exchange for the Soviet pledge to “respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of Manchukuo.”\textsuperscript{11} However, the momentum changed for the Nationalists when the Germans declared war on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and from then on the Nationalists made a more concerted effort to reclaim the northeast with the help of the Allies.\textsuperscript{12} These diplomatic maneuverings are inseparable from the situation on the ground, and had direct consequences for the Muslims who aligned themselves with the Japanese; the Japanese were likewise very aware of Muslims who were susceptible to following the “Red Route” (\textit{Akairo rūto}).\textsuperscript{13}

In the wake of the transnational turn, scholars are beginning to appreciate the importance of global networks in the creation of imperial spaces.\textsuperscript{14} The constant reconfiguration of the Asia-Pacific region by European, American and Asian imperial powers in the twentieth century has had a lasting impact on the prevailing ethnic classifications within the Chinese nation-state. Ethnicity in China is often understood as a hardened category imposed on Chinese people by the


\textsuperscript{11} Shigeo, “Northeast China in Chongqing Politics,” 176.

\textsuperscript{12} Shigeo, “Northeast China in Chongqing Politics,” 176.

\textsuperscript{13} “\textit{Nihon to kaikyō ajia}” 日本と回教亞細亞, \textit{Dai Ajia Shugi} 大亞細亞主義 6, no. 62 (1941): 28.

\textsuperscript{14} Huri Islamoglu and Peter Perdue, eds., \textit{Shared histories of modernity—China, India and the Ottoman Empire}, (London: Routledge, 2009).
nation-state. However, paying attention to the important global and transnational circulations, as well as the ways that the Japanese informed the conversations about the place of Muslims in parts of China for almost twenty years in the twentieth century, highlights how mobile subjects often created these cross-cultural connections. In turn, this allows us to rethink prevailing notions of ethnicity in China.

**Collaboration and Resistance in WWII—Lessons from Vichy**

Any examination of collaborative regimes in the twentieth century should start with a critical look at the Vichy government in France (1940-1944). The breadth of both the theoretical and historical material focusing on Vichy is useful for scholars, and an assessment of the lessons learned by the French exposes the shortcomings of scholarship on collaboration in China. Scholars of modern China and Japan only recently acknowledged that “collaboration often enabled occupation as much as it worked against it,” and that people living in China—especially those on the fringes, such as ethnic and religious minorities—were well aware of the ways that collaboration could aggravate wartime nation-building efforts of the Nationalists.\(^{15}\)

In the years immediately following WWII, the international community attempted to come to terms with the destruction and suffering perpetrated by the Axis powers. The Germans occupied large areas of France between 1940 and 1944, and Phillipe Pétain’s État Français, also known as the Vichy Régime, facilitated the occupation. After Liberation, Charles de Gaulle was quick to purge Nazi sympathizers, such as Fascist writer Robert Brasillach, and political leaders,\(^ {15}\) Timothey Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese agents and local elites in wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007): 88.
such as Philippe Pétain and Pierre Laval. Political leaders who had castigated de Gaulle during the war for running the resistance from London ate their words and followed his example, hiding in Italy and taking refuge in Sigmaringen, Germany to avoid persecution by the Liberation Government.\textsuperscript{16}

In the early years of the Fourth Republic, the French favored memoirs and novels about the prominent members of la résistance. The tone of the writing was resentful and angry as people came to terms with wartime losses, and especially with the French facilitation of atrocities committed against French Jews.\textsuperscript{17} Post-war rhetoric blamed the Germans for forcing the French into collaborative and oppressive relationships, and French writing about collaboration in the immediate post-war period is filled with sentimentalist resentment towards individuals who worked with the Nazis.\textsuperscript{18} Although they now read as polemic, early works on collaboration with the Nazis highlighted a tension confronted by later historians of Vichy: how to distinguish between those who were ideologically sympathetic to the Nazis and those who were simply trying to do what they could to survive the war.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the French started to take a more critical look at collaboration. In 1972 Stanley Hoffman brought attention to the tensions in earlier works on the subject as he drew a sharp theoretical distinction between “collaboration” and

\textsuperscript{16} This model of purging collaborators was also followed in China, and Chiang Kaishek’s government hunted down and executed both communists and Japanese sympathizers. However, many of those handed life sentences by the Nationalists had their sentences commuted and were released during the course of the Civil War. Source

\textsuperscript{17} Jean-Paul Sartre, \textit{The aftermath of War} (New York: Seagull, 2008). [First published in French in 1949].

“collaborationism.” Hoffmann argued that collaborationists were individuals or groups who were ideologically aligned with the Nazis, while all others who lived under occupation should be labeled collaborators. For Hoffmann, the majority of people in France were not collaborationists in “the sense of an openly desired co-operation with and imitation of the German regime,” but there was plenty of collaboration, or the safeguarding of “French interests in interstate relations between the beaten power and the victor.” This important distinction opened the field to new possibilities for study, but it also implicated everyone who lived under occupation as having somehow contributed to it.

French works like Jean-Pierre Azéma’s *La Collaboration, 1940-1944* (1975) and J. Tallandier’s *La Collaboration* (1975) continued to probe the theoretical foundations for understanding collaboration, but faced limitations because of inaccessibility to French archives on the subject of WWII throughout the 1970s. Azéma’s important contribution to the field called on French scholars to look at Vichy from the bottom up, rather than from the top down. By doing this, Azéma was essentially implicating the majority of French citizens of having played an active part in the occupation, rather than simply being passive recipients of a German invasion. Beyond this, Azéma’s *La Collaboration* addressed the problem of the teleology of

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20 Hoffmann, “Collaborationism in France during World War II,” 376.
22 Like many other countries, France has a thirty-year freeze on releasing any government documents in their public archives.
historical narratives about the German occupation. He argued that in order to rethink collaboration, scholars and the French public needed to stop writing history that presented the inevitable outcome of WWII as a German defeat. This, he argued, would provide new ways of understanding peoples’ motivations for collaborating.

Newly declassified sources and post-structuralism changed the field of collaboration studies in France from the 1980s. These changes led to a proliferation of works on the subject. New works divided into two equally important and mutually reinforcing fields: one group focused on the moral conundrums presented by collaboration; the others, influenced by the history of memory, concerned themselves with the ways that Vichy was remembered and commemorated in French collective memory. Pierre Nora and Henry Rousso led the field of the historical memory of Vichy. Rousso understood memory as a “a living phenomenon, something in perpetual evolution,” whereas history, “as understood by historians—[was] a scholarly and theoretical reconstruction and as such [was] more apt to give rise to a substantial, durable body of knowledge.” For Rousso, memory is shaped by signals emanating from various carriers, or as he termed them “vectors of memory.” Memories of Vichy, he argued, were

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24 Azéma, La Collaboration, 74-75.
presented through four different types of “vectors”: “official carriers” were represented by ceremonies, monuments, and celebrations coordinated by governments; “organizational carriers” were exemplified by groups like soldiers and unions; “cultural carriers,” relied on transmission through things like films and literature; and “scholarly carriers” were also known as historians and teachers. Each discrete vector was responsible for specific segments of the French national consciousness pertaining to the historical memory of WWII.28

**COLLABORATION STUDIES IN EAST ASIA**

Until the late 1990s, examinations of influential and important collaborative relationships between populations living under occupation in China and the Japanese Empire were largely absent from western, Japanese, and Chinese historiography of WWII in East Asia.29 Historians of East Asia faced a number of challenges incorporating the Japanese presence on the mainland into the telling of Chinese history. The inability to access archives on the mainland and the persistence of dominant national narratives that emphasized resistance presented the most glaring obstacles to a thoughtful re-examination of wartime collaboration. Part of the problem was the fact that after the war, while other countries were re-building and reflecting on their wartime experiences, civil war enveloped the mainland. However, since the late 1990s, using the scholarship on Vichy as a model, historians started to rethink Chinese collaboration with the

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Japanese and what this meant for Chinese citizens and the ways that the war is remembered and commemorated in East Asia.

The dominant historical narrative in China about the war centers on resistance against the Japanese. In China, those who worked with the Japanese are simply labeled as traitors, or as “selling out” (maiguo 賣國) their country. When speaking specifically of people who worked actively with the Japanese, the moniker hanjian (漢奸), or “traitor to the Han people” is used most frequently. The term hanjian has deep historical meaning, and like the term “collaborator” in the historiography of WWII, carries a pejorative connotation. The term came into frequent usage during the Song Dynasty to describe Han Chinese official who spied for the Jurchen, and the second character “jian” is often used to describe “moral transgressions”, such as adultery or breaking the law. Being a hanjian meant that a moral boundary was crossed, and these indiscretions were often associated with chaos and social disorder. Both the historical context and association of hanjian with people who transgress boundaries is important: in continuing to refer to collaborators as hanjian, the majority of Chinese reject the notion that any sort of

30 A notable exception to this is work by associate professor Pan Min at Tongji University. For example, see: Pan Min 潘敏, Jiangsu riwei jiceng zhengquan yanjiu 江苏日伪基层政权研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社: 2006). Pan Min is also currently looking for a publisher on the mainland for her translation of Timothy Brook’s Collaboration: Japanese agents and local elites in wartime China. In 2000, Jiang Wen directed and starred in a dark comedy about the occupation called Guize laile! 鬼子來了! (English title: Devils on the Doorstep). Although it was banned on the mainland, it is a good indication that certain segments of the population are also thinking critically about the Japanese occupation. Carol wants more explanation here.


32 Wakeman Jr., “Hanjian (Traitor)! ” 299.
accommodation to the occupiers was possible. However, as this dissertation attempts to show, instead of remembering the war as a period of collective resistance against the Japanese, it might be more fruitful, as Tim Brook suggests, to think about the ways that people living under occupation made accommodations for the Japanese in order of making their lives livable throughout the war.

Over the past decade, historians started to transcend stories of resistance during the war and address questions of what it meant to be Chinese during this tumultuous period in Chinese history. This questioning produced new narratives of wartime collaboration that are contributing to the understanding of the process of state building in China in the 1930s and 1940s. Historian Rana Mitter says that we short-change ourselves by looking at the history of the twentieth century in China in simple binary terms of ‘Nationalists versus Communists’ because such a view ignores the Japanese influence on the mainland and those who worked with them. It also ignores the agency of those who willing chose to collaborate. In fact, many people initially chose to avoid both the Nationalists and the Communists and work with the Japanese, but this point is often overlooked in the historiography of WWII. Here, my efforts to examine Japanese efforts to win the hearts and minds of Muslim minorities in North China is part of what Jonathan Lipman

33 Brook, Collaboration, 88.
35 Rana Mitter, “Contention and Redemption: Ideologies of National Salvation in Republican China,” Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions 3, no. 3 (Winter 2002): 44-45. Rana Mitter offers a telling analogy about how Chinese scholars treat the occupation and the puppet régimes in China during WWII as the same thing: “Classifying all the ‘puppet’ régimes of this period together makes as little sense as, say, categorizing as identical the administrations of Vichy France, occupied Denmark and the Generalgouvernement of Poland in wartime Europe, and then declaring that they were, anyways, unworthy of examination in their own right on the grounds that they were ‘just’ Nazi puppet regimes,” (47).
explains as the ongoing and broader challenges to the ethnic and nationalistic consciousness of minorities in China “which are based in a hegemonic ideology that belongs to the nation-state.”

By avoiding “both black-and-white condemnation of the [Japanese] imperial presence simply as depredation and plunder, and the complacent position that imperialism was essentially a ‘helping hand’ in bringing China to modernity,” we can begin to think about the Japanese presence on the mainland in ways that contribute to our understanding of the place of ethnic and religious minorities in the Chinese nation-state.

Serious studies on collaboration in East Asia are relatively rare compared to those of Vichy. Until very recently, most scholarship focused on the Nanjing regime of Wang Jingwei, or on the heavily-Han populated Jiangnan region, and there are no in-depth studies of Japanese collaboration with ethnic or religious minority groups. However, this is changing. In his recent work on Hong Kong under Japanese occupation, John Carroll points out that most people who collaborated with the Japanese defended their actions as trying to help and secure their local communities. At the level of the locality, people in Hong Kong were quick to forgive political elites for collaboration after the war, understanding that their efforts had ensured the safety of their communities. Carroll’s study concludes that Hong Kongers were more concerned with the

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36 Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, XXXIV.
38 Tim Brook’s *Collaboration: Japanese agents and local elites in wartime China* (2007) is the most well known book on the subject. Other more recent works in Chinese and English are: Toby Lincoln, *Urbanizing China in War and Peace: the Case of Wuxi County* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2015); Pan Min, *Jiangsu riwei jiceng zhengquan yanjiu*.
39 To my knowledge, Sakura Christmas’ dissertation (Harvard University) is the only other full-length work in English focusing on Japanese collaboration with Mongolians.
fate of their native place, and that collaborators expressed pride in “Hong Kong, its prosperity and stability, and [they were] committed to preserving these qualities.”

In Hong Kong, Carroll also acknowledges that many people preferred Japanese rule to that of the British colonial authorities. Unlike the British, the Japanese were Asians, and therefore more similar to themselves both racially and culturally, they argued. The Japanese also took the time to explain their policies to Hong Kongers, whereas the British often ruled by decree without any sort of consideration of how their policies would affect the daily lives of normal Hong Kong people. Here, Carroll’s work on Hong Kong makes a important point about collaboration in colonial spaces: he argues that, “colonial spaces do not always have to be imagined as places fraught with tension and failure, where ‘cultural clashes’ overshadow ‘patterns of collaboration and accommodation.’”

Yumi Moon picks up this point in her book about Korean collaboration with Japanese officials at the turn of the twentieth century. Moon implores readers not to think about colonizers and colonized as “monolithic groups” in diametric opposition to each other but rather of colonial encounters as “culturally hybridized…so that the colonized did not remain a unified subject of empire—or its passive victim.” Here, Moon is drawing on Fredrick Cooper’s work on colonial North Africa. Cooper “argues that the binary of collaboration and resistance is inadequate to frame the diverse interactions that occurred within and across empires. Empire…is a potential

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42 Carroll, *Edges of Empire*, 12.
stage for local actors to pursue opportunity, wealth, or even freedom.⁴³ All of these observations are useful for incorporating the stories of Sino-Muslim collaborators into the history of twentieth-century China.

The Japanese geared their efforts at recruiting lower level local elites (who had not fled to Chongqing) and disgruntled religious groups and ethnic minorities, who could then be used against both the communists and anti-imperial nationalist movements throughout Asia.⁴⁴ Unlike the state-building models they used in Korea and Taiwan where Japanese rule was more direct, in North China the Japanese chose to administer by authorizing Chinese to run organizations that were nominally independent, but still committed to Japanese interests.⁴⁵ In the occupied Northeast it turned out that many of these disgruntled lower level local elites were Muslim.

For most people, the options were to pick up and move as the Japanese approached, or to succumb to occupation.⁴⁶ In his discussion of refugee communities during WWII, Keith Schoppa questions whether the masses of Chinese people whose daily lives were affected by the war were at all nationalistic.⁴⁷ Many sought refuge in Japanese occupied areas of Jiangnan, and Schoppa

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⁴⁵ Timothy Brook, “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China,” 159-61.


⁴⁷ Schoppa argues: “The government not only had to deal with the desire of many refugees to return home, they also found that the Japanese were offering active inducements to refugees to tempt them back. The government reported in January, 1940, that refugees wanted to return home, believed that there was a
concludes that lower-level collaborators who helped people from surrounding communities offer “precious little evidence of overt nationalism or patriotic fervor.” For most, local concerns greatly outweighed all others and many Chinese even “tended to see the Chinese army as a threat equal to that of the Japanese army.” Schoppa’s important work on refugees demonstrates that self-protection generally outweighed any concern for the nation: “[a]mong refugees and those who stayed to live under Japanese control, who were muddling along to survive, any sense of “nation” was incipient at best.

The war was dislocating for everyone, even for people who chose to stay in their native place. Keith Schoppa’s recent work also examines peoples’ attachment to their native-place in their decision-making process throughout the Sino-Japanese War. He argues that relocating somewhere close to the native-place had an enormous impact on how the war turned out for many people, since their networks and connections usually did not extend that far beyond their locality. At the same time, people during the war were more mobile and adaptable than they had been in the past, frequently crossing between areas under Japanese control and areas that were not, or from areas firmly under Japanese control to areas that were less so. The whole era was

bumper harvest, and that their costs of living as refugees was too high, but also found that the refugees were being given instructions and road maps by the Japanese as an inducement.” (Schoppa, In a sea of bitterness, 309.)

48 Schoppa, In a sea of bitterness, 309.
49 Schoppa, In a sea of bitterness, 310. Many Chinese rightfully feared being kidnapped for conscription by Nationalist forces as much as they feared the Japanese army.
50 Schoppa, In a sea of bitterness, 310.
51 Schoppa, In a sea of bitterness, Introduction and Chapter eight.
one where accommodation and adaptation ruled, and the lives of civilians were severely disrupted by dislocation.\textsuperscript{52}

Recent work on WWII in China asks scholars to contemplate the variety of regional and temporal experiences during the war.\textsuperscript{53} There was also an important transnational element to Sino-Muslim collaboration with the Japanese.\textsuperscript{54} Muslims from North China traveled to Tokyo to attend the opening of the Tokyo Mosque, and a number of Muslims also went on a Japanese-sponsored \textit{hajj} in the early years of the war. Forging connections beyond the borders of occupied China with other Muslims, these men served as the mouthpieces of Japanese imperialism in the region and helped the Japanese legitimize their claims in the region. There is often an assumption among scholars that occupied China and Free China were discrete spaces, whose boundaries were never traversed. But in many of the memoirs and reports about Muslims living in occupied China, what is striking is how easily and inconspicuously people traveled from one area to the other. This is not to say that there was no danger involved in moving during the war, but in some cases moving around would have been no more dangerous than staying in one place. War uprooted people and ruined lives, displacing families and decimating communities.\textsuperscript{55} Some people also chose to stay and their lives were not ruined by the war itself, but by the aftermath of war and the consequences of their decisions to live under occupation. With regards to refugees,

\textsuperscript{52} Schoppa, \textit{In a sea of bitterness}, 7.
\textsuperscript{53} Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, eds. \textit{The Scars of War, the impact of warfare on modern China}, (Vancouver: Vancouver University Press, 2001). On page 6 of \textit{In a Sea of Bitterness}, Keith Schoppa reiterates this point: “Some counties were controlled by Japan for eight years many were never invaded or occupied by the enemy; some were held for four or five years, others for several months, others for several weeks; and still others were invaded for several months at separate intervals during the war.”
\textsuperscript{54} Moon, \textit{Populist Collaborators}, 286.
\textsuperscript{55} Schoppa, \textit{In a sea of bitterness}, 6.
Schoppa argues that “key existential issues for refugees were ‘questions of time, space, continuity, and identity,’” and the same thing could be argued for those who chose to stay and work with the Japanese.

Foregrounding the experiences of Muslims living under the Japanese occupation also draws our attention to the ways that people living in the same cities—such as occupied Beiping—had very different wartime experiences owing to their ethnicity or religious affiliation. How was the experience of Muslims living in occupied China different from that of their Han Chinese neighbors? Were the motivations for Muslims to collaborate with the Japanese different from Han Chinese motives? Also, not only were the identities of Muslims in China not fixed, but there was a great degree of socioeconomic as well as regional difference between the Muslims communities scattered throughout North China. Different communities of Muslims had different socioeconomic objectives for working with the Japanese, which also factored into their perspectives on the Japanese empire as well as their place within it.

**COMPETING VISIONS OF THE NATION: WHOSE NATION AND WHO BELONGS?**

One of the broader goals of this dissertation is to contribute to the growing body of literature bringing Chinese ethno-political history to the forefront of the discussion of the creation of the modern Chinese nation-state. Throughout the China War, frontier issues were manipulated to

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57 Jeffrey Paul Bayliss, *On the Margins of Empire: Buraku and Korean identity in prewar and wartime Japan*, (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 17-18. Bayliss makes a similar case about both the social and class stratification among the *bakarumin* populations and the Korean minorities living in the Japanese empire. This relationship is explored further in chapter one of this dissertation.
serve the needs of all interested parties, and the Nationalists were especially concerned about how to integrate minorities into China’s national imagination. From the late nineteenth century through to the end of the Chinese Civil War, the Chinese nationalists expended a great deal of intellectual energy trying to figure out the specific place that such minority groups as the Muslims would occupy in their vision for the Chinese nation-state. Through an evaluation of the contentious and contested negotiations between the Nationalists, the Japanese and Muslims in north China, the dissertation highlights just how disruptive and disorderly this period was in modern China, and how “Chinese territorial goals continued to change from a traditional empire to a modern polity.”

Many categories, such as ethnic classifications in China, are considered both essential and natural. However, this does not mean that we should simply accept them to be so. In order to understand the role that the Japanese played in creating and incorporating minority populations into the Chinese national imagination, we first need to examine how the Chinese revolutionaries who helped end the Manchu Qing Dynasty envisioned this process.

Social Darwinism and nineteenth-century racist ideology held sway over both late Qing and Meiji reformers. The introduction of Japanese neologisms about race, especially the racist notion of minzoku 民族, into the Chinese lexicon contributed to the developing notions of race and racial categorizations in the waning years of the Qing. The idea of “Hanren” (漢人) refers to descendants of the Han Dynasty, but the idea of Hanzu (漢族) or Hanmin (漢民) is a

58 Lin, Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier, ix.
distinctly modern invention. The identification and categorization of Muslims in China also underwent a similar transformation during the shift from empire to nation-state. Islam in China had been known as the Hui religion (huijiao 回教) and believers were known as disciples of the Hui religion (huijiaotu 回教徒). Distinctions were made between different communities of Hui, such as “the turban-wearing Hui” (chuangtou hui 裝頭回), which commonly referred to the present day Uyghur; and the hanhui (漢回) used to distinguish Chinese-speaking Muslims in Qing Xinjiang (at least) from the Uyghurs. Huizu 回族 only emerged as an ethnic moniker in the late nineteenth century. The Huizu are China’s largest urban minority, and unlike many of the other minorities in China, they do not have their own language. Furthermore, the cultural practices between Hui communities often differed more than the distinctions from the communities in which they are found. Thus, my work contributes to a further dismantling of what Rana Mitter terms the “Manchurian Myth.” In The Manchurian Myth, Rana Mitter argues that the idea of nation—or minzu—meant very different things to different people at different

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60 Mark Elliott’s article “Hushuo: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese,” in Critical Han Studies: the History, Representation, and Identity of China’s Majority, edited by Tom Mullaney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) argues that the idea of Hanren and Hanzu are not actually drastically different, however the neologisms and racialist connotations were surrounding the ideas of minzu were distinctly modern and late-nineteenth century ideas.


63 Dru Gladney, Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People’s Republic, (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1991). In one of his case studies, Dru Gladney points out among those who identify as Hui in the Southeastern Coast communities, their strongest ties to their cultural traditions are through lineage. These Hui, who are not Muslims, claim their minority status based on the fact that they are descendants of Arab traders. This desire to legitimize their heritage is directly linked to foreign investment from Muslims, who value the fact that the first mosque in the region was built there shortly after the death of the prophet.

moments throughout the first half of the twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{65} I do not dismiss or negate the brutality by which the Japanese armies’ subdued the mainland, but I do examine how the occupation of north China was formative in the formation of Chinese the ethno-political identity of Muslims.\textsuperscript{66}

The idea the Han were a unified majority comprising more than ninety percent of the Chinese population was also a late nineteenth-century invention by revolutionaries who sought to create cohesion between the disparate communities throughout the empire and among the diaspora communities scattered throughout the Pacific for the revolutionary cause.\textsuperscript{67} However, this did not mean that the revolutionaries could ignore the other ten percent of the population who inhabited the land on the peripheries of the crumbling Qing Empire. When the Chinese Republic came into being on January 1, 1912, members of the provisional government were conscious of the need to transform the “Inner Asian dependencies of the defunct Qing into integral parts of the Chinese state.”\textsuperscript{68} In order to maintain the territorial integrity of the empire, the new Republican government, anti-Manchu and often fervently Han-centric, latched onto the Manchu Qing discourses of the five peoples of China—the Han, the Hui, the Manchus, the Tibetans, and the Mongols. Part of this plan entailed a propaganda campaign to promote the five nationalities doctrine, but this plan rested on the idea that these people wanted to be a part of the new Chinese state in the first place. The Japanese were tactful in their efforts to collaborate with non-Han Chinese political figures on the mainland and thus placed the nationalists in a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} Mitter, \textit{The Manchurian Myth}, 14-15.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Mitter, \textit{The Manchurian Myth}.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations?” 122.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Hsiao-Ting Lin, \textit{Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-1949}, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006): 10.
\end{itemize}
precarious position in relation to minorities, who were often rightfully skeptical of overtures and gestures from the GMD.

The shift from empire to nation-state was not a watershed moment, but a long and protracted process. As historian Gray Tuttle argues about the inclusion of Tibet into the new Chinese Republic, “the rhetoric of nationalism and racial unity proved largely powerless to effect this transition. Instead, religion served as the crucial link between the social organization of the dynastic empire and that of the nation-state. Adherents of Tibetan-Buddhism, both Chinese and Tibetan, actively engaged with Chinese politicians to protect and advance their religious interests within the new state formation.”\textsuperscript{69} In his examination of Tibet’s inclusion into the modern Chinese nation-state, Tuttle argues that Buddhism and its “sacred language and practices,” rather than the geopolitical space of Tibet, were central in how the Nationalists, and later the Communists tried to incorporate communities that were adherents of Buddhism but not necessarily Tibetans: “Even when the Communists took control of China in 1949 they continued to use the strategies initiated by the nationalist government. Buddhist monks, both Tibetan and Chinese, were crucial advisors and translators for the Communists.”\textsuperscript{70} The standard Nationalist rhetoric during the Nanjing Decade always asserted that they would “protect China’s territorial integrity and rescue minority nationalities from imperialist suppression,”\textsuperscript{71} and there were attempts to implement economic development programs in the borderlands. Among these

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{70} Tuttle, \textit{Tibetan Buddhists and the Making of Modern China}, 3-4; 13.
  \item \textsuperscript{71} Lin, \textit{Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier}, 38-39.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
projects, schools and investment in infrastructure were deemed “essential for improving the social welfare of the frontier minorities and local inhabitants.”72

The aspirations of the new Republican government fell short of its ambitious goals and throughout the 1920s and 1930s China remained deeply divided. Manchuria was under the control of Zhang Xueliang; Feng Yuxian’s National People’s Army controlled most of Henan, Suiyuan, Shaanxi, and part of Gansu; Yan Xishan ruled uncontested in Shanxi and in parts of Hebei; in the southwest, Bai Chongxi and the “Guangxi faction” ruled the region, including parts of Guangdong, with relative autonomy; and the Muslim Ma clans held a firm grasp over large swaths of Gansu, Ningxia and Qinghai, ruled by Ma Lin and Ma Qi, who were succeeded by Ma Qi’s sons Ma Bufang and Ma Buqing. Beyond this, Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia operated “beyond the effective jurisdiction of Nanking,” albeit in different ways.73 Tibet and Mongolia had broken away; and in Xinjiang Yang Zengxin continued to pay lip service to the Nationalists while remaining effectively independent. Throughout the 1920s, the Japanese also strengthened their foothold in China. In 1931, the Japanese Kwantung army seized a large swath of Manchuria after the Mukden Incident. A few months later, the Japanese declared the establishment of Manchukuo on March 1, 1932.

Because China was divided during the war, the Nationalists sought to define their platform in opposition to the other “wartime alternative” to the Japanese, the Chinese Communists, or other parties, like the Russians who were making overtures to people living

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within the borders of the dissolved Qing Empire. The idea of Chinese nationalism was rhetorically strong, but many people had different goals concerning what they wanted to achieve in the new country. The Nationalists pointed out that the Japanese were quick to exploit the pre-existing cleavages between Han and Hui communities in North China, where propaganda regularly emphasized differences between the two groups. For instance, in one smaller community in North China, the Japanese donated money to repair a mosque that had been destroyed during the war, but not to rebuild the Confucian Temple. In Suiyuan and some other places, the OSS claimed that the Japanese helped to arm Muslims who then settled old grievances and long-time vendettas against their neighbors, taking over 2,000 lives in three years. In response to the “increasing number of overtures made by the Japanese to the minorities after the Mukden incident, the Nationalist government produced several suggestions designed to win the minorities over to its side.” The Nationalists made bumbled overtures to win over minorities, yet they presented a vision of a united China and were always adamant about reclaiming areas lost to the Japanese.

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75 Office of Strategic Services, R&A 890.1S (August 25, 1944).
76 Office of Strategic Services, R&A 890.1S (August 25, 1944).
77 Lin, *Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier*, 39. Lin points out that in their efforts to bring together minority leaders from the frontiers, the KMT actually lacked the “accurate knowledge of the correct names, titles, and ranks of their ethnic minority VIPs, not to mention that they had no proper understanding of the political orientation of these important border elites—a critical prerequisite if Nanking were to compete with the Japanese over the Chinese frontiers,” (45).
78 Lin, *Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier*, 45.
The lack of consensus and ambiguity about who and what the Chinese nation-state should be presented a space for alternate visions and representations of the nation to emerge.\textsuperscript{79} In James Carters’ work on Harbin, he argues the military invasion of north China by the Japanese and the subsequent founding of the state of Manchukuo “toppled the fragile nationalism” in the region and “dreams of Harbin as part of the Chinese Republic were dashed.”\textsuperscript{80} It was precisely the fragility of nationalist sentiments in the region that allowed it to be so easily contested.\textsuperscript{81} For many, the idea of the Chinese nation-state and their personal participation in it was vague and distant, and there was a “profound ambivalence among the North-eastern Chinese about the significance…of the Japanese imperial presence in the region,” before the Mukden Incident.\textsuperscript{82} Until that time, there existed a number of competing dialogues on the place of the region in China, but 1931 signaled the end of this rather liberal period of expression, and any pro-Nationalist or pro-Communist voices were silenced.\textsuperscript{83}

In his examination of Nationalist relations with Tibet during the Sino-Japanese War, Hsaio-ting Lin argues that the Nationalists adopted a “pragmatic stand on Tibetan issues,” which Chongqing needed to “adopt to ensure its survival.”\textsuperscript{84} The Japanese invasion, he argues, provided the Chinese Nationalists with the opportunity to restart many of the state-building projects pronounced in 1911-1912. Through an interrogation of the ways that the Nationalists were forced

\textsuperscript{82} Mitter, “Evil Empire?” 147.
\textsuperscript{83} Mitter, “Evil Empire?” 163.
\textsuperscript{84} Lin, \textit{Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier}, xi.
to confront the issues of minorities when they were physically pushed away from the Han center of China—Nanjing—to the frontier in the Southwest and dealing with minorities became a necessary part of the everyday experience for the Chongqing government.\textsuperscript{85} Lin goes on to explain that confrontations with the Japanese forced the Nationalists to rethink frontier and minority policies in the Southwest at a time when minorities were no longer simply a theoretical other, but a tangible and viable part of their existence in Chongqing.\textsuperscript{86}

The Nationalists’ efforts “to mobilize the population in wartime were flawed and partial,” Mitter writes, yet they also “marked a significant change in the conception of Chinese citizenship.”\textsuperscript{87} As the Nationalists retreated to Chongqing, they not only encountered and interacted with large minority populations for the first time, but also had to figure out how to facilitate relief for the spectacular numbers of refugees who were fleeing coastal areas, fearful of the invading Japanese army.\textsuperscript{88} Rana Mitter argues that in the dominant Communist narrative of this history, “the war with Japan became a catastrophic externality, out of the control of the Nationalists themselves, which blew their fledging developmental state fatally off course.”\textsuperscript{89} In this case, it is useful to think about the tangible ways that the Nationalist state-building project during the war was actually a process of interaction with and responses to the Japanese actions and policies.

\textsuperscript{85} Lin, \textit{Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier}, 13.
\textsuperscript{86} Lin, \textit{Tibet and Nationalists China’s Frontier}, 15.
\textsuperscript{88} Mitter, “Classifying Citizens in Nationalist China during World War II,” 244-245.
\textsuperscript{89} Mitter, “Classifying Citizens in Nationalist China during World War II,” 247.
THE COMMUNISTS, THE JAPANESE AND THE MUSLIMS

Previous scholarship has argued that the way that the Communists approached and integrated minorities into their emerging visions for the Chinese nation-state was a direct result of their experiences with minorities on the Long March.\(^\text{90}\) It was during the Long March, they argue, that the Communists first came in contact with Muslims in the northwest and southwest.\(^\text{91}\) In *Red Star over China*, Edgar Snow notes that the Communists were training soldiers under the banner of “Building our own anti-Japanese Mohammedan Red Army.”\(^\text{92}\) However, in the early 1930s, encounters between Muslims and Communists were haphazard and in the early years of the Shaanxi Soviet, the Communists frequently upset the wealthy Muslims who presided over the regions in the regions with their class-struggle programs. By the late-1930s the Communists realized that they needed the support from the local Muslim communities in the northwest as they regrouped and consolidated power in Gansu and Shaanxi. The policies developed towards Muslims were not simply efforts to make Muslims into Communists, but were developed with an acute awareness that Muslims’ support in the region could make or break the guerrilla campaigns against the Nationalists and the Japanese.\(^\text{93}\) It was only after the Japanese occupation in 1937 that Mao shifted his approach to minorities, offering them the right to self-determination (*zizhu 自主*)

\(^\text{90}\) For example, see: Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations?” 123-125; Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (Grove: New York: Grove, 1938); Harrison Salisbury, *The Long March: The Untold Story*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1985). Gladney writes: “Fathers of the yet-to-be-born Chinese nation were faced with extermination or promises of special treatment to minorities, specifically including the Miao, Yi (Lolo), Tibetans, and Hui. The first Hui autonomous county was set up in the 1930s in southern Ningxia as a demonstration of the early Communists’ goodwill toward the Hui.” (123).


\(^\text{92}\) Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*.

and the right to secede, based on the Soviet constitutional approach. By 1940, however, he was backpedaling, and minority populations were guaranteed autonomy (zizhi 自治) in return for their service and help fighting the Japanese and the Nationalists.\textsuperscript{94}

There is no denying that the Communist approach to integrating minorities into the national fold was heavily informed by the Soviets, especially with regard to two main features: the principle of the self-determination, and the concept of class revolution. With the promises of revolution came the promises of social and political equality and religious freedom; however this program failed to win the support of Muslims and only in areas where the Red Army was capable of enforcing these ideas were they remotely successful. For example, John M. H. Lindbeck argued in 1950 that, “[i]n fact, instead of winning Moslem support Communist activities mobilized the Moslem communities in the Northwest against them and finally led to a major military defeat of the Communists at the hands of the Moslems in January and February 1937…”\textsuperscript{95} The Communists failed for a number of reasons: they failed to understand Islam’s importance to the cultural identity of populations in Northwest China; their staunchly anti-religious reputation hurt their chances of gaining supporters among Chinese Muslim populations; and lastly, the appeals of Pan-Islamism: “Communist Pan-Islamic propaganda proved a liability as it tried to discredit the successes and promises of the Japanese, and the Communists weakened their own position vis-à-vis minorities.”\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{94} Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations?” 124.
\textsuperscript{95} Lindbeck, “Islam and Nationalism in China,” 477.
\textsuperscript{96} Lindbeck, “Islam and Nationalism in China,” 480.
Muslims did join the Red Army in small numbers to escape poverty, but the Communists were not initially successful in appealing to them. Land reform campaigns were not particularly alluring to wealthy and educated Muslim families who owned large parcels of land and did not want to see them divided up. However, by 1936, the Communists shifted their efforts away from winning the support of Muslims to focusing on the impending war with Japan. Throughout the war, the Communists adopted two main strategies for managing Muslims: the cessation of hostilities with Nationalist-supported Muslim generals in Gansu, and the enlistment of Muslims to fight in guerilla units against the Japanese. Although their first objective was successful, their interest in Muslims throughout the war was peripheral to their efforts to defeat the Japanese. The factionalism and division within Muslim communities in the northwest allowed Muslims to play the Japanese, the Communists and the Nationalists off of one another. Simply put, overtures to Muslims by the Communists should be understood not as a Communist recognition of the distinctiveness of Muslims, but more as Communist consolidation of power in the region. Much like the Japanese, the Chinese Communists tried to appeal to Muslim populations by emphasizing liberation from western imperialism, but they were much less successful.

When the PRC was established, protracted negotiations between the state and groups who considered themselves “nationalities” took place. State-sponsored authorities investigated claims to “nationhood” and among the more than four hundred groups who applied, fifty-four groups were granted minority status. The early PRC state proclaimed adherence to the Stalinist

97 A number of prominent Nationalist-supported generals, like Zhang Zhizhong 張治中 defected to the Communists and they were able to “neutralize” Muslim resistance in the region (Lindbeck, “Islam and Nationalism in China,” 485).
criteria, and in order to receive recognition, groups had to prove that they possessed a common language, locality, economy, and culture. These criteria, however, should not be understood as objective, and minorities, as well as the state, used these criteria to their own ends. For example, in early 1950s, Bai Shouyi argued that Islam should be referred to as “Yisilan jiao” (伊，斯蘭教) and not Huijiao (回教). The Hui, he argued, were a group of Muslims who were adherents to the universal religion of Islam. By identifying “Huiness” as separate from the religion of Islam, Communist Muslim supporters like Bai were able to legitimize a separate ethnic category for the “Hui” even though there are nine other groups who are classified as Muslims in the People’s Republic of China. In the early months of 1950, the Communists established the Northwest Military and Administrative committee in Xi’an to govern over the western regions of China. The committee was made up of almost fifty percent Muslims and the Communists appointed them knowing full well that without their cooperation the Communists would not be able to maintain control over the region. The successes of their policies in the region depended on the support of Muslims, as well as a respect and appreciation for their cultural distinctiveness. The new PRC government learned from the mistakes of the Nationalists, and knew that simply treating Muslims in China as a religious minority would not succeed. The PRC approach to currying favor with Muslims because of their international connections and desire to connect with anti-colonial movements in the Third World in the early 1950s meant that the PRC offered Muslims special consideration. However, this was nothing new and the

100 Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations?,” 122. The other Muslim minority groups in China are: the Uyghurs, the Kazakhs, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, the Tatars, the Dongxiang, the Baoan, and the Salars.
Japanese and the Nationalists had both been using Muslim populations in China throughout the 1930s and 1940s to achieve their own ends diplomatically.

James Leibold claims that the debate over integrating ethnic minorities into the national imagination was more important than the role of anti-imperialism in the creation of Chinese nationalism. However, in their appeals to Chinese Muslims the Japanese often used a combined approach; China’s Muslims were used as a link to anti-imperial movements throughout the colonial world and as a way to create cohesiveness in their growing empire in Southeast Asia. This allowed the Japanese to present the Muslims in China as distinct and different from their Han Chinese neighbors and allow them to imagine a place for themselves within the larger community of Muslim believers throughout the world. In turn, the Japanese appealed to Muslims in a way impossible with Han Chinese and could demonstrate to the world their support for global Islam through the mobilization of Chinese Muslims to support their cause. In the modern era, the nation-state and imperial powers are in constant dialogue with groups who are seen as invaluable to maintaining both their territorial integrity and their international legitimacy. The process by which the Hui were incorporated into the nation-state in China is of particular importance, and by examining the Japanese interactions with the Hui for almost twenty-years we can see their important impact on the construction and definition of Huiness, an impact hitherto unrecognized.


103 Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations?” 120-121. Gladney writes: “In the composition of ethnic discourse, we find an internal dialogue between the social actors over their traditional interpretations of ancestry, no matter how that is marked symbolically, and an external dialogue with those to whom the group is in significant opposition: other ethnic groups or the broader state as it is represented at the local level.”
Although it is possible that people from Japan made contact with Muslims from China before the eighteenth century, the first references to Islam in Japanese sources appear in Aria Hakuseki’s early eighteenth-century tome, *Seiyō Kibun* (西洋紀聞). For the next hundred and fifty years, interest in Islam in Japan was nominal. However, after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, knowledge about Islam expanded as Japanese engagement with the world beyond the Pacific grew as well. Soon, translated biographies of the Prophet (usually from European language sources) appeared in Japanese, and in 1899 Sakamoto Kenichi (坂本健一) recorded his own version of Muhammad’s life in Japanese. Sakamoto also translated the Qu’ran into Japanese for the first time in 1920 from European language sources. In 1909, one of Japan’s earliest converts to Islam, Yamaoka Mitsutarō (山岡満光太郎), was also the first *hajji* from Japan. He learned about Islam through his connections with the infamous Black Dragon Society (*Kokuryūkai* 黑龍會) during his time in North China. Through the Black Dragons, he was introduced to Abdürreşid İbrahim, a Crimean Tatar whose resistance to Russian Communist incursion in Crimea was inspiring to Yamaoka. Yamaoka invited İbrahim to Japan in 1908.

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105 Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 621. Krämer remarks that Sakamoto did not know Arabic and translated Allāh as *kami* (神).

106 This is not the last time we will encounter Abdürreşid İbrahim in this dissertation. There is much more about this infamous character in chapters one and four of this dissertation. For more on Abdürreşid İbrahim’s colorful life see: Yamazaki Noriko, “Abdürreşid İbrahim’s journey to China: Muslim
The two men spent a great deal of time in conversation in Tokyo, and Yamaoka converted to Islam shortly before his hajj. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Yamaoka and İbrahim remained close and continued to promote Islam throughout Japan.107

Stories such as that about Yamaoka’s conversion to Islam are perhaps anomalous in the history of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan, but they are not inconsequential. For it was these early connections made by Japanese scholars and others interested in Islam that paved the way for Japan’s growing interest in Islam in the 1930s and 1940s. The relationships of men like Yamaoka with Muslims from all over the Islamic world such as İbrahim, who later became the first Imam at the mosque in Tokyo, laid the foundations for the expanding Japanese interest in Islam. By focusing on some of the changes brought about in North China from the end of the nineteenth century and deepening Japanese control over the region led to changes in the ways that an increasingly internationalized religion—Islam—interacted with the locality.108

Recently, Trent Maxey has re-examined some of the ways that the Meiji state wrestled with the “question of how to best configure the nation-state in relation to religion in Modern Japan.”109 Maxey explains that policy-makers in the late Meiji period understood religion as a problem that needed to be fixed, mostly because religion in Meiji Japan was so amorphous and policy-makers were unable to categorize it. In order for the modern state to make sense of religion, it needed to separate it into discrete and separate categories. Religion, in other words,

became a “problem” because it “presupposed new modes of governance,” and in order “to
develop a secular state, religion was created in opposition to it.”\footnote{maxey2012} As the state redefined itself in
opposition to religion, Japanese policy-makers began to understand the usefulness of religion as
a way of including or excluding people from their empire. As Maxey argues: “the construction of
religion in nineteenth century Japan was part of a global conversation concerning the political
disposition of religion within nation-states and colonial empires.”\footnote{maxey2012} This, of course, all
developed against the backdrop of trying to define Japan against the west, but beyond that, in the
early years of the Meiji state, the Japanese used religion to accentuate difference or to foster
community, depending on their needs. By the 1930s the Japanese had learned many lessons
about how to relate the imperial state to various religious affiliations and organizations.\footnote{maxey2012} After
the unstable years of the 1920s, religion became a tool deployed by the empire “in opposition to
the new political heresies” of socialism, liberalism, and anarchism, all of which posed real
threats to state power in the interwar period of Taishō.\footnote{maxey2012} Overall, Maxey’s work highlights “how
modern political and diplomatic demands and the definition of religion were interrelated.”\footnote{maxey2012}

In the 1930s there were competing explanations of what it meant to be Hui in China: in
some cases it was a religious category, in others it was ethnic, and in some instances it was
racial. In general, religious change and expression happens on three different levels: at the

\footnote{maxey2012} Maxey, \textit{The “Greatest Problem,”} 3-4.
\footnote{maxey2012} Maxey, \textit{The “Greatest Problem,”} 5-7.
\footnote{maxey2012} Maxey, \textit{The “Greatest Problem,”} 56-57.
\footnote{maxey2012} Maxey, \textit{The “Greatest Problem,”} 235-236.
\footnote{maxey2012} Maxey, \textit{The “Greatest Problem,”} 244.
societal and community level, at the theological level, and at level of the state. The Japanese colonial project in North China introduced many new institutions of empire. However, even in places where expression was as tightly controlled as in Manchuria, religion, and expressions of religious belief, were always up for negotiation. Institutions such as civic organizations and schools promoted Japanese imperial policy on religion and ethnicity throughout the occupied region. As much as the Japanese sought to define and mold the meaning of what it should mean to be Muslim in North China and in the Japanese Empire, the term was amorphous. Muslim communities who had lived under the Qing for many generations had a clear sense of what it meant to be Muslim, and they were able to use the new vocabulary and knowledge to understand their surroundings in ways that were similar to yet also different from those of the past. Japan transposed upon north China a new mapping of ethnic and religious communities that had already existed, using new vocabulary to suit Japanese imperial needs.

**Outline of the Chapters in This Dissertation**

Chapter one takes a close look at Japanese involvement with Muslims from the mainland leading up to and throughout WWII. The chapter describes the motives behind Japan’s attempts to win the support of Muslim populations in North China and argues that Japanese policies offered

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benefits and a general approach to modern life that was genuinely and legitimately attractive to some Chinese Muslims. It also contends that the Nationalists were aware of Japanese tactics in the occupied areas, and were, in fact, responding and reacting to Japan’s successes among Muslim populations with comparable policies directed at Muslim populations in territories under Nationalist control.

Chapters two and three examine the Japanese and the Nationalists’ use of education and reliance on educational reforms to influence Muslims in China for political purposes. They also explore the resistance to both Japan and the GMD by Muslim communities when they tried to implement changes in educational policies. Overall, the chapters demonstrate how educational reforms in Muslim schools in occupied China were part of an ongoing dialogue in the 1930s and 1940s between Muslim communities, the Nationalists, and the Japanese, to try to come to terms with the place of Sino-Muslims in society. They focus on the debates over curriculum for Muslim children in China, which were generally centered on one focal issue: language acquisition. Both the Japanese and the Nationalists received the most pushback from Muslim communities when they attempted to substitute either Chinese or Japanese language learning during Arabic language classes.

Chapter four focuses on five men who went on a Japanese-sponsored hajj in 1938 through the eyes of one of the Sino-Muslim participants, Tang Yichen. The chapter showcases how Muslims living under the Japanese occupation positioned themselves vis-à-vis both the Japanese and the Nationalists and exploited the two powers for their own aims. In some ways, these five men were pawns, deeply involved in the international diplomacy of the impending war; in other ways, these men made choices for themselves that allowed them to navigate and
circumvent the obstacles they faced. Their ultimate goal—to go on *hajj*—was always central to the decisions they made. Their journey highlights some of the challenges of traveling and performing *hajj* in the 1930s, and provides insight into the everyday experience of being a Chinese *hajji*.

Finally, chapter five argues that in their appeals to Muslims living throughout Greater East Asia and the broader Islamic world, the Japanese relied on the connections they had made with Muslims in North China to portray themselves as benevolent protectors of Islam. In these appeals, Muslims from China were a lynchpin in Japan’s gestures to Islam. Through their connections with the Japanese, Muslims from China were also to look outward to understand their place in the world. There was a strong desire among Muslim communities in North China to connect with Muslims beyond their localities, and the Japanese helped foster and fund these increasingly important connections and linkages. This chapter places Japanese imperial objectives concerning Islam and Muslims living under occupation in North China into larger currents of global Islam circulating during WWII.
CHAPTER I

MOTIVATIONS, METHODS, AND MODELS: JAPANESE INTEREST IN MUSLIMS FROM CHINA AND NATIONALIST REACTIONS AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

On Friday May 11, 1938, the Tokyo Mosque opened with great fanfare. Delegates from all over the Muslim world made their way to the capital of imperial Japan to participate in the opening ceremonies. The events were presided over by the charismatic and infamous Imam Abûrreşid Ibrahim, a Crimean Tatar exiled from Russia who had found a place for himself among the growing Tatar émigré community seeking exile in Japan after the Bolshevik Revolution.¹¹⁷ Five Muslims from occupied China made the journey to Tokyo to take part in the opening ceremonies.

¹¹⁷ Yamazaki, “Abûrreşid İbrahim’s journey to China.” İbrahim was the first imam of the Tokyo Mosque, but a very controversial figure among the Tatar immigrant community. He was known for his extravagance as well as his strong anti-Soviet sentiments.
The men chosen to accompany Tang Yichen, who was the presiding head Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly at the time, were Liu Jinbiao, Li Zongqing, Zhao Yunsheng, and Wang Lianyu. Among the important Muslim dignitaries present at the inaugural Friday prayers were the King of Yemen (who, at the time, was closely allied with the Italians, one of the Axis powers), the Afghan, Turkish, and Egyptian consuls, and diplomatic representatives from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, West Africa, Indonesia, India, and the Philippines.

Also in attendance at the opening of the mosque was Pugong of the Manchu Aisin-Gioro house. Pugong was the younger and lesser-known cousin of the last emperor of China, Puyi. Pugong had converted to Islam when he married a Hui Muslim woman named Huang Yongni. Huang was a famous opera signer from Jinan and was better known by her stage name was Xue Yanqin. Puyi’s Muslim convert cousin was an asset to the Japanese: one of Puyi’s direct relatives and a member of the important Manchu Aisin-Gioro household was not only a supporter of Islam, but a Muslim himself. Pugong’s presence at the opening of the Tokyo Mosque surely helped the Japanese to imagine themselves as the legitimate protectors of Islam in the region. Representatives from the all over the Muslim world participated in a variety of events meant to showcase Japanese modernity as well as their benevolent support for Islam. Included in the guests’ all-expenses-paid trip to Tokyo were visits to places such as the zoo at Ueno Park and

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118 Pugong was the son of Zaifeng’s close relative Zaixun, and Puyi’s cousin. Zaifeng is also known as Prince Chun, Puyi’s regent from around 1908 until his abdication in 1911. Puyi was deposed as a child ruler in 1911 only to be lured out of exile by the Japanese with promises of reinstating him as “emperor” of Manchukuo in 1932.
a tour of the Japanese Imperial Naval Academy. In the Japanese imperial capital, this group of Muslim men were able to witness for themselves how Japan imagined its changing role vis-à-vis the Islamic world after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

This chapter describes the motives behind Japan’s attempts to win the support of Muslim populations in North China. It argues that the Japanese policies offered benefits, and also a general approach to modern life that was genuinely and legitimately attractive to some Chinese Muslims. It also contends that the Nationalists were aware of Japanese tactics in the occupied areas, and were, in fact, responding and reacting to Japan’s successes among Muslims populations. During the war, Nationalist-supported Muslims traveled secretly into occupied China to report on Japanese activities among Islamic communities in the region. Based on their observations, they offered policy suggestions and directives to the GMD whose concern about what they perceived to be effective Japanese recruitment tactics among Muslim communities mounted throughout the war. The chapter ends with an examination of some of the Nationalist strategy proposals based on their observations of the situation on the ground in areas under Japanese control.

Imperial Japan drew upon a number of specific sources and models as their interest in Muslims on the mainland deepened after the establishment of Manchukuo in March 1932. For one thing, they followed familiar precedents for managing minorities, including late Meiji

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120 Yang Jingzhi 楊敬之, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce” 日本之回教政策, (Yisilan wenhua xuehui 伊斯蘭文化學會: Chongqing, 1943), 34.
policies regarding Korean émigrés to the home islands and the Burakumin 部落民. Their handling of the “Korea Question” at the turn of the twentieth century, as well as the naturalization of a small, Muslim Tatar refugee population who had arrived in Japan after fleeing the Bolsheviks, also provided Japan with models for incorporating minorities into the empire.\textsuperscript{121}

Beyond these examples close to home, the Japanese observed and learned from German and Italian mistakes and successes handling Muslim populations in North Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East from before WWI up until the end of WWII.

The presence of sizeable and long-standing Muslim populations in almost every city in China ensured that both the Nationalists and the Japanese were interested in gaining and maintaining their loyalty. The sheer quantity of writing and secret reports produced by both the Nationalist and Japanese regarding Muslims living under occupation testifies to the interest of both parties in gaining their favor: some of these sources are examined in detail in this chapter and throughout this dissertation. For their part, Muslims also wrote prolifically about the upsides and downsides of working with either the Japanese or the Nationalists. For some, working with the Japanese was the best way to combat the Nationalists, the Communists, and the Soviets in China. Others thought the Japanese could help them connect with their co-religionists throughout the colonized world.

Post-war scholars and politicians in both Japan and China have characterized Japanese efforts to mobilize Muslims in this period as evil and ultimately failed efforts. The idea that Japanese efforts to co-opt Chinese Muslims might have shaped the state-building efforts of

\textsuperscript{121} Bayliss, \textit{On the Margins of Empire}; Moon, \textit{Populist Collaborators}. 

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Chinese leaders, Nationalist and Communist, is all but inadmissible in the politicized post-war discourse regarding ethnicity and the Chinese nation. And yet GMD policy-makers and the Japanese were clearly engaged in a serious and protracted battle to win the hearts and minds of Muslims on the mainland, the results of which were not predetermined. In 1937, Owen Lattimore warned that with regards to Chinese geographic frontiers and ethnic fault lines, the Japanese were attempting to win over Muslims in northwest China with promises of establishing an independent Muslim country in the region called Huihuiguo (回回国). In some ways, Huihuiguo was an unattainable ideal couched in some vague notion of aspirational Islamism propounded by the Japanese. But in other ways the idea was likely appealing to a number of Muslims who were interested in creating their own Islamic state. Lattimore elsewhere argued that the Japanese policies towards Muslims in north China were meant to exacerbate real problems in China and to antagonize the GMD while, at the same time, creating a buffer in the borderland regions against Russian Soviet encroachment.123

Japanese policies influenced how the GMD addressed important issues facing Muslim communities all over China. Thus when we discuss the construction of ethnic minority identity,122 Owen Lattimore anticipated that this policy would fail because the Japanese were evoking the “dynastic policies” of both the Yuan and the Qing by parceling China into smaller regions where they would actively support potentates who remained subservient to the Japanese. Mengjiang (蒙疆) was another, perhaps more successful, attempt by the Japanese to establish an independent Mongolian state as a non-Chinese buffer, along the lines of Manchukuo. For more on this see: Yang Jingzhi 楊敬之 “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce” 日本之回教政策, (Yisilan wenhua xuehui 伊斯蘭文化學會, Chongqing: 1943). Yang writes extensively about Japanese ambitions to establish Huihuiguo. In Yang’s description, the plan for Huihuiguo had been in the works for quite some time, put forth originally by infamous Japanese Black Dragon Society and a Japanese spy with the pseudonym Ma Chenglong (馬成龍). In Lin’s book Tibet and Nationalist China’s Frontiers, he writes that concerning Huihuiguo, “the Japanese were said to have lined up an Egyptian prinFrece to be the new ruler of this Muslims state, with a view of winning over the sympathies of Chinese Muslims,” (108).

and the role of non-Han minorities in twentieth century China, we must consider Japanese ideology and the Japanese presence in North China among the components shaping that construction. Integrating Muslims into the national imagination was an extremely complicated process wherein all the actors were aware of the consequences of their actions and played off of one another for their own benefit. Not ignoring or dismissing the Japanese role allows us to think about how Japanese support for Muslims in the occupied areas divided Muslim communities who chose to stay in their homes under Japanese rule from those who made the difficult choice to become wartime refugees. In some ways it could be argued that this division benefited the Nationalists, as it ensured that Muslims in China remained fragmented and unable to amass much authority in places where the Nationalists had only a precarious hold on power throughout the war.

Concerns about oil and the war were always at the forefront of Japanese policy decisions and factored heavily in their decision to curry favor with Chinese Muslims, who were for their part looking for backers to put their reform agendas into place. Chinese Muslims helped the Japanese manage their interactions with Muslims in the Soviet Union, India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Japan saw Muslims in China as integral to ensuring Japanese imperial supremacy in East Asia; many North China Muslims saw the Japanese as important international players who could link them to Islamic communities outside China and help them foster connections to broader, transnational Islamic networks. In order to effect this, the Japanese established a number of institutions, associations, and religious schools and mosques, thereby contributing tangibly to changes in the social and built landscape of Islam in China and other

124 Schoppa, In a sea of bitterness, introduction.
places under their control in ways Muslims approved of. Chinese Muslim and Japanese interests were aligned in many important respects.\footnote{Khalid, “A Secular Islam,” 576.}

**WHY WAS THE JAPANESE EMPIRE INTERESTED IN MUSLIMS IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

**PART I: INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Japan and the Middle East established trade relations during WWI as Japan searched for markets for its cheaply produced cotton textiles in Middle Eastern countries.\footnote{Hiroshi Shimizu, “The Japanese trade contact with the Middle East: Lessons from the pre-oil period,” in *Japan in the contemporary Middle East*, Kaoru Sugihara and J.A. Allen, editors, (London: Routledge, 1993): 29.} Although Japan continued to import many commodities from Asia before WWII, by the end of the war it was thoroughly integrated into global cotton markets. New markets for cotton laid the foundations for Japanese diplomatic interactions with Middle Eastern countries. By 1926, the Japanese had a consulate in Alexandria, followed by a Legation in Cairo in 1936. Diplomatic relations with the Egyptians paved the way for legations and consulates in Tehran, Beirut, and Baghdad.\footnote{Shimizu, “The Japanese trade contact with the Middle East,” 30.} Initially, the Japanese bought little from the Middle East and enjoyed enormous trade surpluses on the light industrial goods and cotton textiles that they shipped to the region. However, with its increasing reliance on oil, Japan realized that this favorable trade balance could potentially shift. There was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Khalid, “A Secular Islam,” 576.
\item Shimizu, “The Japanese trade contact with the Middle East,” 30. Japan opened their first embassy in Istanbul in March 1925 about six-months after the Japanese ratified the Treaty of Lausanne, the international treaty recognizing the Turkish Republic. In order to show their goodwill towards the Turks, the Japanese established two associations to strengthen Turkish-Japanese commercial relations. However, after the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed in 1936, Turko-Japanese relations soured. Sinan Levant, “Images of Japan Created by the Inter-war Turkish Press: The Role of Cumhuriyet, Turkish Daily Newspaper (1933-1939),” *Annals of the Japanese Association for Middle East Studies* 26:2 (2010): 124-125.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
growing awareness in Japanese policy circles that reliance on oil from the United States would pose problems as tensions mounted between the two powers in the Pacific. The Japanese thus used their commercial connections in the post-WWI era to deepen diplomatic relationships with the Middle East throughout the 1930s. As these connections and investments in the Middle East increased, the Japanese were keen to understand their trading partners and find ways to ensure that they could maintain these relationships. As there was only a handful of Japanese Muslims at this time, the Japanese government began cultivating relationships with Muslims close to the home islands to demonstrate that they were serious about respecting the different cultural and the religious traditions of their new Middle Eastern trading partners.\textsuperscript{128}

In 1938, the Americans began extracting oil from recently discovered fields in Saudi Arabia, and the same year Sheikh Hafiz Wahhabi (then the Saudi envoy to Great Britain) went to Japan to attend the opening of the Tokyo Mosque. While there, the Sheikh reportedly told Japanese officials that the Saudis were prepared to do business with the Japanese—which likely dismayed their British and American allies.\textsuperscript{129} After the Sheikh’s visit, the Japanese sponsored five Muslims from north China to go on \textit{hajj} and visit the Saudi Kingdom.\textsuperscript{130} Upon the Chinese \textit{hajjis} return to occupied Beiping, the Japanese sent a number of representatives, including the Japanese envoy to Egypt, Masayuki Yokoyama, to Riyadh and Jeddah in April 1939 to negotiate

\textsuperscript{128}Suzuki Takeshi 鈴木剛, \textit{Nihon kai kyōto no Mekka junreiki} 日本回教徒のメッカ巡礼期, Tokyo: Greater Japan Printing Company, 1938: 14-15. The position of the few Japanese Muslims within society was precarious, and many Japanese were confused and frightened by their conversion to Islam. Among this small number of converts, few could speak Arabic and fewer had ever been to a Muslim country. This, of course, is no indication of their devotion, but simply a marker of their isolation from both Japanese and Muslim cultures.

\textsuperscript{129}Shimizu, “The Japanese trade contact with the Middle East,” 42-43.

\textsuperscript{130}Their \textit{hajj} is explored in detail in Chapter Four of this dissertation.
for an oil concession in Saudi Arabia. An agreement was never reached, however. By September 1939, Europe was at war and the situation in the Middle East had changed dramatically. Although Japan’s trade with the Middle East was not immediately affected, by 1940 the European war had spread to North Africa and the Middle East, enveloping the region in conflict and closing the Suez Canal to Japanese shipments. Japanese consulates and legations in Beirut, Baghdad, Tehran, and Alexandria were all shut down.¹³¹

Before then, however, commercial ties had established the context for a burgeoning relationship between Japan and Middle Eastern countries. In 1938, the Japanese convert Suzuki Takeshi 鈴木剛 published a short account of his hajj called *A Japanese Muslim’s Mecca Pilgrimage*. Suzuki’s journal attempts to clarify some of these tenuous connections between the Islamic world and the few Muslim Japanese. Suzuki argued that the small number of Japanese Muslims was inconsequential given that everyone who lived within the Japanese empire was an imperial citizen (*kokumin* 国民).¹³² For Suzuki, the Japanese Empire was a bastion of religious freedom and expression, where, he argued, Muslims were free to practice Islam as they pleased. The spirit of imperial vigor and a great respect for religious piety allowed the Japanese to appreciate and support both Muslims who lived in the home islands and those who lived as far

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¹³¹ Shimizu, “The Japanese trade contact with the Middle East,” 44-45. After the San Francisco Treaty was ratified in 1952, Japan’s importation of oil rose dramatically. Between 1952 and 1970, around 80 percent of Japanese oil came from the Middle East. Because of the massive increase in oil imports from the Middle East in the post-war period, it is sometimes assumed that Japan and the Middle East had no extensive relationships before the war, however, it was the networks that the Japanese worked so hard to create and maintain with the region in the interwar period and throughout WWII which allowed them to quickly and efficiently insert themselves into the region following the end of the American Occupation and de-colonization in the Middle East (29). Was the US not a part of this? Not a function of being a new ally of the US?

¹³² Suzuki, “*Nihon kai kyōto no Mekka junreiiki,*” 16.
afield as Morocco. Nor was the underlying importance of commercial links between the Middle East and Japan lost on a Muslim like Suzuki. As knowledge of Islam and Middle Eastern culture expanded, Suzuki suggested that Japan begin developing products specifically for Muslim markets in the Middle East. Suzuki’s business ideas took the Islamic concepts of *halal* and *haram* into consideration, and he helpfully explained to his readers that alcohol and pork products should be avoided in exports to the Middle East. Suzuki’s plan was to export water bottles printed with Japanese motifs (such as cherry blossoms and pagodas) for long journeys through the arid deserts. For Suzuki, the Japanese had an opportunity to deepen their commercial ties with the Middle East by creating and fostering cultural ones. For him, this meant presenting the Japanese as supporters of Islam who were sensitive to the specific cultural needs of Muslims. Suzuki’s reasoning was thus the opposite of the way that the Japanese government suggested appealing to Muslims. Suzuki wanted to use a deeper cultural understanding to develop commerce, whereas the government promoted commercial ties that would then broaden into cultural connections. In the end, however, both approaches served the same aim: increased interactions with Muslims in the Middle East.

**PART II: INTERESTS ON THE MAINLAND**

After the Mukden Incident, two policies governed Japanese expansion throughout the 1930s—“advance on land” (*tairiku shugi* 大陸主義) and “advance by sea” (*kaiyō shugi* 海洋主義). These two imperial policy slogans comprised competing and even contradictory objectives. The

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133 Suzuki, “*Nihon kai kyōto no Mekka junreiiki*,” 16.
134 Suzuki, “*Nihon kai kyōto no Mekka junreiiki*,” 17-18.
“advance on land” policy had the most direct impact on Muslims in China. Using this expansionist policy as leverage, Japanese policy-makers and military officials interested in Islam used it to justify the establishment of a number of institutions and associations—both in Japan and on the mainland—to further their understanding of the different peoples they intended to bring under their control. A subsequent section of this dissertation examines some of these institutions and associations in detail. Through these organizations, the Japanese collected ethnographic and geographic data on the areas they now governed. This data served as a starting point to figure out how to best turn the resources—both human and natural—of the mainland to their imperial objectives. The “advance on land” policy benefited from Japan’s ability to enlist the small number of Japanese scholars who had knowledge about both Islam and Muslim communities in China.

Under the umbrella of such large and influential associations as the Dai Ajia Kyokai (大亞細亞協會), scholars who had long been interested in Islam and the Middle East were commissioned to work for the imperial government. The Dai Ajia Kyokai was founded in Tokyo on March 1, 1933, a symbolic date that marked the one-year anniversary of the founding of Manchukuo and coincided with Japan’s dramatic exit from the League of Nations. Influential intellectuals and politicians were present at the inaugural meeting, and shortly after its establishment in Tokyo, the organization opened branches in Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, and in Manchukuo. After the outbreak of the Pacific War, the organization was incorporated into the
Japan Pan-Asian Alliance. These research organizations were instrumental to Japan’s strategies and tactics on the mainland, and more branches were soon inaugurated throughout China as well as elsewhere in the expanding empire. Between 1933 and 1942, Dai Ajia Kyokai published a monthly journal called “Greater Asianism” (Dai Ajia Shugi 大アジア主義) which frequently featured articles about the relationships between pan-Asianism and Islam, and also covered international events relating to Muslims and the Japanese Empire. This was another way that these associations garnered legitimacy: through the publication of scholarly reports about Muslims on the mainland, Japan justified their growing interests in the region as contributing to the development and civilization of ethnic minorities.

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135 Sinan Levant, “Turanism in Japan from Perspective [sic] of the Pan-Asiatic Journal, Dai Ajia Shugi,” Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies 201 (2011): 307-325. According to Levant, a number of influential politicians were involved in the establishment of the Dai Ajia Kyokai, for example, Hirota Kōki 廣田弘毅 and Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文磨. Hirota served as the thirty-second Prime Minister of Japan for a brief period between 1936 and 1937 and was executed in 1948 for war crimes. Konoe also served numerous tenures as Prime Minister of Japan throughout the war and committed suicide during the American Occupation.

136 Levant, “Turanism in Japan,” 311. The journal had a circulation of around 2,000. Many foreigners contributed to the journal, such as Indian nationalist Rash Behari Bose who was part of the growing number of Indian Muslim exiles in Japan. Cemil Aydin adds that, “while Rash Behari Rose edited a journal addressing primarily India, Qurban Ali was publishing Yani Yapon Muhbiri (New Japan Journal), which aimed it message at the Muslim world. Although the journal was in Turkish, the cover page of the magazine included a Japanese subtitles, describing it was ‘the only journal that introduces Japan to the Muslim world.’” The sponsorship of this journal by the Japanese was seen as a way to increase knowledge about the Japanese Empire in Turkey so that Muslims might understand that the Japanese faced some of the same challenges they did with regard to imperialism and modernity. For more on this see Cemil Aydil, The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 176-177.

137 Yumi Moon’s Populist Collaborators, 8-10. In her recent book, Moon argues that the “discourse of ‘civilization and enlightenment’ (mumyŏng kaehwa) was a major ideological frame within which both the Korean reformers and the Japanese discussed politics, reform, and culture in Korea between 1896-1910,” (8). According to Moon, these discourses were contingent on a number of “different historical actors simultaneously proposed diverse interpretations of enlightenment justifying their own political imperatives…” (9).
to be increasingly appropriated by the Japanese state in those years, culminating in the
declaration of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1940.”  

It is impossible to disassociate Japan’s concerns with Islam in this period from its imperial ambitions. Yet, at the same time, growing Japanese appeals to Islam reflected in an increasing number of researchers and scholars working to categorize Muslims and problematize their place within the Chinese nation-state for the advantage of the Japanese Empire. As we will see, these efforts did not go unnoticed by the Nationalists, who were grappling with similar questions regarding Muslim populations throughout the 1930s.

**MODELS FOR MANAGING MUSLIMS**

The Japanese drew on a number of important precedents from their own and their allies’ experiences to model their approaches to managing Muslim populations living under their control. Apart from the exiled Tatar émigrés who had escaped Bolshevik persecution and made their way to Japan via Ha’erbin after the Russian Revolution, the Japanese had little experience with Islam on the home islands. They thus turned to previous experiences with other minorities living in the Japanese Empire: specifically, the Korean émigré communities in the home islands and the *Burakumin*.  

Japanese policies also closely mirrored German approaches to dealing with Muslims during WWI and WWII, and Italian models for handling Muslim populations in North Africa, although the Japanese were quick to point out the many differences between the Germans, the Italians, and their own specific cases. According to the Japanese, there were two

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major differences with their experiences and approaches and those of Germany and Italy. Japan argued that the Germans and the Italians had more experience and knowledge about Islam given their proximity to large Muslim populations in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Although this point is debatable, it was a sentiment often echoed by Japanese policy-makers regarding their comparative approaches to managing Muslim communities. The Japanese were also aware that in areas under their control Muslims comprised a small minority of the population, unlike in the Ottoman Empire in WWI, Crimea, parts of the Balkans, or in North Africa, where Muslims often made up the sizable majority. This presented a different set of challenges to Japan than the Italians and the Germans faced at the other end of the Eurasian continent. The Japanese drew on some of the perceived successes of the Axis campaigns into the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and North Africa, and modified these policies to their specific needs in North China. One important example examined in detail in this chapter is a top-secret Japanese military document published in 1938 called “Italy’s Muslim Policy” (Itaria no kaikyō seisaku 伊太利ノ回教政策) that outlined the relationship between Italy and the Islamic world and explained how Italy governed Muslim populations in its empire.

PART I: THE GERMANS

In the years leading up to WWI, Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany had been deeply involved with the Ottoman Empire. His endeavors proved a powerful case study for the

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141 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 14.
Japanese, who hoped to learn from some of the Kaiser’s over-ambition and political blunders in the region. In the Kaiser’s vision of *Weltpolitik*, he presented a concrete plan for uniting the East and West through Istanbul with the Berlin to Baghdad railroad.\(^{142}\) Wilhelm’s plan of *Drang nach Osten* (“push eastward”) consisted in part of a continental imperial drive into Ottoman territory that the Kaiser imagined would be more economically viable than joining the scramble for Africa. Wilhelm’s vision of *Drang nach Osten* also had an important cultural component: he emphasized learning about Islam and spreading German culture to the region. During WWII, especially after the Italian failures in North Africa and in the Balkans, the Nazis, too, developed a political strategy for dealing with Islam—*Islampolitik*—that was heavily influenced by the Kaiser’s involvement with the Ottomans in WWI.\(^{143}\)

The Kaiser’s vision for the Middle East ensured German access to the Arabian Gulf without reliance on the Suez Canal, and gave them direct access to India, the crown jewel of the British Empire.\(^{144}\) As Wilhelm saw it, the Germans had not made aggressive advances into Muslim lands before the Triple Entente between Russia, France, and Great Britain in 1907. The Kaiser understood that this was an advantage for the Germans: as a latecomer to the game in Asia and North Africa, Kaiser Wilhelm attempted to use Muslim resentment towards imperial rule to foment dissent in these regions, all the while directing European powers’ attention away from continental Europe with his plans for a railroad through Ottoman territories. Whether or not this was entirely successful is beyond the point: Japanese policy-makers emulated this approach.


\(^{144}\) McMeekin, *Berlin-Baghdad Express*, 3.
in their propaganda for explaining why Muslims in China should support their vision for a Greater East Asia where Muslims would play a prominent role.\textsuperscript{145} The Japanese, like the Germans before them, vilified the British and the French presence in the Middle East and East Asia among Muslim communities as a way to gain sympathy for their own imperial objectives. The Japanese observed and wrote about these German policies in order to legitimize their own imperial aspirations and create closer linkages with the Axis powers in the 1930s.

The Japanese also understood well the drawbacks of the Kaiser’s plan and wrote how they could learn from and apply the concepts of “Drang nach Osten” (Dorangu naha osuten ドラング・ナハ・オステン) on the mainland.\textsuperscript{146} A secret policy document published by the Japanese Army in 1938 explained that this “push eastward” concept was a term coined in the late nineteenth century to justify German expansion into Slavic lands. The document explained that Hitler appropriated the policy in the 1930s as a major tenet of Nazism, which involved the assimilation and Germanization of Slavic and non-German peoples.\textsuperscript{147} After visiting the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid, Kaiser Wilhelm declared the German people the eternal friends of the Ottomans. Perhaps not fully understanding the implications of allying himself with the Sultan, Wilhelm was “meddling in the affairs of other powers with Muslim subjects—not least French North Africa, Russian Central Asia, and the British Empire, which alone contained some 100 million Muslims spread out over British India, Egypt, and the Gulf States.”\textsuperscript{148} This aggressive

\textsuperscript{145} “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 14.
\textsuperscript{146} “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 14.
\textsuperscript{147} “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 15.
\textsuperscript{148} McMeekin, \textit{Berlin-Baghdad Express}, 14. Kaiser Wilhelm continued to travel throughout the Middle East and the Levant, visiting the Holy Lands and Damascus. He came away with an orientalist
German vision presented the Kaiser as the benevolent protector of the Ottomans and antagonized colonial powers in the region. However, this bold move presented a powerful symbol of strength for the Japanese, whose visions for a Greater East Asia meant that they too would have to figure out how to appeal to the large numbers of Muslims who came under their control.

Historians agree that in their efforts to mobilize Muslims the gravest mistake the Germans made in WWI was to underestimate the backlash of backing an Ottoman call for global jihad. On 11 November 1914, the Ottoman sheikh al-Islam Ürgüplü Hayri, issued five fatwas with German backing. In an elaborate ceremony three days later at the Fatih Mosque in Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed V declared it “the duty of Muslims everywhere on earth to wage war on (Entente) infidels.” However, from the outset there were serious problems with the fatwas. There are two concepts of jihad: the lesser jihad (al-jihad al-asghar) is the armed fight against non-believers; the greater jihad (al-jihad al-akbar) is the inner struggle for self-improvement. The 1914 fatwas declared a greater jihad, which was theologically unorthodox and was distinguished not by “the terms of the declaration itself but [by] the open-ended selection of targets—including Entente civilians, along with armies—and the pointed exemptions for German and Austro-Hungarian nationals, for which there was no precedent.” Not only were the theological grounds for this jihad highly questionable, but also Mehmed V’s declaration was

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149 McMeekin, Berlin-Baghdad Express, 124. The Ottoman fatwas of 1914 were not unprecedented: during the Crimean War and ongoing battles with Russia, the Ottomans declared jihad against the Greeks in 1897. Also see Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War for more on the Ottoman fatwas.

150 Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War, 24.

151 McMeekin, Berlin-Baghdad Express, 124.
considered a symbolic last-ditch effort by the Sultan to retain power despite his lack of legitimacy and authority in the eyes of many of his subjects.\textsuperscript{152} In retrospect the jihad is considered a failed effort, but at the time it alarmed the British, the French, and the Russians, who decided to keep troops in the Middle East that could have been diverted to the front in Europe.\textsuperscript{153} Financially, the jihad also cost the Germans much more than they had anticipated. After all, the jihad needed to be advertised widely throughout the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{154}

The Japanese imperial government seems to have learned from this: although they presented themselves as protectors of Islam, they never went as far as allying themselves with a Muslim country that was vying for power nor did they ever call on Muslims to proclaim jihad. Having devoted a lot of energy and scholarly man-hours to understanding Islam and Islamic movements, the Japanese government understood the contradictions of a non-Muslim power backing a call to jihad, and although they were intent on being taken seriously as supporters of Islam and even played around with the idea of creating an independent Muslim state in North China, they stopped short of enforcing theological decrees on Muslim populations living under their control and beyond in their war efforts.

In a Japanese-sponsored journal published in Chinese in 1938, an unnamed Chinese writer expressed admiration for the Germans for helping the Turks preserve the Hagia Sophia (Ch. Haya Sufeiya 阿雅蘇非亞). The Japanese, like the Germans, he argued, were busy preserving the minarets that came under their control and building new mosques for Muslim

\textsuperscript{152} McMeekin, \textit{Berlin-Baghdad Express}, 85-87.
\textsuperscript{153} Motadel, \textit{Islam and Nazi Germany’s War}, 25.
\textsuperscript{154} Motadel, \textit{Islam and Nazi Germany’s War}, 27.
populations living within their empires. A Japanese commentator noted that the Germans had built a large mosque in Berlin in 1923 for the many Turks, Egyptians, Persians, and Indians who lived there. Muslim collaborators like Tang Yichen also suggested to Japanese policy-makers that one of the surest ways to secure the loyalties of Muslims in North China was to build mosques for their communities. The preservation of sacred Islamic places, the rebuilding of mosques destroyed by the war, and the construction of mosques in the imperial metropoles—such as Berlin or Tokyo—can be considered a successful tactic for gaining the favor of Muslims based on the sources under examination. The Japanese government saw it as serving two main purposes: it gave them a sense that their authority within Muslim communities could be validified and offered opportunities to vilify their enemies. This was especially true of the Soviets, who destroyed mosques and seized mosque property throughout the Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In essence, both the Germans and the Japanese helped foster the re-entrenchment of Islamic communities through the re-building of mosques destroyed in the war. For the Germans and the Japanese the costs of these reconstruction and building projects were minute compared to their propaganda value.

A number of Japanese observers also commented on favorable German treatment of Muslim communities in German-occupied Qingdao prior to the Japanese takeover of the region

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155 By one account, 402 mosques came under Japanese control during the first years of the war.
156 Juzi 鉅子 (pseudonym), “Riben chuangle huijiao xiehui zancheng” 日本創立回教協會贊成, Huiguang 回光 1, no. 1 (1924): 51. This article was published in both Japanese and Chinese. The language between the two is slightly different, but the content is the same.
157 “Hui lianzong hui jiangshe libaitang” 回聯總會建設禮拜堂, Huijiao 回教 1, no. 6 (1938): 43.
158 This was especially true for the Germans who supported reestablishment of the waqf (a mortmain religious endowment in Islamic law) after the Soviets had abolished them in 1923 and seized all their assets and property. (Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War, 160-161.)
after WWI. One article commented that as a result, the Japanese had the Germans to thank for their positive interactions with Muslim populations in Qingdao.\footnote{Guanyu Dongjing Qingzhensi luocheng yu li zhi suo wen” 关于东京清真寺落成与礼之所文, Yiguang 伊光 97 (1939): 11-13.} This connection of the German presence in Qingdao to the Japanese presence there is a tenuous one, but it served a rhetorical purpose: although there was no mention that the Japanese had received Qingdao as part of the spoils of war after the defeat of Germany in WWI, the author was suggesting that there was an inherent connection in the ways that the Germans and the Japanese treated Muslims and that the Japanese had benefited from German benevolence towards Muslims in Qingdao. These claims could simply be dismissed as wartime propaganda, but the main point should not be overlooked: the Japanese were looking for ways to tie their own involvement with Muslims—however ambiguous—to perceived German policy successes.

During the interwar period, the German interest in Islam was predominantly scholarly. However, this changed suddenly with the outbreak of WWII in Europe. Hitler had Mein Kampf translated into Arabic in 1938, and it was distributed in Arabic speaking countries on the eve of the outbreak of war in Europe. In February 1941, the Germans landed in Tripoli to come to the aid of the Italians and at the same time started a “religious blitz of the region with propaganda presenting Germans as friends of Islam.”\footnote{Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War, 73.} The Germans were careful to treat Muslim POWs well, and allowed them religious freedoms denied other captives. For instance, the Reich ensured that Muslim captives had access to halal food and were allowed to pray five times a day.\footnote{Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War, 73.} Those Muslims who served in the German Army or joined the Schutzstaffel (SS) in
increasing numbers after 1941 were also provided with a mullah to accompany their battalions into battle. As the Nationalists responded to the Japanese, the Allies responded to Germany’s growing interests in Islam with counter efforts. One leaflet distributed by the British in the Maghreb praised the “‘Chinese Muslims Warriors,’” who, under Chiang Kai-shek, were fighting the Axis in Asia.”162

**PART II: THE ITALIANS**

“Italy’s Muslim Policy” outlined the relationship between Italy and the Islamic world and explained how Italy governed Muslim populations in its empire.163 As in Japan, there were very few Muslims living in Italy in the first years of the twentieth century, and like the Germans, the Italians were latecomers to the scramble for Africa. Comparing their situation to the Italians, the Japanese deemed both of these factors advantageous. The Japanese admired the Italians, who, they argued, had managed with their continuing support for the King of Yemen to secure a foothold closer to Mecca than the British or the Americans would have liked.164 The Japanese

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162 Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War, 117.
163 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 14.
164 The history of Yemen’s relationship with Fascist Italy is little known and very interesting. In the 1870s Yemen was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire as a province. The Ottomans introduced state centralization and modernization projects to the region, but these programs faced obstacles and resistance from locals. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman hold over Yemen was waning, creating a power vacuum in the region. Prompted by the inter-war Salafi movements, Yahya Hamid al-Din quickly adopted the military apparatus put in place by the Ottomans, and increasingly presented Yemen as an important “element in the greater trans-regional project of Islamic unity and anti-imperial activism that was characteristic of the inter-war period,” (Willis, 148). Essentially, Yemen was looking to position itself as a leader of global Islam and in opposition to the British presence in Aden, and this led directly to their alignment with Fascist Italy. In 1926, Imam Yahya signed a treaty with Italy establishing friendly relations and advocated for stronger bi-lateral trade between the two countries. This quickly translated into a massive influx of military aid, accompanied by military advisors from Italy (Willis, 157). The relationship between Italy and Yemen explains why the Yemeni King was the guest of honor at the
were anxious to gain the patronage of important Muslim leaders in the Middle East and beyond, and they held the Italians in high regard for implementing what they imagined to be successful policies. *Italy’s Muslim Policy* also outlined some of the Italian developmental initiatives in North Africa. In a preliminary observation, the report explained that as a Mediterranean nation, Italy’s proximity to North Africa meant that Italians had long been in contact with the Islamic world. The Japanese assumed that this meant that Italian policy makers were more familiar with Islam, unlike the Japanese policy makers who were still struggling to learn as much as they could about Islam and the Islamic world.¹⁶⁵ This assumption led the Japanese to deem the Italian ventures into North Africa effective since they felt they derived from the Italian grasp of Islamic culture.

The parallels between the Japanese and Italian policies were not lost on Chinese Nationalist writers, who loudly claimed that both countries were, with limited success, inserting themselves into the affairs of Muslim countries.¹⁶⁶ According to one Nationalist source, the Japanese and the Italians had signed a secret pact to conspire to win the support of Muslims all over the world as early as 1936.¹⁶⁷ The article warned that the Japanese attempted to show their sincerity and express their understanding of Islam by presenting handcrafted samurai swords to the opening of the Tokyo Mosque in 1938. It also explains why he greeted the guests in both Arabic and Italian. For more on the history of modern Yemen see: John M. Willis, *Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of the Yemeni Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Madawi Al-Rasheed and Robert Vitalis, eds., *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

¹⁶⁵ “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 14.
¹⁶⁷ Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 34.
Muslim dignitaries and leaders that they met. The swords were a symbolic gesture: drawing on the importance placed on the sword in both Islam and in Japanese samurai culture, the gifts were usually inlaid with the motif of the rising sun, representing the bond between Islam and the Japanese Empire.

After describing Italian colonial expansion into Africa following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Japanese military’s secret analysis, *Italy’s Muslim Policy*, goes on to single out Libya as the place where Italian policies and strategies were the most successful. The Japanese commented that before WWI, the Ottoman Sultan had helped the Libyans fight against Italian imperialism because they were both Muslim nations. At that time, the report noted, the Italians did not truly understand that governing Muslim populations was different from governing Italians. It was due to this lack of understanding of local customs and culture, that Italians sent colonists to Libya, which increased tensions with locals who were being armed by the Ottomans. However, after WWI, the Italians learned from their errors and began developing industries in Libya (particularly smelting and ironworks), and also shifted their policies to promote cultural and mutual understanding between Italians and local Muslims (*yūkō-teki bunka seisaku* 友好的文化政策). As part of the plan to promote cultural appreciation, the Italians also started funding the building of mosques, schools, hospitals, bridges and roads, all tangible gauges of the Italian presence, which locals perceived as beneficial. These projects not only

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169 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 16.
170 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 16. The “cultural policy” (文化政策) model is regarded by most scholars as having been tested and proved in Korea after the March 1st Movement. It is possible that the Japanese derived their benevolent “cultural policies” regarding Muslims in North China from their experience in Korea or from their analysis of the Italians in Libya.
changed the physical landscape of Libya but also provided jobs for locals, resulting in a higher standard of living among certain segments of the population. The report claimed that in a few short years the Italians had transformed their reputation in Libya and were seen in a much more positive light.\textsuperscript{171} This was a model similar to that being adopted by the Japanese in North China. Being able to justify their investment in the region by pointing to what they considered to be a successful Italian precedent surely helped to bolster the support that policy makers working on Muslim issues in China hoped to gain among the larger spectrum of empire-building projects.

Hand-in-hand with Italian developmental policies, Benito Mussolini made a trip to Tripoli to declare himself a protector of Islam (\textit{Kaikyō no hogo-sha} 回教ノ保護者) while making promises about the beneficial relationship between Fascism and Islam for Muslims throughout the region. In their propaganda in North Africa, the Italians stressed that the French and the British were the real enemies of Muslims. In order to present themselves as legitimate liberators, the Italians fabricated an origin myth that claimed that Italians—unlike the British and the French—were descendants of Middle Easterners and North Africans much like the Libyans. While the French and the British were white, the Italians were darker skinned Mediterranean people racially similar to North Africans.\textsuperscript{172} Like their European counterparts, the Japanese

\textsuperscript{171} “\textit{Itaria no kaikyō seisaku},” 16.
\textsuperscript{172} “\textit{Itaria no kaikyō seisaku},” 16. The Germans also used race to appeal to Muslims and tried to foment anti-Jewish rebellions among Arabs in the Levant and North Africa with little success. Part of the problem for the Germans was that in their racial categorizations, Arabs were considered Semites. In order to get around this issue, the rhetoric of “anti-Jewish” rather than “anti-Semite” appeared much more frequently in propaganda. The Nazis also used nomenclature to defend their collaboration with peoples they thought they could successfully deploy against the Soviets. The long-pejorative moniker “Tatar” was avoided in favor of “Ural peoples” or “Crimean Turks”. Motadel,\textit{ Islam and Nazi Germany’s War}, 56-57. Similarly, the Germans presented themselves as friends of Islam, and Heinrich Himmler even proclaimed: “There is no more solid basis for cooperation than common aims and common ideals. For 200 years,
looked for tangible ways to connect themselves to Muslims. A number of scholars claimed that the Japanese connections to Islam in China could be traced back to the *Han Kitab* (漢克塔布), Chinese works on Islam which had been read by Japanese scholars during the Tokugawa. Like both Italy and Germany, Japan tied its economic investments in infrastructure in the region to a narrative of interconnectivity between people living in North China and Japan. In the Japanese version of events, Manchuria’s development, and subsequently the character makeup of the regions’ people, had deviated from the rest of China during the first part of the nineteenth century. It was argued that Japanese involvement in the region with and the opening of the port at Yingkou (營口) on the Bohai Sea had facilitated more frequent contact between the Japanese merchants and people in Manchuria. In order to legitimize their involvement in the region, the Japanese projected their connections to the region and with Islam back to the late Tokugawa.

*Italy’s Muslim Policy* also explained that Italy had appealed to Muslims in Libya by supporting anti-British and anti-French colonial movements throughout the Muslim world. To show their support for other Muslims suffering at the hands of the French and the British, the Italians had invited Muslim students to Rome from such places as India, China and Afghanistan to participate in the Asian Student Congress (*Ajia gakusei Kaigi* 亞細亞學生會議) in 1933. Mussolini addressed some five hundred students in attendance with a rousing speech about the Italian Fascists’ plans to give Muslims a leg-up to free themselves from the clutches of Germany has not had the slightest conflict with Islam,” in his appeals to lure Muslims from the Balkans in to the SS (Motadel, 219; 240).

173 Juzi, “Riben chuangli huijiao xiehui zancheng,” 50-52
colonialism. The Italians were also exporting their vision of Fascist youth culture to their colonies in North Africa where they established a number of Green Shirt organizations (Midori Shatsu Tō 緑シャツ党). For their part, many young Muslims joined happily, since signing up presented them with the opportunity to go to Rome to study. The Japanese thought that this would be a good tactic for recruiting young and impressionable Muslims into their own camp and replicated this model, inviting Muslim students from North China to study in Tokyo.

The Italians also supported hajj trips from East Africa and Libya. In 1938, a sarcastic British observer, commented that Italians, who were the “so-called Protectors of Islam” did not “appear to have protected quite as passionately” as in past years, even though they still sponsored over 500 pilgrims from East Africa that year alone. Presumably, then, before 1938, the Italians were sending many more than 500 pilgrims a year on hajj from North and East Africa. In their constant patrolling of the Red Sea and the Arabian customs at Jeddah, the British observers noticed a very well-equipped Italian naval vessel arriving at the port in Jeddah with 616 pilgrims from Mogadishu: “She [the boat] had a very large hospital, shower-baths, and porcelain wash-basins: her pilgrims were very happy, though two of them died.” Although the journey from Mogadishu to Jeddah was not that far, a death rate of 0.3% at the time was still quite admirable and there is no mention of how the pilgrims passed away onboard the Italian ship: they could have been sick before they boarded or been very old, as many pilgrims were. Like the Italians, the Japanese also sponsored hajj trips from Muslims in occupied China. Although the numbers

175 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 27.
of pilgrims were not as staggering, the distance from China to Mecca is also a different matter entirely than the boat trip from Mogadishu.

The Japanese believed that they could learn from the Italians but army observers felt that they should proceed with caution when implementing and adopting Italian precedents. As far as inciting anti-British violence among the Muslim populations in North Africa and the Middle East, the Japanese considered the Italians extremely successful as demonstrated by their support for the Palestinians in the Arab Revolts against British rule in the Levant in the late 1930s. The Italians also ran a number of radio stations in Arabic, which presented Jews as puppets of the British imperialists, which the Japanese noticed and admired. Through propaganda and by sponsoring Palestinians, the Italians had gained the approval of certain groups of Muslims in India, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Again, the Japanese army observers commented on this policy as one that could work with Muslim populations in East Asia. By helping Muslim communities that were oppressed by British colonialism especially, they could demonstrate that they supported Muslim causes and help foment anti-British sentiment. Although most of these Italian propaganda “successes” would later be understood as complete failures, especially after 1941 when Italy was vanquished from North Africa, we cannot dismiss the fact that in 1938 the at least some in the Japanese military looked with admiration towards Italy, and hoped to learn from their attempts to win the hearts and minds of Muslims in the Maghreb.

178 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 21-22.
179 “Itaria no kaikyō seisaku,” 23-24. The report also claims that the Iraqis were so upset with British aggression in the Levant that they were flying the Fascist flag (Fashisuto Tōhata ファシスト黨旗—the Nazi swastika) as a form of resistance. The Italians were also supposedly supplying arms to the Aga Khan (Aga Kan アガ・カン) to fight the British in India.
*Italy’s Muslim Policy* concluded that unlike the British, who were intent on dominating Muslims for the purpose of extracting as much oil as possible from the Middle East, the Italians were trying to cooperate with Muslims for their mutual benefit. It was from this “cooperative model” that the Japanese analysts thought they stood the most to learn: in the eyes of the Japanese, this model led to both cultural understanding and economic development ensuring a long and sustained relationship of mutual dependence. By following the lead of the Italians, the report concluded that the Japanese could also make similar inroads among the Muslim populations who had recently come under their control in North China.

However, as previously noted, the main difference between Italy’s Muslim initiatives and those of Japan was that the Muslim populations Japan encountered were usually a relatively small proportion of the larger population. The Japanese thus had an interest in perpetuating difference in China, especially between Muslims and their Han Chinese neighbors. The Japanese fostered ethnic and community cleavages by promoting pan-Islamism and bonds with the larger global community of Muslim believers, fabricating narratives which projected the relationships between Japan and Muslim populations as peaceful and historically significant, and cultivating a sense that Chinese Muslims were distinct and oppressed communities, which if given the chance, could flourish.


In the interwar period, as Japanese policy-makers’ interest in the Middle East expanded, so too did the population of Muslims and knowledge about Islam on the home islands. Although only a handful of Muslims lived in Japan before WWI, the government claimed that by 1935 over
20,000 Muslims called Japan home through both immigration and conversion to the religion. By the mid-1930s, there were also numerous Japanese translations of the Qu’ran, and Arabic was taught at a number of universities. The Japanese government had also naturalized a number of Tatar Muslims who fled Bolshevik persecution to demonstrate not only Japan’s support for Islam, but also its anti-communist stance. Growing numbers of Japanese converts were sent to the Middle East and Turkey to study, while, at the same time, the Japanese government extended offers to Muslims to study in Japan at state expense. The small—but growing—Indian Muslim community in Nagoya also funded the building of the first mosque in Japan in 1931 with financial support from Arab benefactors. The Indian donors, mostly living in Japan as exiles from the British Empire, were welcomed with open arms. A few years later, in 1935, the Indian Muslim community contributed the majority of the funds to build a mosque in Kobe. However, the third mosque built in Japan, which was raised in Tokyo, was built almost entirely with Japanese funds and opened in 1938. This shift from Indian and Arab funding of mosque projects to Japan claiming the Tokyo mosque as a larger project of empire reflects Japan’s broader Islam policy, which realigned dramatically after the outbreak of war outside Beiping in July 1937.

This growing interest and support for Islam on the home islands in the interwar years and after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War was not without precedent. Recently, historians of Japan have highlighted the need to rethink the treatment of minorities living in the Japanese home islands leading up to the war, as well as collaboration with Koreans on the peninsula. In her exploration of the Ilchinhoe who collaborated with the Japanese in Korea at the

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180 The Tatar community in Tokyo is fascinating and deserves a dissertation of its own. Their community is discussed further in the chapter about Japanese Muslim educational reforms.
turn of the twentieth century, Yumi Moon argues persuasively that, “Japan repeated this pattern of expansion, alliance with local elites and canceling out of grassroots organizations when it occupied China in the 1930s.”\(^{181}\) As they had done in Korea, the Japanese stamped out dissent by quashing organizations that resisted their rule and created new institutions in their place. Also, as mentioned previously, recent studies of domestic minorities suggest some of the ways that the Japanese imagined incorporating minorities beyond their borders into their expanding empire.\(^{182}\) Jeffery Paul Bayliss addresses a growing and shared interest by scholars of the Japanese empire in the “connection between the ideology deployed in the rise of the modern Japanese nation-state and empire and how these stereotypes applied to minorities.”\(^{183}\) Bayliss points out that the ways minorities were understood as part of the Japanese imperial project was an integral part of their broader justifications for the project itself.\(^{184}\) However, there was a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty about how to approach those who were not seen as Japanese (or not “Japanese enough”). This ambiguity had serious implications for the position of minorities within the “emerging ideal of an emperor-centered, homogeneous Japanese nation-state: the kokutai.”\(^{185}\)

\(^{181}\) Moon, *Populist Collaborators*, 287.

\(^{182}\) For example, see Jeffrey Paul Bayliss’s fascinating comparative history, *On the Margins of Empire: Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan*. In Yumi Moon’s *Populist Collaborators*, she argues that the “discourse of ‘civilization and enlightenment’ (*munmyŏng kaehwa*) was a major ideological frame within which both the Korean reformers and the Japanese discussed politics, reform, and culture in Korea between 1896-1910,” (8). According to Moon, these discourses were contingent on a number of “different historical actors simultaneously proposed diverse interpretations of enlightenment justifying their own political imperatives…” (9). This should be in the intro where I discuss this.

\(^{183}\) Bayliss, *On the Margins of Empire*. In this comparative approach to both Korean and *Burakumin* identities, Bayliss explores the “striking parallels between these two minority communities in terms of their socio-economic position in Japanese society and the degree to which they were ostracized from the majority,” 11.


\(^{185}\) Bayliss, *On the Margins of Empire*, 47.
Peter Duus has suggested that in order to manage this incorporation, the Japanese emphasized cultural similarities between groups like the Koreans and the Japanese.\textsuperscript{186} To legitimize these claims, they concocted stories and origin myths that connected the Japanese to both Korean émigrés and \textit{Burakumin} and presented these stories as historical truisms. However, this argument hinged on the idea that the Japanese were the pure race, while groups like the Koreans had been polluted through their interactions with the Chinese and others on their borders.\textsuperscript{187} The Japanese believed that they shared a racial affinity with people like the Koreans and the \textit{Burakumin} it was up to the Japanese to help restore these groups to their original and pure form. Once that was achieved they too could be Japanese.\textsuperscript{188} Similar racialist arguments were made with regard to Muslims in China. For example, a common trope in articles about the Hui was that although they now shared racial similarities with the Han, this had not always been the case. When Muslims originally arrived in China they had been racially different from the Han, but over time had been Sinified (\textit{Shinajinka} 支那人化).\textsuperscript{189} The argument then tied the Tatar population in Japan to the Hui in North China, claiming a shared cultural and racial heritage for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{187} The Japanese were very much aware of the position of the Hui between the Chinese and the Mongols. They did not so clearly understand the same positioning of Hui between China and Tibet or between China and Southeast Asia.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Bayliss, \textit{On the Margins of Empire}, 49. Sinan Lenvant’s dissertation about Pan-Turanism and the Japanese leading up to the war makes similar claims about the ways that the Japanese created origin myths and constructed cultural and racial affinity with peoples as far afield as the Finns to bolster their imperial legitimacy. For more on this please see: Sinan Levant, “\textit{Senchū-ki Senchu-ji ni okeru Nihon no \textquote{Yūrashia seisaku'} to\textquote{irei shugi \textquote{kaikyō seisaku'} han so hankyō undō no shiten kara}'} (戦前期-戦中期における日本の「ユーラシア政策」- トウーラン主義 \textquote{回教政策} 反共反共運動の視点からー)” Waseda University Monographs, no. 107 (2014).
\item \textsuperscript{189} Togō Fumio 都甲文雄, \textit{Manshū shūkyō no gaikan} 满洲宗教の概観, (Tokyo: Nichiman bukyō kyōkai honbu 満植仏教協会本部, 1936): 17.
\end{itemize}
the two groups, and by extension to all Muslims everywhere. And since the Tatars were now considered to be an indelible part of the Japanese empire, it was the duty of the empire to help save Muslims in China.

This ongoing conversation about the place of Koreans and Burakumin within Japanese society permeated the discussion of Japan’s ambitions in Asia. By the end of the Meiji period, regular Japanese subjects were conversant in the ways that the Japanese government imagined the Koreans and the Burakumin fitting into Japanese society. By building schools and promoting “civilization and enlightenment” for the Burakumin, the discourse presented the Japanese as saviors.  

These policies were emulated in North China among Muslim populations, and, as chapter two and three in this dissertation demonstrate, Muslim communities, the Japanese, and even the Nationalists considered them successful. The Burakumin resembled Muslims in a number of ways not lost on Japanese policy-makers. Like Muslim communities in China, Burakumin had traditionally dominated certain sectors of the Japanese economy. Like the Burakumin, Muslims in China often occupied liminal spaces in the economy as intermediaries between Han Chinese and nomads, especially the Mongols. In order to figure out how to either integrate these Buraku-specific sectors into the larger economy, the Japanese had conducted extensive ethnographic studies of Burakumin communities as early as the first decade of the twentieth century. A number of reports put out in the early years of the war about specifically Muslim-dominated industries in China, such as jade trading, butchering, and wool dealing resembled the earlier Buraku economy studies. In a report on Muslim guilds in Beiping, for example, the Japanese reporter divides the Muslim community in the city by the economic sector

190 Bayliss, On the Margins of Empire, 83.
they occupied. The top six jobs for Muslims in the city in the mid-1940s in descending order were: fruit and vegetable vendors, pack animal traders, camel traders, beef and mutton butchers and vendors, duck vendors, and jade traders. Since the mid-1930s, the head of the Beiping Vegetable Guild, which charged both Muslims and non-Muslims vendors ten yuan a year in membership fees, was a Muslim. Without going into the details of garlic scapes (qingsuan 青蒜), garlic rape (caitai 菜薹), watermelon (xigua 西瓜), and pumpkin (nangua 南瓜) sales at the markets in Beiping, it is safe to say that the detail and amount of data collected by the Japanese regarding the economic activities of Muslim fruit and vegetable sellers reflected Japanese strategic interests in understanding the economic situation among Beiping’s Muslims. Although they made no explicit comparisons to the Burakumin in their reports, the methods used and the reasons for their studies of Muslim communities in North China were similar.

The Russian Revolution and the 1919 Korean Independence movement following WWI forced the Japanese to re-examine their imagination of non-Japanese integration into their evolving ideas of the kokumin. After 1919, the integration of Koreans became a “problem” (mondai 問題) that needed to be addressed. This rhetoric of trying to “fix” minority problems in the empire would echo through policy reports dealing with Muslims on the mainland throughout the 1930s and 1940s and many of the reports posted by the Japanese imperial army began to

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191 There are numerous examples of reports that document the economic specialization of Muslims in North China, among them: 仁井田陞, “Pekin no kaikyōto shōkō hito to sono nakama-teki shōgen” (北京の回教徒商工人と其の仲間的緒言) Kaikyōken 回教圏 8, no. 6. (1944): 241-265.
192 “Pekin no kaikyōto shōkō hito,” 253. Interestingly, the report concluded that in order to create better relationships with Muslim vendors in the city, the Japanese should fund the building of more mosques in the area.
193 Market activity is described excruciating detail: suffice to say the nangua market was dominated by traders from Shandong. For more see: “Pekin no kaikyōto shōkō hito,” 253.
focus more on figuring out how to fix minority problems, such as the 1938 policy report “The Tatar Problem” (*Tataru mondai* タタル問題) and “The Muslim Problem” (*Kaikyō mondai* 回教問題).\(^{194}\)

This shift in rhetoric concerning minorities in Japanese-controlled Korea happened around the same time as the naturalization of around twenty Crimean Tatars who had fled Bolshevik persecution and found a welcoming home in Japan. The Tatar émigré community served two distinct needs of the Japanese imperial government: the Tatars presented the Japanese both as protectors of Islam and as saviors from Soviet communism. Unlike the Koreans, where the “policy of commonality between Japanese and Koreans left no room for the existence of a distinct Korean culture,”\(^{195}\) the Japanese needed the Tatars to embrace and use their religious and cultural differences to suit the changing needs of the Japanese empire. The goals of all of these programs should not be ignored: their efforts were to integrate people into the Japanese Empire as seamlessly as possible.\(^{196}\) By Japanese estimates, there were approximately 100,000 Muslims living in the Manchurian cities Chengde and Fengtian alone. According to the Japanese, Muslims living in these cities were particularly impoverished. In the 1930s, the Japanese suggested using propaganda about the flourishing Tatar community in Tokyo to demonstrate to Muslims in Rehe and Fengtian Tokyo’s good intentions. Since Tatars had escaped east over the Urals (*Uraru-san* ウラル山) and the Volga River (*ヴォルガ川*), making their way to Japan via Siberia and Korea,

\(^{194}\) “*Tatāru mondai* タタル問題” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muslim Relations Section (1:2:1:0:1 DSCF 0107-0143): 1939.

\(^{195}\) Bayliss, *On the Margins of Empire*, 51. This, however, was only true of certain policies and was not totally enforced across the board.

\(^{196}\) Bayliss, *On the Margins of Empire*, 390.
Japanese propagandists presented the Tatars as racially similar to the Muslims in these northern cities. Through these outreach efforts to poorer Muslim communities, Japan hoped to attract the attention of Muslims in Gansu and Yunnan, or, as they described it, the places where “the most of the famous Muslims come from.” The Japanese drew on their experiences with the Tatars to figure out ways to gain favor among the larger and more influential groups of Muslims throughout China. To justify their actions, the Japanese imperial government argued that the Nationalists had failed Muslims in North China completely by not addressing the specific needs of Islamic enclaves, and that only after the Manchurian Incident (Nisshi jiken 日支事件), did Chengde and Fengtian Muslims get from the Japanese the support they needed.

Also, the Japanese claimed that through exposure to the Tatar community living in Japan, Japanese people were learning about Islam and had developed a sense of goodwill towards this community, which, in turn, fostered and nurtured an appreciation for Islam. This continued reliance on the émigré Tatar community as a gauge of Japan’s commitment to protecting the religious rights of Muslims was a common trope in their propaganda directed at the Muslim world throughout the 1930s and 1940s. By drawing parallels between the Tatar Muslims who had fled the Bolsheviks after the Russian Revolution and Muslims fighting the Soviets in Ha’erbin, the Japanese were able to present themselves as liberators from Soviet oppression in two distinct but unrelated cases. Stalin’s crackdown on Muslims in the USSR provided the

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Japanese with an entry into Muslim communities and Japan successfully exploited Stalin’s harsh policies to promote the stamping out of the Soviet “Red devils” (Akaoni 赤鬼) in the region. Unlike the evil and oppressive Soviets, the Japanese not only respected religious freedom, but also provided religious minorities with the means to flourish and develop in their empire. By presenting themselves as benevolent protectors of Islam, the Japanese were able to position themselves as pro-Islamic and anti-Communist.

**METHODS FOR MANAGING MUSLIMS: LEARNING ABOUT ISLAM—KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT**

**PART I: THE DRAMATIC EXPANSION OF ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATIONS IN JAPAN AND IN MANCHUKUO BETWEEN 1932 AND 1937**

Most historians agree that the study of Islam in Japan and the Japanese interest in Islam can be divided into two periods. Until the invasion of North China in 1931, there were a number of Japanese scholars who were interested in Islam, but that point marked a decisive turning point the Japan’s policies regarding Islam. Prior to 1932, the Japanese hoped that they would be able to gain support of Muslims in the North China region to create a buffer between Korea and Russian expansion in Siberia, but their approach had been rather haphazard, drawing mostly on their experiences with the Tatars and from their commercial ties to the Middle East. But as Japanese influence expanded on the mainland, their tactics and approaches to managing Muslims changed as well. In 1932, renowned Islamic scholar Kobayashi Hajime 小林元 (c. 1890-1963)

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founded the Islamic Culture Study Group at Komazawa University (*Komazawa Daigaku* 駒澤大学) in Tokyo. Following this, a number of Islamic academic research institutes were repurposed and renamed for broader appeal, such as the Islamic Society (*Isuramu gakkai* イスラム学会) in Tokyo.

Scholars of Islam joined together to promote their mission to disseminate information about the religion in Japan and to help spread information about Japan to Islamic countries. Men like Matsuda Hisao 松田寿男 (1903-1982), Kobayashi Hajime, and Okubu Koji (1899-1950) were among the most important coordinators of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies in Japan before and after the war. Matsuda taught Turkish and Arabic, and the others gave classes about the history of Islam. After 1937, two other major Islamic research institutes were established: the Association of Islamic Culture (*Isuramu bunka kyokai* イスラム文化協会), along with the Islamic Studies Department (*Isuramu gakubu* イスラム学部) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The following year, The Greater Japan Muslim League (*Dai-Nippon Kaikyō Kyokai* 大日本回教協会) was founded with the help of the Japanese government and military. Although the stated goals of many of these organization were to promote the mutual understanding of Islamic and Japanese culture, their close ties with high-ranking military officials like Hayashi Senjūrō ensured that the objectives of the organization went far beyond simple research and promotion of

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204 The organization was dissolved three months after the end of the Pacific War during the American Occupation of Japan. It was then reconstituted as the *Nihon Isuramu Kyokai* 日本イスラム協会. In the early 1960s, the contents of Greater Japan Muslim League’s extensive library were donated to Waseda University, which now houses the largest collection of works on Islam in Japan.
cultural understanding to intelligence gathering and military strategy development.\textsuperscript{205} The number of associations pertaining to Islamic studies started in the years between 1932 and 1937 highlights the dramatic Japanese increase in interest in Muslims throughout the world and the growing understanding among Japanese policy-makers about the importance of Chinese Muslims to Japanese efforts to win over people on the mainland.

Not only did the Japanese strategies concerning Islam pertain specifically to Muslims in China, but they also extended to Muslims throughout the colonized world and to regular Japanese subjects. These associations were tasked with promoting knowledge about Japan among Muslim populations abroad, and they produced a number of publications in Arabic, Malay, Urdu, Turkish, and Indonesian to be disseminated to Muslims around the world.\textsuperscript{206} On the home front, the Japanese government also tried to inform their subjects about Islam. Right after the outbreak of WWII in Europe, the Japanese mounted a campaign to expose Japanese lay-people. With the help of the Japanese Islamic Society, Matsuda Toshio and others mounted a public exhibition in Tokyo and Osaka to inform the Japanese public about Islam. The association estimated that over 150,000 people visited the exhibit in these two cities.\textsuperscript{207}

Most of the Muslim organizations also published scholarly and popular journals in both Japanese and Chinese. For instance, Greater Japan Muslim League published a journal called \textit{The World of Islam} for two years beginning in 1939 in Japanese. In 1938, Kobayashi Hajime was

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\textsuperscript{206} Tanada, “Islamic Research Institutes in Wartime Japan,” 96-97.
\textsuperscript{207} Tanada Hirofumi 店田廣文, “Shakaigaku nenshi ni okeru kaikyō kenkyū” 戦中期日本における回教研究” \textit{Shiyakuwai Gaku nenshi 社會學年誌} 47, no. 3 (2006): 119-120.
\end{flushright}
\end{footnotesize}
appointed head of the newly formed Japanese Muslim Association (Nihon kaikyō Shakai 日本回教社會) which in April of that year started publishing a monthly journal called Islam (Kaikyō ken 回教園) followed a few months later by another journal, Islamic World (Kaikyō Sekai 回教世界). Other journals published by the Japanese during this period that regularly featured information about Muslims were Shin Ajia 新亞細亞, which started publication in August 1939, and Huijiao Shiqing 回教事情, which was published on the mainland in Chinese from May 1938 throughout the war. The dramatic increase in publications aimed at or concerning Muslims is further evidence the policy towards Muslims changed after the outbreak of war and there was a growing interest about Islam in general.

Apart from in the upsurge in the number of associations concerned with understanding Islam and their affiliated publications, the Japanese government also began sending more research teams with specialties in Islamic studies to report on the conditions among Muslim communities living in the occupied areas. In November 1938, Kobayashi Hajime led a group on a research trip throughout North China and into the Mongolian border areas under Japanese control (Mōkyō 蒙疆) under the supervision of the Research Branch of the South Manchurian Railway Company. The group visited mosques and Muslim enclaves throughout the region, stopping for extensive research and data collection in Datong 大同 and Zhangjiakou 張家口. Kobayashi and his associates also helped to established a number of Muslim Associations for locals in smaller cities like Taiyuan 太原, Baotou 包頭, and Jinan 濟南. On their tour, they visited a total of forty-six mosques, including five women’s-only mosques, and a number of
madrasas that were already teaching Japanese language among the elementary and secondary school students.\textsuperscript{208}

As early as 1934, the Japanese, who were hoping to promote educational reforms among the Muslims population in Xinjing\textsuperscript{209} established the Xinjing Islamic Association (\textit{Xinjing Yisilan Xiehui 新京伊斯蘭協會}) to achieve these goals. After their successes in Xinjing, the Japanese continued to open branches of the associations in various cities under the Japanese occupation, which eventually fell under the umbrella of the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly (\textit{Zhongguo huijiao zonglianhehui 中國回教總聯合會}).\textsuperscript{210} These branches opened with the plan of developing relationships between Muslim communities and the Japanese Empire.\textsuperscript{211} Chinese Muslims like Yi Guangshe 依光社 announced that they hoped these organizations would help Muslims in North China to gain a higher degree of education and find good jobs through an increased understanding of Islam.\textsuperscript{212} The promotion of these organizations through the mouthpiece of Chinese Muslims reflected a growing desire on the part of the Japanese government to articulate a clearer and more coherent policy about Islam. It also highlights their efforts to bring many of the more scholarly, academic research associations.

\textsuperscript{208} Ioka Shunichi 井岡畯一, “日本イスラム学 13年.” 日本イスラム協会 [The study of Islam in Japan—1938] \textit{Association for Islamic Studies in Japan} 21 (August 1983). The report filed by Kobayashi regarding the state of Muslim schools in China is examined in detail in Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{209} Xinjing (新京) was the capital of Manchukuo between 1932 and 1945. After the war, it reverted to its previous name, Changchun (長春), and is the current capital of Jilin province.

\textsuperscript{210} The South Manchurian Railroad had a special division for researching and reporting on Islam in China called the Muslim Research Group (\textit{Kaikyō han 回教班}). By the beginning of September 1938, the Ninth Route Army had also established the Japanese Imperial Muslim Association (\textit{Dai Nihon kaikyō kyōkai 大日本回教協会}).

\textsuperscript{211} Sakurai, "Manshūkoku no kaikyō," 167.

\textsuperscript{212} Juzi, “Riben chuangling huijiao xiehui zancheng,” 50-52.
under the control of the army—even if only indirectly—promoting a growing desire to control to output and production of research institutes for their imperial war aims.

The Beiping Branch of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly was established in 1937 near Guang’an Men 廣安門, but soon moved to the more proximate Zhongnanhai area. Organizationally, the Assembly was divided into seven main branches: Xibe 西北, Wai Menggu 外蒙古, Huazhong 華中, Hua’nan 華南, Xi’nan 西南, and Huabei 華北. Under the umbrella of the Huabei branch, which due to its location was the most active, there were seven chapters: Beijing, Tianjin, Jinan, Taiyuan, Zhangjiakou, Jinan, and Baotou [Please see Figure 1 and Figure 2 in the Appendix]. Each chapter consisted of two further divisions: one that oversaw research, communications and publications, and another that administered schools and mosques in the region under its jurisdiction. By the early 1940s, there were around twelve full-time employees working at the Beiping chapter of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly, with Zhang Wangmou 張王某 acting as the spiritual leader of the group. Zhang was fully educated in Japan before leaving for New York to pursue graduate studies at Columbia University. He was supportive of Japanese efforts on the mainland and helped the Japanese recruit Muslim students among those in Beiping to study in Japan.

213 Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce”, 13. According to Yang’s report, there were a total of 374 active members at the time of its publication across the seven different chapters in Huabei.
PART II: TACTICS FOR RECRUITING MUSLIMS

Four delegates from the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly were invited to attend the opening of the Tokyo Mosque at the beginning of May 1938. Tang Yichen, who was the head of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly at the time, led the delegation. As mentioned in the introduction, Liu Jinbiao, Li Zonging, Zhao Yunsheng, and Wang Lianyu joined him.216 The attendees at the opening of the Tokyo mosque hailed from all parts of the Islamic world from West Africa to the Philippines: a news wire from Hong Kong reported that there were representatives from forty-four countries in attendance.217 High-ranking officials were invited at Japan’s expense to the opening of the Tokyo mosque, and the Tatar émigrés were introduced to dignitaries to highlight the long-standing Japanese support for persecuted Muslims. Beyond their treatment of the Tatar Muslim community, this accommodation was supposedly exemplified by their building of the Tokyo Mosque itself. Here, the Japanese wanted to present themselves not just as the protectors of Islam, but also as an empire that extended religious freedom to everyone living within their borders.218

The Chinese delegates left occupied Beiping on May 1, 1938. They arrived in Kobe six days later and were greeted by a Chinese Muslim named Wang Ruilan 王瑞蘭 and Japanese officials. They traveled by boat from Kobe to Osaka, and from Osaka they continued their

journey to Tokyo by car. Upon arrival in Tokyo, 50-60 Tatars and a number of Chinese Muslims who were either working or studying in Japan greeted the group. The festivities celebrating the opening of the mosque commenced the next morning, and Liu Jinbiao gave a short speech in Arabic to the delegation. Later, their Japanese hosts arranged a tour of Tokyo including the Imperial Palace and the Meiji Shrine (*Meiji Jingū* 明治神宮), as well as the Yasukuni Shrine (*Yasukuni jinja* 靖国神社). Following breakfast with Xue Yanqing, the Chinese Muslim opera star, the group departed for the Yoyogi district of Tokyo, where the mosque was built. At the inauguration of the mosque, the Muslims from North China participated in a ceremony where they presented a bronze vase to one of the Japanese dignitaries who were on hand to receive gifts. In the prayers that followed the opening of the mosque, many prayed for world peace and better cooperation between Muslims. Following their visit to the mosque, the Muslims from North China had an audience with the Yemeni King at the Egyptian embassy, where there were also a number of Turks and Afghans on hand to meet the group. Over the next few days, the Muslims from North China participated in a number of meetings.

Their twenty-day sojourn in Japan left the men with a favorable impression of their host country. Upon returning to Beiping, the group wrote a number of articles detailing the events of their trip, indicating in their writings that Muslims from North China should accept Japanese aid.

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220 The Tokyo Mosque, or the Tokyo Camii (東京ジャーミ), as it is now known, was rebuilt in the 1990s with financial support from the Turks. It is in the same location as the original Tokyo Mosque, and within walking distance from the *Yoyogi-uehara* Metro Station. Architecturally, the structure is an Ottoman style mosque that also now houses the Japanese Turkish Cultural Center.
222 Ma, “Zhongguo huijiao zong lianhe,” 33-40.
and be less suspicious of their intentions. No doubt the men had a great time touring Japan for three weeks for free, visiting zoos and parks, and shrines. Beyond this, however, it is clear is that for twenty-one days they met, interacted, and ate with important dignitaries from all over the Muslim world, establishing connections and learning about the plight and struggles of their religious brethren who lived beyond the borders of China. These transnational connections made in Tokyo were instrumental for shaping the worldview of men like Tang Yichen, whom we will meet again in another chapter about the Japanese sponsored hajj mission in the latter months of 1938.

**PART III: TRANSLATING JAPANESE INTO CHINESE WITH THE HELP OF CHINESE MUSLIMS**

Ma Liangpu 马良璞, who accompanied Tang Yichen on the Japanese-sponsored hajj, studied in Japan for a number of years. He was instrumental in translating important articles about Islam from Japanese to Chinese. These articles were then published in Japanese-sponsored periodicals for Muslims throughout occupied China. Ma worked closely with men like Hayashi Senjūrō 林銑十郎, who was promoted to a position of leadership in the Japanese Ninth Route Army after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, to translate a number of tracts about Japan’s desire to foster relationships with Muslims in China and beyond. The relationship was strategic, but also forward thinking and meant to foster long-term growth and intimate diplomatic relationships between the Japanese and Muslim populations throughout East Asia and beyond.²²³ Men like Ma also benefited from working for the Japanese: apart from earning a decent salary, they had the

²²³ Ma Liangpu (translated from Japanese) 马良璞譯, “回教動向日本回教協會生日之意義” *Huijiao Dongxiang Riben Huijiao xiehui shengri zhi yiyi. Huijiao 回教 1, no. 6 (1938): 11.*
opportunity to study in Tokyo and learn another language. In Ma’s case, he was likely picked to go on *hajj* in 1938 because of his Japanese language skills.

After the opening of the Tokyo mosque, growing numbers of Chinese Muslim students from occupied China went to Japan to study. One of these students was a young man named Bai Jinyu 白今愚. Bai corresponded with Tang Yichen during his time in Japan and Tang published a number of his letters in the journal *Islam*. After Bai arrived in Tokyo in August 1938, he wrote to Tang about the well-integrated and growing community of Chinese Muslims in the city, and how he had been welcomed into the expanding network of Muslims from all over the colonial world upon arrival. Bai was in Tokyo to learn Japanese, but his arrival was made much easier, he wrote, by the fact that there were already a number of Muslims from North China studying and working in Tokyo. Bai also indicated that Muslims from China constantly went back and forth between Tokyo and the Mainland, and would bring news and goods back and forth with them.

Bai’s experience highlights two important points: firstly, there was a degree of freedom of movement by certain Chinese during the Japanese occupation of North China. There is a tendency to think of occupied China as an impervious border where people who stayed after 1937 were stuck there and unable to leave. Although Bai was traveling to Japan under Japanese supervision, like many others at the time, he came and went throughout East Asia and was in contact with many people who lived beyond the borders of the occupied territories. Secondly, Bai’s account reveals an important growing network of Muslims living and studying in Tokyo during the war. They exchanged ideas, helped each other out, and likely studied Japanese.

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224 Bai Jinyu 白今愚, “*Baijinyu Anda Riben*” 白今愚安達日本, *Huijiao 回教* 1, no. 6 (1938): 41-42.
together in the same classrooms, fostering a sense of community with Muslims from beyond the borders of occupied China. It was the type of circumstances described by men like Bai that worried the Nationalists and Japanese efforts to enlist their support drew more and more attention as the war went on.

**NATIONALIST RESPONSES TO THE JAPANESE SUCCESSES WITH MUSLIMS LIVING UNDER OCCUPATION**

Nationalist Muslims living in Chongqing wrote prolifically about Japan’s efforts to win over Muslims, going so far as to claim that Muslims in the region were so much under the spell of the Japanese that they had forgotten that Japan was the enemy. In 1944, the Americans remarked: “In recent years, the Chungking [sic] Government has become increasingly aware of the strategic importance of Muslim minorities within its borders, and of Japanese efforts to utilize this minority. This awareness has resulted in increased efforts to win the friendship of Muslims, not only in China but in the wide Islamic world.” Beyond sending students to Al-Azhar in Cairo to study, the Nationalists also sent a number of good-will missions to Iraq, Iran, Egypt, and Afghanistan partly in response to what they imagined as Japan’s successful campaigns to court Muslims living under occupation. To the American commentators, the Nationalists appeared to be using all possible channels to “counter Japanese activities and to present her side of the Sino-Japanese War to the Islamic world, hoping to win voluntary Muslim support.”

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225 “Rikou huijiao zhengce yu Zhongguo huimin” 日寇回教政策與中國回民, *Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo huihuibao* 中國回教救國會會報 4, no. 5-8 (1942).
227 Office of Strategic Services, R&A 890.1S (August 25, 1944).
Nationalists also attempted to “mend old antagonisms” within China they often presented “direct answers” to Japanese-sponsored organizations by promoting their own visions for how they should manage Muslims.\(^{228}\) The Office of Strategic Services even remarked that the Nationalists had established the Chinese Islamic National Salvation Federation in 1938 as a direct reaction to the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly. The Chinese state-building project during this period was a messy, ongoing dialogue with many different actors and as many different visions for the nation: the war was a time of upheaval none of the Japanese attempts to make friends with Muslims went unnoticed by the Nationalists. 1938 was a busy year for the Nationalists as they continued their retreat from Wuhan to Chongqing and dealt with a growing refugee crisis. It is understandable then, that in the early years of the war their top priority was not dispersed Muslim communities from North China who had fled the Japanese army, or meeting the demands of the elite Muslims who wanted to be included in the future plans for the nation-state.\(^{229}\) But as the wartime situation stabilized, the Nationalists grew more anxious about Japanese encroachment on the mainland, and began to respond in kind.

At first, the Nationalists argued that the Japanese understood little about the dynamics and relationships of Islam in China: they simply considered Japan’s relationship with Muslims too new and too superficial to be legitimate. The Nationalists also falsely assumed that Japan was

\(^{228}\) Office of Strategic Services, R&A 890.1S (August 25, 1944).

\(^{229}\) In his article “Classifying Citizens in Nationalist China during WWII, 1937-1941,” Rana Mitter argues that although there were setbacks in the Nationalist efforts to mobilize people living in Free China, their efforts were instrumental in framing the ways that the Communists envisioned participatory citizenship in China. Dealing with the refugee crisis in the early years of the war led to new forms of categorisation and mobilization: “Action during wartime was at the heart of constituting citizenship,” and the Nationalists were forced to “define their own identity in competition with other wartime alternatives.” Rana Mitter, “Classifying Citizens in Nationalist China during WWII, 1937-1941,” *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 2 (March 2011): 248; 251.
interested in Muslim populations because Islam glorified war and were always happy to fight for the highest bidder. In most cases, they argued that Muslims in North China were only willing to collaborate with the Japanese when they promised developmental projects, such as modern schools. Drawing from the Qur’an, Nationalist Muslims claimed that the Japanese had misinterpreted and misread Islam, and that contrary to what the Japanese believed, Islam was not a violent religion. This line of reasoning was then extended beyond the Qur’an to describe the incompatibility of Islam and Shinto: how could the emperor, the spiritual leader of all those who lived under the Japanese Empire, also claim to be the spiritual leader of Muslims? This question demonstrated a fundamental weakness in the Japanese aspirations to position themselves as protectors of Islam in the East. In truth, as we have seen, the Japanese strategy concerning Islam and their motivations were much more complicated than simply recruiting a Muslim mercenary army. Distracted at the beginning of the war and unable to see the Japanese successes for what they were, the Nationalists initially fumbled their policies concerning the incorporation of Muslims into the nation-state.

**NATIONALISTS: INCREASING DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH THE MIDDLE EAST**

The Japanese devoted substantial efforts to creating Mongolian and Muslim puppet regimes that they could effectively leverage against the Nationalists. Partly in response to this, Jiang Jieshi

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232 Zhu, “Riben yu Yisilanjiao,” 133.
invited prominent Muslim leaders to a conference in Hankou in 1938 to establish the Chinese Muslim National Salvation Federation. The influential warlord-cum-governor of Ningxia, Ma Hongkui 馬鴻逵, the governor of Qinghai, Ma Bufang 马步芳, and the governor of Gansu, Ma Buqing 马步青, were all made honorary chairmen of the organization under the leadership of Bai Chongxi 白崇禧.\footnote{For example see: “Shina-kai kyōto no shin dōkō,” (支那回教徒の新動向) Tōa 东亚, 11, no. 4 (April 1938): 20-30; “Ma Hongkui to Shina no kai kyōto,” (马鸿逵と支那的回教徒) Kaikyō ken 回教圏, 6, no. 6 (June 1942): 377-388.} In 1939, the Nationalists sponsored the first National Muslim Congress and changed the name of the organization to the Chinese Muslim Association. The association directed its energy and propaganda at resisting the Japanese through such mechanisms as traveling performing troops that put on plays in local communities. The Chinese Muslim Association also sponsored a number of goodwill missions to the Middle East as “a counter measure against visits under Japanese auspices to three or four Moslem countries in the Near East” through 1938 and 1939.\footnote{British National Archives, Records of the Foreign Office, Far Eastern Department, FO 371/99367, FC/1785/2.} These missions to the Middle East were supplemented by Nationalist-supported visits of Muslim delegations to Indonesia and Singapore with the intent of countering the Japanese efforts to win the sympathy and respect of these places. In 1940, Bai Chongxi initiated official diplomatic relations on behalf of the GMD with Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey, partly in response to increased Japanese involvement in the region.

The Nationalists also soon recognized that in a short number of years, the Japanese had managed to secure and expand their diplomatic relationships with a number of countries throughout the Muslim world. For example, according to Nationalist sources, Persians were
rejecting the British and beginning to favor the Japanese, who were supplying them with arms. Naval officers from Iran were also traveling in relatively large numbers to the Japanese Naval Academy to train there. The Afghans, as well, were expanding their diplomatic and economic ties with the Japanese in order to upgrade their industrial capacity and train their army. In India, the Japanese were trying to and develop trade in the cotton industry. The Nationalists did not just take note of these interactions, but stepped up their own campaigns and diplomatic maneuverings in Middle Eastern countries.

The GMD also funded the rebuilding of the largest Chongqing Mosque after a Japanese bombing raid destroyed it. This rebuilding project presented the Nationalists with two opportunities: to counter Japanese propaganda and to emphasize to local Muslims that they supported Islam in Free China. These actions were direct reactions to Japanese wartime policies regarding Muslims and responses by the GMD leadership to the destruction and suffering inflicted on Muslim populations by Japanese aggression. They tied their aid to propaganda, which presented them as enhancing and bettering the lives of Muslims through modern reconstruction efforts. However, in order to get on-the-ground information about the situation in North China, they needed to send operatives secretly to the occupied areas to gather data on what the Japanese were actually doing.

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**RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS TO OCCUPIED CHINA TO OBSERVE AND REPORT ON JAPANESE POLICIES TOWARDS MUSLIMS**

Japanese propaganda successes with Muslims living under occupation concerned the Nationalists so much that they sent a number of Muslims undercover into occupied China on reconnaissance missions.\(^{237}\) Muslim scholars like Yang Jingzhi 楊敬之 risked a great deal to travel into North China and collect intelligence on the situation among Muslims in the region. In 1943, Yang wrote and published a report called “Japan’s Muslim policy” (*Riben zhi huijiao zhengce* 日本之回教政策). The document does a number of things: it outlines and analyzes some of the specific Japanese successes with Muslims in the occupied areas; it offers suggestions and policy directives based on the conclusions of these findings; and, it presents a number of conversations between the author and Muslims.\(^{238}\) *Japan’s Muslim policy* presents a picture of a China deeply divided by Japanese aggression.

Yang Jingzhi was originally from Beijing and graduated from Beijing University. In 1937, he fled south to Kunming, and then made his way to Chongqing. In 1941, he returned secretly to the occupied areas to collect data on Japanese policies and to speak with Muslims. He conducted a number of interviews with friends and acquaintances from before the war who had not fled when the Japanese occupied Beijing and with Muslims who he met in while traveling in North China. In these conversations, he asked most people to provide justifications for staying in

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\(^{237}\) However, it is also important to keep in mind Rana Mitter’s point in his article “Classifying Citizens in Nationalist China during World War II.” In the article, he writes that “the geography of occupation, particularly in the early years of the war was very patchy: the idea that there were clearly delineated zones between the Nationalists (‘Free China’), the Communists, and the occupation regimes was misleading, as barriers between the three were always changing and blurred.” (254).

\(^{238}\) Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 19.
occupied China. Yang’s research yielded some interesting—and perhaps surprising—results. He concluded that among the Muslim populations in Beiping and Tianjin, those who were most likely to work with the Japanese were shopkeepers and entrepreneurs, since they had the most to gain. Above all, people stated that economic incentive had been the largest factor in their decisions to stay. The economic incentives provided by the Japanese were closely tied to the second reason that many Muslims gave for staying: a strong loyalty to their families and their native-place. In a number of cases, the Japanese provided incentives that ensured that their families were well cared for, such as tuition waivers for modern schools or paying hospital fees for older relatives.239

Yang remarked that by 1931, the Japanese were integrating themselves into existing networks of Muslim entrepreneurs and by 1937 they were either subsidizing or buying most of what was produced by these networks. He provides a number of examples of Muslim-dominated industries and guilds in North China that were benefiting directly from the Japanese occupation. For instance, sheep and beef butchers in Beiping sold the majority of their meat to the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy at fixed and inflated prices. It is interesting to note that these findings were also presented in the Japanese intelligence reports, but it is inconclusive whether Yang had access to these reports or was relying on his own findings. In Yang’s report, he notes that the Japanese bought upwards of seventy percent of the meat available in Beiping, which was all consumed by the Japanese. The wool industry—where Muslims occupied the economic niche as middlemen between Mongolian herders and Han Chinese buyers in the cities—profited because

239 Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 18
the Japanese Imperial Army requisitioned most of the wool at favourable prices.\textsuperscript{240} In this case, the Army bought around ninety percent of the wool coming through large trading entrepôts in Mongolian border towns like Zhangjiakou.\textsuperscript{241}

Another important sector of the economy dominated by Muslims who profited immensely from the Japanese occupation was the barbequed skewered lamb meat vendors (\textit{kao yangrou chuar} 烤羊肉串).\textsuperscript{242} Yang claimed that \textit{yangrou chuar} vendors hawked their kabobs at inflated prices to the large numbers of Japanese Imperial soldiers in the capital. Yang remarked that there were even a number of vendors who were willing to “sell-out” Islam by providing beer as an accompaniment to the meat sticks. To conclude his rant about the kabob vendors, Yang retold a common joke from the time that he heard on the streets of Beiping: the Japanese army officers were such frequent customers that they held stocks in the \textit{yangrou chuar} businesses. In response to these claims, Muslim vendors would say things like: “How is this collaboration? We are just obeying orders and doing our job!”\textsuperscript{243}

Yang singled out for attention another small sector of the economy, one dominated by Muslim women. At train stations throughout the region, it was Muslim women who sold cold dishes and chestnuts to passengers waiting for trains or grabbing a snack on a short stopover. Since Japanese officers were the most frequent passengers on trains in occupied China, they

\textsuperscript{240} Though smaller than the Mongolian wool trade, another source of wool lay in northeastern Tibet (Amdo), the product moving eastward on Yellow River rafts and boats rather than Mongolian caravans.\textsuperscript{241} Yang, “\textit{Riben zhi huijiao zhengce},” 26-28.

\textsuperscript{242} There is no indication in the report about whether these vendors were Uyghurs living in Beiping, or Hui Muslims. Currently, the \textit{yangrou chuar} business is dominated by Uyghurs in most metropolitan areas in China. Yang does interact on numerous occasions with these vendors, so presumably they spoke Chinese, perhaps indicating to us that these were local, Hui Muslims from Beiping who were selling meat sticks.

\textsuperscript{243} Yang, “\textit{Riben zhi huijiao zhengce},” 29-31.
often bought snacks from these Muslim women. Yang commented that this public and open display of economic collaboration that took place on the bustling train platforms and led Han Chinese to suspect that all Muslims worked willingly with the Japanese in order to make a few extra kuai.\textsuperscript{244} Clearly, economic collaboration in almost all sectors of Muslim society in North China was evident to Yang.

Another way that Yang observed the Japanese catering to Muslims was to safeguard them and to promote divisions between their communities and their non-Muslim neighbors. Yang claimed that the Japanese used specific policies to generate animosity between local communities. For instance, the Japanese supposedly gave Muslims preferential treatment in court cases against non-Muslims and released Muslims on bail more easily than non-Muslims.\textsuperscript{245} As the Japanese became more deeply involved in the region, Yang mentioned that this trend was very concerning since the Japanese helped foster the hatred that many Muslims felt towards Han Chinese. This was potentially detrimental to solidarity among Muslims and Han living in Free China.\textsuperscript{246} Exacerbating already existing ethnic tensions between long-standing communities is a tactic used by imperial powers to generate support from disenfranchised minorities, and in this case, for the Japanese, Yang believed that it was working.

Like Yang, a number of Nationalist Muslims believed that the often-tenuous relationships between the Han and the Hui could be repaired. Zhu Jianmin 朱建民 argued that the cultural differences between the Han and the Hui were so deeply entrenched that there was really no way

\textsuperscript{244} Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 27.
\textsuperscript{245} Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 29.
\textsuperscript{246} Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce”, 21. One of the ways that Yang claimed that the Japanese fostered loyalty among minority populations was by supplying them with opium.
that they would ever be able to get along. For Nationalist writer Zhu, who was not a Muslim himself, the Japanese were working hard to deepen these cleavages by presenting themselves as friends of Muslims and by doing things like building the Tokyo Mosque.\textsuperscript{247} Zhu thought that the Japanese were making astute observations about unrest and the increasing Islamism (\textit{Yisilanzhuyi 伊斯兰主義}) in the Muslim world, and were using this religious unrest beyond occupied China to their advantage in recruiting Muslims.\textsuperscript{248} Zhu had three main suggestions for Nationalist policy-makers to adopt in order to counter Japanese successes: he suggested that the Nationalists do things to promote the reconciliation between Muslims and Han communities; he recommended that Nationalists improve Muslim schools; and he thought that the Nationalists needed to bolster their propaganda efforts directed to Muslim populations. Finally Zhu suggested that since the Japanese were portraying themselves as liberators from imperialism in Asia, the Nationalists needed to work harder to vilify the Japanese imperial ambitions in the eyes of Muslims in Free China, occupied China and beyond.\textsuperscript{249}

Following this policy of promoting difference between different ethnic groups, one of the tactics that the Nationalists observed the Japanese using and reacted to strongly was Japanese propaganda that promoted ideas among Muslims that they were not Chinese (\textit{huihui bing bushi zhongguoren 回回並不是中國人}).\textsuperscript{250} The Japanese told students that once they finished school and had learned Japanese properly, they would be dispatched to other Muslim countries to help

\textsuperscript{247} Zhu, "\textit{Riben yu Yisilanjiao}," 132.  
\textsuperscript{248} Zhu, "\textit{Riben yu Yisilanjiao}," 133.  
\textsuperscript{249} Zhu, "\textit{Riben yu Yisilanjiao}," 135.  
\textsuperscript{250} Yang, "\textit{Riben zhi huijiao zhengce}," 44.
build East Asian Muslims (Dongya de huijiao ren cai 東亞的回教人)\textsuperscript{251}. This was presumably intended to create a sense that their religious identity was more important than their ethnic or localized one and that they could go anywhere in the empire where there were Muslims and feel at home. According to the Nationalists, this propaganda was poisoning the minds of Muslims, who, Yang argued, had been an integral part of China since the Tang Dynasty. In order to combat this propaganda, which Yang deemed successful on his secret trip to Beiping, the GMD needed to devote more energy and effort to making Muslims understand that they were a part of the Zhonghua minzu. He also suggested getting Muslim agents from Free China to the North to infiltrate mosques and counter Japanese propaganda\textsuperscript{252}.

Other Nationalist Muslims also went secretly into occupied China, reporting back and publishing articles in Nationalist supported magazines and circulars about their experiences. They found out that resisting Soviet Communism was especially important for Muslims who lived in Xinjiang and North China. Ren Wenbo 茂文波 had fled his home in the north and secretly visited his home region in 1938. Upon returning to occupied China, he was introduced to an old Muslim man—according to the account, a renowned scholar and a hajji—who, like many others, did not want to have his name published. When Ren confronted the hajji about his choice to remain in the occupied territories, he replied that working with the Japanese was like performing a juggling act: there were many things to consider and if one of the balls fell the act

\textsuperscript{251} Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 52.
\textsuperscript{252} Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 52.
would be over.\textsuperscript{253} When asked why he chose to stay while the Japanese pillaged and killed his brothers in the south, the old man grew irate: he warned Ren that the only aggressors Muslims should concern themselves with were the Soviets and the British. For this old man, the localized concerns of his community fighting the Soviets greatly outweighed any thoughts of resisting the Japanese or building a nation. At that time, the Japanese were helping them fight off the Soviets, and this is what mattered in his community. When Ren probed him further about his feelings regarding China and the Three People’s principles, the man replied: “What does \textit{sanminzhuyi} do for Islam?”\textsuperscript{254} The old \textit{hajji} might have known that his stance was unorthodox in the eyes of his interviewers, but differed little from that of many northwestern Hui under both the Qing and the Republic—the secular government was not something they concerned themselves with frequently and its only importance lay in its behavior toward Muslim populations. The \textit{hajji} explained that many people who did not have the luxury of leaving for Free China were simply trying to make the best of a bad situation. By presenting an ideological justification for working with the Japanese and defending his choice to Ren, the old \textit{hajji} defended his collaboration. Both Yang and Ren concluded that the Nationalists needed to devote more attention to fighting the Soviets in the borderlands in order to show their support for the Muslims in these regions.\textsuperscript{255}

Beyond these incentives for collaborating, many Muslims told Yang that their families were an important factor in their decisions to stay in the region after the Japanese invaded. In his travels, Yang met a young Muslim in Jinan who explained to him that the Japanese had killed

\textsuperscript{253} Ren Wenbo 范文波, “\textit{Huijiao shijie de mogui huodong}” 回教世界的魔鬼活動, \textit{Huijiao Jiuguo huihuibao} 中国回教救國會會報 1, no. 8 (1939): 34.
\textsuperscript{254} Ren, “\textit{Huijiao shijie de mogui huodong}” 35.
\textsuperscript{255} Ren, “\textit{Huijiao shijie de mogui huodong},” 36.
both of his brothers and that his parents were old and his father was impaired. When probed by
Yang about why he had not picked up his parents and moved to free China, the young man got
defensive, asking Yang rhetorically how that would have been possible: not wanting to suffer the
same terrible fate as his brothers, he had no choice but to cooperate with the Japanese and had
stayed in Jinan to take care of his parents. This was a common trope that collaborators used to
defend their actions after the war, but it surely played into the decisions of many people who
were faced with the choice of becoming refugees or staying in their homes and working with the
Japanese.256

Later, in Beiping, Yang ran into a Muslim classmate from his days at Beijing University. His old friend agreed to talk to him in private on the condition that he would not publish his name. Before the occupation, Yang’s friend had been a school principal in Dezhou 德州 in Shandong Province. He admitted to Yang that he had few regrets about choosing to stay in North China to work with the Japanese, although he expressed shame and remorse after running into Yang. His classmate felt that he had no other choice and thus working with the Japanese was really his best option. When Yang further asked his old friend whether or not he had a responsibility to his religion—not to his country—to resist the Japanese. His old classmate explained that after the occupation, the Japanese had enlisted him, moved him and his sick mother to Beiping, provided her with excellent medical care that she desperately needed, and they paid him a hefty salary on time—something his Chinese employers had never done. Yang presents his friend as rather indignant and when probed further about his decision to stay and

256 This is one of the central arguments of Keith Schoppa’s recent book, In a sea of bitterness (2011).
work with the Japanese he provided perhaps the most quintessential Chinese response to Yang’s persistent probing: “mei banfa” (沒辦法)—there simply was no other way.257

Yang draws numerous conclusions about the Japanese successes among Muslim populations in the places he visited. Like Ren, he also argued that it was imperative that the GMD respond to these Japanese triumphs. Beyond suggesting that they extend their foreign service postings to the Middle East, Yang also noted that the GMD must work to recruit more Chinese Muslim diplomats who spoke Arabic. He also suggested that the Nationalists implement curriculum amendments for middle schools and high schools that focused on Middle Eastern history and geography and recruit students from the Middle East to come study in China. Yang thought that this program be supplemented with exchanges between teachers’ colleges in the Middle East.258 Through these programs, the Nationalists would be able to help train revolutionaries in the Middle East and improve their capabilities to resist both foreign imperialism and Japan.259

**CONCLUSIONS**

Reports and articles like these illuminate that the GMD were aware of and responding directly to the policy initiatives implemented by the Japanese in north China. Both the Japanese and the Nationalists realized that they needed to present Muslims with opportunities to remake themselves and to reconceptualise their relationships to the Middle East. These efforts show us

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257 Yang, “Riben zhi hujiiao zhengce,” 43.
258 Yang, “Riben zhi hujiiao zhengce” 43.
259 Yang, “Riben zhi hujiiao zhengce,” 44.
something about the fractured process of both nation and state-building in China throughout the 1930s and 1940s and show how the Japanese imperial policies regarding Muslims had a hand in Nationalist wartime policy concerning the place of Muslims in China. Beyond the important Chinese cultural idea of connections to the native place, local institutions continued to be an important way by which people ordered and understood their daily interactions during the war. The Japanese provided new institutions for Muslims to join. Even people like Yang were nostalgic and excited to return to places under occupation because of the strong attachment to these places. Through their efforts to support Islam on the mainland, the Japanese elicited direct responses from the Nationalists, who observed the ways that the Japanese Empire managed Muslims very closely. The outcomes of some of these Japanese successes are examined in detail in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.
The following two chapters explore the Japanese and the Nationalists’ use of education and reliance on educational reforms to influence Muslims in China for political purposes. They also explore the pushback and resistance that both parties received from Muslim communities when trying to implement changes to educational policies. Overall, the chapters demonstrate how educational reforms in Muslim schools in China were part of an ongoing dialogue in the 1930s and 1940s between Muslim communities, the Nationalists, and the Japanese to try to come to terms with the place of Sino-Muslims in society. Respectively, both the Nationalists and the Japanese were aware of the role that education played in molding modern citizens and subjects, and they dedicated a substantial amount of energy to Islamic educational reforms.²⁶⁰ Although

²⁶⁰ This message continues to resonate with the state and the international community throughout Asia. In the 2009 edited collection Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in
both governments actively tried to control Muslim populations, success of educational reforms and policy implementation ultimately lay in the hands of the Muslims themselves, who were willing to make concessions, but only to a point. These chapters trace the tensions, the mediations, and the frustrations of all the actors involved in these reforms in order to explore how Muslims were being “made” in China and how the Japanese imperial ambitions on the mainland contributed to this process.261 The chapter also explores how this led to increasing tensions between the state—the new educational providers—and Muslim communities, the traditional source of education.

Many of the debates over curriculum for Muslim children in China during this time centered on one focal issue: language. Both the Japanese and the Nationalists received the most resistance from Muslim communities when they attempted to substitute either Chinese or Japanese language learning during Arabic language classes. All of the Muslims in North China could already speak a local dialect of Chinese—it was their native language. The problem lay in Chinese literacy, compared to or in competition with Arabic literacy, which was in competition with learning to both speak and read Japanese. The idea that the Japanese, the Nationalists, and Muslims all had their own preferred language that each group was interested in promoting is worthy of attention. Muslims were, of course, focused on Arabic because, beyond being the language of the Qur’an, it allowed them to participate in a broader trans-national political and

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religious community that other non-Muslims living in China were not apart of. This was not lost on the Japanese or the Nationalists, and there was very little discussion about eradicating Arabic language learning from the curriculum altogether. There were on-going debates, however, about reducing the number of hours per week learning Arabic and replacing it with either Chinese or Japanese language and culture classes. Both powers understood the value of having a group of Muslims with the cultural capital to converse socially and linguistically with Muslims beyond China.

Education also extended the reach of the Nationalists and Japanese into local communities, and they were able to use state-directed education initiatives to exert influence over Muslim families and communities in ways that the state in China had never been able to do so before. Overall, the Nationalist approach to Muslim education in the 1930s and the 1940s appears to be less consistent and cohesive than the Japanese approach, and was more haphazard and reactionary. In order to appeal broadly to Muslims, the Nationalists knew that they needed to reform education, but throughout the 1930s they faced two interrelated problems: Islamic educational reform was not a priority for the Nationalists, and there were too many competing voices and intellectual trends regarding the place of Muslims in the Chinese nation-state. This resulted in an incoherent message about the place of Muslims in both the nation and the emerging national education system. On the other hand, the Japanese had a more cohesive vision for Muslims and Islamic education in north China. This vision also extended to Muslims throughout East Asia.

As mentioned, by the 1930s, both the Japanese and the Nationalists were using education to influence Muslims on the mainland for their own purposes. However, Muslims were not
simply passive agents of state-directed reforms. As Mao Yufeng points out, “the transition from
the Qing Empire to the Republic of China gave Muslim modernist reformers a chance to promote
an alternate vision of the Chinese nation-state” where they played a larger and more definitive
role in policy-making. By tapping into some of the insecurities Muslims reformers expressed
regarding outdated learning methods and the lack of skills that young graduates received from a
traditional madrasah education, both the Japanese and the Nationalists presented Muslims with
the opportunity to remake their schools, albeit with input from their respective educational
advisors. These efforts show us something about the fractured process of nation-building in
China throughout the 1930s and the 1940s.

EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN CHINA IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH
CENTURY—WHERE DO MUSLIMS FIT INTO THE PICTURE?

Between the end of the nineteenth century and into the early years of the Republic, educational
reforms in China changed the place of the teacher in society and of education in relation to the
state. Dramatic changes to the way the state approached education were precipitated by
numerous factors, including the unsuccessful reforms of the ailing Qing Dynasty in conjunction
with the increasing influence of Meiji Japan on the mainland, especially after Japan’s victory in
the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The visible successes of the Meiji educational reforms, as
well the mounting pressure exerted on China by imperialist powers, alerted Qing reformers to the
fact that the maintenance of their empire depended partially on massive reforms within the
sphere of education. It was the confluence of these problems around the turn of the twentieth

262 Mao Yufeng, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation: Chinese Pilgrimage Missions to Mecca
century that led to shifts in the approaches to teaching in China. At the same time, the Qing began to see the education of Muslims as a seminal part in their vision for the creation of a modern nation-state and explored a variety of ways that they could incorporate them into the imperial fold. 

In the standard periodization of major curriculum trends in Republican China, there are three distinct breaks: the first occurs directly after the founding of the Republic; the second in 1922, with the promulgation of the New School Act; and the third, in 1928, with the founding of the Nationalist government in Nanjing. In 1903, the imperial government laid the groundwork for the adoption of a modern education system based on the successful Meiji model, and in 1905 the Qing abolished the civil service examinations. In 1912, the provisional government of the new Republic created a Ministry of Education, reorganized the school system, and tried to enforce compulsory elementary education. In most instances, these announcements and developments were not as far reaching or as penetrating as some works on educational reforms in China would have us believe. 

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263 Mao “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 373-395. In this article and in her dissertation Sino-Muslims and Chinese Nation Building, 1905-1956 (George Washington University, 2007), Mao Yufeng argues that Chinese Muslims elites “collaborated in the making of the “Chinese nation” with various Chinese governments, including the late Qing, the Nationalists, and the Communists.” (Dissertation Abstract). While I do not disagree with this point, one my aims are to show that Chinese Muslims also worked with the Japanese in the making of the Chinese nation-state.

264 For instance, in Robert Culp’s examination of elite education in Jiangsu, he extrapolates his findings about the wealthy and traditionally well-educated Jiangsu region to claim that "the threat to national survival posed by the Sino-Japanese War drove all kinds of socio-political elites to commit to a nationwide mobilization of China's people." (Culp, Articulating Citizenship, 285). Students obviously played an active role in mobilizing a wide cross-section of society to take political action on behalf of the nation, but this is only part of the story.
Until the twentieth century, if Muslims in China received any formal education it was likely a madrasah education.\textsuperscript{265} Madrasahs were supported by the Muslim community (\textit{waqf} in Arabic) and financed by wealthy patrons. Madrasahs in China created a sense of community among Muslims through the teaching of Arabic (and previously Persian) and Islamic theology.\textsuperscript{266} They also bolstered a shared sense of identity, which was especially important since the environment in China was overwhelmingly non-Muslim. Madrasahs are found all over the Islamic world and although the curriculum varied, the teaching style and the objectives of these schools were similar: the schools lacked a cohesive central authority and individual Imams taught based on their own knowledge of the Qur’an and Hadiths.\textsuperscript{267} Although the curriculum varied from madrasah to madrasah, the pedagogical style focused on rote memorization of the Qur’an, Hadiths, and other theological texts. This was similar to the imperial educational model where students memorized the Confucian canon and Classical Chinese texts from an early age. The madrasah, however, was different in that it provided Muslims with a direct connection to the

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\item[\textsuperscript{265}] For a good overview of Muslim education in the twenty-first century see the collected works of Elisabeth Allès, especially “Muslim Religious Education in China,” \textit{China Perspectives}, 45 (January-February 2003).
\item[\textsuperscript{266}] This is not a generalization about Muslims in China only receiving a \textit{madrasa} education because that would entirely deny the \textit{Han kitab} tradition. Beginning in the second half of the Ming, Sino-Muslims created a viable, persuasive (to them) Islamic literature \textit{in Chinese}, and many Muslims (elites, of course) became literate in Chinese and read those books (and inscriptions). However, by the beginning of the Republican Period, there was an increased awareness and growing concern among educated Muslims about the lack of conversational Arabic skills among Sino-Muslims that became glaringly obvious as they began to travel more frequently to the Middle East. This “crisis” in Islamic education could even be pushed back into the late Ming and early Qing and resulted in the \textit{Han kitab} corpus. Muslims were losing the ability to think or compose in Arabic and Persian, and enough of them could read Chinese to make worthwhile a translation of Islam into that language.
\item[\textsuperscript{267}] Imams are known in Chinese as Ahongs 阿訇. The term is derived from the Persian word \textit{akhund}. The words are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.
\end{itemize}
world beyond the boundaries of the Qing Empire through learning and the promotion of the Islamic concept of the *ummah*—or the larger community of believers.

The crisis within Muslim communities in China concerning the continued viability of the madrasah education paralleled a similar crisis in the Chinese imperial education system. Madrasahs continued to train students with deep theological knowledge, but in the eyes of many Islamic reformers they failed to produce Muslims with the skills needed to function in the rapidly changing world at the turn of the twentieth century. Just as the new Republican government was doing, Muslims in China began to re-envision the role that education should play in the lives of their children and, in some cases, the changes they imagined involved more direct state involvement in this process.\(^{268}\)

The Qing reformers both envisioned and, to some limited extent, put into practice a new curriculum for elites of the empire after the abolition of the examination system in 1905. The Japanese impact on that curriculum was considerable. As the new post-Revolutionary curriculum in China became more streamlined, the ways that knowledge was transmitted from teachers to students also changed. These broader curricular and pedagogical changes ran parallel to certain strains of the Muslim reform movement in China, which brought the modernization of education to the forefront of their political agenda. In some cases, they insisted that learning Chinese was seminal to the future of Muslims in China, and some reformers went so far as calling for the compulsory education of Muslim women.\(^{269}\) Alternatively, scholars like Ma Wanfu, one of the founders of the *Yihewani* 伊赫瓦尼 movement in China, was heavily influenced by Saudi

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\(^{269}\) Allès, “Muslim Religious Education in China,” 4.
Wahhabism during his time in Mecca in the late nineteenth century, and advocated maintaining strict theological learning through the madrasah. Wahhabism called for a return to a more literal reading of the Qur’an and Hadiths, and the banning of rituals associated with Sufi customs and opposed the entire structure of Sufi Muslim life, especially the centrality of the shaykh, the essential center of Sufi Islam. The influence of Wahhabism and the Ikhwan movement on late nineteenth-century Chinese Muslim education can be seen in the push during that time for “complete Arabization” of the curriculum along with the “utter prohibition of Chinese and Sufi influences” in schools. However, this was not practical for many Muslims living in China, and second-generation “Ikhwan adepts” in China, although still vehemently anti-Sufi, tried to adapt the madrasa education to their surroundings, teaching both Chinese and Arabic. Less conservative Muslims reformers in China argued that the madrasah model of education was untenable given the pressures of the modern world. This was in-line with the main intellectual currents running through modernist Islamic discourse throughout the Muslim world at the

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270 The Yihewani are a Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi tradition and are one of the three major branches of Islam in China (the other two are Qadim [Ch. Gedimu 格迪目] and Xidaotang 西道堂). The conventional Chinese categories delineated here are rather arbitrary and ignore a great deal of history, not to mention the lack of parallelism between the three. They are radically different from one another, the Gedimu being a sort of default category of “unreformed” communities, which nonetheless differ considerably on the basis of geography, among other things. The Ikhwan was founded by a returned pilgrim exposed to Wahhabi teachings in Arabia, and the Xidaotang by an ex-Sufi literatus who learned Chinese well enough to be affected by the Han Kitab and to make some of its texts the basis of Chinese learning within his community. The movement described here is known as al-Ikhwan in Arabic, but should not be confused with the Middle Eastern Muslim Brotherhood, which is also named Ikhwan, that was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. Unlike the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, the Yihewani in China were somewhat more tolerant of Sufi rituals, but deplored Sufi saint veneration. For more on this see Françoise Aubin, “Islam on the wings of nationalists: the case of Muslim intellectual in the Republican China,” in *Intelectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, transformation and communication*, edited by Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (New York: Routledge, 2006): 252.

beginning of the twentieth century. Although there was tension between the groups about which ways to reform education in China, there was agreement and consensus among the Islamic sects in China around that changes needed to be made to the current system.

These early twentieth-century educational reform movements among Muslims in China cannot be separated from the internationalization of Muslims from the mainland at the turn of the century. The profound changes that Muslims who were traveling and studying in the Middle East experienced with increased frequency slowly disseminated among their communities upon returning China. They also created new and lasting linkages with Muslim communities further abroad than had been possible before steamship travel. An important consequence of these international networks was that educated Muslims from around the globe were in more direct and frequent contact with each other, resulting in many competing voices within the Muslim community in China about the future of Islamic education.²⁷² This meant that by the time the Japanese and the Nationalists began to show an interest in incorporating Muslims into their educational purview, Muslims in China had already taken a deep and critical look at what they perceived to be some of the problems and shortcomings of the madrasah educational model. Both the Japanese and the Nationalists included Muslims in their competing vision for how they

²⁷² Stig Thøgersen, *A County of Culture: Twentieth-Century China Seen from the Village Schools of Zouping, Shandong* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). Thøgersen notes that, "[t]he ethnic dimension is definitely important for both the implementation and the reception of education reforms in China, and different ethnic groups have reacted in quite diverse manners to the Han-dominated school system..." (15).
could be incorporated into their respective modern educational realm long after Muslims had started to think critically about these questions within their own communities.²⁷³

The lack of stability and incompetence of the new Provisional government severely limited the enforcement of educational policies throughout the 1910s, and in most cases reforms did not filter down to the local level until the late 1920s and early 1930s.²⁷⁴ While Muslims contemplated the future of the madrasah in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Chinese government tried to implement reforms to nationalize the education system, which were largely unsuccessful. The hastily published regulations from 1912 outlined the national curriculum and made up the formal framework for public education in China until 1922, when the regulations were again reformed. By the 1930s, Jiang Jieshi’s New Culture Movement swept China and envisioned that the spread of a single written language (baihua 白話) and a single spoken language (Putonghua 普通話) would facilitate the creation of citizens (guomin 國民) in the newly formed republic by providing a more simple written language and a common vernacular. One of the measures undertaken with these reforms was to centralize teachers’ colleges, placing them under the control of provincial governments.²⁷⁵ At the same time, a group of intellectuals organized the National Language Study Society (Guoyu yanjiu hui 國語研究會) in the hopes that they could harness state power to establish a single national language that

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²⁷³ Jean-Paul Wiest, “Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China’s Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850-1950),” *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 33 (2011): 95. Wiest notes that for at least a decade, “lack of discipline, poor attendance and sub-par teaching seem to have been the sad characteristic of many public schools. By 1922 China had more than sixty million children of primary school age but only 10.7 percent registered in government schools,” (Wiest, 96).


would help standardize spoken dialects throughout China. Before that, however, the Ministry of Education also announced that classical Chinese would be replaced with vernacular Chinese classes (\textit{yútiěwén} 語體文). To implement this change after 1922, the Ministry required that all schools, including secondary and tertiary schools, reduce the number of class hours devoted to classical Chinese and increase the number devoted to vernacular Chinese classes. This shift demonstrates that regardless of the successfulness of the implementation of these policies, the Nationalists were keen on using a common vernacular language to create a sense of coherence among their emerging citizenry. New language and new ways of expression were seminal to their policies of developing a national educational agenda, and this policy was also reflected in Nationalist attempts to integrate and reformulate Muslim education into the national curriculum in years that followed.

The China that the nationalists had to come to terms with was in a terrible state of dissary when they took power from the Qing, and there were many competing objective and motivations for maintaining or dividing up the crumbling empire. The ironies of the Nationalists desire to retain the territorial integrity of the Qing Empire with tenuous claims of national cohesion were not lost on Muslim intellectuals during the early years of the Republic. Competing ideologies and pedagogical methodologies came head-to-head as different interest groups sought to maintain or even increase their viability by ensuring that their educational needs were met and that their religious and ethnic identities were not compromised in the process. As noted, these developments were occurring in tandem with a deep crisis in the Islamic community in China.

\footnote{Cong, Teachers’ schools and the making of the modern Chinese nation-state, 72.}
\footnote{Cong, Teachers’ schools and the making of the modern Chinese nation-state, 78.}
regarding the continued feasibility of madrasah education vis-à-vis modern education. There was a recognized need and desire among Muslim elites to try to reconcile their religious beliefs with new ideas like constitutionalism, secularism, and nationalism. Part of the problem was trying to figure how these new strands in Islamic modernist discourse could be transmitted to young people without them losing a sense of a distinct religious and cultural identity in China. These views were developed and refined through increased efforts to connect with Muslims outside of China who were facing similar crises.

The increasing anti-foreign nationalism in the wake of WWI after the unfavorable treatment China received at the Paris Peace Conference negotiations rippled through the new Republic. One reverberation of the way the Chinese government projected their disappointment with the Treaty of Versailles was a 1922 policy directive that required all private religious schools to register with the government and to comply with the curriculum regulations set out by the National Ministry of Education. These changes were ushered in and accompanied by mounting anti-foreign and anti-imperialist sentiment across China after the realization that Woodrow Wilson’s platform of national self-determination for countries in Asia was nothing more than empty promises.278 This policy directive reflected a desire to bring missionary schools under state purview and tighten control over both curriculum and students throughout the mainland who were receiving education from westerners at Christian schools. Although this directive was aimed at missionary schools, madrasahs also fell into the newly created category of “private religious” schools. An amendment to the new policy followed stipulating that schools

were not permitted to teach religion as a required subject and that students could not “be compelled nor induced to participate” in religious activities.\textsuperscript{279} Once again, this directive was aimed at missionary schools and activities in China, but did reflect a broader desire of the Nationalists to exert more direct control over religious education in general throughout their vast territory. However, in practice, these regulations often went unenforced, as the political situation in China was too tenuous to attempt to implement them for the Republican state was never singular enough after the death of Yuan Shikai in 1928 nor did it have the capacity to enforce these regulations in many places outside of urban centers. For at least twelve years there was no singular Chinese state, and even after 1928 the “central government” in Nanjing always had competitors that controlled large swaths of territory and thus directed policy in regions under their control. The Nationalists’ attempts to regulate curriculum must be carefully hedged with the conclusion that like much of the GMD’s political and cultural programs, these were paper regulations with very little effect outside a few large cities, at least in the 1920s.

After WWI, years of experimentation and openness in curricular and educational approaches in the early twentieth century on the mainland gave way to an era of censure and resistance to learning foreign languages. Before the May Fourth Movement in 1919, foreign languages—especially English and Japanese—accounted for more hours per week of secondary school curriculum than any other subjects. Yet, this era of experimentation with foreign languages came to an abrupt halt in 1922 as the government sought to tighten their control over the national curriculum and devote more hours to learning vernacular Chinese. As hostilities between the Nationalists and the Communists intensified in the 1920s and early 1930s, anti-

foreign nationalism fuelled the reversion to a more Chinese and “less international curriculum, focusing on ideological training rather than foreign language acquisition.” However, this educational policy shift should not be understood as a reflection of the receptiveness or the permeation of these policies at the local level. Concerns about education diverged from nationally promulgated policies as localities adjusted their curriculum needs to meet the changing demands of their own communities until at least the beginning of the 1930s.

It was not until the establishment of the Nanjing Government under Jiang Jieshi that the Chinese state maintained the relative stability and the wherewithal to begin enforcing their pronouncements on educational policy. From 1927, indoctrination in the Three People’s Principles (sanmin zhuyi 三民主義) took precedence over everything else, and religious education of all types—be it Christian, Buddhist, or Islamic—were supposed to be relegated to the sidelines. However, after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), some of the regulations imposed on religious teaching in schools were lifted as the Nationalists realized the importance that missionaries and Imams were playing in keeping schools open and running in areas that were beyond the reach of the GMD. Until this time, Nationalist policies

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282 Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” 378. In the early years of the Republic, Sun Yatsen wanted Muslims to feel like they were a part of the newly formed state and praised them for their courage and sacrificial spirit, calling on them to use their connection to Muslims abroad to defeat imperialism. During the Republican era, Sun’s statements about the importance of Muslims in defeating western imperialism were frequently cited in Muslim publications and textbooks throughout Nationalist China.  
283 In “Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools” Wiest notes that “…at a meeting of missionaries in Hankou in April 1938, Madame Chiang Kai-shek stated that, in appreciation for the work Christian missionaries had done for the wounded and the refugees, the President had decided to permit the
regarding the education of Muslim children—and more broadly, children in general—were haphazard, piecemeal and not well enforced. Although it is hard to gauge their influence on Muslim schools, it can be assumed given what is known about the enforcement of some of these policies directed at missionary schools throughout the 1920s that they did not have a large or lasting impact on the education of Muslim youth. Perhaps another apt comparison would be to compare “minorities” to people who lived in rural areas and who needed to be brought into the modern world by the state. In this case the “Han vs. non-Han” debate was simply another dimension of a rural versus urban dichotomy that was obvious to all these administrators.

As the Nationalists retreated to Chongqing, they were faced with a number of pressing issues.\textsuperscript{284} Among them, the adaptation to Sichuan meant that many government officials and intellectuals who were displaced from Jiangsu were confronted for the first time with actual minority populations living in Sichuan. No longer were minorities a theoretical other, relegated to the hinterlands of China and called upon when they served the purposes of propounding a unified vision for China. In their efforts to both modernize and inculcate people in Sichuan with teaching of religion as an optional course. Accordingly, the following year the Ministry of Education revised the private school regulations by allowing religious courses and exercises in private schools as long as students remained free to attend or not.” (102).

\textsuperscript{284} In the chapter of his book \textit{Sea of Bitterness} called “Guerrilla Education”, Keith Schoppa explains the hardships and burdens of schools that chose to pick and move as the Japanese advanced. Headmasters faced difficult decisions as the Japanese approached about whether to uproot not only their students, but also their libraries, supplies, and records. Many schools faced enormous financial constraints during the war. Moving schools were often not welcomed with into communities that were already facing food and water shortages: the idea of supporting an extra twenty to thirty late-teens boys who locals perceived as spoiled city brats was a reality for many schools that chose to move. Schools also had to move repeatedly—some up to seven or eight times during the war—which definitely had a large impact on the quality of education as schools split and splintered into smaller institutions and fees dried up. As Chinese students fled to the rural hinterlands with their teachers complained about lack of resources, they left behind the comforts modernity they were accustomed to; those who stayed in occupied China and worked with the Japanese in their schools reaped the benefits of new textbooks, technological training, and access to resources not available to them before the war.
patriotism, the Chongqing government passed the War of Resistance and National Rehabilitation Act in 1938. One aspect of this act was to improve literacy rates in the countryside surrounding Chongqing, as the government “recognized that education could play a crucial role in garnering peasant support for the government’s war against Japan, and more generally for the government itself.”[^285] Heavily tied to the discourses of modernization, rural education during the war was seen by the Nationalists as a way of preparing conscripts to fight the Japanese. These efforts at rural educational reform, coupled with the increased interaction with minority populations living in Sichuan, helped the Nationalists frame their discussion in opposition to Japanese efforts to develop Islamic education in North China during this same period.

**ENTER THE JAPANESE: EARLY JAPANESE INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CHINA**

Japanese influence on the development of the Chinese education system at the turn of the twentieth century cannot be underestimated. Japan left an indelible mark on curricular developments and changes in the approaches to education in China among the entire population, and this influence definitely extended to Muslims as well. Initially, reforms instituted by the provisional and Nationalist governments faced enormous obstacles in implementing a new national educational program: they suffered from a lack of funds, difficulty training and securing teachers and administrators, as well as textbook shortages. It was in this milieu that Japan became an important facilitator and collaborator with Chinese intellectual elites, providing

successful educational models, training personnel and teachers, and supplying many of the textbooks for new schools in China in the first decades of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{286}

After their defeat by the Japanese in first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) the Chinese looked to Meiji Japan for educational alternatives to their Confucian-based imperial education system. Although the British model influenced reformers during the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), by 1904 the Japanese model had the most visible impact on policy-makers.\textsuperscript{287} Chinese observers were impressed with three aspects of Meiji education: it was universalist; it promoted social and intellectual conformity; and it imbued the populace with loyalty to the emperor.\textsuperscript{288} At a time when the Qing was facing serious threats to its prestige and power, all three of these principles were in line with the government's ideals for maintaining Qing sovereignty. Not only did the Qing adapt the Japanese educational model to suit its needs, but the Chinese government also accepted hundreds of Japanese teachers and educational advisors to help with their reforms during the late Qing and in the early years of the Republic. These Japanese teachers imparted new ways of thinking about the role of education in Asia to their Chinese counterparts. By January 1905, the Japanese journal \textit{Chūō Kōron} estimated that some 30,000 Chinese youths were receiving a Japanese-style education on the Japanese home islands or under direct Japanese supervision in China.\textsuperscript{289}


\textsuperscript{287} Cong, \textit{Teachers’ schools and the making of the modern Chinese nation-state}, 9.

\textsuperscript{288} Harrell, \textit{Sowing the seeds of change}, 48.

\textsuperscript{289} Harrell, \textit{Sowing the seeds of change}, 35.
The Japanese decision following the defeat of the Qing after the first Sino-Japanese War to help educate students in China was not some sort of sudden generosity by a victorious nation, but rather “grew out of an increasingly popular belief among Japanese from the 1880s on, that Japan had a special role to play in China's political and economic life,” and a desire to gain increased access to the mainland. Of all the consequences of this mutual receptivity at the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese influence on China’s education reform throughout the first twenty years of the twentieth century had a more lasting impact on Chinese society than any other models owing to the incredible influence that the model and Japanese advisors had on the Chinese education system. Although there was definitely backlash against the Japanese influence in education on the mainland following WWI, the Japanese continued to influence Chinese approaches to education in numerous ways. However, recent scholarship on nationalism, social networks, and community organizations in Republican China treats the Japanese establishment of Manchukuo in March 1932 and the occupation of North China as a distinct break from other simultaneous developments in educational policy. For instance, Robert Culp’s survey of education in modern China ends with the Japanese occupation and, underestimates the Japanese contribution to education in this period.

Treating the occupation of North China as a complete disjuncture in the development of the modern school system in China ignores the Japanese contributions to modern schooling and

290 Harrell, *Sowing the seeds of change*, 40.
291 Harrell, *Sowing the seeds of change*, 40.
their endeavors to educate both young children and youths who lived under occupation and beyond. It also ignores the Nationalist responses from Free China to Japanese educational policy successes among populations living under occupation, and fails to address the ways that the Nationalists adapted their curriculum in territories under their control to counter the impact of Japanese-sponsored education for Muslims living in the occupied regions of China. The strong Nationalist reactions to the teaching of Japanese language to young Muslims living under occupation, as well as the Nationalist methods of calling attention to the plight of Muslims living under occupation were hallmarks of how they framed their own approaches to training and teaching Muslims in Free China during the war. In this regard, little has been written about the concrete ways that Nationalist educational policy was a direct reaction to policies implemented by the Japanese in North China. Previous scholarship on education in twentieth-century China tends to overgeneralize both the spatial and temporal continuity of the nation-state throughout the entire Republican era that simply was not there. Calling attention to the Japanese educational policies in North China helps dispel the notion that China a unified geopolitical entity at any time.

293 Culp’s analysis provides insights into how students used the tools of civic education in schools in Jiangsu to “make themselves into young citizens.” His work explicitly links emerging notions of citizenship to educational reforms. By understanding “citizenship as a creative process of interaction where a variety of intellectual trends intersected,” schools in Republican Jiangsu became a place where “many dimensions of citizenship were introduced, juxtaposed, and related in anything resembling a systematic way,” (32). This is a useful way to think about the mediation between policy and the realities that people faced in understanding their daily lives with regard to education in Jiangsu, but this analysis needs to be taken a step further to take into account the Japanese contributions to this ongoing intellectual discourse in the occupied areas and during the war. Like Culp, Cong Xiaoping claims that the modernization of education in China followed a linear path, never straying far from the political climate of the twentieth century. By stopping her study in 1937, she also ignores the fundamental changes for those living in occupied territory that were educated by the Japanese. When the war broke out in 1937, many schools closed, making it a convenient place to end her study of Chinese educational development in twentieth-century. However, her study fails to account for the developments in the occupied areas or to explain that many schools re-opened once the wartime situation stabilized in many regions (Cong, Teachers’ schools and the making of the modern Chinese nation-state, 128; 204.)
before 1949. If schools in Free China were used as places to recruit and mobilize students, then we need to acknowledge that the same thing was happening in schools throughout occupied China. This indicates that there was not only temporal continuity in the development of minority educational policies throughout the war, but a certain degree of spatial continuity, as schools for Muslims continued to operate in both occupied and Free China throughout the war.

**WHOSE NATION IS IT?: VISIONS FOR THE NATION AND MUSLIM SCHOOLS**

Nationalist Muslims writing from Kunming and Chongqing after the outbreak of the war broached the topic of educational policy, curriculum development, and the formation of citizenship differently from their Han Chinese counterparts. Examining their perspectives on the place that education should occupy in the lives of young Muslims highlights the wide variety of intellectual trends addressing various meanings of citizenship and nationalism circulating among Muslim intellectuals at the time. Examining the diversity of these developments showcases how there was anything but cohesive nationalist movement with a unified vision for how Muslims should participate in the forming of the Chinese nation-state in both the occupied and unoccupied areas. Muslims, for their part, articulated expressions of their desire—or lack of desire—to be included as part of the Chinese nation differently that the Han majority, and also had competing visions for how they should insert themselves into the ever-evolving idea of what China would become.

Some of these developments are exemplified in changes to Nationalist slogans during the war. The pre-war nationalist rhetoric directed at Muslims of “love the fatherland and love Islam” (*aiguo aijiao* 愛國愛教) evolved during the war into a message of salvation: “save the fatherland
and save Islam” (jiuge jiujiu, 救國救教). This was regarded as part of the emerging moral code that all Nationalist Muslims should adhere to, and the message of salvation for both the nation and Islam was clear: the slogan placed loyalty to the nation before loyalty to Islam. By acknowledging that the nation needed fixing and by prioritizing loyalty to the nation before loyalty to religion, the Nationalists were sending a clear message to Muslims: if you help us redeem our nation and reform your religion, there is a place for you in our country. However, there were many ways that this slogan was interpreted and adapted to daily life among Muslims living in the unoccupied areas: like all political slogans it was open to interpretation by various Ahongs and intellectuals who preached its value. Under the tutelage of the educational system initiated by the Islamic reformers, Muslims’ obedience to the authority of the nation became a question of religious theory and doctrine.

When thinking about Islamic education in China, it becomes apparent that most of the scholarship on education in twentieth-century China which focuses on “student nationalism” as a driving force for creating the modern Chinese nation-state fails to see the entire picture. Scholars like Lincoln Li take China as a cohesive geopolitical entity throughout the Republican period at face value, and present it as a complete unit of analysis from the time of the collapse of the Qing through to the foundation of the People’s Republic. However, the collapse of the “ancient régime” in 1911 did not, as Li asserts, usher in a cohesive nationalist movement among all

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294 For example, Sha Lei 沙蕾 “Aiguo yu Aijiao” 爱国与爱教, Huijiao Dazhong 回教大众 6 (1938): 99-100.
students—especially among ethnic minority students—throughout China.\textsuperscript{296} Divisive and competing visions for what China should become and how minorities should fit into this nation informed how administrators developed curriculum, and these visions were salient depending on the shifting political situations on the ground. It was the interaction between these competing visions of the nation throughout period that provide us with insights into the ways that the Chinese nation-state came to see itself as a cohesive and congruent entity. The ongoing debates about the place of ethnic minorities in China were playing out in numerous ways during this period, and schools were an especially important locus for these discussions. The next sections examine some of the concrete ways that educational policy for Muslims was contested, debated and conceived in the 1930s and 1940s.

\textit{The centrality of language—Arabic, Chinese, or Japanese and visions of what it meant to be Chinese}

Language was central to the ways that the Japanese, the Nationalists, and the Muslims framed their arguments for and against changes to Islamic educational models both in unoccupied and occupied China. Japan emphasized the importance of learning Japanese so that Muslims could take part in their vision for the larger Islamic community living in the Japanese Empire. The Nationalists, on the other hand, emphasized the values of learning vernacular Chinese, so that Muslims could be more easily incorporated into the Chinese nation-state. Throughout all this, Muslims insisted on maintaining their connection to Arabic and often vehemently resisted the substitution of Japanese or vernacular Chinese during time allotted to learning Arabic. The

Japanese and the Nationalists quickly figured out that Arabic was central to the Muslim identity and if they hoped to make any headway with regards to inserting themselves into curriculum planning, it could not come at the expense of Arabic learning in the classroom time. In this way, Islamic schools became a place where competing interests of the state and religious communities were meted out. The reception of reforms was accepted differently within different communities of religious minorities, a point clearly exemplified with the variation in levels of resistance to policy directives to lessen the hours of Arabic learning. Where Muslims were a small minority within the general population, the Japanese in particular found it easier to gain the approval of the local Islamic community to make changes to curriculum that promoted their own interests. However, in places where there was a relatively large and cohesive Muslim community, like Beijing, the Japanese faced more direct opposition.

Language was also a vehicle for individuals to re-conceive their relationship to the state. By providing students with a new vocabulary in a language that they might not otherwise learn, the state was able to reformulate the ways that children learned, the ways that they spoke, and how they envisioned their connections to their religion, their communities, and to the state. In the past, the vocabulary of the ummah provided a sense of community or belonging for Muslims, and children learned to operate with the vocabulary provided to them by Ahongs in the madrasah. Placing a new emphasis on learning either Japanese or Chinese, Muslims realized that they had to make concessions to the state: it meant that parents were handing their children over to be educated in a language that they themselves did not know because although most parents
spoke Chinese, they probably could not write, let alone speak or understand any Japanese. However, most parents were also aware of the benefits their children would gain from learning another language. As parents navigated the new systems and regulations, their children became proficient in languages that they were not familiar with.

The Nationalists presented Arabic as an obstacle for learning that made Muslims unable to keep up with the national education standards. For the Nationalists, being modern citizens in this context meant adopting the standard national curriculum. To elucidate the point that religion and religious instruction had no place in the classroom, nationalist writers often turned to metaphor. One example compared education to a car: like a car, education had many components which all needed to be maintained and work together in order to operate like a well-oiled machine. Religious education, nationalist writers argued, had only one component, so much like a car that could not operate with only one working part, an education that focused purely on religious instruction was unsuitable for driving people into the modern world. The use of a car in this analogy is telling: cars were markers of modernity and by drawing on them, the Nationalists presented religious education as a vestige of a bygone era, holding China back from driving into the future.

The issue of lack of adaptability and the maintenance of the status quo with regards to Arabic language education was also often blamed on Ahongs and their desire to maintain the

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297 Cong, Teachers’ schools and the making of the modern Chinese nation-state, 72. The initiation of the national language movement (guoyu yundong 國語運動) won a major victory after it was embraced by teachers’ colleges, who came to realize the importance of disseminating standard, vernacular Chinese if their efforts were to succeed.

298 Zhao Tangqi 趙鏜奇. “Lun Zhongguo huijiao zhi guomin jiaoyu,” 論中國回教之國民教育, Xing Hui Pian 醒回篇, 1908.
status quo. Ding Zaiqin 丁在欽, a fourth-year Muslim attending teachers’ college in Kunming, presented an educational model that was specifically devised with Chinese Muslims in mind. He felt the educational methods and techniques imported from Europe, America, and Japan had failed to resonate or create any sort of new consciousness among Chinese Muslims. In response, Ding developed a radical solution to combat the educational deficit that he saw facing Muslims: the only way to rejuvenate Muslims was to purge mosques of old Ahongs and start afresh with young Muslim teachers. The problem for Ding was that the old guard only knew Arabic or Persian and were therefore resistant to change since their positions depended on maintaining the status quo. Ding suggested a new focus on science, technology and militarization, all while maintaining the religious integrity of Muslim schools. He cited Turkey as a model where this was successful under the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. If planned properly, schools could give Muslims the opportunity to become more engaged in the larger Chinese economy rather than continuing to work within the economic enclaves that they currently operated in, such as animal husbandry and butchery. This idea of purging the old guard was not a new one, but considering the important place of Ahongs within Muslim communities, it was definitely a radical suggestion. Through the idea of starting fresh and saving Islamic education through making it more modern, Ding presented a solution whereby Muslims could be more easily integrated into the Han Chinese vision for the nation-state. However, this proposal was never

299 “Huijiao jiaoyu zhi gaige,” 回教教育之改革, Huiguang 回光 2, no. 2 (1935): 56-58. Ding Zaiqin was perhaps so naïve that he did not comprehend the European roots (imported from Europe, America, and Japan) of Ataturk’s educational reforms and their fundamentally secular goals. Though they had the same target—the old-fashioned imams who taught in mosque schools—they had opposite purposes, Ataturk to sweep away the influence of religion and Ding to reify it.

300 “Huijiao jiaoyu zhi gaige,” 56-58.
implemented and might only have been successful in places where Muslims only made up a small percentage of the population. Where there was a large and wealthy contingent of Muslims with long established connections to the city and its surroundings, such as Kunming or Beijing, this model would have faced insurmountable resistance from Muslim communities.

Other nationalist commentators echoed these sentiments. Essayist Shang Zhige 尚止戈, published a piece after the establishment of Manchukuo in a leading nationalist-leaning Muslim journal called “Muslim Light” (Huiguang 回光). He offered other suggestions on how to reform Muslim schools. As a part of the Zhonghua Minzu (中华民族), he argued that Muslims had a responsibility to mend their country which was divided and in a state of degeneration. By calling on Muslims to come together in the face of division and opposition caused by the establishment of a “Japanese puppet state” in Manchuria, Shang argued that Muslims living in Manchukuo were living under completely different circumstances than Muslims in Free China. For Shang, the problem beyond this division lay with the backwards and conservative Ahongs who taught at madrasahs combined with the lack of qualified nationalist-trained Muslim teachers. In his view, Muslim children who continued to only learn to read and recite the Qur’an were losing out on an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of full citizenry, again tying Chinese language acquisition to their potential of becoming functioning members of the Chinese nation-state. For Shang, Muslims in China were selling themselves short by limiting themselves to an Islamic education. His argument, like others writing at the time, was couched in the vocabulary

301 “Huijiao jiaoyu zhi gaige,” 56-58.
303 “Huijiao jiaoyu zhi gaige,” 56-58.
of development: Muslims needed to “catch up” with their Han Chinese neighbors by implementing science, technology, and vocational training programs. But another part of his argument centered on the Muslims themselves: by learning vernacular Chinese they would stop being so closed off and insular, which would allow for more interaction between themselves and their Han Chinese neighbors. Although it is not clear whether this was a direct reaction to Japanese policies in occupied China, Shang explicitly states that the Japanese were experiencing successes with educational policies geared at Muslims in occupied China.

There was another vision circulating among nationalists about how to Muslim schools should could be dealt with: eliminate the madrash altogether. Trying to transcend difference and fulfill their vision of unity, some Nationalists claimed that Muslim parents were happy to send their children to national schools with Han children because they realized the value of a “national education.” By sticking together as a country and resisting the Japanese they could defeat their occupiers while giving Muslims the chance to integrate themselves into the dominant Han Chinese community. For many Nationalist policy makers, resistance and assimilation went hand-in-hand. This argument is very different from arguments for resistance presented to Han Chinese: only by assimilating would Muslims be strong enough to contribute to the resistance, and only by learning Chinese would they be able to assimilate properly. In order to do this, Muslims would be given the opportunity to emerge from being seen by the rest of the nation as poor and ignorant (pinyu 貧愚). Muslim support for the war effort and their loyalty to the Nationalist Party

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304 “Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu,” 抗戰建國與發展回民教育, Chengshi Yuekan 成市月刊 5, no. 12 (1938).
305 “Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu.”
would be repaid to the Nationalist effort to help Muslims develop.306 The trade-off is clear: only by helping resist the Japanese would the nationalists provide the means for young Muslims to become the Chinese citizens that they wanted them to be. The argument followed that the Nationalists vision of ridding the mainland of suffering at the hands of the Japanese required not only the co-operation of Muslims, but also the co-opting of Muslims, and their integration might not have been necessary for the Nationalists had the Japanese policies with regards to education in Manchukuo not been successful.307 These competing visions for education as well as the repeated emphasis on the differences between Muslims living under occupation and those living in Free China highlights that there was nothing resembling a cohesive Muslim nationalist resistance on the ground in China in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As the Nationalists hashed out their arguments about how to deal with some of the issues they faced with regards to minority education policies, they pointed to the Japanese as either a model of success, or as a point of difference.

Nationalist writers also argued that making the curriculum more broadly appealing and making schools both free and mandatory, as the Japanese were successfully doing in Manchukuo, Muslim students would be able to acquire vocational skills that would allow them to contribute to the wartime economy.308 Here, the direct mention of the successes that the Japanese were experiencing among Muslim communities in Manchukuo is presented as a reason for promoting changes in the curriculum at Muslim schools throughout Free China. Cloaked in the language of development and a vague idea that all Muslims aspired to fluency in Putonghua, these arguments

306 “Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu.”
307 “Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu.”
308 “Huijiao jiaoyu zhi gaige,” 56-58.
for assimilation permeated much of the Nationalist discourse about Muslims and sometimes even came from Muslim writers.309

Both the Japanese and the Nationalists also used connections between morality, culture, language, and education to imbue the educational experience with meaning and coded political messages. For the Nationalists, acquiring a level of literacy in Chinese inculcated not only language, but also culture (wenhua 文化) into Muslims who were supposed to “become” Chinese. Literacy and education in Chinese were thus central to China’s nationalist project of integration, whether developmental and assimilationist, and learning Chinese was presented to Muslims as a “crucial step in the staged, developmentalist process of nationalization.”310 The Japanese had a similar vision and approach, although their tactics were less imposing and their rhetoric about inclusiveness does not appear as narrow as the Nationalists. More than the Nationalists, the Japanese understood the value of Muslims who could speak both Japanese and Arabic for their larger visions of East Asian hegemony and their important and developing relationships with Middle Eastern countries. These Japanese tactics and approaches are examined more thoroughly in the next chapter.

APPROACHES AND TACTICS—APPEALING TO THE NATION, THE FAMILY, AND FAITH

Education and control over curriculum allowed the Japanese and the Nationalists access to both the family and Islamic communities in a round-a-bout way. By projecting their ideals of the meaning of citizenship and nationhood onto children and youths in schools, they were able to

convey messages to the broader community. This implicit relationship between family, education, and faith was not new, but the ways that the GMD and Japanese exploited these connections in order to project their competing—and often contradictory—conceptions of how they imagined Muslims in China fitting into their respective visions of nation or empire. By directing curriculum, they were able to expose youths to ideas and concepts that students would not have had the opportunity to learn in madrasahs while at the same time combining these new ideas with Islamic learning.

Closely related to the arguments that the Japanese and the Nationalists made about the importance of learning either Japanese or Chinese were their respective visions for Muslims in China. Schooling is an instrumental part of politicization and socialization, and at the level removed from the community the perceived effects of schooling on the individual become extended to society as a whole. The arguments presented those who were not educated in conventional ways as uncivilized, or not properly socialized. This gave the state the chance to give children the tools they thought they needed function in a modern society and to become fully socialized adults. By enforcing a certain type of order, schools allowed the state to reinforce the idea that order helped to maintain social stability. The Japanese realized that teaching Chinese was directly tied to cultivation of national sentiment among students in Nationalist schools. Remarking on the sweeping changes to modernize Zhong-ah xuexiao 中阿學校 in Ningxia, a Japanese commentator mentioned that by 1933 the GMD government had implemented reforms in this region not only to raise the educational level of students in Ningxia,

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311 Thorgenson, *A County of Culture*, 3.
312 Thorgenson, *A County of Culture*, 3.
but also to promote Chinese language learning. The Japanese commentator wrote that part of these reforms included the substitution of Arabic learning with Chinese learning, which was intended to help the Muslims develop “national sentiments.” He went on to say that the stated purpose in implementing these changes was to make it easier for Muslims to communicate with other Chinese, although the Japanese author was not convinced that their motives were so altruistic: he thought the real goal of the GMD was to sweep away religion by slowly assimilating Muslims through the gradual removal of Arabic learning. The fact that the Japanese were aware and responding to the development of “national sentiment” among Muslim populations in the early 1930s shows that they were thinking about how the Nationalists were managing Muslim populations before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

These expressions of how Muslims would fit into the Chinese nation extended beyond schools and into visions for the family, which are intimately linked to the history of educational reforms in the same era. By the 1930s, the discourse of the “small household” (小家庭) presumed that mothers should take an active role in educating their children by making the home a place where children learned to live through examples set by their parents. This extended the socialization from schools into the home and meant that parents also had

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313 Jin Jitang. 金吉堂, “Shina kaikyō no kyōiku” 支那回教の教育 in Shina-kai kyōto 支那回教徒, Tokyo, (1940): 251-265. Jin Jitang (1908-1978) was a relatively famous Muslim educator from Beijing who spent time in Japan. He returned to Beijing to work under the Communists on Islamic educational reforms under the PRC government in the 1950s.
obligations to socialize their children in accordance with behaviors prescribed by the state. The state centered its attention on students and made them the locus of the family, which allowed them access to homes in new and unprecedented ways. However, this was not a one-way process of integration. Students and their parents were “not necessarily impervious to these larger issues and ideals, but they did at the same time hold some very distant expectations of the education system because they realized that the type and level of schooling a person received actually mattered for his or her chances in adult life.”

By handing their children over, parents entered an implicit contract with the state: schools should provide basic academic skills, like learning to read and write, and in turn these skills should promote upward social mobility. In other words: “parents did not send their children to school primarily in order to save the nation…but because they expected the education system to make a positive difference at the personal level.”

One of the ways that the state appealed to these concerns was through the use of the family as a metaphor for the state. The comparison of the nation to a family is a strong rhetorical device and aimed for Muslim student’s to aspire to be as devoted to the nation as they were to their parents. The analogy also shifts the responsibility for educating young children from a large and distant organization—the state—onto a familiar social organization—the family.

Couching the argument in Confucian rhetoric and the concept of the family, the wellbeing of the nation was directly tied to individual actions and choices regarding religious education. By evoking sentiments about the family, the state was able to more easily and clearly articulate the

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317 Thøgersen, A County of Culture, 7.
318 Thøgersen, A County of Culture, 12.
319 Zhao, ” lùn Zhōngguó huìjiào zhì guó mín jiàoyù.”
role that it wanted citizens to fulfill within the larger, more amorphous and ambiguous concept of the nation-state.

Another way that the Nationalists promoted their visions for the relationships between the nation and the state was by making theological concerns national ones. Because of their long and interwoven history with both state and society in China, managing China’s Muslim community was a priority for maintaining legitimacy of any entity that attempted to govern. But it was in this period that the attempts of the state to control the lives of ordinary Muslims through education gave it unprecedented access to religion and religious discourse. Both the Japanese and the Nationalists recognized the structural overlap between the religious communities that they attempted to entice into buying into their visions.

These reforms were part of a larger pattern of social and political change throughout China and Japan in the 1930s and 1940s. As new approaches to the family and childhood were integrated into policy-making decisions, the value of children as future agents of the state were fully recognized, and the cultivation of young children in both the home and at school became a priority. How to reconcile the potential conflicting claims of political loyalty versus family loyalty did pose problems for state ideologies, however. In essence, parallels between the family and the state were drawn using the language of Confucianism and filial piety. These were concepts people were familiar with and they were able to use them to bring these two seemingly disparate loyalties together. In some cases, Confucianism was presented as an aspirational and idealized cultural norm. The Nationalist-funded *Islamic Student Journal* published a number of interesting pieces about the relationship between education, culture, and Confucianism as they related to Islam. In these articles, the new nationalist educational model was presented as
successful because it emphasized cultural learning, which is where Islamic learning supposedly fell short. Two reasons were offered for Muslims to acculturate themselves to Han standards, which could be achieved by emphasizing the Confucian Classics at Muslim schools: firstly, with a better understanding of Chinese, Muslims would be able to produce a more accurate translation of the Qur’an; secondly, Arabic lacked the vitality of Chinese. The implication was that because Muslims invested so much time in learning Arabic, which was an archaic language compared to Chinese, they lagged behind their neighbors.

This point is reinforced by a striking comparison with Chinese Buddhists. Nationalist writers argued that Buddhist scriptures had long been translated into Chinese from Sanskrit and had adapted and developed within a specifically Chinese milieu, using new language and idiom that was appropriate to their surroundings. By learning to use and translate texts into Chinese like the Buddhists had, Muslims could bring new, more dynamic and appropriate translations of the Qur’an to a wider audience. Building on this religious analogy, it was argued that Muslims should follow the lead of Buddhists and integrate into Chinese society. There was no acknowledgment, however, about the enormous theological differences between Islam and Buddhism, the main one, of course, being that Islam is a monotheistic religion. Writers argued that Muslims who could not grasp how seminal these changes were to their future were “so backwards” that they should be considered pagan, or non-believers. By accepting Chinese as an integral part of the curriculum at Islamic schools, Muslims argued that they should come to

320 “Shengjiao yu Guoxue” 聖教與國學, Yiselan Xuesheng Zazhi 伊斯蘭學生雜誌 1, no. 3 (1933).
321 “Shengjiao yu Guoxue”
322 “Shengjiao yu Guoxue”
323 “Shengjiao yu Guoxue”
terms with the fact that learning Chinese would not compromise to their religious identity, and in some cases, as the example of the Buddhists proved, it could strengthen their ties not only to their nation, but to their religion, as well. Through learning Chinese, the author explained that young Muslims would then become “religious citizens” (gongmin jiaotu 公民教徒). This concept of religious citizenry is interesting and important. By tying religiousity to the notions of citizenship, it clearly indicated that there would be no lessening of religious identity by becoming a full citizen of the Chinese Republic.

Emphasizing Chinese suffering at the hands of the Japanese from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was another common theme running through Nationalist writing about the state of Muslim education in the 1930s and the 1940s. Certain intellectuals framed the discussion about the Chinese education system in relation to Islam as originating from before the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). This shifted the blame for the perceived educational deficiencies of Muslims from the current Nationalist government to the Qing. With regards to the education of minorities, they argued that the government needed to take a stronger role in convincing minorities that their educational prospects were severely limited by their own inward-looking schools, and upon witnessing the successes of their Han neighbors, minorities were more likely to have some sort of educational epiphany. Once again, this argument is framed around a filial metaphor where the older brothers and fathers, who were represented by the Han Chinese, were bound by their duties to their younger brothers and sons, who were represented by Muslims. Muslims, in return also had their own duties to perform: to obey their fathers and older brothers.

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324 “Shengjiao yu Guoxue”
325 Zhao, “lun Zhongguo huijiao zhi guomin jiaoyu.”
This patronizing analogy presents Muslims as parochial and uneducated because their religious schools failed to follow the national curriculum, leaving young Muslim youth lagging behind Han Chinese youth.\textsuperscript{326} Nationalist writers evaded any responsibility by placing the blame on the Qing and the Muslim communities for the problems they faced modernizing the education system.

Although their approaches and methods varied, there were parallels and junctures where the Nationalist and the Japanese ways of teaching and enlisting young Chinese Muslims overlapped. Both groups faced pushback from Muslims, as tensions between the state and Islamic communities tried to find a suitable compromise within the new curriculums. The Nationalist approach often centered on incorporating or assimilating Muslims into their vision for the Chinese nation, whereas the Japanese were quick to promote the notion of difference between Muslims and Han living in the same places. Presenting education as a way out of poverty for Muslims living in North China, the Japanese made a strong case that working with them would give their children a better life in the future while being able to maintain the integrity of their Muslim identity. This message was not lost on the Nationalists, who grappled with the accommodations that the Japanese were making to get Muslims on their side.

Some intellectuals manipulated or misread global events in order to align their ideas with the Nationalist agenda. These arguments are regularly framed through the comparative historicization of the state of Muslim education in China with tenuous arguments about state of religious education in different countries around the world. For instance, a Nationalist, writing

\textsuperscript{326} Zhao, ”\textit{lun Zhongguo huijiao zhi guomin jiaoyu.”}
under the name “Suliman” 蘇里曼 argued that China could be distinguished from all other countries by the fact that it was made up of many different nationalities, whereas all other countries (which essentially meant Japan, North America, and Europe) only had one nationality living within the borders of their nation-state. Suliman echoed a common idea among Chinese Nationalist writers at the time and explained that there were many countries whose boundaries naturally encased a single nationality. For instance, the Teutonic peoples (*tiaodunzu* 條頓族) were only found within the ethnically bounded nation-states of Germany, Sweden, Norway, Demark, and Holland; Slavic people (*silafuzu* 斯拉夫族) only lived in Russia, the Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) and Yugoslavia; Saxons (*sakexunzu* 撒克遜族) inhabited England, America, and Canada; and Latin people (*ladingzu* 拉丁族) were only found in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Suliman argued that Japan also only had one nationality (*dahe yige minzu* 大和一個民族) living within its borders. Suliman explained that China could not be categorized as simply as other mono-ethnic states because China was made up of five nationalities that all subsumed their own individual national consciousness to the larger state project. This made the situation with regards to educating the five different ethnicities in China more complicated than in any of these other places.

Suliman’s argument indicates that Muslim writers were trying to understand their place within China and placed themselves within a larger, global context where

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327 Suliman could have been a pseudonym or could have been the authors’ Qur’anic name, which many Sino-Muslims had from birth.

328 Suliman 蘇里曼 “*Minzu jiaoyu yu guozuzhuyi, *” 族教教育與國族主義, *Huijiao Qingnian* 回族青年 1, no. 3 (1933).

329 Suliman, “*Minzu jiaoyu yu guozuzhuyi.*”

330 Suliman, “*Minzu jiaoyu yu guozuzhuyi.*”
they compared themselves to Japan and Europe. By putting Japan in the same category of mono-
ethnic nation-states, Suliman reinforced notions of Japanese superiority over a broken China and
that their imperial claims to China were strongly rooted in the cohesion of the different minzu as
a nation-state.

This strain of nationalist discourse circulated in the early years of the Republic among
intellectuals and officials who were trying to maintain the territorial integrity of the Qing Empire
while still maintaining control over large groups of minorities, such as Uyghurs, Tibetans, and
Mongolians who lived in the borderlands. However, Su takes his argumentation a step further:

since the only nationality in China to actually come from China was the Han, the four others
were “visitors” and therefore needed to act according to Han Chinese ways. Suliman stated that
the Manchus hailed from Japan, which explained by their propensity and desire to live in a
puppet state under Japanese rule in Manchukuo.331 The Mongolians hailed from the southern
steppes of Russia, whereas the Muslims came from the far western parts of Russia and Persia.
Finally, the Tibetans came from beyond the Tibetan plateau in India and had settled in Tibet,
making the only people indigenous to China the Han.332 Here, Suliman projects backwards the
geopolitical entity of China at the end of the Qing Empire back in history, allowing him to create
a racialist argument for assimilation within the borders of the old Qing Empire. However faulty
his logic may seem to us now, for Suliman it was the Han who had attained the highest level of
culture (wenhua zuigao 文化最高) and because they were the most populous ethnic group, they
were deemed the best representatives of China. Suliman imagined that the Han would eventually

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331 Suliman, “Minzu jiaoyu yu guozuzhuyi”
332 Suliman, “Minzu jiaoyu yu guozuzhuyi”
assimilate the “immigrant nationalities”. By distinguishing China as an anomaly among nation-states under the (false) pretext that other “developed” nationalities were firmly bound by national borders, the argument is tied together by the logic which claimed that all minorities were immigrants who would simply assimilate if given the chance to adopt Han Chinese ways. For Suliman, the simplest way to achieve this assimilation was through education. The diversity in China provided the justification for assimilationist policies, as exemplified by arguments like Suliman’s: by presenting the nation as an incomplete project, the Nationalists gave students a goal to work towards. Only once China was like the other nations of Europe, North America, and Japan—where a homogenous ethnic nation-state existed—would China be on par with them. The logic many seem incongruous, but Suliman’s message resonated with assimilationists who aspired to a degree of homogeneity in their ethnic vision for China.

Schools were a place that created, enforced, and maintained order, and where values were easily channeled to relatively “uncritical recipients”. Stig Thøgersen points out that all political actors in the war—the Communists, the Nationalists, and the Japanese—were aware that modern schools provided them with a “powerful political and ideological weapon and tried to establish schools that could disseminate their propaganda.” In some ways, Japan had a sense of educational responsibility towards their colonial subjects, which was reflected in the increased use of Japanese as the primary language of instruction and incorporation of discernible aspects of

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333 Suliman, “Minzu jiaoyu yu guozuzhuyi”
335 Thøgersen, A County of Culture, 125.
Japanese culture within the curriculum.\textsuperscript{336} Students who did not become politically active were exposed to propaganda with an intensity that must have made an impact on them: "Even under extremely difficult conditions of war, the three contenders for state power—the Japanese, the Communists, and the Nationalists—all chose to open their own schools with their own curriculum and textbooks."\textsuperscript{337} Whatever their motivations or the outcomes of the war in the long run, the bottom line was that the Nationalists had conflicting ideas within their own party for how to incorporate Muslims into the Chinese nation-state through educational reforms.

\textit{Visions of the Nation and Islamic Education in the Nationalist Imagination}

One of the ways that the Nationalists responded to the Japanese successes with regards to educating Muslim youths was simply to claim that everyone on the mainland resisted Japan (\textit{quanmian kangzhan 全面抗戰}), and that Muslims should follow suit along with the rest of their countrymen. Muslims who fled North China with the Nationalists and set up in Chongqing or Kunming wrote and published prolifically in Islamic journals throughout the 1930s and 1940s about the dismal state of education among Muslim communities across China. Focusing on Japanese aggressions, the issue of education was often expressed in anti-Japanese propaganda that emphasized the extreme hardship (\textit{chiku 吃苦}) and suffering of the Chinese people during

\textsuperscript{336} Otsuka “Japan's Involvement with Higher Education in Manchuria”, 78. In Korea as well, John Whittier Treat notes that the number one prerequisite for imperial subjectification was learning Japanese. John Whittier Treat, “Choosing to Collaborate: Yi Kwang-su and the Moral Subject in Colonial Korea,” \textit{The Journal of Asian Studies} 71 no. 1 (February 2012): 89.

\textsuperscript{337} Thøgersen, \textit{A County of Culture}, 240.
An article from 1938 about Muslims schools featured in the pro-Nationalist Muslim Journal Chengshi Yuekan 成市月刊 begins by comparing the “War of Resistance” to the Thirty Years’ War and the Hundred Years’ War in Europe. The comparison is drawn to highlight the ways that all three wars impacted the daily lives of normal people beyond soldiers, implying that the “War of Resistance” was an all-encompassing war that would forever change the landscape of China. By comparing the situation in China to early modern European wars, the author also creates an ahistorical analogy where early modern Europe is somehow on the same plane as China in the 1930s, perhaps implying the backwardness of China at the time. Beyond this, the main point of the article was to draw attention to the situation among Muslims living close the occupied areas. Admitting that there was a lack of funds and resources, the author implored the Nationalist government to support Muslim schools along the border of Manchukuo (bianjiang jiaoyu 邊疆教育). These schools, he argued, should receive precedence for funding so that students there could be indoctrinated with anti-Japanese messages to resist the Japanese.

Tying the proximity to the border with the Japanese occupation to increasing educational efforts in order to “develop” national sentiment among Muslims in this region indicates a reactive nationalist sentiment which was contingent on Muslims being “brought up” to the level of the Han. It also indicates that Muslims in this zone between Free China and occupied China had little or no conception of the Nationalist agenda because the “development” of a national sentiment was seen as seminal to resisting the Japanese along the borders of the occupation.

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338 ‘Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu’
339 ‘Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu’
340 ‘Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu’
The argument is framed in a way that makes it clear that in order that to successfully resist the Japanese, Muslims living close to occupied China needed to devote their energy to learning Chinese rather than Arabic, which would make them modern like their Han neighbors. It was argued that learning Chinese to resist Japan should not only be a desire of Muslims, but a duty of Muslims throughout China. In order to achieve this goal, the Han and the Hui needed to work together because the Muslim community could not be expected to bear the responsibility of this formidable task on their own. It was hoped that Muslims would then be able to pass on the messages of resistance to their religious brothers who were living under occupation (zhanzhe 佔著).

These debates also extended into a conversation about the place of religious education within the nation in relation to the ongoing war with Japan. While some intellectuals advocated integration and assimilation, others were sensitive to the different religious identity of Muslim Chinese, and argued that they should be accommodated for larger, more global geopolitical reasons. Nationalist Muslim writer Gai Dainxun 盖殿勳 wrote prolifically about problems facing Muslim schools during the “War of Resistance” with Japan. Like others, Gai thought that the most pressing problem was a lack of young Muslim teachers who were qualified to teach the nationalist curriculum to Muslim students. This problem was exacerbated by the lack of teacher training facilities for Muslims, who he felt had special needs such as learning how to integrate Islam into the national curriculum. Gai argued that in order to be successful teachers, Muslims needed a deep understanding of their faith so that they could relate Islam to the development of

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341 “Kangzhan jianguo yu fazhan huimin jiaoyu”
the nation. His argument was framed against the backdrop of the war: for Gai, knowing that the Japanese were working to co-opt Muslims in North China informed the ways that he viewed the place of religious education in the curriculum. Gai urged Muslim teachers to think about how their religious culture could help China resist Japan through inculcating nationalist sentiment among young Muslim minority students. In his view, religious training and religious education went hand-in-hand with the national curriculum. From the perspective of writers like Gai, if Muslim teachers were first armed with a deep and true understanding of Islam, it would prepare them to apply nationalist principles such as the Three People’s Principles, morality training, technology and skill training, and physical training according to the tenets of Islam. This process would allow teachers to understand how to relate Islam to all aspects of their own lives as citizens of China, which they could then impart on their students. Gai presented an alternative to the assimilative nationalist policies and placed Islamic learning at the center of the methods for training an Islamic cadre of teachers who could teach within the framework of the national curriculum.

Along these lines, an article written by a committee or perhaps the editorial board of the journal (zutong nigao 組同擬稿) presented yet another approach for reforming Muslim education. They wrote about the future of Muslim schools under the Nationalists in the widely circulated *Yisilan Xuesheng zazhi* (伊斯蘭學生雜誌). The editorial claimed that the largest obstacle to

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342 “Huijiao jiaoyu zai kangzhan jianguo shiqi zhong de shizi wenti” 回教教育在抗戰建國時期中的師資問題 Chengshi Yuekan 成市月刊 5, no. 13 (1938).
343 “Huijiao jiaoyu zai kangzhan jianguo shiqi zhong de shizi wenti”
344 “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti” 關於今後的回教教育問題* Yisilan Xuesheng Zazhi 伊斯蘭學生雜誌 1 no. 4 (1932): 35-40.
reforming Muslim education in China was their lack of identification with the Chinese nation-state. Reinforcing the notion that being both Muslim and Chinese was not contradictory, the article noted that the negotiation of multiple identities was not fully understood by the government, which was made up primarily of Han Chinese. In order for their voices to be heard, the writers advocated that Muslims focus their efforts on strengthening their relationship with the state: “How is our country? How is our culture? What about territorial losses [to the Japanese]? What is the relationship between Muslims and these questions? These are questions that Muslims should be able to answer,” he proclaimed in fiery sermonic prose.345 Here, the authors not only acknowledge that there was a distance between Han Chinese and Muslims, but that the Muslims living under the Japanese occupation were beyond their accessibility for their current vision for the Chinese nation-state. According to the writers, the responsibility of fostering better relationships between Muslims and their neighbors lay in the hands of the Muslim communities. Interactions between Han Chinese and their Muslim neighbors had been contentious and sometimes violent in the past, and they attributed this long-standing animosity to economic disparity between the two communities: once the educational level of Muslims was on par with the Han, they thought that a mutual understanding would develop between them. In order to achieve this, the writers felt that Muslims should emulate the educational model provided by the Han Chinese because they believed that the Han had successfully adapted both Japanese and western educational models, facilitating their modernization. Through education, the Han

345 “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”
Chinese were able to allay their long-held traditions and superstitions (mixin 迷信).\footnote{“Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”} According to the article, this was something Muslims would only be able to achieve once they managed to “modernize” Muslim education. By emphasizing the important influence of Japan on the education system in China, and by highlighting the lack of national sentiment among Muslim communities at this time, their argument further reinforced the idea that there was anything resembling a cohesive Muslim resistance during the war.

The article also offered some theological suggestions for Muslims looking to improve their educational standing and place in society. In their view, all humans were equal according to Islam, and by extension they understood this to mean that Muslims had a fundamental duty to help others attain a minimum level of education. The Qur’an stipulated that Muslims should strive to help each other advance, and that all Muslims should help others who were less fortunate than they were. The writers reiterated that this unambiguous message of sacrifice was repeated throughout the Qur’an and was to be emulated in the daily life of Muslims. For them, attending mosque, living in accordance with the principles of Islam, and respecting your Ahong would all yield good spiritual results, but not the kind that made modern citizens of the Chinese nation-state. In order to become active citizens of China, Islamic education needed to be reformed because Muslims were mocked for their educational deficiencies (or what they call “feeblemindedness” dineng 低能). To address some of these issues of “backwardness”, they suggested a joint Han-Hui committee on educational reform. Its purpose was to get the
government to think critically about some of the specific issues facing Muslims.\textsuperscript{347} In order for the joint committee to succeed, it needed to be sensitive to the needs of Muslims and teach the Han and the Hui about each other in a meaningful way. This, in turn, would foster a mutual appreciation for each other. For the authors, this process was not about eliminating difference, but about showing people how an appreciation of difference could create and maintain harmony, which would in turn provide Muslims with a way to play a larger role in the government in China.\textsuperscript{348} Although his standpoint might seem somewhat idealistic in hindsight, they offer a clearly articulated vision for Muslim-Han understanding. This proposal was meant to foster not only better relations between the two groups, but also allow for Muslims to eventually play a role in national politics that was proportional to their size within the population. Their vision for Muslim education in China thus provides an alternative to integrating Muslims into the Chinese nation-state through educational reforms. By envisioning Muslims that had cultivated both a civic and religious consciousness, they presented a scenario where the Han and Hui could potentially learn to work together to improve the nation. They felt this would only be achieved if outstanding members of the Muslim community committed themselves to becoming “religious politicians” who would speak for the interests of Muslims at all levels of government. The writers argued that Muslims in places like Gansu and Xinjiang were afflicted with a “developmental deformity” and it was the responsibility of urban, educated Muslims to help raise their standard of living, which could only be achieved through improving the quality of education for Muslims throughout the mainland.

\textsuperscript{347} “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti” This was a precedent established by the Mongolians and the Tibetans, who, according to Zutong, were in a much more dire situation than the Muslims.

\textsuperscript{348} “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”
This developmental argument was common among Muslim Nationalist intellectuals in this era, and they, like others, believed that Muslims needed to reform and develop within the framework of the teachings of the Qur’an: only through a true understanding of Islam would Muslims in China be able to contribute to the nation in a thoughtful and meaningful way. The writers urged Muslims in good social standing to get involved in all levels of politics because their participation ensured a Muslim voice throughout government to advocate for specifically Islamic interests. In order to persuade Muslims get engaged in politics, they listed the virtues that he felt religious politicians should possess: beyond a deep understanding Islamic teachings and theology and a strong faith in Allah; politicians must also be able to get along with non-Muslims and have a desire to promote their faith through education. The religious politician also had to be dedicated to the cause of opening schools for both Han and Hui children in order to promote mutual understanding. Interestingly, the writers were perhaps the most skeptical about their own idealized vision for the future of Muslim education. In practice they acknowledged that getting Muslims to learn Chinese at the expense of Arabic—let alone having them studying side-by-side with Han Chinese—was a potentially insurmountable obstacle. They knew that his idea of creating a Han-Hui school was innovative, and not a concession that the large and entrenched Muslim communities in places like Beijing or Yunnan would ever accept. For this reason, the writers suggested that the Nationalists implement the model project somewhere in Xinjiang or Gansu, where the educational situation was so dire communities would be willing to make concessions about the curriculum and potential learning methods. Presenting Muslims with this

349 “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”
350 “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”
far-fetched model for how they could address some of the issues facing Muslim education was perhaps intended not to be a plan that came to fruition, but rather a chance to begin a dialogue among Muslims about the ways that they could reform education without compromising their religious and ethnic identity and still be active participants in Chinese political life.351

**CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter explores some of the ways that the Nationalists envisioned Muslims fitting into their vision of the nation through an examination the ways they thought about educational reform in Muslim schools during the 1930s and 1940s. It also describes how many of these reforms were responses to Japanese successes providing education for Muslims living in occupied China. Nationalist Muslim reformers had a precarious balancing act to perform: how could Muslims maintain their religious integrity if they had to adhere to the curriculum standards of the Nationalists? On the one hand, Muslims wanted to modernize schools, giving communities a chance to participate in the nation-building process on equal footing. On the other hand, Islamic schools were a way of preserving their faith and distinguishing themselves from the Han. In their search for answers to these questions, Nationalist Muslims presented a variety of educational models for making new, nationalist, Muslims in China.

The Nationalists also recognized that different groups of Muslims had different priorities when it came to education.352 Many of the publications on the state of Muslim education under the Nationalist government noted that one of the major downfalls of madrasah education was that

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351 “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”
352 “Guanyu jinhou de huijiao jiaoyu wenti”
the majority of the instructors were old and they were unable to provide the type of education sanctioned by the state: Ahongs transmitted culture, just not the kind that the state wanted them to communicate to students.\textsuperscript{353} The ephemeral quality of the idea what the nation meant in conjunction with the inability of the Nationalists to enforce their curriculum throughout China attests to the great diversity of approaches to Muslim education circulating at the time. The history textbooks used in unoccupied China adhered to the Republican-period ideal that China’s national people were a union of five peoples in the Chinese Republic (\textit{wuzu gonghe} 五族共和). Yet, when it came to portraying how these people were united as a common people, they often differed over whether to portray them as a common racial group or as the product of successful assimilationist policies.\textsuperscript{354} The plurality of approaches was confusing, and the Japanese were able to capitalize on these ambiguities and inconsistencies, especially by highlighting the incongruities between the Nationalists’ rhetoric and the reality of the situation on the ground.\textsuperscript{355}

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\textsuperscript{353} Allès, “Muslim Religious Education in China,” 89.
\textsuperscript{354} Culp, \textit{Articulating Citizenship}, 58.
\textsuperscript{355} Culp, \textit{Articulating Citizenship}, 64. Some textbooks did describe religious pluralism, often claiming it as a badge of religious freedom in China (\textit{zōngjiào zìyóu} 宗教自由). This was a tacit acknowledgement that the Hui, Mongol, and the Tibetans who made up parts of the Republican ideal of China’s national peoples had different customs.
CHAPTER III

JAPANESE INVOLVEMENT WITH MUSLIM EDUCATION IN OCCUPIED CHINA AND CHINESE MUSLIMS RESPONSES TO THESE EFFORTS

This chapter explores some of the justifications provided by the Japanese Imperial government for teaching Japanese to Muslim students under occupation and assesses responses to this policy from different Muslim communities throughout the North China region. Through Muslim schools, the Japanese promoted their imperial agenda in a seemingly innocuous way to a young and receptive population who realized the opportunities that learning Japanese presented them.356

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356 Beyond schools, the Japanese instituted numerous public health campaigns and infrastructure developments in Mongolia and North China. The campaign against trachoma was successful and communities responded well to Japanese efforts to combat the disease. Although spreading information about western style medicine was not easy, the Japanese publicized their efforts via children in schools. Children were the vehicles of policy transmission in a way that the state could be use children to
The relationship between the Japanese Empire, Islam, and educational policy in occupied China is integral to understanding the Japanese motives as well as the receptiveness toward their overall policies among minority communities throughout their empire. Admittedly, life under occupation was harsh, but Japanese support for Muslim educational opportunities was effective enough to get the attention of the Nationalists, who grew increasingly concerned about Japanese successes educating Muslim minorities in the occupied areas.

Continuing to look at the occupation as a complete break in the way that Muslims conceived their relationships to both the state and society in twentieth-century China diminishes the important intellectual trends introduced by the Japanese and some of the real physical changes that the Japanese introduced to the landscape of North China. Schools were a place that embodied these changes in a very real way: for the first time, in many instances, they provided families and communities with a tangible connection to a state power beyond the madrasah or the local mosque. In this way, the relationship centered around educational reforms between the Japanese authorities and Muslims in China provides new ways to imagine how an

disseminate policy directives to their families: children became a proxy to the community. Similarly, the “good roads” campaign in Manchuria is well documented. Anecdotally, people would regularly comment about being aware of crossing the border between occupied and unoccupied China because the roads the regions under Japanese control were much better maintained (Rana Mitter, The Manchurian Myth, 2000). These projects were “all [Japanese] attempts to project their presence as a positive force in the areas they had conquered; while they were not entirely convincing, there were elements of their projects that did resonate even with those who resented their presence….For this reason, it is impossible to know how far even the most well-intentioned Japanese welfare practices were really effective in capturing the hearts and minds of the local Chinese population,” (Rana Mitter, The Manchurian Myth, 124; 122).

In Hong Kong, the Japanese went to great lengths to publicize and explain their policies to the Chinese. The Japanese also made some positive changes in public health, education, and agriculture. In this way, Carroll argues that: “[p]eople collaborated with the Japanese to help the local community…and at the end of the war in Hong Kong there was little general resentment towards the [Chinese councils] who had collaborated because people understood that they had not really had other options.” (Carroll, Edge of Empire, 184.)
occupying power can shape national discourse. Shifting the focus to marginalized participants during the China War allows us to reconsider expressions of religious and ethnic identity during this tumultuous time and conclude that in many instances, expressions of Chinese nationalism did not factor into the choices minorities made during the war.

From this starting point, we can then think critically about why “compliance with the Japanese made sense to so many people.”

For their part, Muslims collaborated with Japanese educational reforms for a variety of reasons: there were economic incentives and opportunities for social advancement through education, but many offered religious and theological justifications for working with their occupiers. For this reason, examining Japanese approaches to minority education on the mainland during the 1930s and 1940s is integral to furthering our understanding of wartime collaboration. In choosing to be complicit with Japanese rule, by either making the conscious choice to learn Japanese or let their children be educated by the Japanese, Muslims in North China were in a sense “collaborating”. Partly through schools, the Japanese provided Muslims with the vocabulary to understand their changing position vis-à-vis the Japanese empire, along with knowledge of the situation among Muslims beyond their immediate surroundings, albeit from a Japanese perspective. This new consciousness contributed not only to the formation of ethnic identity in China, but involved Muslims in a larger, international and transnational dialogue about the place of Chinese Islam in the international community and about the place of Islam in China. By placing Muslims in North China at the center of the story of the occupation, new narratives emerge as peripheral peoples learned to mediate loyalties to the

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Chinese nation-state and to the Japanese imperial state with pre-existing loyalties to region, family, community and, most importantly, to Islam.

Mark Lincicome’s recent work explores the relationship between education and the internationalization of students in Japan during the imperial period. He argues that, “the school, like the state itself, [was] a site where different classes or interest groups regularly engaged in ideological struggles over meaning, values, and principles,” and concludes that, “dominant ideologies are thus a product of compromise.”

His argument about imperial internationalism can be extended to Japan’s goals for Muslim education in North China, exemplified through Japan’s efforts to manage educational reforms at Islamic schools in the region. Japan’s own complex struggle with the outward projection of their imperial identity to the Muslim world along with the sometimes seemingly contradictory goals of “peaceful coexistence and co-prosperity” provided an avenue and some leeway for Muslims in China to negotiate within the terms of educational reforms. Though the Imperial Way provided a path to civilization and enlightenment for Japanese subject on the home islands, this discourse did not always resonate with Muslims, and the Japanese, anxious to win their support, were sensitive to the specific educational needs of Muslims.

The Japanese also presented learning Japanese as a way for Muslims in Manchukuo to preserve their independence from British and Russian imperialism. Schools, they believed, had a specific agenda, and part of that agenda was to help Japan defeat the western imperial enemies in

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361 Lincicome, *Imperial Subjects as Global Citizens*, xxvi.
their “Holy War” (*seisen* 聖戦).\(^{362}\) The Japanese often highlighted the importance of the relationship between the larger community of Muslims in the *dar-al-Islam* and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, emphasizing how Muslims all over the world were oppressed at the hands of western imperial powers. By projecting the idea that they both had a common experience with western imperialists as well as with the Soviets, the Japanese and the Muslims were depicted as fighting common enemies. Calling these campaigns against imperialism in East Asia a ‘Holy War’, the Japanese were also using language and ideas that were familiar to Muslims. Muslims in the Middle East had declared *jihad* on many of the imperialist powers in WWI, and here, by using this term, the Japanese were (perhaps inadvertently) expressing solidarity with Muslims in China and beyond in their campaigns to expel western imperial powers from Asia and the Middle East.

**JAPANESE INVOLVEMENT WITH EDUCATION IN NORTH CHINA**

Japan’s first active involvement with education in Manchuria came with their defeat over the Russians in 1905. At the time, permission was granted by the Qing for them to establish a privately run military academy in Jinzhou. Soon after, the Japanese were exerting influence on Chinese universities in Manchuria, and some of these institutions continued to exist in the same form but under different names after the establishment of Manchukuo in March 1932. The Japanese also took over the educational administration of certain schools in the territory adjoining the South Manchurian Railway, eventually gaining control of institutions of higher education.

\(^{362}\) Of course, the term *seisen* was not used until after 1941 and the outbreak of the Pacific War and the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.
learning such as the Lushun Technical Institute and the Southern Manchuria Medical Institute.\footnote{Glen Peterson and Ruth Hayhoe, “Introduction,” in *Education, culture, and identity in twentieth-century China*, edited by Glen Peterson and Ruth Hayhoe (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001): 11-12.}

This involvement exemplifies Japan’s growing interest in education on the mainland, and also highlights Japan’s influence on education long before the occupation of North China. The full-scale invasion of Manchuria in 1931 marked a shift in policy towards education there, but given their presence in the educational realm from the first decades of the twentieth century, it was less abrupt than other works suggest.\footnote{See: Culp, *Articulating Citizenship*; Li, *Student Nationalism*; and Cong, *Teachers’ schools and the making of the modern Chinese nation-state*.}

After the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, Japan hoped it would be able to enlist the support of the Muslims in the area for the Manchukuo government. However, aside from a handful of willing participants, the majority of Muslims remained indifferent towards the Japanese, or they fled south with the Nationalist government.\footnote{In *Student Nationalism*, Li writes, “How large was this academic refugee constituency in 1937? And what was the scale of assistance offered by the GMD government? The establishment of the temporary university at Changsha was guided by a small committee of five, representing the central government, the Hunan provincial government, and the three universities concerned. The annual budget allocated was to be 35 percent of that of the previous year. The size of the budget allocation reflected an official estimate that about a third of the staff and students was able to find their way south to Changsha. This estimate proved conservative, for when the first term started on Nov 1, 1937, the temporary university had a staff component of 148 and a student enrolment of 1452. Of these, over eleven hundred students were from the three northern universities: 631 from Tsinghua, 342 from Beijing University, and 147 from Nankai” (81).}

After the full-scale outbreak of war in 1937, the Japanese adopted a stronger policy vis-à-vis Muslims when they pronounced their plans for hegemony in East Asia and their desire to build relationships with the Middle East. Japanese observers in China acknowledged that if they wanted their policies with regards to Muslims in newly occupied areas to be successful the policies should address economic and
political interests of Muslims, and not simply religious objectives. With this in mind, the Japanese began to curry favor with Muslim youths by offering scholarships and student loans. This aid was meant to raise the educational levels among Muslims and create loyalty to the Japanese. At the same time, Japan started funneling more funds into the education system in North China. The money was allocated to build schools and to set up an administration to oversee educational reforms in the region.

Drawing attention to Japanese efforts to gain the support of Muslims in North China and the continued Nationalist responses to their efforts and successes is not meant to underscore the profoundly disruptive impact of the Sino-Japanese War on people in China. In the countryside, especially, many schools were closed as soon as the occupation began. In his examination of Catholic education in China, Jean-Paul Wiest explains that after the fall of Nanjing, most of the schools in the region remained closed through 1938. But as the fighting stabilized and people resumed their daily lives—albeit under occupation—schools gradually reopened. Wiest goes on to remark that the war had an almost adverse effect on Catholic schools in urban areas throughout the mainland, especially in the occupied areas. Catholic schools were quick to fill the vacuum left by the Nationalist supported schools that picked up and moved west. In smaller urban areas, Catholic schools were the only “educational outfits in occupied territories above the lower primary,” level and at these schools, enrollment of non-Catholics grew by up to fifty-five

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367 However, these loans were “not given gratis, for the recipients in return [had to] do espionage work among their schoolmates and file reports with the Japanese military headquarters from time to time,” (Michael, “Notes and Comments: Japan—Protector of Islam!” 481).
percent. In a policy brief to the Japanese Education Ministry about the state of Muslim education in China, a Japanese imperial official on the ground in North China noted a similar pattern at Muslim schools in Beijing in 1937-1938. They were surprised to find that many of the students attending Islamic schools were, in fact, not Muslim. Among the nineteen Muslim schools listed in Beijing, there were fourteen schools with Han students. The majority had a handful of non-Muslim students, but at a couple of schools such as at the Andingmen Mosque School (安定門清真寺學校), and at the Xizhimen Mosque School (西直門清真寺學校), non-Muslim students outnumbered Muslims students almost four to one. Before the outbreak of the war, it would have been highly unlikely for a Han Chinese student to attend a Muslim school. The realities of war blurred ethnic and religious lines: as people re-adjusted to life living under the occupation, they were forced to make choices about how they would continue with their daily routines throughout the war. For a certain number of Han Chinese families who did not leave North China after 1937, ensuring that their children continued their education during the war outweighed any misgivings they might have had about sending their children to an Islamic mosque school.

**The Centrality of Language—Arabic, Chinese, or Japanese?**

The Japanese maintenance of imperial legitimacy was partly contingent on those living under occupation understanding that the imperial education system would serve their pedagogical

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370 “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō” 北京回教徒最近の全面的考慮, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.
needs. By 1937, in all of the territories under Japanese control on the mainland, the degree of receptiveness to Japanese language curriculum varied from city to city among Muslim communities, depending on a number of factors. Some of these factors are outlined in an important policy document written by the reputed Japanese scholar of Islam, Kobayashi Hajime 小林元. The report, which was first published in secret in 1940 and later re-published for a general audience, is called, “Japanese Language and Muslim Children” (Nihongo to kai-min jidō 日本語と回民児童). Kobayashi’s report aims to validate Japan’s efforts between 1937 and 1940 to teach Muslim children Japanese language in school. Kobayashi stressed that language acquisition was a skill, which required will and dedication to learn. His point that people did not have an inherent ability to learn languages was meant to attest to the determination of the young Muslim students who often learned three languages—Japanese, Arabic, and Chinese—in elementary school. For Kobayashi, Japanese language acquisition presented children with an opportunity, and for those with less chances in life—like Muslim children in North China—learning Japanese presented them with a whole new set of possibilities for the future. In this instance, Kobayashi presented learning Japanese as a way for Muslim youths to distinguish themselves from their Han neighbors and to get ahead in the world.

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371 Carnoy, Education as Cultural Imperialism, 1-5.
372 Kobayashi Hajime 小林元, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō” 日本語と回民児童 Kaikyōken 回教圈 57 (1940). Kobayashi is introduced in Chapter I.
373 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō”
374 These policies of educational reform and reinforcing pre-existing notions of difference were not unprecedented. Japanese approaches to incorporating foreigners into their empire were well honed by their arrival in North China. In her examination of how the Ainu (the indigenous peoples who inhabited Hokkaido) were incorporated into the Japanese empire from 1869 onwards, Kojima Kyōko explains that the Japanese aspired to make the Ainu national subjects by ‘civilizing’ them. Long considered inferior to the Japanese, the Ainu were given Japanese names, settled, and registered with the state. In Hokkaido, the
Supporting proficiency in Japanese among Muslim populations was seminal to the long-range imperial policy of Japan from the mid-1930s. Japan realized that in order for their policies to be successful they needed to allow Muslims to practice Islam and learn Arabic. Muslims resisted encroachment into the educational sphere when Japan attempted to reduce the number of Arabic learning hours or infringed on the Islamic curriculum. There were never conversations among the Japanese about eliminating Arabic language instruction from the curriculum, and the Japanese had a clear vision for how Muslims would fit into their imperial schema with their Arabic and Japanese language skills.

In 1937, a Japanese journal called *Islam* (イスラム), published an article about the state of Islamic education in North China before the occupation and provided an assessment of Muslim schools throughout the region. The article traced the establishment and opening of “new style schools” during the Opening School Movement (*Kōgaku undō* 興學運動). The article explained that throughout the 1910s and 1920s, prominent members of the Beijing Muslim community established modern schools for Muslims after exposure to Islamic modernist reform movements in the Middle East. The article then used the examples of the few modern schools as

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Japanese built schools for the Ainu, who initially had a ‘zeal for education’ which was ‘rooted in the readiness of parents and grandparents to bring to an end with their own generation the transmission of Ainu language and cultures, in order that their children would not be disadvantaged’ (108). Unlike in Manchukuo with the Muslims, Ainu language was banned at school, and Ainu children were educated only in Japanese. However, the Muslims had cultural capital that the Ainu did not possess—Islam and Arabic—which the Japanese recognized as valuable for their diplomatic dealings with the Middle East. For more on this see Kojima Kyōko’s fascinating essay “The making of Ainu citizenship from the viewpoint of gender and ethnicity,” in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, edited by Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr (New York: Routledge, 2014): 101-119.

The term *kōgaku undō* goes back at least to the Song period and usually refers to Buddhism, not Islam. I have never found a source in Chinese that used this term to refer to the opening of modern schools by Sino-Muslims, and in my experience it is strictly limited to Japanese writers.
proof that there were positive precedents and cases of non-madrasahs institutions succeeding in Beijing to help make a case to establish more modern Islamic schools using Japanese funds. For example, they cited a famous Chinese hajji Wang Haoran 王浩然 (1848-1918) who opened a Muslim Teaching College (Kaikyō shihan Gaku Dō 回教師範學堂) on Oxen Street (J. Ushimi machi 牛街) in Beijing to train teachers under the new guidelines provided by the Nationalists after 1922 for certifying private school teachers.\(^{376}\) Initially, Wang had faced resistance for teaching non-religious subjects like science or technology, and Beijing Ahongs claimed that studying vernacular Chinese would dilute religious education, causing students to become more secular.\(^{377}\) However, the article noted that Wang Haoran eventually persuaded Muslim parents that children would adopt a broader world-view and an education beyond Qur’anic and Hadith memorization would be beneficial for the community. Wang also told parents that they could have a modern-style education for Muslim children without the kids having to attend school with Han Chinese.\(^{378}\) Wang’s successes were used as evidence that the Japanese could convince Muslims in North China to adopt Japanese language training: if they had accepted science and technology training in their schools, Muslims would surely be receptive to learning Japanese, they argued. The article also contended that using Wang’s model would convince Muslims that they were not trying to assimilate Muslims or integrate them into Han Chinese schools as many of the Nationalists were arguing they should attempt to do. In their eyes, Japan presented a model

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\(^{376}\) “Shína-kái kyōto no kyōiku jōsei” 支那回教徒の教育情勢 Isuramu イスラム (July 1937).

\(^{377}\) “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō”, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.

\(^{378}\) “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō”, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.
where Muslims could maintain the integrity of their own religious schools, albeit with a few hours of Japanese learning added to the curriculum.

Japan also connected their arguments about the viability of teaching Japanese in Muslim schools to creating new educational opportunities for Muslim women. The Japanese noted that Wang Haoran had opened a small school for girls because before 1921 there were no schools specifically for Muslim women in Beijing. On Wang Haoran’s lead, the Muslim community donated money and opened the New Moon Women’s Middle School (Xīnyue nüzi zhongxue 新月女子中学) in 1926. The explicit purpose of the school was to train Muslim women as certified teachers. However, the school had trouble getting off the ground. The Japanese saw this failure as an opportunity, and in 1932 they began working on plans to provide teacher training for Muslim women in North China. By 1935, with the Japanese funds, the Shijian Nüzhong (實踐女中) school reopened in the previous location of the New Moon school. In 1938, the Japanese reported that there were around three hundred girls studying there, and around a third were Muslim. Islamic women’s education was presented as a great place to start in order to gain footing in Beijing with the Muslim community. Taking this logic a step further, the Japanese claimed that by helping educate Muslim women and by teaching them Japanese, these women could participate more actively in the ever-increasingly interconnected world. Since many Muslim women did not have the opportunity to go to school at all, the Japanese argued, they would be more willing to accept instruction in Japanese since it was their only option.

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379 “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō”, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.
380 Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 18
381 “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō”, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.
Projecting their vision into the future, Japan imagined that once one class had matriculated, these women would then be able to disseminate Japanese language and the imperial curriculum to a larger group of Muslim students throughout the empire. The Japanese aspirations were not novel among imperial powers, but their long-range goals and the all-encompassing scope of these policies indicates that they did have far-reaching plans for integrating Muslim populations into their empire. In this instance, the Japanese were able to present their educational model as an unfulfilled vision of Chinese Muslims, and as a way to successfully educate Muslim women, who could then be deployed in the service of the empire.\textsuperscript{382} Interestingly, this document was specifically geared towards a Chinese audience and a Chinese-speaking Japanese audience because it was written in Chinese although printed by a Japanese publisher.

Beyond creating educational opportunities for women, Japanese language training was presented as a vehicle for economic advancement. In principle, the benefits of empire would extend to people living in the empire who learned Japanese. Drawing attention to the economic benefits of being able to converse and do business with the Japanese, Japanese educators confident that language training among minority populations would become more and more popular.\textsuperscript{383} This was partly due to the Japanese notion that minorities in China were disenfranchised and that learning Japanese would give them an advantage over Han Chinese who did not speak Japanese. They also thought that Japanese language facilitated the study of science and technology, which was heavily dependent on vocabulary imported from Japan. Beyond this, it was argued, Muslims could also have friendly interactions (choucu 酬酢) with their new

\textsuperscript{382} “Guoren jiyi riwen” 國人亟宜日文, Datong Wenhua 大同文化 252, no 2-3 (1932

\textsuperscript{383} “Guoren jiyi riwen.”
Japanese neighbors. There were likely Muslims in North China who were anxious and willing to learn Japanese to facilitate business transactions and to figure out ways to extend their economic influence beyond the mainland through connections with the Japanese. For example, in a short report about Muslim students working diligently at their summer jobs during their break from school, the Japanese focused on how the technical skills and Japanese language skills students had learned throughout the year were an asset in helping them secure summer employment with Japanese firms operating in North China. This connection between imperialism and fostering economic development through the promotion of education is a common theme that was frequently revisited by Japanese officials and bureaucrats when discussing Muslim youth in North China.

**APPROACHES AND TACTICS—FAMILY, FAITH, AND NATION?**

The Japanese also projected their visions for Muslim education in North China beyond the war. In the early 1940s, it was not foreseen that they would lose in the Pacific, and they proposed long-term plans for Muslim education. Their main goals in the interim were to get the standards of Muslim educational levels up to those of their Han Chinese neighbors. Japan may not have been successful at convincing anyone that it was the new Islamic power in the region, but they were supportive of Muslims in ways that other powers were not, and they did continue to prove

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384 “Guoren jiyi riwen.”
themselves to be capable of providing the services that Muslims wanted, such as good education for their children.\textsuperscript{387}

In order to make their stance on education and its relationship to the family known, the Japanese published a number of weekly columns directed at Muslim families that was featured in daily newspapers circulated in the occupied areas. One example of this is a Dear Abby-like character who offered wisdom on Islamic social mores, and also provided commentary and insights into the daily struggles faced by Muslims. The column often centered on the role parents should play educating their children in relation to the education they received at school.\textsuperscript{388}

Another columnist, Ma Yao 馬耀 wrote a regular column in \textit{Mengjiang Xinbao} 蒙疆新報 where he wrote frankly about Muslim taboos (jinji 禁忌), how Muslims should interact with Han neighbors, and about the importance of imparting Islamic cultural norms to members of the community.\textsuperscript{389} The overarching point in his weekly column was that in order to have a

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\item \textsuperscript{387} “Quan jiang huijiao ti ganji mengbang: Xianshen jianshe win dongya huimin qingqian xuexiao shouchang xian jin” 全疆回教徒感激盟邦：獻身建設新東亞回民青年學校首倡獻金, \textit{Mengjiang Xinbao}, 蒙疆新報 (August 27, 1938).
\item \textsuperscript{388} In her book chapter, “Domestic roles and the incorporation of women into the nation-state: The emergence and development of the ‘good wife, wise mother’ ideology,” Koyama Shizuko provides a nice overview of how these discourses about the role women in the family emerged in the late nineteenth century on the home islands. Through the ideology of ‘good wife, wise mother’, “women were not simply assigned such household functions as performing housework and childrearing. Rather, these roles were reinterpreted according to the logic of the state which positioned women as national subjects,” (in \textit{Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan}, 85). How, if at all, were these ideas sold to Chinese Muslim families.
\item \textsuperscript{389} Japanese-sponsored, Chinese language newspapers had a wide circulation in North China and Manchukuo in the 1930s. Another one of the important papers, the \textit{Shengjing Shibao} had regular printing runs of 30,000 or more. Although the Japanese owned the paper, the majority of the staff and writers were Chinese. On these types of papers, Rana Mitter writes: “Our understanding of why Chinese readers might choose such a paper is increased on examining it closely: \textit{Shengjing Shibao} was by no means a crude propaganda organ for the Japanese presence in the region but instead offered analysis that resonated with its readers...Naturally, readership of a newspaper does not equal agreement with its views, but it seems
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functioning and active Muslim community, there needed to be mechanisms in place for instilling markers of distinction between Muslim communities the Han. The home, Ma argued, along with the school, should play an active role of imparting Islamic norms and values in children.\textsuperscript{390} It is evident through these columns that the focus of learning within the family was meant to reinforce what children were learning at school, and that parents were expected to provide positive role models of how to be good Muslims for their children. Learning began in the home, but it was also meant to be an extension of what was being reinforced in schools and in the community. Both mothers and fathers were urged to lead by example by doing things like drinking less, not fighting with their spouses, and not smoking inside their homes.\textsuperscript{391} Families were not expected to teach their children math and science, but they were responsible for imparting the appropriate Islamic customs onto them. The message was clear: only through good behavior in the home would Muslim children thrive in school, and only through school would children get ahead. Thus, children became a locus for imperial policy and gave the Japanese a way into the socialization process of the entire family.

The Japanese imperial government funded Muslim schools, but also emphasized the participation of parents in schooling to reinforce state messages. The approach to education policy taken by the Japanese imperial state reveals some of the ways that the Japanese imagined the relationship between children, the family, and the imperial state. Muslim parents witnessed tangible results of their children attending new schools with new curriculums but parents did unlikely that the two were completely unconnected, particularly when, as in the Northeast, there was a choice of periodicals,” Rana Mitter, “Evil Empire?” 156.

\textsuperscript{390} “Huimin shehui zhi liyi” 回民社會之禮儀, Mengjiang Xinbao 蒙疆新報 (February 12 1938)
\textsuperscript{391} “Zenme jiao nide haizi” 怎麼教你的孩子, Mengjiang Xinbao, 蒙疆新報 (February 2, 1938).
express concern that learning Japanese would “dilute” the religiosity of schools.\textsuperscript{392} Therefore, it became the responsibility of the Japanese to prove to parents that students could receive an adequate Islamic education and still learn Japanese.\textsuperscript{393} This relationship between parents and the Japanese empire was symbiotic: even if parents did not speak Japanese, work for the Japanese, or otherwise support the Japanese, the fact that their children were learning the language formalized their relationship to the empire and brought them into the imperial fold, tacitly gaining acceptance of their rule through the promotion of religious education.\textsuperscript{394} The Japanese, for their part, also had to ensure that parents were adequately satisfied with the Islamic education their children were receiving because otherwise they faced resistance from the parents and the community.

Some of these tensions are exemplified in one striking example. Students from a new Muslim school in Datong (大同) wrote a short play in Japanese and presented it to the community. The play was announced and covered in the local Japanese-supported Chinese language newspaper. Although the publication is a well-known mouthpiece of the Japanese, the remarks on the high level of Japanese proficiency of the students are telling: the students presented a play that they had written about the “East Asia Liberation War” and a key theme in the play was the importance of resisting western imperialism in Asia.\textsuperscript{395} There is no

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\textsuperscript{392} “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō”, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.
\textsuperscript{393} They were well aware that even wealthy Muslims who could afford to send their children to private schools often chose madrasah over these new forms of education because they were interested in maintaining the integrity of their communities, not providing their children with new fangled educations.
\textsuperscript{394} Carnoy, Education as Cultural Imperialism, 19.
\textsuperscript{395} “Huimin xuexiao wei jingtong qi jian jinri ju xing riyu huaju ge sheng jiazhang jun xing canjia”回民學校為精通起見今日舉行日語話劇各生家長均行參加, Mengjiang Xinbao, 蒙疆新報 (November 10, 1937).
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acknowledgment in the article that the parents and community members in attendance would not have been able to understand the play unless they also knew Japanese, but it was reported to be a grand success and received rave reviews from everyone who attended. The success was attributed to the communities’ support for Japanese language learning among the young Muslim population. Although this is likely an embellished compliment on the part of the reviewers, it should not detract from the main points: Muslim students were performing a pro-Japanese/anti-imperial play in Japanese and the community attended to support their children; and Muslim children were also acquiring Japanese language skills and learning the rhetoric of anti-western imperialism, which they were transmitting through performance to their community.\(^{396}\)

Japanese authorities suggested that children would be better off because they were learning Japanese, and encouraged other forms of family participation education. For example, there was frequent Japanese-language speaking competitions held throughout Manchukuo specifically for Muslims. In one instance, a young Muslim girl named Bai Shufang 白淑芳 was awarded a scholarship to continue her studies in Japanese. Some students were handpicked to continue their studies in Japan, where they would receive a small stipend from the Japanese Educational Ministry (wenbu 文部) depending on their gender, what they were studying and their level of proficiency.\(^{397}\) Bai Shufang placed first in the competition in Datong, and her proud parents were in the audience to cheer her on. She must have been quite good at Japanese because her name appeared again a few months later in another newspaper article reporting the overall

\(^{396}\)Huimin xuexiao wei jingtong qi jianri ju xing riyu huaju ge sheng jiazhang jun xing canjia”

\(^{397}\) Yang, “Riben zhi Huijiao zhengce,” 25.
winner of another Japanese language competition held in Manchukuo for Muslim students.\textsuperscript{398}

Although it was likely that her parents could not understand her speech, they nevertheless supported her. Beyond demonstrating that—like parents everywhere—they were devoted to their daughter, it also presents a tacit acknowledgment of Japanese imperialism reaching into the realm of the family. This repeated emphasis on the family and their relationship to supporting Japanese-language education among Muslim children is a thread that runs through many of the sources from occupied China.\textsuperscript{399}

This extension of the Japanese imperial power through education went beyond children as well. Newspapers in North China also ran short weekly Japanese lessons for adults who were literate in Chinese. These lessons were not geared specifically at Muslims, but were meant to provide interested adults a way to learn Japanese. Here is an example of a Japanese language lesson:

日本人ハ一日ニ三度御飯ハ食べする。
ニホンジンハイチニサンドゴハンワタベスル。
一日一天吃三軟飯。

吾吾ハ一週間ニ一日休息ミマス。
ワレワレハイッシウカンニイチニチヤスミマス。
我們一個禮拜一天。

バナナニ柿ニ梨ナドガアリマス。
バナナニカキニクリニナシナドガアリマス。

\textsuperscript{398} “Tong huimin xiaoxue riyu fabiao hui” 同回民小學日語發表會, \textit{Mengjiang Xinbao} 蒙疆新報 (March 18, 1937).

\textsuperscript{399} “Hui Qingxuexiao xinsheng” 回青學校新生 \textit{Mengjiang Xinbao} 蒙疆新報, (March 18, 1937).
香蕉柿子栗子和梨子什麼的都有。\textsuperscript{400}

This particular example included simple Japanese sentences with Kanji, Kana, and Hiragana subscripted with katakana to help with pronunciation. Below the Japanese is the Chinese translation. Generally, the lessons included a short grammar lesson and an explanation of the new vocabulary used in the lesson.\textsuperscript{401} The point of this particular lesson was to explain some different uses of the particle “ni” and to provide Japanese vocabulary for certain food items. For Chinese speakers, these lessons would have been quite straightforward since the new vocabulary included Chinese characters that would have been familiar to any literate Chinese. If they learned the Hiragana and Katakana syllabaries, they would be able to learn how to pronounce frequently used words in their daily interactions with Japanese. Extending Japanese lessons beyond children and into the community allowed adults to participate in Japanese learning as well, but on a voluntary basis. These types of lessons, which were featured in newspapers, were relatively mundane forms of cultural imperialism where the simple vocabulary and grammar lessons were intended to facilitate interactions between literate Chinese and their occupiers.

In Datong, there was another large Japanese language speaking competition with mostly Mongolian and Muslim participants that came from numerous schools throughout the area. A reported 400 members of the community were in attendance to watch the competition that was put on to promote interaction between members of the Muslim and Mongolian communities so that they could understand the important relationship between themselves in relation to the

\textsuperscript{400} “Zhongdeng kouyu songzuo” 中等口語詠座 Mengjiang Xinbao 蒙疆新报 (September 8 1938).
\textsuperscript{401} “Zhongdeng kouyu songzuo”
For these two groups of students, their common language would have likely been Japanese. Students presented short speeches about the East Asia Liberation War (dadongya jiefang zhan 大東亞解放戰) and emphasized the importance of fighting British and Russian imperialism. Japanese language, then, was used to foster relationships between various minority groups who, according to the Japanese, had similar concerns and obstacles to face in north China. Whereas the Nationalist rhetoric often focused on resisting the Japanese, in the occupied areas the emphasis was not about fighting the Chinese, but rather on the importance of resisting western imperialism. In the end, the competition was won by a young girl named Ding Shuyuan 丁淑媛 from the second-level Japanese class at the Muslim elementary school in Datong. In the majority of cases, girls and young women won the Japanese language proficiency competitions; perhaps a testament to the successes Japan were having providing an educational outlet for Muslim girls.

As mentioned, Japanese language learning extended to young mothers and female students in particular. The North Islamic Women’s association held small seminars in home economics for Muslim women where they were also introduced to a few words of Japanese. For a small fee, women were invited to join classes where they would learn some of the basics of modern home economics and participate in Japanese language classes. In one instance, they joined up with Japanese teachers to celebrate the Japanese children’s matsuri festival in North

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402 “Datong Huixiao riyu fazhanhui” 大同回小日語發展會, Mengjiang Xinbao. 蒙疆新報 (June 6, 1937).
403 “Datong Huixiao riyu fazhanhui”
404 “Chengli riyu jiazheng Jiangxi hui” 成立日語家政講習會, Mengjiang Xinbao 蒙疆新報. (August 27 1938).
China and to learn about the manners and customs of Japanese women. The female Muslim students dressed in kimonos and served alcohol (baijiu 白酒) and tea to members of the community. There is no indication that the Muslim women objected to serving alcohol, but it seems interesting that the Japanese would specifically mention them participating in a haram (something that is forbidden according to Islamic law) ritual. Since some of the women were training to become teachers and learning Japanese, they were also presented as being interested in learning about Japanese culture. The women who participated in the festival agreed that Japanese and Muslim women in North China should work together toward creating a happy and harmonious relationship (hele 和乐) for the sake of the Greater East Asia Nationality.405

Although women may have been receptive to the idea of learning Japanese, one group that was opposed to instituting Japanese language lessons in Muslim schools were the Ahongs. The Japanese explained that part of the resistance to change came from the Ahongs, who realized that their positions within the schools could potentially be marginalized if the number of hours learning Arabic were reduced.406 The desire of Ahongs to maintain the status quo can be partly understood as a way to maintain control over the education of the youths in their communities, and partly as a way to maintain their own cultural legitimacy. Passing off education to teachers who were trained at normal schools was a direct threat to the control of Ahongs over their mosques and their communities. This ongoing struggle for authority in madrasahs was summed up by a Japanese observer: most Ahongs had only ever studied the “Arabian Classics” (Yalabiya

405 “Rihui nusheng Chuji yanhuan” 日回女生雛祭聯歡, Mengjiang Xinbao 蒙疆新報 (March 4, 1937).
406 “Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō”, file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.
jingdian 亞剌比亞經典) and their knowledge came from the Qur’an and Hadiths, which was “unsuitable” for modern students. He went on to argue that it was not Arabic language per se that presented the direct problem for the Japanese, but rather the people teaching Arabic were to ones who posed a threat to Japanese educational aspirations in the region. 407

**METHODS, MOTIVATIONS, AND INCENTIVES FOR EDUCATING MUSLIMS**

Japanese bureaucrats made frequent trips to Muslim schools to report on their status and for propaganda purposes. There was also a proliferation of scholarly articles and books published in the 1930s and the 1940s about Islamic education in North China. These articles, that were geared towards academics and policy-makers in Japan, were often written in a similar in tone, although their content varied: they usually began with an overview of the history of Islam in China, followed by claims about the dismal state of Muslim educational opportunities in the region. 408 For Muslims, their current educational situation was presented within the larger narrative of the interactions between the Han and Hui since Muslims had arrived in China during the Tang Dynasty. This was perhaps meant to highlight the redemptive qualities of the Japanese Empire, which had arrived at a specific moment in this historical trajectory to insert itself between the Hui and the Han. The story of the Han and Hui was usually divided into four periods: pre-Tang; Tang through Ming; Qing; and contemporary. The interactions between the Muslims and Han

407 "Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō", file 1:2:1:0:1—1 DSCF 0107-0143.
408 Jin Jitang 金吉堂, “Shina kaikyō no kyōiku” 支那回教の教育 in Shina-kai kyōto 支那回教徒, Tokyo, (1940): 251-265. For example, in a book about Islam in China published in Tokyo in 1940, an entire chapter is devoted to the current state of Islamic education on the mainland. The author gives a rundown of the types of textbooks used in the classes, noting that apart from the Qur’an all the textbooks focused on learning Arabic and Islamic law. The lack of any science classes and science textbooks, he believed, was the largest flaw at the schools he visited (Pages 251-265).
were described as relatively stable until the Qing dynasty when the relationship quickly
deteriorated owing to large-scale Muslim uprisings, such as the Panthay Rebellion (1856-1873)
in southern Yunnan province, and the Dungan Rebellion (1862-1873) in Gansu. The author of
the article argued that the brutal suppression of these rebellions by Qing forces left Muslim
communities devastated and since then they had lagged behind in development.

With help of the Japanese, Muslims were presented with a way to “unshackle”
themselves from Han Chinese oppression. According to Japanese intellectuals, the tension
between the two ethnic groups was the result of the bitter suppression that the Qing had inflicted
on Muslims, causing them to turn inwards and rely completely on their own communities and
mosques. This reaction, in turn, caused the Hui to become much more conservative and narrow-
minded (hoshu korō 保守固陋) compared to their Han neighbors. Recently returned hajjis
began to realize that Muslims in China were “backwards” and needed educational reforms, and
this is where the Japanese thought they could make themselves useful. By drawing attention to
the injustices inflicted on Muslims from the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese presented a scenario
where Muslims were continually oppressed and neglected, and left to fend for themselves on the
fringes of society. From the perspective of Japanese academics, things had not improved for
Muslims since 1911, and in fact, in some cases their situation had deteriorated. At this critical
juncture in Hui-Han relations, the Japanese presented themselves as saviours, giving Muslims an
opportunity to choose a different future. Muslims were at the end of their proverbial rope,

409 “Shina-kai kyōto no kyōiku jōsei” 支那回教徒の教育情勢, Isuramu イスラム (December 1937).
410 “Shina-kai kyōto no kyōiku jōsei”
411 “Shina-kai kyōto no kyōiku jōsei”
withdrawing into their mosques and shielding themselves from the Chinese nationalistic cultural onslaught and assimilationist policies, said the Japanese.\(^{412}\)

Japanese officials also attended the opening of new Muslim schools in Manchukuo with great fanfare. Reports in newspapers about these events were always favorable, and definitely served a propaganda agenda. When the Zhangjiakou Muslim School opened in Zhangjiakou, the entire community along with a number of imperial officials reportedly celebrated its opening. Kobayashi explained that the school was a place where Hui identity could be fostered while students strove for excellence. It was hoped that many of the students at the school would go on to serve in the army, work for the government, or become teachers because in these capacities they could act as positive role models and representatives to younger members of their community.\(^{413}\) The Japanese imperial government also sent agents into the field to report on the situation at schools for developing policy with regards to Muslim educational policy. For instance, the Datong-Jiamu Special Investigation Team (Datong Jiamu tewu jiguan 大同鉿木特務機關) reported favorably on a visit to a Muslim school where the teachers and the students were apparently very studious and enterprising.\(^{414}\) By emphasizing the diligence of young Muslim students, Japanese writers and policy-makers were able to justify the establishment of schools as an imperial obligation to an unsupported minority group in China.\(^{415}\) Directly related to this question of providing support for schools was one of the largest obstacles that the

\(^{412}\) “Shina-kai kyōito no kyōiku jōsei”
\(^{413}\) “Huiqing xuexiao xinsheng” 回青學校新生, *Mengjiang Xinbao* 蒙疆新報 (March 18, 1937).
\(^{414}\) “Huimin shehui zhi liyi” 回民社會之禮儀, *Mengjiang Xinbao* 蒙疆新報 (February 12, 1938).
\(^{415}\) “Tong Huimin xiaoxue riyu fabiao hui” 同回民小學日語發表會 *Mengjiang Xinbao* 蒙疆新報 (March 18, 1938).
Japanese faced: a lack of qualified Muslim teachers. The Japanese expended a fair deal of energy assessing teachers, and suggested that a number of them would be suitable for Japanese language training. They also assessed the numbers of textbooks that were needed, concluding that the number of Japanese language textbooks available to the students was insufficient. Through these reports and surveys, the Japanese were always on the lookout for ways to legitimize their claims over Muslims and Muslim institutions throughout Asia.

The Japanese were also aware that they would not have been teaching young Muslims without the state of occupation. Reports on schools often stipulated that the main goal of the education system was to prepare Muslim youths for the world they would encounter after Japan won the war. In order to get ahead, Muslims should strive to learn Japanese because once Japan defeated the imperialists it was a skill that would help them get ahead in the new order Japan envisioned for East Asia and South East Asia. Reflecting on their successes in exporting Japanese language to the mainland in the northern borderlands Mengzhijiang, one Japanese essayist noted that in time it could be used as a model for providing education to Muslim youths throughout the entire mainland. He presented the issue of learning Japanese as a political one: the circumstances for Muslims throughout China would improve after Japan won the war if they could speak Japanese. Although in retrospect perhaps a far-fetched scheme, the ambitious plans to teach the entire Muslim population on the mainland Japanese is a testament to

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416 “Chanan Riyu zhuangkuang baogao hui” 察南日語狀況報告會 Mengjiang Xinbao 蒙疆新报 (August 11, 1936).
417 “Datong Huimin Qingnian xunlian” 大同回民青年訓練 Mengjiang Xinbao 蒙疆新报 (March, XX, 1937).
418 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō” 57.
the way that the war was going in 1940. At that time, the inevitable and only outcome envisioned by strategists was victory and the Japanese were preparing for it.

**A variety of experiences convincing Muslims in China to learn Japanese**

The Japanese had a variety of experiences in their efforts to convince Muslims in different areas under occupation to accept Japanese language learning as an integral part of the curriculum. In areas where Japanese was integrated into the curriculum with the most success, Muslims were considered to be “less religious” by the Japanese, and therefore less attached to the Islamic learning and to their religious communities. The report written by Kobayashi Hajime about the relationship between Japanese language learning and Muslim schools in North China assessed the implementation of the policy at schools in Zhangjiakou, Beijing, Datong, and in Houhe 厚和. Of the four places, the schools in the Muslim district of Beijing were considered the “most backwards” (kōshin 後進) because the community in Beijing was larger, more established, and “more Islamic” (kaikai-iro 回回色) than in other places, and therefore the schools were less receptive to taking time away from learning Arabic to teach children Japanese. In response to this, Japanese policy-makers suggested that they should write and publish their own textbooks in Arabic for schools that were more resistant to including Japanese in their curriculum, taking things one small step at a time. By suggesting that the Japanese write Arabic language textbooks for Muslim students, their top priority was to gain the favor of Muslims in whatever

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419 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō” 49.
420 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 49.
421 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 42; 52.
language they could get it across.\textsuperscript{422} Beijing had a large, wealthy, and vibrant Muslim community, who were perhaps more politically in tune with the developments of the war than smaller, more isolated communities. However, tying the perceived religiosity of Muslims to their receptiveness to Japanese language pedagogy within their communities the report downplayed the question of any national sentiment that these communities might have had: the issue of resistance was about their belief in Islam, not about any sort of attachment to the Chinese nation-state.

Kobayashi Hajime, who is mentioned earlier in this chapter, begins his report from his trip to China in late 1938 on the state of Japanese language learning with a visit to the Muslim school in Zhangjiakou. He explained that the school received a hefty stipend from the Japanese government and had arranged a concert for his visit to thank the Japanese for their support. The children sang songs in Japanese about a famous section of the Great Wall called Badaling (八達嶺), which is about 150 kilometers from Zhangjiakou, and about the greatness of Imperial Japan. Kobayashi transcribed one of the songs written by the students in his honor at the ceremony. The Muslim children sang about weaving red, white, and green together. This was a rather obvious metaphor for the interwoven relationship between the Muslim crescent—which is green—and the Japanese imperial rising sun.\textsuperscript{423} The description of the concert provides a segue into

\textsuperscript{422} Thøgersen, \textit{A County of Culture}, 125. He writes: "In the larger town Japanese military control was firmer, and they were better able to mold schooling in their own image. They published new textbooks centered on Sino-Japanese "cooperation" and the building of the so-called East Asian co-prosperity zone. They also made some changes to the curriculum, such as introducing Japanese as a mandatory subject from year 3 and changing the tile of the course "citizenship" (guominke) back to its pre-1923 name "self-cultivation" (xiushen), which signaled bonds to Confucianism and to an East Asian cultural heritage rather than to the Chinese nation-state," (125).

\textsuperscript{423} Kobayashi, "Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 36.
Kobayashi’s main argument: for him, the concert was emblematic of the ways that the Japanese and Muslims on the Asian continent were creating a “symphonic poem” (kōkyōshi）together.\textsuperscript{424} The melodic sound of Chinese Muslim children’s singing in Japanese was literally music to his ears: “I felt the spirit of the Great Wall and wanted to walk along it. Overall, I had a great impression from the Muslim children, who sang beautifully and came to greet me after the concert.”\textsuperscript{425}

In his report, Kobayashi remarked on the fact that Muslim children were an undervalued resource, and that the Japanese imperial officials needed to pay more attention to their education. Muslims, he noted, not only had a large influence in Manchuria, but also within the large community of Muslim peoples throughout Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East.\textsuperscript{426} For Kobayashi, these children were a way to gain leverage within their communities, as they became proxies between the Japanese and Muslim communities in China and beyond.

Another striking feature of Kobayashi’s report is his commentary on the religiosity of the four Islamic communities under study. He uses religiosity as a way to defend the shortcomings and perceived failures of Japanese policies in Beijing when contrasted with smaller cities, like Zhangjiakou. Kobayashi observed that compared to Beijing, children in some of the smaller communities were less familiar with the beliefs of Islam. In smaller communities, he felt that children were happy to learn Japanese because it distinguished them from older generations and their parents, who were generally educated in a madrasah, if at all.\textsuperscript{427} By creating a distinction

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  \item \textsuperscript{424} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 38.
  \item \textsuperscript{425} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 37.
  \item \textsuperscript{426} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 39.
  \item \textsuperscript{427} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 39.
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between what he perceived to be parochial Muslim parents and modern Japanese-speaking Muslim children, Kobayashi presents the Japanese motives as altruistic and not in contravention of the ideals of an Islamic education, but rather as a marker of the distinction between tradition and modernity. Kobayashi suggests that success with this policy would eventually create a new cadre of students whose loyalties to the Japanese could be used to distinguish them from older generations. According to Kobayashi, the Japanese wanted to implement curriculum that not only suited the needs of the community, but that would also advance the goals of the Japanese by promoting their visions of empire.\textsuperscript{428} In this way, the curriculum was meant to contribute to the building of a new order in East Asia, and to provide students with the tools to understand what the Japanese envisioned for Asia.\textsuperscript{429}

Although the Japanese were interested in promoting their visions of empire to Muslim children, they were also consciously cultivating ethnic Hui sentiments at the Muslim school in Zhangjiakou, which promoted Muslim identity as separate from the Han in their community. Kobayashi explicitly stated that it was the mission of the school to continue to promote the Hui identity as an integral part of building the new order in East Asia within the curriculum.\textsuperscript{430} This confluence between the promotion of the Japanese vision for East Asia, the strengthening of the Hui identity among Muslim populations in China, and the promotion of the aspiration to excellence (\textit{youxiu} 優秀) among the student body at the school at Zhangjiakou positioned these youngsters as unique individuals: the entering class was expected to serve as models for others.

\textsuperscript{428} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 49.
\textsuperscript{429} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 46.
\textsuperscript{430} “Huiqing xueyiao xinsheng,”
within their own Muslim communities, but also within the greater community of Muslims in East Asia. The tensions between the cultivation of a distinct Hui identity and an imperial identity which was cultivated through curriculum and language learning highlights some of the tensions among nation and empire building projects in East Asia during this time.

Kobayashi and others were always quick to praise the ability of Muslim students who were learning Japanese. In his report, he describes the incredible improvements they witnessed among Muslim students studying both Japanese and Arabic. Kobayashi mentions that Muslim children were very clever and learned Japanese quickly. He explained this aptitude for Japanese with a religious and ethnic argument: unlike Han Chinese children, Muslim children had a gift for learning languages because beyond studying Chinese, they also learned Arabic. Studying two languages facilitated their acquisition of Japanese and gave them an advantage over Han Chinese students. Kobayashi presented the young Muslims as adept and intrepid, and commended them for their work ethic. He also acknowledged the high demands placed on these children who learned three languages in elementary school, and he admired their perseverance. Kobayashi explained that Japanese language learning was successful in Zhangjiakou because it did not detract from Arabic learning and if students continued to develop these language skills in tandem. He expected that one day their faith in Islam would be mirrored by an appreciation for the Japanese Empire.

As mentioned, Kobayashi’s acknowledgment of the resistance that the Japanese faced in implementing a Japanese element to the curriculum was always justified by the religiosity of the

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432 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 40.
community. There was no indication that the Japanese faced resistance to imposing Japanese language classes because of any sort of nationalistic sentiment expressed by Muslims in North China. This lack of national sentiment presented the Japanese with an opportunity that was not lost them: because the Muslims they encountered did not have a strong attachment to the Chinese nation, Japan saw this as an opportunity to cultivate imperial subjects who were also Muslims. Within the Chinese Muslim communities, the Japanese promoted the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere while also trying to forge connections between Muslims in China and the Middle East, as well as in South East Asia, which was something they were not able to do with non-Muslim groups throughout East Asia. Simultaneously appealing to Muslims in China with both Pan-Asian and Pan-Islamic rhetoric played out in the implementation of Japanese policies with regards to teaching Japanese to Muslim children. For instance, children who also studied Chinese were presented as having an easier time learning Japanese because of their familiarity with Chinese characters, and since Muslims abided by strict religious principles and respected their parents, their values were similar to Japanese values and ethics. By appealing to the idea that Muslim children would more easily understand Japanese because they were familiar with not only characters, but also with Japanese familial structures, the author presents us with veiled Confucian rhetoric disguised as an ethno-religious argument.

Kobayashi remarked that the important relationship between Arabic and Islam meant that students took their Arabic classes much more seriously than their Chinese or Japanese language

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433 “Nihon to kaikyō Ajia,” 日本と回教亞細亞 Dai Ajia Shugi 大亞細亞注意 6, no. 62 (1940); “Dai Ajia sensō to kaikyōken” 大亞細亜戰爭と回教圈 Kaikyōken 回教圈 6, no. 1 (1942).
434 The connections between Pan-Asianism and Islam are examined in detail in Chapter 5.
classes. The importance placed on Arabic learning within the community and by the students was seen as an impediment to implementing successful Japanese language programs. School schedules were full, and because Muslim schools took off Friday afternoon for prayers, finding the time to fit Japanese into an already packed curriculum was no small feat. Below are two examples of schedules from Muslim schools:

**Schedule 1:**

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<tr>
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<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>Ethics; Morality</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Ethics; Morality</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Free Period</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Free Period</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>Islamic Culture</td>
<td>Islamic Culture</td>
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**Schedule 2:**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>Free Period</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Ethics; Morality</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Ethics; Morality</td>
<td>Free Period</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Ethics; Morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>Penmanship; Calligraphy</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Technology; crafts</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 5</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Free Period</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Free Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
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These schedules provide insight into the daily life of Muslim students. There was an emphasis on physical education, and students also had free periods and homework periods to complete extra work. They attended school six days a week, with breaks on Friday afternoon for prayers and on Saturday afternoons, as well. In the first schedule, students had three Japanese lessons a week and three Chinese lessons compared to six Islamic Culture classes. In the second schedule, students had five Chinese classes and only two classes each of Japanese and Arabic. Although it is unclear whether the ethics and composition classes were for Islamic or Japanese ethics and morality lessons, or Japanese, Chinese or Arabic composition, it seems likely that given that only two periods are devoted to learning Arabic in the second schedule, these would have been theology and Arabic composition classes. The same goes for the calligraphy classes: it is unclear whether these were Chinese calligraphy classes or Arabic calligraphy classes—or perhaps a combination of both. These schedules help demonstrate that there were a variety of ways that schools approached integrating Japanese into their curriculums. They also illustrate that there was no standard curriculum at Muslim schools and the content of courses, as well as the courses being offered varied from school to school, likely depending on the skills of the teachers employed.

In cities and towns where the Japanese faced more resistance from the community implementing Japanese language programs, Kobayashi advised proceeding with caution and initially feeling out community receptiveness. Using the school in Zhangjiakou as a positive model, he suggested that in places where they were less likely to be in favor of substituting

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437 A distinction is made between learning “Islamic culture” and “Arabic culture” classes kaikyō bun/Abun 回教文/阿文, but regardless of what they called it the children continued to learn Arabic at school.
Japanese classes for other subjects, the Japanese should make it clear to Muslims that learning Japanese would in no way impede Arabic learning. In Beijing, for instance, the main mosque on Oxen Street was in charge of overseeing some of the smaller Muslim schools in Beijing and guiding their curriculum as well. Because of this, Kobayashi argued that they took their responsibilities for overseeing schools very seriously. As a response, the Japanese suggested a plan for reducing the influence of the mosque on Oxen Street in making curricular decisions. For this plan to be both successful and to produce the desired outcome, Kobayashi proposed shifting the jurisdiction of Muslim schools in Beijing from the private sphere to the public sphere, which would allow the Japanese more autonomy in implementing pedagogical changes. This was a radical suggestion that highlights the resistance that Japan faced implementing policies in Beijing. It is also a reflection of how different communities responded to the Japanese occupation, and how the Japanese were forced to respond with individual solutions for individual communities.

Among the reasons given by the Beijing Muslim community to the Japanese for not wanting to increase the number of hours of Japanese language lessons was that it was too taxing on children to learn three languages and that children needed to focus on learning Arabic, which was indispensible for their religious education. For Kobayashi, this played into the notion that Beijing Muslims were both more Islamic and more backwards (kōshin 後進) than in other parts north China. In other places, such as Zhangjiakou, children had no problems learning three or even four languages in elementary school, implying that they were both smarter and more

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438 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 42.
439 Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 42.
progressive than the Muslims in Beijing.\footnote{Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 42-43.} Kobayashi presents the spread of Japanese on the mainland as a historical inevitability that would bring progress and change and provide Muslims with a way of moving towards a more modern culture and lifestyle.\footnote{Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 56.} As mentioned, children in smaller cities were presented as more intelligent and modern than “backwards” Beijing Muslims who resisted Japanese language learning. To illustrate this point, Kobayashi drew parallels to the schools established by the Japanese for the Tatar émigré children that were naturalized by Japan after fleeing from Bolshevik persecution. For him, this successful precedent on the home islands proved the benefit of teaching Muslim children Japanese. It showcased that through Japanese language learning, Tatar children had not only been successfully integrated into Japanese society, but had also become model subjects of the Japanese Empire. Back in Japan, imperial officials and the Tatar teachers had developed a system of incorporating Islam and the national spirit (\textit{kokumin seishin} 国民精神) into the curriculum for Tatar children.\footnote{Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 52.} Beyond Japanese language instruction, Tatar language instruction, their classes included subjects that would be taught in Muslim schools abroad.\footnote{"Pekin kai kyōto saikin no zenmen-teki jōkyō"} Kobayashi expressed a great deal of admiration for the young Tatar children, who apart from learning Japanese and Arabic, also learned the Tatar language (\textit{tataru-go} タタル語), and in some cases Russian.\footnote{Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 52.} For the Tatar children, learning Japanese presented them with opportunities that were now being made available to Muslims in China. This positive precedent was intended to generate support for Japanese policies on the mainland, and to show
Muslims they could attain a suitable level of civilization and be accepted as subjects of imperial Japan. By providing incentives, such as scholarships to learn in Japan and good jobs for those who graduated with a certain level of Japanese language proficiency, the Japanese knew how to appeal to the desires of the local communities and minorities who might not otherwise have these sort of opportunities.445

According to the Japanese government, they offered these opportunities to Muslim children because they did not want to discriminate against them and wanted to minimize difference between imperial subjects.446 In rhetoric, at least, these policies presented a chance for everyone in the empire to strive toward a common goal using a common language. However, the Japanese also acknowledged the uniqueness of the situation among Muslim communities and never shied away from their objective of connecting with Muslims around the world. There were also goals in their promotion of education in North China that were specific to Muslims, such as respecting the need to continue teaching Arabic.447 Taking these considerations into account, the possibility of educating young Muslims presented a distinct opportunity for the Japanese. In their idealized vision for East Asia, all subjects of the emperor would converse with each other in their only common language: Japanese. For the Japanese, language was the tie that would eventually diminish difference and create a commonality between the many peoples within their expanding empire. In an effort to demonstrate how useful Japanese language learning could be for the Muslims, Kobayashi explained that when a number of Muslims from North China visited Japan and were introduced to the Tatar community in Tokyo, their common language was, in fact,

445 Kobayashi, "Nihongo to kai-min jidō," 49.
446 Kobayashi, "Nihongo to kai-min jidō," 50.
447 Kobayashi, "Nihongo to kai-min jidō," 51.
Japanese.\textsuperscript{448} Finally, if Muslims from China could speak Japanese, it could help to foster a deeper understanding between Japanese subjects and Muslims throughout the world since each respective culture would be able to explain their perspective in a mutually comprehensible language, thus tying Japan’s objectives to a larger, more global objective. Having a deeper and better understanding of Islam, Japan could educate their subjects on the home islands about Islam in order to justify their growing interest and involvement with the Middle East, India, and Indonesia. In this regard, there seemed to be no downside to teaching Muslim children to learn Japanese.\textsuperscript{449}

\textit{Conclusions}

Clearly, the Japanese imagined it to be in their best interest to teach Japanese to young Muslims in North China. Education and education policies are not short-term policy goals, and Japan’s heavy investment in schools and Muslim children in North China helps historicize the war and present it in a way where the outcome of Japanese defeat was not inevitable. Given the amount of resources invested in Muslim children and North China, the Japanese expected that they would be an integral element of their empire for years to come. This does not mean that the Japanese motives were altruistic in providing educational support for Muslims in China, however they often offered the best option available to smaller, more isolated communities for providing both a religious and modern education. Muslims collaborated with the Japanese for a variety of reasons, and by in shifting the focus to marginalized minorities, we can begin to reconsider how

\textsuperscript{448} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 54.
\textsuperscript{449} Kobayashi, “Nihongo to kai-min jidō,” 54.
expressions of Hui identity during the war were often not even remotely based on considerations about the Chinese nation-state.
Chapter IV

Situating Muslims from North China in a Global Context: Chinese Nationalist Networks, the Japanese Empire, and Five Beijing Muslims on a Japanese-sponsored Hajj on the Brink of the Outbreak of WWII

Introduction

Japanese sponsorship of five Chinese Muslims to perform hajj on the brink of the outbreak of WWII showcases how Muslims living under the Japanese occupation positioned themselves vis-à-vis both the Japanese and the Nationalists and leveraged the two powers for their own aims. In some ways, these five men were pawns, deeply involved in the international diplomacy of the impending war; in other ways, these men made choices for themselves that allowed them to navigate and circumvent the obstacles they faced. Their ultimate goal—to go on hajj—was always central to the decisions they made. Their journey highlights some of the challenges of traveling and performing hajj in the 1930s, and provides insight into the everyday experience of
being a Chinese *hajji*. Looking at larger patterns of increased interactions between the GMD, the Japanese, and Muslims—both in China and beyond—provides an important global perspective, but can be too broad to offer a satisfying explanation of lived experiences of Muslims in the 1930s. This pilgrimage provides a bridge between these larger currents in global Islam and the quotidian trials of traveling during this tense period. It also highlights the fact that Chinese Muslims made choices—in this instance to work with the Japanese for their own purposes—that deviated from the dominant narrative of “patriot-collaborator”.

The Japanese were acutely aware of anti-western, anti-colonial movements as well as anti-Communist sentiments among populations throughout the Muslim world, and they armed the Chinese *hajjis* with the vocabulary needed to present the British, French, and Soviets as oppressors, and themselves as liberators. Though the war and their known affiliation with the Japanese Empire complicated their journey, their awareness and familiarity with the tense international situation allowed them to offer critiques of European and Soviet policies with

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450 Because war had not broken out in Europe, it meant that the five Japanese-sponsored *hajjis* had the chance to make their way to Mecca with the help of the Italians via Eretria. The anti-Comintern Pact was signed by the Germans and the Japanese Empire in November 1936, and later joined by the Italians in November 1937. However, since there was not yet a formal declaration of war in Europe, the situation between the Germans, Japanese and Italians and the other European powers was tense, but not impossible for the group to navigate. By 1941 their trip would have been impossible since the Allies had defeated Italy, Germany, and the Vichy Régime in North and East Africa, and the British occupied the entire western coast of the Red Sea.

451 Supporting the *hajj* was an easy way to gain supporters among Chinese Muslims living in occupied and unoccupied China. The Japanese financed Tang and his companions’ *hajj* trip, but they also provided loans and funds to Muslims from China who were stranded in Mecca without return fares. Many Muslims did not realize the high costs of a return trip to Mecca and the Saudis set up camps for them outside of Jeddah until they could secure funding from a family member or alms giving. This problem prompted a response from colonial powers such as the British and the Dutch and they demanded full payment of the return trip before the *hajj* was undertaken. However, this was not the case for Muslims from China, and according to British sources, the Japanese were able to enlist Muslims into their favour by providing food for stranded *hajjis* and in some cases offering to pay their return trips to China.
regards to Muslims living under these powers along their route while ultimately completing their goal of performing hajj. The members of the group were also active participants in growing transnational networks of Muslims and they were aware of the connections between themselves and Muslims from South Asia, South East Asia, Arabia, and even Africa. However, as we will see, they also asserted a very strong sense of local identity as “Beijingers” that often trumped all other ethnic, political or religious affiliations. The chapter also provides a glimpse into the ways that the China War impacted the everyday lives of minorities who traveled beyond the areas under Japanese occupation, and their reflections on these experiences. The experience of these men shows how, in some ways, they escaped the occupation by traversing borders: the group never encountered a single Japanese person on their journey beyond the boundaries of occupied China.

Although the Japanese government sponsored the group, the men were ambivalent about working with their occupiers. The group explicitly defended themselves for cooperating with the Japanese, which implicitly acknowledges their complicity to work with them, however they never go as far as lauding the Japanese as protectors of Islam.452 Perhaps this was a strategic decision to distance themselves from the Japanese in order to present themselves as more closely connected to other Muslims in China. This realization further nuances our understanding of the relationship between the occupiers and occupied, and the chapter argues that Sino-Muslim “collaborators” often paired their cautious affinity for the Japanese with genuine fear. At the same time, the Nationalist surveillance apparatus was far-reaching, deploying agents as far afield

452 Yang, “Riben zhi huijiao zhengce,” 61-62. Yang Jingzhi wrote that the Japanese had forced the five Muslims from North China to participate. Yang also noted that once the Nationalists learned about this Japanese-sponsored hajj they quickly deployed the students from Egypt to counter the Japanese efforts.
as Singapore, Mumbai, Egypt, and Arabia to confront the Japanese-sponsored Muslims. The sheer number of Nationalist agents that the group encountered indicates deep concern on the part of the Nationalists with Japanese successes working with Muslims in North China. It was, after all, the Nationalist preoccupation about the Japanese-sponsored *hajj* that provided the group with the exposure and attention that Japan had likely only dreamt they would be able to achieve on their own.453

**TANG YICHEN AND THE JAPANESE-SPONSORED HAJJ MISSION**

Tang Yichen 唐易塵 (1897-1972) was born into a prominent Muslim family in Beijing in the last decade of the nineteenth century. His father, Tang Yutian 唐雨田, and his four brothers were all well-known Muslim businessmen in Beijing. His family had extensive holdings in the *halal* butchering industry in the city, and his brother Tang Fuzi 唐父子 was one of the main benefactors of the *Tianqiao* Mosque (*Tianqiao qingzhensi* 天橋清真寺) near Oxen Street (*C. niu jie* 牛街).454 His family was also politically active, known throughout the Beijing Muslim community before the war for supporting projects and initiatives that focused on educational reforms and helped to strengthen the position of Muslims vis-à-vis Han Chinese.

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453 *Zhang Huaide* 張懷德, “*Zhongguo Huijiao chaojin riji*” 中國回教朝覲日記, *Huimin yanlun* 回民言論 1, no. 11 (1939): 36. Zhang reported that the Japanese gave the men 15,000 cash (*yiwan wuqian* 一萬五千) to complete their journey and cover their expenses. Unfortunately, the currency is not noted.

When the Japanese occupied Beiping in July 1937, Tang and his family did not leave. Instead, Tang worked closely with the Japanese and helped them found the Beiping branch of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly (Zhongguo huijiao zonglian hehui 中国回教總聯合會) in February 1938, and he became its head shortly afterward. Since 1927, Tang had published a journal, the Zhenzong Monthly (Zhenzong bao 震宗報), which came under Japanese auspices after the occupation of the city. Zhenzong Monthly had a circulation in the low thousands among Muslims living throughout North China. The journal covered regional affairs as well as the situation among Muslims worldwide, and ran articles about the relationship between Islamic theology and religious expression. After 1937, Zhenzong Monthly also started publishing articles pertaining to Japanese policies and attitudes towards Islam. For instance, the journal covered Tang’s trip with three other Muslims from North China to attend the opening of the Tokyo mosque in 1938 as an honorary guest.

Tang and the other delegates traveled via Manchukuo to Kobe and on to Tokyo, where the Russian Tatar émigré community and numerous Japanese officials greeted the group.

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455 Beiping and Beijing are the same place. Beijing means “Northern Capital” and Beiping means “Northern Peace”. The city was renamed “Beiping” during the Nanjing Decade and although the Japanese changed the name back to Beijing in 1937 when they occupied the city, it is generally referred to as Beiping for the period from 1928 through 1949.

456 Yamakazi, “Chūni sensō-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru,” 2. Yamakazi notes that Tang started publishing Zhenzong Monthly in 1927 as a reaction to the successful communist newspapers that were popping up in Beijing in the mid-1920s, such as New Beijing Monthly (Xin Beijing bao)新北京報. Tang wrote most of the articles in Zhenzong Monthly himself. The precursor of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly was the Manchurian Islamic Association (Manzhou Yisilan xiehui 滿洲伊斯蘭協會). It was established in 1934 with the help of some Japanese Islamic specialists who were working on the mainland such as Taijima Daisuke 田島大輔氏 and Kawamura Kyōdo 川村狂堂.

457 Yamakazi, Chūni sensō-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru, 5. Yamakazi explores Tang’s hajj journal briefly in her article about “Pro-Japanese” Muslims like Tang Yichen. Yamakazi’s concludes that there were two distinct camps of Muslims in China during the war: the pro-Japanese and
During their stay in Tokyo, the delegation paid visits to the Turkish, Afghan, and Egyptian Embassies where they dined with dignitaries from different Muslim countries. The opening of the mosque was presided over by Imam Abdürreşid İbrahim (1857-1944), the Crimean Tatar Muslim exiled from Russia who had found a place for himself among the Tatar émigrés in Tokyo in 1933. During their stay in Tokyo, Tang and the others also visited with the Yemeni King and attended a party at the Italian Embassy. When Tang got back to Beiping, he published a few articles about his trip in Zhenzong Monthly and wrote that he wished to return one day to open a Beijing-style halal restaurant in Tokyo. His comments at that time provide insight into some of his explicit and implicit justifications for collaborating with the Japanese: Tang understood his connections with the Japanese to be as potentially beneficial to himself. In expressing his desire to open a restaurant in Tokyo, Tang likely knew that a Beijing-style halal noodle house would prosper thanks to the large contingent of Northern Chinese—both Muslim and non-Muslim—then residing and studying in Japan, as well as the growing Muslim community in Tokyo who sought out halal dining options. While in Tokyo, moreover, Tang must have been approached by Japanese officials about embarking on a Japanese-sponsored hajj trip because following his return to Beiping from Japan, Tang started planning for his upcoming pilgrimage and helped to recruit four other Muslims to join him.

the anti-Japanese, although my reading of Tang’s journal suggests more nuance. For more on the opening of the Tokyo mosque, please see Chapters 1 and 5.  
458 Yamazaki, “Abdüreşid İbrahim’s journey to China.”  
459 Yamakazi, Chūni sensō-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru 9.
Despite the fact that historians of Islam in both Japan and China are familiar with Tang’s
*hajj* journal, very little attention has been given to the actual journey itself.\(^{460}\) Perhaps part of the
reason is that Tang’s journal does not fit nicely into a bounded nationalist idea of what it meant
to be a collaborator, nor does it laud the Japanese as protectors of Islam.\(^ {461}\) Instead, Tang’s
journal offers a glimpse into the tensions and stresses of traveling on the brink of war in Europe
and a window into the everyday experiences of being a Chinese *hajji* during the war. It also
underscores the fraternity among Muslims from China that often overrode any sort of Nationalist
or Japanese sponsorship. Maybe the question of trying to decipher their “true” loyalties obscures
the main point: Tang and his companions participated in an on-going dialogue between the
Nationalists and the Japanese Empire about the loyalties and place of Sino-Muslims on the
Mainland during the war. The *hajjis* and the Japanese Empire respectively got what they wanted
out of the trip: the North China Muslims got a free *hajj* and the Japanese established diplomatic
relations with the Saudis, leading to Japanese-Saudi negotiations for an oil concession in the

\(^{460}\) In her 2011 article, as well as in her 2007 dissertation, Mao Yufeng mentions the Japanese-
sponsored *hajj* trip in passing, but pays no significant attention to it. Her argument that all Muslims were
united in their vision for China throughout the war and that all Muslims in China actively supported
resistance against Japan would make it hard for her to include this dissenting voice. In her article “A
Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation,” Mao mentions that there was a Japanese delegation to Mecca that
preceded the Nationalist delegation. She also notes that the Japanese delegation was in fact the *reason*
that the Nationalist delegation was on *hajj* in 1938. When word of the Japanese-sponsored Sino-Muslims
delegation got back to the Nationalists, they rallied funds and had students studying in Egypt make their
way to Mecca to intercept them. However, the stated purpose of the article it to focus on the “first and
third *hajj* missions, both of which were initiated by Sino-Muslims and were supported by the Nationalist
state under Chiang Kai-shek,” (Mao, 375).

\(^{461}\) Tang Yichen’s story is corroborated in the British Archives, which mentions that there was a
group of Muslims on a Japanese-sponsored *hajj* who presented elaborate gifts to King Ibn Saud in the
name of the Japanese Empire. (Military Intelligence Division Regional File relating to China, 1922-1944.
2610.50: Microfilms RG 165 M 1513, Roll #9).
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia almost immediately after Tang and his companions returned to China.\textsuperscript{462}

\textit{STUCK IN THE MIDDLE?}

At the time of their \textit{hajj} trip in late 1938, Tang was still the head of the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly that he had helped establish earlier the same year. The stated objectives of this organization were to support the policies of the new government, to support Islam, and to resist communism. Thus, through his engagement with the Chinese Muslim General Assembly and his publications in Chinese, Tang became a mouthpiece of the Japanese in occupied China.\textsuperscript{463} However, as his writing shows, his guarded ambivalence towards the Japanese presents a complicated picture: He was not simply a stooge who was parroting everything the Japanese told him to say, Tang clearly chose to engage with the Japanese with the primary intention of benefiting from the relationship as well.

The \textit{hajj} trip elicited both a massive and well-orchestrated surveillance campaign by GMD agents and sharp public criticism from the GMD. It was in response to this criticism that Tang published his \textit{hajj} journal.\textsuperscript{464} Tang made a choice, and his decision to stay in Beiping after

\textsuperscript{462} Shimizi Hiroshi, “The Japanese trade contact with the Middle East: Lessons from the pre-oil period,” in \textit{Japan and the contemporary Middle East}, edited by Sugihara Kaoru and J.A. Allen (London: Routledge, 1993): 27-53. Oil was not discovered in Saudi Arabia until 1931 and production of oil there only started in 1937.

\textsuperscript{463} Yamakazi, \textit{Chūni sensō-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru}, 417. Yamakazi argues that through his publication of the \textit{Zhenzong Monthly} and as the head of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly, Tang participated in the creation and dissemination of Muslim policy in the region.

\textsuperscript{464} Not only were the GMD critics skeptical of the motives of Tang’s \textit{hajj}, but they were also critical of his positive account of his earlier trip to Japan. Soon after Tang returned to Beiping and the publication of his articles in \textit{Zhenzong Monthly}, the Nationalist-sponsored journal \textit{Yuehua} ran scathing articles denouncing Tang as a traitor. This indicates two things: the Nationalists were clearly aware of the
the Japanese occupation was based on his understanding of the war at the time. The response to Tang’s *hajj* by Muslim supporters of the Nationalists is not surprising (even though Tang expressed surprise over it). Prominent Nationalist-supported Muslims (and later Communist-supported Muslims) such as Ma Jian 馬堅 (1906-1978) and Ma Songting 馬松亭 (1895-1992) wrote about Tang and his pro-Japanese proclivities.\(^{465}\) There were also a number of articles published in Nationalist-sponsored periodicals, such as the commentary by Zhang Huaide 張懷德) in *Huimin Yanlun* (回民言論). Zhang, writing from Egypt, explained that Ma Songting had sent a telegram asking him to gather all the students studying in Egypt to intercept and keep a watch over Tang and his companions.\(^{466}\) He also claimed that he had heard from a source in Mecca that the Japanese had paid Tang and his companions 15,000 yuan (yiwan wuqian 一萬五

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\(^{465}\) Ma Songting’s 1941 book *Journey to the West* (*xixing riji* 西行日記), attacked Tang and his companions. Although Ma Songting was not in Egypt or Mecca with the Al-Azhar students, he was the one who had arranged for them to be there with King Farouk on a visit to Egypt in 1936. Pang Shiqian 龐士謙 (1902-1958) was one of the Nationalist-supported Chinese Muslims chosen to study in Egypt at Al-Azhar. In one of his many publications called *Nine Years in Egypt* 埃及九年 (which, incidentally, was published in 1951 after the establishment of the PRC) Pang includes a small section about his *hajj* 1938-1939 to intercept the Japanese-sponsored mission and to spread anti-Japanese propaganda. Pang explains that through Ma Songting’s connections, he arranged for around twenty students to study in Egypt on fellowships from King Farouk of Egypt in the 1930s, but that many in the group were apprehensive about leaving China as all-out war with Japan loomed on the horizon. Although his account does not specifically mention Tang, he does explain that the group sent by the Nationalists from Egypt spread the word about Japanese encroachment on the mainland and informed other *hajjis* about “China’s anti-Japanese War of Resistance”. Pang Shiqian *Aiji jiunian* 埃及九年 (Beijing: Xiandai qianyin ben 現代鉛印本, 1951).

\(^{466}\) Zhang Huaide 張懷德, “*Zhongguo Huijiao chaojin riji*” (中國回教朝覲日記) *Huimin Yanlun* 回民言論 1, no. 11 (1939) 27-40.
to complete their journey. However, their criticisms of Tang should be contextualized:

Ma Jian was the leader of the delegation of students sponsored by the Nationalists who were studying at Al-Azhar and who were sent to Mecca with the specific mission of intercepting the Japanese-sponsored hajjis, and Ma Songting was one of the Nationalists most important and well-connected Muslim allies in China, indicating that their criticism of Tang reflected GMD views.

In response to Ma Jian, Ma Songting and others critics, Tang decided to publish his own version of events. Three years after their return to Beiping, he printed his *hajj* journal in book

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467 Zhang, “Zhongguo Huijiao chaojin riji”, 33. Zhang and his companions also reportedly told all the North African Muslims travelling with them on their return journey to Egypt that there were no Muslims in Japan regardless of the fact that the Japanese had built an extremely large mosque in Tokyo the previous year (38). This Nationalist policy of using state funds to support religious travel was also common among the Tibetan Buddhists during the 1920s and 1930s. In an effort to foster goodwill among Tibetans and to create more international exposure for Tibetan Buddhism, the Nationalists funded a global tour of Buddhist scholars after the Northern Expedition (Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists and the Making of Modern China*, 127).

468 Between 1931 and 1947 a total of 35 students from China attended Al-Azhar in Egypt. As Zvi Ben-Dor Benite argues, most of the men who were part of this delegation “were loyal to the perspective formulated by earlier generations of Chinese Muslim modernizing thinkers, namely, that Islamic renewal was entirely consonant with Chinese nationalist objectives.” (Benite, 2008: 9). Among the four men who signed the letter for Tang and his companions, Ma Jian (1906-1978), whose Arabic name is Muhammad Makin, is surely the most well known. Ma was from Yunnan but studied at the Islamic Normal School in Shanghai before being selected as one of the students to travel to Egypt in 1932. In Egypt, he spent a few years learning Arabic before delivering a series of lectures on China and Chinese culture, which were later printed as a book in both Arabic and Chinese (*Nazra jāmīa ilā tārīkh al-islām fī-l-ṣīn wa ah wāl al-muslimīn fīhā* 中国回教概观 *Overview of the History of Islam in China and Conditions of Muslims Therein*. Cairo: al-Matba’a al-Salafiyya, 1934). Ma Jian is also known for translating the Analects into Arabic. After 1949, Ma realigned himself with the Communists and became a professor of Arabic in Beijing. He is also remembered for facilitating the conversations between Gamal Abdel Nasser and Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference in 1955. For more on the Chinese Al-Azharites please see: Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “Taking ‘Abduh to China: Chinese-Egyptian Intellectual Contact in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, edited by J. Gelvin and Nile Green, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014): 249-266; Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “‘Nine Years in Egypt’: Al-Azhar University and the Arabization of Chinese Islam,” *Hagar* 8, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 1-21; John T. Chen, “Re-Orient: The Chinese Azharites between *Umma* and Third World, 1938-1955,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. 34, no. 1 (2014): 24-51.
form (parts of it had previously been printed in monthly journals) to defend himself and his companions from the criticism they faced for having accepted Japanese money to support them. Throughout his published journal, Tang emphasizes that although his group and the GMD-sponsored Chinese Muslims were originally suspicious of each other, they did in fact spend a lot of time together and many of them were friends and acquaintances from pre-war Beijing. Tang and his companions knew that Ma Jian and the other students from Al-Azhar were there to watch over them, yet in Tang’s account it does not seem to impede camaraderie between the two groups. Through his quotidian anecdotes of shared meals and tourism, Tang’s memoir reveals how shared identity as Muslims overcame the political divisions between GMD- and Japanese-backed hajj delegations. Delving into the day-to-day of their hajj trip and their interactions with other Muslims from China sheds light on the ways that the ordinariness of their everyday activities and concerns often undermined the political concerns of their backers. Because of what he portrays as amicable relations between the groups, Tang makes it very clear that he was deeply hurt by the negative portrayal of the Huabei (華北) hajjis. His

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469 Upon returning to Beiping, Tang focused most of his efforts on resisting Communism and developed a growing interest in protecting Xinjiang from Russian Communist incursion. Yamakazi, Chūni sensū-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru, 7.
470 Yamakazi, Chūni sensū-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru, 10.
471 Tang’s choice of the word Huabei (華北) to describe the region under Japanese occupation is an interesting one: much less loaded than Manchukuo (C. Manzhouguo 滿洲國), the term was familiar, innocuous, and also vague. Although Beiping was not in Manchukuo, it was still under Japanese occupation and his choice of the word “Huabei” evokes shared cultural rather than divisive political geography and indicates that he was completely aware of the political sensitivity among his intended readers with regard to the puppet state of occupied China and Manchukuo. By using the word “Huabei” Tang skirts this politically sensitive topic, while providing his readers with a clearly defined and historically familiar geographical entity that essentially corresponded with the area being occupied by the Japanese. These tensions and vocabulary choices highlight that Tang's hajj account was not a real-time journal but a reedited, apologia in response to the criticism Tang received following his return. Though no
published journal is his attempt to set the record straight. Intent on quashing what he calls rumors and lies, Tang repeats time and time again that these five men set out on a journey with no political ambitions and were simply performing hajj. In this way, Tang’s journal can be understood as a “performative action,” meaning that the specific time and place when his hajj occurred had an effect on both “social and cultural transformations” going on around him and were reflected in his recording and editorializing of his journey. In numerous places in his journal, Tang explicitly defends himself for working with the Japanese; however, there is also a degree of complicity and acceptance of the Japanese occupation in his journal. Like the use of the word “Huabei,” this complicity is expressed through the language he uses to explain and describe the occupation, the way he describes the Japanese, and the way he relates his experiences to his everyday life.

Their journey also indicates that resistance to the Japanese was anything but unified and that the Muslim community in China remained deeply divided throughout the war. This particular hajj trip served as an ominous reminder to the Nationalists of the geopolitical situation in North China: more than half the Muslims that they claimed to be a part of the Zhonghua Minzu were living under Japanese occupation, influenced in some capacity by the Japanese.

doubt based on his journals from the trip, Tang’s post-facto commentary regarding their interactions with the Free China Muslims visiting from Al-Azhar suggests to the reader that that the groups were close. In his 1976 work, La Grammatologie, Jacques Derrida argued that all texts can be constructed as social documents in which ideological positions are implicitly or explicitly expressed. In their work theorizing pilgrimage, Coleman and Eade write, “If pilgrimage can be seen as involving the institutionalization (or even domestication) of both mobility in physical, metaphorical and/or ideological terms, such a focus can be located on various levels. Within the macro context of the political economy of travel and the globalization of (religious) cultures, dynamic interplays between transnational, national and regional processes may be evident.” Simon Coleman and John Eade, “Introduction to Reframing pilgrimage,” in Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion, edited by Simon Coleman and John Eade (New York: Routledge, 2004): 17.
Tang and his companions were also well aware of this fact and the careful language he uses to describe both the wartime events as well as their occupiers hints at a nuanced understanding of the situation throughout the Mainland and beyond. Although Tang and his companions did accept funding and guidance from the Japanese, according to Tang's journal, the Japanese did nothing to facilitate their trip beyond providing them with the funds to undertake it. In fact, he laments the lack of assistance from the Japanese in aiding their visa process on numerous occasions.

**Tang Yichen’s Hajj—Departure from Beiping**

Tang often reiterates that although the Japanese sponsored their pilgrimage, the men embarked on this journey because they felt that it was their fundamental duty as Muslims to undertake *hajj* and that they were grateful to the Japanese for making their journey possible. Tang was joined on his *hajj* journey by four other prominent Huabei Muslims: Zhang Ying 張英, and Su Ruixiang 蘇瑞祥 were both Imams in Beiping, and Liu Derun 劉德潤 and Ma Liangpu 馬良璞 were Muslim entrepreneurs like Tang. Tang’s published journal begins with an explanation and a

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473 The group took photos of the places they visited as well as of the people they met along their journey and, on numerous occasions, Tang expresses his anticipation about returning to Beiping to develop the photos and share them with his friends and colleagues. However, as Tang explains in his introduction, of all the photos they took, only thirty-two turned out because over-exposure or improper developing ruined the others. It is impossible to know if they were actually taking photos as part of a Japanese intelligence gathering project whereupon returning to Beiping they turned the photos over to the Japanese. Given the Japanese track record of intelligence gathering, it seems like a distinct possibility: Tang and his companions provided the perfect cover for intelligence gathering and perhaps this was part of their trade-off with the Japanese for covering their *hajj* expenses. Tang mentions that upon returning to Beijing they were de-briefed by the Japanese. (Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 415.)

justification for embarking on pilgrimage sponsored by the Japanese: as the head of the Chinese Muslim General Assembly based in Beiping, Tang writes, he wanted to clarify some aspects of the journey, allowing readers to come to their own conclusions about its supposed political motivations. However, Tang also informs his readers that the five men were themselves deeply conflicted about accepting Japanese sponsorship for their trip.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 407.}

Even before leaving Beiping in winter of 1938, Tang and the others encountered some seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Under normal circumstances Muslims would obtain the required paperwork for the \textit{hajj} from the Chinese Department of Foreign Affairs (\textit{Zhongguo zhengfu waijiao bu} 國民政府外交部) in Shanghai before traveling by ship for Singapore. From Singapore, they would sail to Jeddah (\textit{Zhunde 准德}) via Sri Lanka, Mumbai, or Egypt. However, Tang noted, their situation was a little more complicated: he pointed out that since the Nationalist government had not returned to the capital from “exile” they would be unable to get the passport stamps they needed to complete their journey in Shanghai.\footnote{國民政府尚未還都 (the term ‘\textit{huandu} 還都’ literally means for a government to be returned to a capital after exile). Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 408.} Tang thus danced around a sensitive issue with carefully chosen language: given that the Japanese occupied both Beiping and Shanghai and they were going on this journey sponsored by the Japanese there was actually no way that a Nationalist government office in Shanghai would—or even could—provide them with the passport stamps they needed to get to Jeddah.
Tang spends a few pages in his journal framing his trip as a predetermined religious journey, which Japanese sponsorship had allowed him to fulfill. However, their *hājj* almost did not happen. In mid-December 1938 the group began preparing for their trip, starting with numerous visits to the British Consulate in Beiping to try to secure stamps for their passports. But owing to the tense geopolitical circumstances and the Japanese alliance with Italy and Germany under the Anti-Comintern Pact, the British were unwilling to help the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslims, which complicated their preparations. The British never flatly refused Tang and his companions; instead they presented them with an impossible choice: since the *Huabei* Muslims would be disembarking in Egypt, the British officials claimed that the travelers would first need to visit the Egyptian Embassy in either Mumbai or Tokyo to get the requisite stamp. Getting to Mumbai without stamps from the British would have been impossible, but Tang and the others briefly contemplated a trip to Japan to get the visa stamps from the Egyptians but thought it would be prohibitively expensive. Tang realized that they needed to go to Shanghai but the group was also very well aware that this trip might be a wasted journey. In the end, they decided that they would travel to Shanghai on a Japanese boat from Dalian and try to get the required stamps from the Italian Consul. Getting visas from the Italians determined the route they would take, the ports of call they were allowed to disembark, the people they would meet, and the languages they would need for their journey.

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477 He wrote that he had wanted to participate in *hājj* for over twenty years after seeing old photos of Mecca at a mosque he was visiting. Then, after attending a talk by Wang Ahong, 王阿訇, one of the spiritual leaders of the Tianqiao mosque in Beiping, Tang was inspired to find a way to get himself to Mecca. Finally, in 1932, he visited the mosque in Fengtian 奉天 where he was shown another old photo of numerous pilgrims from China. Tang claims that it was at that point that he told himself that if he was ever presented with the opportunity to go to Mecca, he would not turn it down. Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 414.

LEAVING BEIPING—TRAVELING TO DALIAN

Feeling defeated, the five men set out by train on December 19, 1938. Their strong sense of local Beijing identity meant that the men were insistent on getting one last taste of Beijing before their long voyage. As a group, they went for a steaming bowl of Beijing-style beef noodles and lamented about how this would be the last time that they would enjoy this staple in their diets for the next few months. This theme of missing Beijing and Beijing style cuisine is a thread that runs through the entire journal. The meals they ate and the food they encountered was an important part of their journey and in this way the food they were able to eat and enjoy presents an intersection between their Muslim and Chinese identities. Since the men followed a halal diet, they expended a lot of energy on their travels seeking out Muslim restaurants or were most content among predominantly Muslim populations because they did not have to worry so much about finding halal places to eat. Beyond that, however, the group was always happiest when they encountered other Chinese restaurants serving familiar dishes (as in Singapore, or a small Uyghur Restaurant in Jeddah that served dumplings) or had the chance to eat with other Chinese-Muslim companions.

Their first stop was Tianjin. Tang remarked on the increased presence of Japanese soldiers and civilians in the city. Reflecting on this, he said that the group agreed that they were happy to have Ma Liangpu as part of their entourage because he had studied in Japan and spoke Japanese quite well. This was Tang’s first mention of Ma’s Japanese language abilities and it was their first encounter with a foreign language. Ma’s Japanese language skills would prove very useful at the beginning and end of their journey, as Ma was able to help them buy tickets.
and interact with the Japanese officers they encountered throughout occupied China. From Tianjin, the group went on to Shanhaiguan by train and then to Fengtian. On the train to Fengtian, the group grew frightened after being yelled at by some Japanese officials who inspected their belongings. Ma cautiously explained why they were on the train and where they were going.⁴⁷⁹

**FROM DALIAN TO SHANGHAI**

The group was only in Dalian long enough to get their bearings, buy provisions for their trip at the night market, and to delegate Ma to buy tickets for the boat ride to Shanghai. Once settled on the boat, they encountered a problem that continued to affect them throughout their entire journey: the lack of halal food at sea. In the small teahouse onboard the ship, the cook noticed that they were Muslims (presumably from their white caps) and told them there was little for them to eat on board. Tang and his companions settled on tea and bread. The boat stopped for a short time in Qingdao, where they were able to procure some fish that the chef agreed to cook separately for them in oil and garnished with sesame oil (xiangyou 香油) that they had brought with them from Beiping in anticipation of these types of situations. Given that most of the food on the boat would probably have been fried in lard, the men were aware before their departure that they would need to bring food and oil with them if they wanted to eat more than bread and tea throughout their journey.

In the section of the journal describing their approach to Shanghai, Tang delicately broaches the issue of the ‘Shanghai Incident’ (*Shanghai shibian 上海事變*), a term used by the

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Japanese for the intense fighting in the late summer and fall 1937 that preceded the Japanese occupation of Shanghai. His sensitivity about the topic clearly arose not only from the tense geopolitical situation at the time in Shanghai, but also from his understanding that his Japanese sponsors used a particular vocabulary which was different from the terms Chinese used to describe these events. The Japanese choice of the word “incident” obviously downplays the fact that they had invaded the mainland and occupied Shanghai with brutal force. Tang’s vocabulary choice here indicates that he was versed in the euphemisms preferred by the Japanese.

SHANGHAI—FOREIGNERS IN THEIR OWN LAND

Tang and his companions had never been to Shanghai and found the burgeoning metropolis completely overwhelming. Their fears of being robbed and frustrations about not being able to find their way around or getting cheated were amplified by the fact that everyone seemed to know that they were not locals before they had even uttered a word in their thick Beijing accents. While in Shanghai they sought out local Muslims, but it took them some time and energy to get in touch with them, indicating that they had few connections in the southern city.

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480 In Chinese historiography, the occupation of Shanghai by the Japanese is sometimes referred to as “813” (bayisan 八一三), indicating the day the Japanese onslaught began in the region. It is also commonly referred to as the battle of Songhu (Songhu huizhan 鬆湖會戰). Songhu is an alternate name for the Suzhou Creek, where one of the decisive battles of the occupation of Shanghai took place in November 1937.

481 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 420. Tang repeatedly writes about how hard it is for them to fit in in Shanghai because they did not look like locals (buxiang bendi 不像本地). Unlike Beijing, Shanghai had a relatively small Muslim population so Shanghainese were less familiar with Muslims and there were less qingzhen places for them to eat than expected. In order to eat halal, they bought a small grill and kettle and tried cooking for themselves. Tang, however, ended up burning himself while making tea and pondered rhetorically: “If we can’t even make ourselves tea, how will we ever get to Mecca?” Tang also commented extensively on the abject poverty and prostitution they encountered in Shanghai, which disturbed the men greatly.
Once again, they asserted their strong sense of local, northern Chinese identity. Anecdotally, the men claimed that they were surprised by how cold Shanghai was in late December, and stated that the current weather was only something northerners, like themselves, could ever survive.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 419.} Being from the North, the group was used to long and cold Beijing winters where people imagine themselves to be more tolerant of cold than their southern neighbors.

After visiting the local mosque, they met an Imam whom they refer to only as ‘Ha’ (\textit{Ha jiaozhang 哈教長}), who was the famous Shanghainese Imam, Ha Decheng \footnote{Yamakazi, \textit{Chūni sensō-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru}, 8.} Ha was sympathetic to their situation and agreed to be their local guide for the next few days. Together, they tried their luck at the British Consulate hoping to get the required visa stamps, but were firmly rebuffed by the “Indian” (likely Ghurkha) guards who would not even let them in the building. Dismayed, Tang wondered why the Japanese had not helped them secure travel documents, and then reiterated his plan to visit the Italian Embassy and travel to the Red Sea on an Italian Boat.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 420-421.} Between the five of them, they called on everyone they knew in Shanghai to help secure their visas. However the answer was always the same: without proper travel documentation from the required embassy and health certifications, the men would be unable to secure boat tickets. Embarrassed, Tang was concerned that they would lose face if they had to return to Beiping after a week, and even proposed travelling overland through Central Asia to complete their journey.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 422.} One of the reasons they were given that they could not secure passage was that after the "Shanghai Incident" foreigners were trying to leave Shanghai, but the Japanese

\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 419.}
\footnote{Yamakazi, \textit{Chūni sensō-ki no chūgoku musurimu shiyakukai ni okeru}, 8.}
\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 420-421.}
\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 422.}
were making it difficult for them. However, taking an Italian ship made it easier to avoid detection and inspection than would be the case were they taking a British ship, so many foreigners were booking passage on Italian ships to get to Singapore or Mumbai.

After two or three anxious days and exhausting what they thought were all possible avenues to get to Mecca, they received a phone call at their hotel from a Shanghainese travel agent who told them that they should come immediately to his office because he had found a way to get them to their destination. He explained that he could gain them berths on an Italian boat to Masawa in Eretria with the proper Italian passport stamps, which he had also promised to secure for them for a rather hefty fee. The travel agent suggested that while they were docked in Hong Kong, Singapore and Mumbai, they should simply stay on the boat to avoid dealing with British colonial officials. Once in Eritrea, the hajjis would have to figure out for themselves how to get across the Red Sea to Jeddah.\textsuperscript{486} Although it was risky, they decided to take their chances and after securing their passage, the men spent a few frantic days buying provisions and accouterments such as water bottles and towels for their journey. Finally, Tang and the others took some time to visit a local mosque and pray for their good fortune: their dreams of going to Mecca were finally coming true.\textsuperscript{487}

At this point in his journal, Tang offers a proverb to explain and justify their actions and the actions of others living under occupation: “some years you are on the west bank of the river and some years you are on the east” meaning that they understood fully that they were allied with the Japanese and that their choices to stay in occupied China when many of their

\textsuperscript{486} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 422.  
\textsuperscript{487} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 423-424.
compatriots had left for Kunming and Chongqing had influenced their ability to get visas.\textsuperscript{488} This highlights some of the explicit versus implicit rational for the choices that Tang and his companions made, and also shows, once again, how the affiliation with the Japanese made it nearly impossible for them to get the necessary documentation. It also implied that these loyalties were shifting and that people went back and forth with their political affiliations from one side of the riverbank to the other, indicating that Tang knew and appreciated fully the vicissitudes of their political affiliation with the Japanese Empire.\textsuperscript{489}

\textit{LEAVING SHANGHAI ON AN ITALIAN STEAMSHIP}

On January 3, 1939 the five men finally departed Shanghai on an Italian steamer with around 60-70 westerners and 30-40 Chinese on board. After the occupation of Shanghai, foreigners were anxious to leave China and boats heading to Europe were filled mostly with Europeans. Even though Europe was on the brink of war, Europeans in China hedged their bets and made their way back to Europe as the Japanese occupation of the city stifled their economic incentives for being in Shanghai in the first place. Also, as word of the Nanjing Massacre and the fall of Nanjing to the Japanese spread, westerners in China grew more apprehensive that the

\textsuperscript{488} “Dangnian dong he dangnian xihe,” 當年東河當年西河. This is a reference to conversation between Gaozi, a contemporary critic of Mencius who disagreed with his interpretation of human nature, and with Mencius’ views of it. Gaozi said: “Human nature is like whirling water. When an outlet is opened to the east, it flows east; when an outlet is opened to the west, it flows west. Human nature is no more included to good or bad than water is inclined to east or west.” Mencius responded, “Water, it is true, is not included to either east or west, but does it have no preference for high or low? Goodness is to human nature like flowing downward is to water. There are no people who are not good and no water that does not flow down. Still, water, if splashed, can go higher than your head; if forced, it can be brought up a hill. This isn’t the nature of water; it is the specific circumstances. Although people can be made to be bad, their natures are not changed.” (quoted in Ebery, \textit{Mencius} 6A.2).

\textsuperscript{489} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 424.
Nationalists would not be able to turn things around. The Italian crew spoke only English and Italian, which posed a problem for Tang and his companions.

Tang and his companions often felt awkward and uncomfortable on the Italian ship, adding a certain degree of anxiety to their journey for the group. Although they spoke French, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese between them, none of them spoke a word of Italian and very little English. The group was able to enjoy a good laugh at the comedy of errors that ensued over dinner when they had to resort to frantic pointing and gesturing in order to get the waiters to understand what they were and were not able to eat. The five of them were shocked one evening when they arrived at dinner to see the dining room converted from its usual casual atmosphere into a formal dining room. Nervous about not having the proper attire for dinner, Tang feared the westerners aboard would find them “traditional” and “backwards” in their regular clothes. They also had daily encounters with Italian soldiers in stiff black uniforms, which made the group nervous. When they came upon these soldiers on-board, the five Chinese would anxiously say in unison in English: “Good Morning!” and the officers would reply in kind. Tang expressed a deep regret at not bringing a Chinese-English dictionary with them, which would have allowed them to communicate a little more easily with staff on the boat and have allowed them to read the daily news cables, which were only published in English.  

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Three days after leaving Shanghai, the boat pulled into Hong Kong harbor, though they did not disembark because of their visa status. Although the group was not forbidden from leaving the ship, they were concerned that their paperwork would cause them difficulty when it came time to get back on and thus they decided to stay on board for the day.\textsuperscript{492} Luckily, many small wooden boats with hawkers selling fruits, snacks, and other necessities approached the ship and they were able to buy some provisions. Two days later, the boat arrived in Singapore. In Singapore, they were again anxious about disembarking, but two British customs agents came aboard and explained to them that because Singapore was not their final destination, they could get off the ship and visit the city for the day. After spending the morning touring Singapore, Tang and his friends returned to the ship to find two Chinese men waiting for them: their first encounter with the elaborate GMD surveillance apparatus. The men asked Tang: “Are you the five gentlemen from Huabei?” Tang replied that they were.\textsuperscript{493} One of the men told them that they had received a cable from the Chongqing Government that five Muslims from Huabei were going on a “mission” (shiming 使命) to Mecca. The two men (who are never named) told the would-be hajjis that they were there to intercept them and try to stop them from continuing their journey. Tang replied that it was the duty of all Muslims to go to Mecca and it would be truly unfortunate if the men detained them at this point.

\textsuperscript{492} Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 428.
\textsuperscript{493} Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 428. “Nimen shiyu huabei laide wuwei ma?” 你們是從華北來的五位嗎？
The encounter with the overseas GMD Chinese agents was the first of numerous such encounters in which the Huabei Muslims’ intentions were questioned. The Chongqing government was clearly monitoring the group, and seemingly wanted them to know that they were being observed. After a tense interaction, the men demanded to see their travel documents and requested that they go with them to one of their offices. At the office, they photographed the pilgrims and told them that their photographs would appear the next day in a Singapore Newspaper, the Qingzhou Daily (Qingzhou ribao 清州日報). According to the two GMD agents, this would expose their identities as well as their nefarious intentions of spreading propaganda for the Japanese in Mecca, but Tang was unperturbed by their threats when he realized that their ship would be well into the Indian Ocean by the time the evening edition of the newspaper came out the next day. In the end, the group retrieved their travel documents, left the office unceremoniously and went in search of a halal restaurant to have dinner.\footnote{Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 429.}

Luckily, their taxi driver was a Muslim, and he dropped them at a restaurant where everyone was wearing “Red Turkish hats” (presumably a fez).\footnote{Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 429.} Although it is unclear if the restaurant was full of Turks, the group did recognize the fez that many of the men were wearing, and identified it as a marker of faith in Islam. Zhang, who had barely eaten anything in a week was extremely happy and the men ordered rice, fried bread, barbequed lamb (kaoyangrou 烤羊肉), and spicy beef (laniurou 辣牛肉). Although the food might not have been typical Chinese fare, it was halal and Tang used the vocabulary at his disposal to describe the dishes they ate.
From the restaurant, the men had a driver take them to one of Singapore’s famous night markets to buy provisions for the next leg of their journey.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 430.}

The ways that the group mediated their Muslim versus Chinese identities was evident in some of the interactions that the group had with passengers who boarded in Singapore. Tang and his friends met a pleasant Chinese Buddhist who was traveling alone on pilgrimage to India and they spoke with him for a while. Here, their Chinese identity overrode their Muslim identity, and they bonded with a man with whom they shared a common language and certain cultural affinities rather than a religion. Tang also made the acquaintance of a Chinese-speaking Italian who boarded in Singapore. The man told Tang that after teaching at \textit{Tsinghua} University in Beijing for almost twenty years, he was unable to secure employment during the war, and so he was returning home to Italy.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 431.} On this occasion, Tang and his companions bonded with the Italian over their mutual understanding of Chinese language, but perhaps more importantly, over their mutual appreciation for Beijing.

Part of Tang’s cosmopolitan character is embodied in his appreciation of cinema, which he describes frequently in his journal. Although he was a devout Muslim, he was also a member of a growing global community of urban moviegoers and his appreciation for movies might be somewhat startling since the majority of the films he was watching were likely produced in Hollywood. Tang loved all movies, and he eagerly anticipated the Tuesday evening shipboard film showings even though it is very unlikely that the movies had Chinese subtitles. He also wrote extensively about the movies onboard, one time commenting that he wished there was a
movie everyday. Much to his chagrin, bad weather and choppy seas led to the cancelation of the film on the Tuesday following their departure from Singapore. This was a small distraction that he had been looking forward to for a few days, and being unable to spend an evening relaxing and watching a film was disappointing given how banal their days a sea must have been.

The tension between their local identity and their global outlook is most evident when they encountered Muslims with habits and customs different from their own. A few days later, after his Friday prayers, Tang went out on the deck and spotted some islands in the distance. One of the boat stewards told him they were coming up on Colombo (Gelunbo 哥倫坡) in Sri Lanka. When the boat pulled into the port, Tang mentioned that everything was very different and strange looking and the local customs and language were completely incomprehensible to the group from north China. These differences were often mediated through racialist discourse, and the observations of difference between themselves and Muslims from South Asia, East Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula are glaringly obvious to these Chinese Muslims, perhaps saying more about their “Chineseness” than about their adherence to a universal religion. Coming from China, the men were obviously aware of the large influence of Indian Buddhism on Chinese society over the millennia, and Tang acknowledged this important connection between India and China, pointing to their cultural sensitivities about the importance of these longtime and ongoing cultural and religious transfers between the two places. But on numerous occasions, the cultural difference between Indian Muslims and Chinese Muslims provides a glimpse into the

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498 In his discussion about students from the mainland studying in Japan in in the early twentieth century, Joshua Fogel makes the point that only when “viewed from the outside” did China “begin to acquire meaning,” for many. Joshua Fogel, “Introduction,” in The teleology of the modern nation-state, edited by Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
ways that Tang and his companions practiced and expressed their religious beliefs and how they saw their co-religionists as quite different from themselves.

After disembarking in Colombo, they went in search of somewhere to eat. Tang used elaborate hand gestures to order some *halal* lamb dishes, once again showing how difficult it was for these Chinese Muslims to travel, even in places where the population was predominantly Muslim. After, they located a *halal* butcher and bought some chickens from him. The men were often able to tell which restaurants and butchers were *halal* by the Arabic signs hanging outside, or by the small white hats that the owners and staff were wearing. They returned to the boat and roasted the chickens with some of the spices and oils they had brought with them from Beiping and Tang commented that Zhang ate almost his body weight in food and everyone went to bed happy, sated by the barbequed chicken.\(^{499}\) The next morning, they hired a small boat to take them back into Colombo where they managed to visit a mosque to say their prayers. Tang explains that the men were all intrigued and interested in the region's history because India was the birthplace of so much culture they were equally impressed by the large and beautiful temples they saw on route to the mosque.\(^{500}\)

While walking around Colombo, they stumbled upon a small Muslim restaurant and thought about stopping to eat there. However, the men were put off when they noticed that everyone in the restaurant were eating with their hands and changed their minds. Later, they refused to buy from the Muslim vendors in Colombo who were selling raisins and other dried

\(^{499}\) Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 433.

\(^{500}\) Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 433.
goods because they doled them out with their hands and the Chinese found this repugnant.\footnote{Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 433.}

Tang reveals his own lack of cultural relativity and highlights the group’s insensitivity at the outset of their journey. They were often repulsed when they saw Muslims eating with their hands; Tang was never shy to explain that they questioned the religiosity of people who ate in this unfamiliar way without utensils. Having never been anywhere beyond East Asia, markers of cultural difference such as eating with the hands, caused Tang to reflect on the differences between Muslims from China and Muslims from South Asia. Islam in China in particular is characterized by discourses of purity: Muslims were pure whereas non-Muslim Chinese were dirty, largely because the latter ate pork. This discourse is in some ways also a characteristic of Chinese views of some foreigners, meaning that foreigners were dirty when compared to the Chinese. In this instance, as opposed to seeing the custom of not serving or eating food with the hands as specifically Chinese, Tang puts a religious gloss on it by assuming the foreigners he sees eating with their hands must not be good Muslims.

After the boat sailed from Colombo, once again, a Chinese man who we can assume to be another GMD operative or informant confronted the men. He approached the group and asked if they were the five Muslims from Huabei going to Mecca. Tang and Ma replied that they were. The man then asked them how they felt about leaving Huabei when the situation in Beiping was so dire and pressed them to reveal whether or not they were on some sort of “mission”. In his usual manner, Tang replied that it was the responsibility of all Muslims to perform hajj and that their trip would be advantageous to all the Muslims living in Huabei since they would return with knowledge to share with them about their trip to Mecca. Tang notes that the man seemed
satisfied with his answer. He told them he had read about their “mission” in a newspaper from Singapore. He then told Tang and Ma that he worked for the Chinese Foreign Service (Zhongguo waijiao buyuan 中国外交部部員) and that he was headed to America. After hearing this, Tang and Ma quietly excused themselves and the men went their separate ways.  

The man apparently disembarked in Mumbai and although he never admitted as much, the GMD was sending agents to monitor the various legs of their journey in a way that made it clear to the group that they were being watched. The well-connected and informed network of GMD agents positioned throughout the overseas Chinese community in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean indicates that this was a well-organized operation. This offers quite the contrast to the lack of Japanese oversight for their the mission.

**Entering the Red Sea—The Gulf of Aden and Eritrea**

Soon after the boat entered the Gulf of Aden and the stewards informed Tang that they would be reaching their destination of Massawa (Masadian gang 瑪撒淀港) in Eritrea, which was under Italian control at the time.  

After disembarking, Tang and his companions were taken to a

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502 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 434.
503 Eritrea, which came under Italian control in the late 1880s, was part of Italy’s first colonial acquisition in the nineteenth century and the small piece of land was so-named by the Italians since it was on the shores of the ‘Erythrean’ Sea. The area was home to numerous Bedouin tribes that came under the control of the Ottoman Empire in sixteenth century. After the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, all the land bordering the Red Sea became more strategically important and by 1872 the Egyptians ousted the Ottomans from Eritrea’s capital Masawa, briefly bringing the region along the eastern seaboard of the Red Sea under Egyptian and British control. By 1885, the burgeoning Italian Empire made a play for Masawa, which mildly irritated the British who were much more concerned with French expansion in North and East Africa than with Italian attempts at empire building in the region. In 1889, regional powers, led by the Ethiopians, signed the Treaty of Uccialli with the Italians. The treaty ceded parts of Eritrea and Ethiopia to the Italians and accepted their protection. It allowed Italy to control the foreign
holding room at the customs office since they spoke neither Italian nor Eritrean (which he calls ‘Abyssinian language’). While they waited for the solider to return with their passports, Tang pulled out a map to see how far they had come on their journey, reflecting that it would be unfortunate if it were to come to an end in Eritrea after they had come so far. At that moment, a few frightening Italian special police officers (Yiguo tejing 義國特警) came to collect the group and take them to a hotel. It was explained to them that they needed to stay in Massawa for a few days for medical quarantine and that once an Italian doctor gave them a clean bill of health, they would be able to book passage across the Red Sea to Jeddah.

Again, as in Sri Lanka, Tang’s comments about the cultural differences between East African Muslims and himself were steeped in the racialist discourse of the early twentieth century. On the way to the hotel, Tang was astounded to see Muslims everywhere and people praying all over the place, and it was remarkable to him to see so many black Muslims. However, Tang and his companions also mentioned that they felt very at home in East Africa, knowing that they were among a large number of believers. Although it may seem incongruous, there was no apparent tension for Tang between his racial—and sometimes racist—observations about the difference between East African Islamic culture and his own and his deep appreciation for being affairs of their East African holdings. However, the Ethiopians rebelled and expelled the Italians shortly after, leaving them with a small piece of land in Eritrea. Before the war broke out in Europe, the Italians invested a lot of money, time, and energy into colonial infrastructure and development in Eretria when the war broke out there was a large contingent of Italians in the East African colony.

About a year after Italy declared war on Britain and France in June 10, 1940, the Italian occupation in East Africa crumbled, leaving the British to rule the region until 1952. The Fascist Italians ruled Eretria for a short time, but from the descriptions provided by Tang Yichen they made quite an impression on the region with their military and civilian presence. For more on the history of Eretria see: G.K.N. Trevaskis, Eritrea—A Colony in Transition: 1941-1954, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

504 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 437.
in a place where there was a very high proportion of Muslims compared to the community in occupied Beiping.

Back at their hotel, Zhang used his Arabic to speak to some locals, who told him that there were forty million Muslims in the region and that everyone living in East Africa was Muslim. Tang and his companions were very impressed by this information, and Tang duly records the rather blatant exaggeration (there are large communities of Coptic Christians and Roman Catholics in East Africa, especially in Eritrea and Ethiopia).\(^{505}\) Their acceptance of this claim shows how little the group knew about East Africa even though they were all highly educated. The following morning after prayers and breakfast, the group found a car waiting to take them to the Italian hospital for their quarantine check-up. On the way there, they noticed an advertisement for a boat across the Red Sea to Jeddah that left every Wednesday, giving the group three days to get their quarantine paperwork in order if they were going to be able to leave for Jeddah that week. The French-speaking Italian doctor asked them “Malades?” and they replied, “Non malade,” to which he replied “Bon!” (which, Tang explained, meant hao! 好), and they expected that their medical quarantine papers would be ready in the next few days. This interaction highlights the rather lackadaisical health and quarantine restrictions for the hajj at the time. Of course, the group had already been vaccinated, but they were traveling from China and South Asia and had come via boat, so there were plenty of communicable diseases that they could have been carrying which likely warranted more of an inspection than a quick questioning

\(^{505}\) Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 438.
about how they were feeling. The next day, the group got word that they were cleared for travel and they purchased tickets for Jeddah.

**EN ROUTE TO JEDDAH**

When they woke up on Wednesday morning and were getting ready to board their boat to Jeddah, Ma was visibly ill with a fever. Tang told him to hold himself together and when people inquired about Ma’s state, Tang told them that the extremely hot weather was affecting him, which the officials seemed to believe. Once they were on the boat, they took Ma to their cabin and got him some tea. The men were trying to conceal the fact that Ma was vomiting and when asked about it, they told a steward that he suffered from motion sickness. While Ma rested, the others went on the deck to have coffee and were extremely pleased to find out that the boat only served *halal* food.  

On board, they met only Muslims. An Imam from Sudan (*Sudan* 蘇丹) chatted with them in Arabic for a while, providing them with information about his home country, which the group found fascinating. As they approached Jeddah, the group took out their new white cloth to wear and their new leather sandals to prepare themselves for *Ihram*, the sacred state that all Muslims must enter into before embarking on any pilgrimage. On *hajj*, once the *Ihram* rituals are complete, pilgrims pass through one of the six *Miqat*, or one of the specific places from which pilgrims can begin their journey. For *hajj*, *Ihram* involves following certain prescribed rituals, such as wearing a white cloth robe without any knots or stiches in it, and participating in

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cleansing ceremonies. Tang commented that it was strange to see everyone dressed in white, the color of burial shrouds in China. Once again, the group took note when Islamic customs differed from those among Muslims in China. In some ways, Tang’s comment about the white shrouds exemplifies just how “Chinese” this group was at a seminal moment in their hajj.

Tang and his friends changed into their white gowns, the group complained about how expensive and uncomfortable their requisite new leather sandals were. After disembarking, the group headed to the medical center for another health inspection, which feverish Ma miraculously passed. Following that, Tang and his companions went through Saudi customs. The customs officer then told Tang they had been expecting them because the previous day eighteen Chinese students had arrived from Egypt and alerted the customs officers about the arrival of five Muslims from Huabei. Tang describes this event matter-of-factly, with no comment, turning quickly to his excitement about finally being in Jeddah. However, this is another indication that their movements were being monitored and tracked.

Tang and his companions quickly found lodgings and a local guide in Jeddah. They went out with their guide and upon returning to their room found a letter in Arabic for them signed by Ma Jian (aforementioned) Zong Hongqing 宗鴻青, Wang Shiqing 王士清 and Ma Fuliang 馬福良. Tang writes that after reading the letter, his heart and soul were elated at the possibility of seeing old friends and classmates whom he had not seen since before the war broke out in China and whom he had definitely not expected to encounter in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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507 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 441.
508 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 442.
509 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 443.
The group started their morning with a prayer followed by a visit with a guide to the Zamzam Well and to the Kaaba (Ka’erbai 克爾拜). Finally in Mecca, at the holiest site of Islam, Tang lamented that it was hard for them to get close to the Kaaba due to the crowds of pilgrims flowing like "a tide" around it. After completing their seven circuits, the group decided that they wanted to do it again, so they did. The group then left for Mount Arafat (Haxilei shan 哈皙勒山) by car after stopping in Mina briefly on the way. During a quick stop for watermelon and grapes, a shopkeeper mentioned that another group of Chinese pilgrims had been through earlier that day and Tang and his companions were hopeful that they would be reunited with their old friends sometime during their journey. During their stop, Tang also remarked on the bloodthirsty mosquitoes and the unhygienic condition of the toilets. The men from Beiping did not feel that the Arabs had high standards of hygiene and Tang repeatedly reiterates this point. This suggests the influence of the social conditioning and health campaigns run in 1930s China to promote sanitation and health as hallmarks of modernity. Perhaps Tang and his companions

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510 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 445.  
511 Unlike today, the group was able to repeatedly visit the Kaaba during their time in Mecca, indicating that the hajj was not as rigid and prescribed as it is today. Tang’s comments indicate that in the past there was less structure and order to the proceedings, and hajjis were less confined by the bureaucratic structures that now govern the movement of pilgrims. There were, of course, fewer pilgrims during the 1930s than there are today, but the fluidly and flexibility of their journey offers an interesting contrast to the very well-organized and ordered contemporary hajj journeys.  
512 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 445.  
513 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 445. Tang, who was covered head-to-toe in mosquito bites, had trouble sleeping because of the constant buzzing in their ears. He also prayed that it would not rain because he was concerned that if it did they would literally all be up to their knees in feces—something that terrified him enough to mention it on numerous occasions.  

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felt the need to emphasize the “backwardness” of Arabs with regards to toilets and other markers of hygienic modernity in order to drive home their point about the evils of European imperialism in the Middle East.\

They finally met up with the GMD-sponsored Muslim group and Ma Fuliang and Tang struck up an unlikely friendship, as Tang describes it. As Beijingers, Ma and Tang were acquainted but did not know each other that well. However, Tang writes that after a short time they realized that they had many mutual connections and the two men felt like they had known each other for eons. Ma was waiting for Īsa Yūsuf Alptekin (C. Aisha 艾沙), a Muslim from Xinjiang who was travelling to Mecca from Turkey. After spending some time together, Ma asked Tang whether it was just the five of them on the hajj or if there were other people with them in their party, perhaps implying that there were Japanese agents accompanying them. Tang denied this allegation and told him that it was just the five of them. After hearing this, Ma Fuliang recounted a rumor he had heard that five Huabei Muslims had been involved in an incident in Singapore and had murdered someone in Mumbai. This rumor-mongering by the GMD agents potentially indicates that these agents were expected to report on nefarious intentions of the group but when they were unable to provide their superiors with factual information they simply made things up. However, Ma told Tang that after spending some time

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515 Īsa Yūsuf Alptekin (1901-1995) was head of the first Eastern Turkestan Republic in Kashgar between November 1933 and February 1934. He later became the Xinjiang representative to the Nanjing government and fled to Chongqing with the GMD. In 1938-1939, he and Ma Fuliang were on a diplomatic mission to Middle Eastern countries with GMD sponsorship. The objective of this trip was to explain the current situation in China and to try to gain support for the resistance against the Japanese from Middle Eastern countries. For more on Īsa Yūsuf Alptekin see Lin Hsiao-ting, *Modern China’s Ethnic Frontiers: A Journey to the West*, (New York: Routledge, 2011).
with the men he was sure that they were incapable of murder, which somehow reassured Tang. Tang replied that the group was happy that their new friends—i.e. the official GMD envoys who were sent specifically to Mecca to spy on them—trusted them. Although it is impossible to say for sure, perhaps Tang was trying to establish a connection to the Nationalists by stressing his interactions with important and well-known Nationalist Muslims like Īsa and Ma Fuliang. As well, the fact that Tang and his companions were amicably spending time with GMD envoys helps undermine the criticisms they published about him later on. The men talked about the latest news and Ma related a story about the misfortune of a large group of pilgrims from Xinjiang who were supposedly massacred by Russian Communists on the Afghan border while trying to get to Mumbai overland.516 During their conversation, they were joined by some of the Al-Azhar students, who explained to them that very few Turks were permitted to make the hajj that year because of the impending war. Normally around 30,000 or more Turks would perform hajj but very few had been granted visas to travel through the Levant in 1938-1939 since the British had their hands full dealing with Eastern European Jews fleeing Europe through the Levant.517

516 Tang, Majia xunli ji, 447. In the “Report on the Hajj 1938,” the British made a few comments about these claims. Firstly, they observed that there were a number of refugees from Xinjiang on hajj that year, most of whom had come overland with General Mahmud Si Jang (alias Mohiti) and they have travelled from Karachi on Chinese passports. Also, there were apparently twenty-five “Tungen refugees from Sinkiang who also visited Mecca and appeared intent to settle down there.” Secondly, the dispelled some of these claims as wild rumours circulated among anti-British Muslims. The British were also not impressed with the Chinese Muslims sent from Al-Azhar, calling them “bogus representatives” who supplied Tang and his companions with all kind of rumours, which they then used to spread anti-British colonial sentiment upon their return to China. From: Records of the Hajj, Volume 5, (London: Archive Editions, 1993): 281; 347.

517 In 1938-1939 the British were denying transit visas through the Levant to the majority of Turks who applied. The British felt that they had their hands full with the impending war and with the growing number of German and Eastern European Jews fleeing their homes and heading to Palestine. The British were concerned that another 30,000-40,000 Turks traveling through the region would just be too much to
The following day was the tenth day of the twelfth lunar month (layue 臘月), which marks the beginning Festival of Sacrifice, also known as *Eid al-Adha*. One of the members of the group visiting from Egypt told Tang that he was happy that they could share this holy experience. However, in the next breath he questioned Tang’s intentions, asking if their "mission" had any political affiliations. Annoyed by this continual questioning, Tang replied that he found their assumptions unfair and tedious. Tang’s repeated denial of any political affiliation with the Japanese prompted another member of the group to tell him freely that they had been specifically sent from Egypt tasked with sending frequent cables to the Chongqing government and reporting on their movements. Apparently shocked by this news, Tang, for once, did not know how to respond. Tang then reports that the group went on to tell them that their minds’ had been set at ease once they had met the Japanese-sponsored Muslims in Mecca and realized that they were the same men of good character that they knew from before the war. Despite these expressions of confidence, the encounter depressed Tang and convinced him that their trip would be the last from Huabei during the war. Disillusioned and upset, and too tired to walk after the long day, the group hired camels to take them back to their hotel.

In order to celebrate *Eid al-Adha* the group set out to buy five sheep to have slaughtered as part of the rites performed during *hajj*. Tang invited the Chinese students from Egypt to partake in their ceremony and share some of the mutton they were allocated from their sacrifice. Over their delicious mutton dinner which they prepared with spices and oils they brought with

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them from China, the conversation turned to tea: although tea was slightly different everywhere they had been—Japan, China, Sri Lanka, India, Eretria, Saudi Arabia—everyone they encountered drank some form of tea.\(^51^9\) As they enjoyed what is possibly the most quintessentially “Chinese” global commodity, the political boundaries between Japanese and GMD were broken down through their mutual appreciation of roasted mutton washed down with Arabian tea. (The rest of the meat was donated to the poor, according to the rites of *hajj*.) Ma Fuliang was extremely excited for the cookout because it had been around three years since he had eaten anything with “Beijing flavor”.\(^52^0\) Once again, their local Beijing identity trumped everything, and they easily won over the staunchly Nationalists supporter with the delicious flavors of his native-place.

On their way home, the group were held up by traffic and someone explained to them that the presence of the large number of guards milling around meant that the royal entourage was nearby. As the Saudi royal family passed in front of them, Tang inquired about the large number of children he saw in the entourage. A passer-by informed him that they were all children of the Saudi King, Adbulaziz, or Ibn Saud (r. 1932-1953).\(^52^1\) Tang pondered about the

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\(^51^9\) If they were aware that tea originated in China, they did not mention this during their conversation. 
\(^52^0\) He said: “Xiang budao ersan nianwei hui chidao de Beijing fengwei!” 想不到二三年未會吃到的北京風味. This statement is corroborated in Zhang’s “Zhongguo Huijiao chaojin riji”. Zhang commented that the Japanese-sponsored *hajjis* brought their own soya sauce, spices and oils to cook with, which was appreciated by everyone who attended the feast (35). 
\(^52^1\) In Michael Penn’s chapter “The Vicissitudes of Japan-Saudi Relations” which appears in *East by Mid-East: studies in Cultural and Strategic Connectivities* (New York, Equinox Press, 2012), he explains that after the establishment of the unified Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, the Japanese looked to establish diplomatic relations the Saudi royal family. According to Penn, Ibn Saud had little to do with the Japanese apart from receiving *hajjis* from Japan until the late 1930s, when their pressing need for oil led to the first real outreach to the Saudi King. The first Japanese diplomatic mission came right after Tang’s trip in March and April 1939, which could be an indication that Tang’s mission was sent as a goodwill
feasibility of four wives being able to bear upwards of fifty children and later asked the Chinese
students from Egypt about his question. One of the students explained that the King also had a
large harem and his children were born from his wives and his harem.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 452.}

Before they left Saudi Arabia the group had one more thing to do: visit the palace for an
audience with the Saudi royalty. There is no information in Tang’s journal about how they
managed to secure an audience with Saudi royals, but this was surely not a usual affair. At this
point, it remains unknown whether they were able to get this audience through Japanese
connections; however, they did bring numerous gifts, such as a jade vase, with them all the way
from China in anticipation of this audience with Ibn Saud and presented the gift on behalf of
China’s \textit{Huabei hajj} mission. After a short ceremonial audience with the King, the men relaxed
and went to eat at a noodle shop run by a family from Xinjiang.\footnote{Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 456.}

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\textit{As noted, almost immediately}
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following the Japanese-sponsored *hajj* trip, the first-ever diplomatic mission of Japanese imperial officials made their way to Mecca to try to secure an oil concession.

While securing the paperwork for their return trip, a young guard spoke with them and although they found his Arabic hard to understand, they grasped that he was telling them that all the countries surrounding Saudi Arabia were occupied by the French or the British. Here, once again, Tang highlights the tense geopolitical situation in the region and mentions that the Allies were threatening the Islamic holy lands. This reflects the Japanese anti-imperialist message to the Muslims of Asia: there were obviously no criticisms of Japanese imperialism, but taking jabs at the British and French was definitely fair game. After, one of the students brought Tang a picture of King Farouk, he lamented that his own party could not go to Cairo (*Kailuo* 開羅) but he explained that their trip was coming to an end and they needed to return to China. However, it is quite clear that the British, given the refusal of their initial visa request, would have prevented the group from entering Egypt.

Tang devotes some space in his published account to express his discomfort and disdain for Arab merchants because their style of bargaining was very different from what the group were familiar with. Their pushiness and physicality was off-putting for Tang, who found the experience of shopping in Jeddah overwhelming. Tang was surprised by the lack of theological texts available in the bookstores. Books he was told by the Al-Azhar students were readily available in Egypt were not available in the markets they visited. After their time in Saudi Arabia, Tang expressed the need for an intellectual revival in the region, which was reflected by the lack of theological texts and what he imagined to be the disgraceful behavior of Arab merchants in markets. According to Tang, Arabs needed to throw off their colonial oppressors and awaken,
since they were the progenitors of the most glorious religion followed by more than 300 million people worldwide. This rhetoric is familiar: like the previous example, it echoes the Japanese anti-imperialist discourse in East Asia in the late 1930s and 1940s. Beyond that, however, it also presents Arabs as a mirror for the Chinese. Here we see a few different types of nationalisms at work in the same place: the growing anti-imperialist sentiment coupled with these Muslims presenting themselves as distinct and separate, and in many ways better, than the Arabs they encountered. This jockeying for cultural and civilizational superiority presents a complicated picture of how these Sino-Muslims from North China on a pilgrimage sponsored by the Japanese Empire understood themselves in relation to the Muslims they met on their journey. Again, this was all part of the discourses of hygienic modernity circulating in China at the time and is a testament to the successes of Nationalist campaigns to indoctrinate people living in China with ideas about the relationships between cleanliness and civilization.

As they packed to leave, Tang was surprised to see some of the students who had not yet returned to Egypt come to see them off, and he wrote that their shared experiences in Saudi Arabia made them like brothers. Tang explained that the students from Egypt had been paid by the authorities to intercept their Japanese-sponsored "propaganda mission". However, according to Tang, as the men parted ways, they all shook hands and traded Qur’ans as an expression of their solidarity. Tang claimed that this group of men would always be in his heart. They took group photos and Tang told them he would send them copies after they had them developed back in Beiping. However, he never got around to mailing the photos to Egypt once back in Beiping.

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525 Tang, Maijia xunli ji, 458.
As he prepared to leave Mecca, Tang confessed that he was happy to never have to ride another camel, which he thought was way more trouble than it was worth.\footnote{Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 460. About riding camels, Tang wrote: “Tai mafanle!” 太麻煩了！} While the group waited for their boat in Jeddah, they visited the Chinese Guild Hall (*Zhongguo huiguan* 中國會館) established there a few years prior by a Gansu Muslim, Ma Shaoyun 馬少雲. Tang explained that Ma had originally planned to build a Hezhou Guild Hall (*Hezhou huiguan* 河州會館) in Jeddah but not enough people from Hezhou went on *hajj* so he named it the Chinese Guild Hall instead.\footnote{Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 460.} Tang’s observations are telling as they help to contextualize the broad reach of the native-place associations for not just Han Chinese but Sino-Muslims traveling abroad in an era of increasing worldwide travel. In some ways then, Sino-Muslims shared more in common with Han Chinese than they did with non-Chinese Muslims, at least in terms of cultural fabric and social institutions.

The group had trouble getting passage back to Massawa. Although there were plenty of boats moving through the Red Sea, they were all full with Italian army officers traveling to East Africa or with Jews and other minority groups fleeing Germany and Eastern Europe on whatever form of transportation would accept them.\footnote{Tang, *Maijia xunli ji*, 462.} The group left the day before the Chinese Lunar New Year (*Zhengyue chuyi* 正月初一) and celebrated by drinking coffee and barbequing fish that they caught off the stern of the boat while docked in Sudan. Back in Massawa, once again,
they were told that all the boats heading to Shanghai were full of Jewish refugees fleeing Germany and that the group would not be able to secure passage before March.

While in Massawa, they managed to track down all the ingredients needed to make dumplings (*jiaozi* 餃子) to celebrate Chinese New Year at their hotel. This small gesture of spending an evening making dumplings together further exemplifies that although Tang and his companions were definitely devout and pious Muslims, they were also active participants in rituals which they themselves might not consider to be distinctly Chinese, but onlookers in East Africa and the Middle East would have considered them to be. Although the group had recently completed their *hajj* they also had a deep attachment to the Lunar New Year and spent the evening recreating a comforting familiar atmosphere even though they were far from their homes and families.

Once on board the Italian steamer bound for Shanghai, Tang made sure to note that he and Ma were ecstatic that the larger boat showed movies every evening instead of once a week. Tang also remarked that the boat was full of Italian soldiers and Jewish refugees, and complained that they might be the only Muslims on board. At this point Tang launched into an anecdotal tirade against Jews, perhaps reflecting his previously mentioned racist views or the growing exposure to German fascist anti-Semitic propaganda filtered through his Japanese sponsors. Although it is unclear if he had ever met a Jewish person before traveling on the boat to Shanghai with them, Tang had preconceived prejudices towards them. Without any further explanation, it is clear that the presence of Jewish refugees made the group extremely uncomfortable, and that they avoided interactions with them at all costs for the rest of their journey.
Once they arrived in Singapore, twenty-or-so Chinese students dressed in western clothes and speaking near-perfect English joined the *hajjis* onboard. Tang was shocked to see one of these Chinese women carrying her own luggage and expressed disdain for this and other western habits they exhibited.\textsuperscript{529} This anecdote perhaps notes the limits of Tang’s cosmopolitanism. However, the students had all kinds of interesting things with them that they hawked onboard, such as exotic snakeskins they had acquired in Singapore, which Zhang purchased from them. The snakeskins were presumably medicinal and given that they came from the south, were likely hard to come by and expensive in Beiping. As the boat approached Shanghai, the weather got colder and they had to take out their quilted jackets before passing through customs. Once back in Shanghai, they asked a horse-drawn cart to take them to the *Xinhuizhong* hotel, after all, this was not their first time in Shanghai and they knew where to go.\textsuperscript{530}

\textbf{BACK ON THE MAINLAND—TIME TO EAT!}

The first thing they did after checking in at their hotel was to go to a *halal* restaurant and eat a feast. Apparently, the restaurateurs were shocked at how much food the men consumed, but Tang explained to them that it had been almost two months since they had eaten “real” Chinese food. Afterwards, they sent two cables: one to Su’s mosque in Beiping and another to the mosque in Qingdao to let them know they would be stopping through the port en route to Beiping. They went out again later in the evening and had another large feast after which they

\textsuperscript{529} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 469.
\textsuperscript{530} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 470.
returned to their hotel for a good night’s sleep.\textsuperscript{531} The following morning Ma went to buy the boat tickets to Qingdao while Tang and Su headed to the market at \textit{Hongkou} Bridge to get provisions for their trip to Qingdao. When they arrived at the \textit{Hongkou} Bridge, they grew frightened when they noticed the number of Japanese soldiers in the area. One of the soldiers stopped them and asked them in Chinese what they were doing there. Tang, with his heart in his stomach, explained that they had just returned from Mecca and were buying provisions for their boat ride to Qingdao the following day, which seemed to satisfy the soldier. Tang does not explain why this answer was sufficient, but perhaps their sincerity and their appearance made the story plausible.\textsuperscript{532} The repeated encounters with Japanese soldiers demonstrate that although the men were accepting Japanese money to fund their trip, this did not mean that they were fearless or unconcerned about the Japanese presence on the mainland. Collaboration with the Japanese in the case of these men may not have been coercive, but there was an important element of fear involved in the way that Tang and his friends dealt with the Japanese they encounter throughout their journey.

In Qingdao, they caught up on news over lamb hot pot, while Ma—tasked with all things involving Japanese—went to the train station to get their tickets for the following day to Jinan 濟南 and Tianjin.\textsuperscript{533} Once back in Beiping, Tang was extremely happy to be greeted by his family and his mother, who explained to him that his father was ill and could not make the trip to the

\textsuperscript{531} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 470.
\textsuperscript{532} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 471.
\textsuperscript{533} Tang, \textit{Maijia xunli ji}, 472.
station. After almost three months of traveling, Tang and his companions were back in Beiping and the first thing they did after greeting their families was head to their favorite restaurant on Oxen Street for a steaming bowl of Beijing-style beef noodle soup.

**TANG’S AFTERTHOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The journey broadened Tang’s knowledge and understanding of the variety of Islamic practices in South Asia, East Africa, and Arabia. The increasingly frequent circulations of Muslims allowed for more dialogue between Muslims and contributed to the creation of larger, more integrated, global Pan-Asian and Pan-Islamic movements. In his concluding remarks, Tang offers his readers some insights into this from his journey. Firstly, Tang blamed the British for the obstacles they encountered on their journey, and the anti-British thread runs throughout his narrative. This obviously served the Japanese purposes as positioning themselves as the liberators from European imperialism in East Asia and as the protectors of Islam in the East. The British, Tang claimed, had made their pilgrimage much more difficult by refusing to give them visas to go on the *hajj*. Of course, Tang was well aware of the international political situation in 1938-1939, but he uses the British refusal of their visas as an avenue to offer a critique of British policies regarding Muslims. The British, he argued, had quashed the dreams and hopes of Muslims all over the world of successfully completing their *hajj* trips: besides their group, thousands of Turks had been denied transit visas through the Levant, making their pilgrimage impossible. Tang felt that Muslim countries with a British colonial presence were volatile and

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dangerous because the British had a long history of intervening in religious affairs of other countries. In turn, this was unspoken praise for the Japanese, who had helped them complete their *hajj*. He also voiced concern that Muslims in British colonies would react violently to British rule, and argued that his readers should support groups who were resisting the British, such as the Balochs in Afghanistan. For Tang, the events in Baluchistan provided a clear example of a group of Muslims who were successfully opposing the British and were much worse off than Muslims from North China, and therefore deserving of their help. This anti-western and anti-colonial sentiment was a way for Tang to appease his Japanese sponsors and a way for him to create camaraderie with his fellow Muslims throughout the Middle East, Africa, and other parts of Asia. It was also a tacit acknowledgement that Tang and his companions were satisfied with the ways that the Japanese were running their empire in East Asia.

Tang also expressed sympathy for Xinjiang’s Muslims, such as Ma Zhongying 马仲英, who Tang wrote was living in exile because he had been chased out of Xinjiang by the Russian Communists. According to Tang, Russian Communists had also massacred upwards of a thousand Muslims from Xinjiang who were trying to get to Mumbai by land through Afghanistan. His sentiments here went beyond echoing the Japanese-established Chinese Muslim General Assembly, and reflected some of the wider concerns of Muslim pilgrims they encountered on their journeys, even the Nationalist-sponsored students from al-Azhar.

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537 It is interesting that he brings up Ma Zhongying and it is unclear where he thought Ma was since as far as we know Ma Zhongying was then in Soviet territory, having been lured there, or perhaps even dead by this time at the hands of the Soviets.
In his conclusion, Tang also reflects on the different ways that people practiced Islam in the places they visited. Tang recognized that for a religion over 1300 years old that had spread to all corners of the earth, the elapsed time and the immense geographic space of the *dar-al-Islam* manifested itself in diverse expressions of the Islamic faith. Interestingly, however, it is these small markers of difference—such as Indian and East African Muslims eating with their hands—, which Tang dwells on in his journal. Tang wanted Muslims to overcome these differences and focus on a more fruitful enterprise: rising up against European colonialism. Again, by indicating that the Japanese were providing Muslims with the support that they needed to fulfill their fundamental religious obligations while the British and the Soviets were oppressing Muslims and denying them these rights, Tang indicated that he accepted Japanese policies. After nearly three hundred pages, this is where Tang ends his narrative, which was presumably followed by a bowl of Beijing-style beef noodles.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Looking at larger patterns of increased interactions between the GMD, the Japanese, and Muslims provides an important global perspective, and Tang’s journal provides a bridge between these global developments on the verge of WWII and the quotidian trials of performing *hajj* during the 1930s. The reality of the situation was that both groups of pilgrims were paid and sponsored to go on *hajj*. In the middle of these Nationalist and Japanese maneuverings were the Muslims themselves, who, when presented with an opportunity, took it. Focusing on the specific moment where this journey was possible and the five Chinese Muslims who accepted Japanese

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funds to complete the *hajj* reveals some of the ways that minorities in China acted as intermediaries between the Chinese Nationalists and the Japanese Empire, and how they influenced policy decisions and tactical political moves for both powers.

Movement and motion are also a large part of Tang’s story: the modes of transportation, the places they visited, their comfort or discomfort on the trains, ships, cars, wagons, and camels they used to get them to and from their destination gives the reader a glimpse into the ebbs and flows of a *hajjis*’ journey from China in the first half of the twentieth century.\(^{540}\) It also becomes clear how central the local Beijing identity was to how Tang saw the world around him. From their thick accents, to their deep appreciation for Beijing-style cuisine, to their belief that they were heartier as northerners who knew how to weather cold and adversity, being from North China figures heavily into Tang’s explanation and understanding of his place in relation to both other Muslims and other Chinese. Their attachment to Beijing underlines the need to strike “an appropriate balance between the role we assign to global and local elements involved in an encounter.”\(^{541}\) While trying to illuminate global trends, focusing on the profoundly local character of these men is seminal to understanding how they mediated the interactions with people around them.

What is also clear is that by the 1930s, the role of Muslims in China in influencing domestic policy and international politics was disproportionate to their small numbers in the Chinese population.\(^{542}\) Realizing how much was at stake with regards to their dealings with

\(^{540}\) Coleman and Eade, *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion*, 2.

\(^{541}\) Coleman and Eade, *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion*, 2.

Muslims in the Middle East, both the Japanese and Nationalists were more likely to cater to the needs of Muslims and try to use them as leverage in their increasing diplomatic interactions with the Middle East. The Japanese financed Tang and his companions’ hajj as a relatively cheap and easy way to gain supporters among Chinese Muslims living in both the occupied areas and in the Middle East. As the Japanese began to exert more influence in areas of North China where Muslims lived, they focused their attention on recruiting those who had been to Mecca, since they were venerated in their communities and exerted greater influence among their co-religionists. The war with Japan also precipitated more aggressive GMD recruitment campaigns among Muslims, as well as increasingly important linkages with Middle Eastern countries owing directly to the successes that the Japanese were experiencing among Muslim populations in North China, as Tang Yichen’s hajj clearly demonstrates.
CHAPTER V

MUSLIMS FROM CHINA, ISLAM AND JAPANESE VISIONS FOR A GREATER EAST ASIA AND BEYOND

“It will not surprise me if in the end it turns out that the Japanese have been more useful to the Chinese Muslims than these much-coveted allies will be to the cause of Japanese domination in Asia.” 543

THE LYNCHPIN IN JAPAN’S OVERTURES TO ISLAM: MUSLIMS FROM NORTH CHINA

This chapter argues that in their appeals to Muslims living throughout Greater East Asia and the broader Islamic world Muslims from China were the lynchpin in Japan’s overtures to the Islamic world. Japanese advances did not go unnoticed by the Nationalists, who were also aware of anti-colonial movements among Muslim populations from the Maghreb to Manila, and expressed

growing concern about the role that Muslims from China played in enabling connections between the Japanese Empire and the Islamic world. The Japanese had a number of objectives in their appeals to Islam: embracing Muslims allowed the Japanese to present themselves as religiously tolerant, unlike, they argued, western Christian empires, the Nationalists, and the Communists. As the sole non-Christian imperial power at the time, the Japanese had a unique opportunity in the changing global landscape of the post-WWI era. In their efforts to show their appreciation for Muslims, the Japanese government included Islam in the 1940 Religious Corporations Law (Shūkyō Dantai Hō 宗教団体法) along with Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity to point out the importance that they placed on protecting Islam in the East.\footnote{Hans Martin Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 625.}

Through their interactions with the Japanese, Muslims from China were also able to look outward to understand their place in the world. There was a strong desire among Muslim communities in North China to connect with Muslims beyond their localities, and the Japanese helped foster and fund these increasingly important linkages. This chapter places Japanese imperial objectives concerning Islam and Muslims living under occupation in North China into larger currents of global Islam circulating during WWII.\footnote{As discussed in Chapter I, the Germans during WWI were interested in managing the balance of power vis-à-vis Russia, the Middle East, the other European powers. This led them to place strategic importance on the Ottoman Empire. Max van Oppenheim’s plans played powers in the region off each other to try to manoeuvre a more advantageous situation for Germany, and the Germans supported Pan-Islamism as a way to get the Ottomans to join the war effort on their side. The Japanese also used and supported Pan-Islamic discourse as a way to create connections between disparate Muslim communities. However, unlike their the Germans in WWI, the Japanese had a more nuanced and less essentialist view of Islam. (McMeekin, Sean. The Berlin-Baghdad Express, Chapter 1).} Through their appeals to Muslims in China using the rhetoric of Pan-Asianism, the Japanese imperial government hoped to present
them as transnational Islamic actors with strong ties to Japanese Empire to other Muslims throughout South East Asia and the Middle East in an increasingly globalized world.\textsuperscript{546}

The Japanese argued that they were different from western imperial powers that had long antagonized Muslim populations and had a violent and tenuous relationship with Islam. Also, much like in Japan, the Middle East was experiencing a revival, or a Renaissance (\textit{renesansu レナサンス}), and if the two regions gained a deeper understanding of each other, it would allow them to come together to defeat the west.\textsuperscript{547} However, the interactions between the Japanese empire and Islam were often varied, characterized by both cooperation and conflict. On the one hand, many Muslims were skeptical of Japanese motives, especially after the outbreak of the Pacific War, and thought that Japanese Pan-Asianism was simply empty rhetoric veiling their militaristic intentions. On the other hand, the Japanese gave Muslim communities and individuals who cooperated with them a chance to relate their frustrations about the state of Islamic reforms in Asia and their experiences as religious minorities to the experiences of Muslims throughout the colonized world.\textsuperscript{548} As the war went on, it also became clearer to Muslims living under occupation what role they were supposed to play in Japan’s visions for a Greater East Asia. As the number of Islamic Associations sponsored by the Japanese grew

\textsuperscript{546} American observer Franz Michael noted in 1942 that Japanese policy-makers and the Army were well aware that if they wanted to carry out their plans for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity sphere, appealing to Muslims from China was necessary. Michael, “Notes and Comments: Japan—Protector of Islam!” 472.

\textsuperscript{547} \textit{Nihon to kaikyō to no kankei}, 19.

\textsuperscript{548} The relationship between Islam and society was mediated through a number of factors that are not limited to the ability to have open theological debates, and the ability of religious associations to recruit and proselytize, and the ability of Muslims to express their religious views in relation to the intrusiveness of the state in this process. Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 625.
rapidly after 1937, the objectives and goals of Muslims from the mainland and the Japanese Empire began to align more closely.549

**PAN-ASIANISM AND PAN-ISLAMISM: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN?**

There are a number of scholarly works that focus on the ideological similarities and differences between Pan-Asianism and Pan-Islamism. Turkish scholars in particular compare Ottoman (and later Turkish) and Japanese anti-western sentiments to focus on intellectual trends circulating among non-western, anti-imperial movements throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.550 However, in these works a central part of the equation remains absent: Muslims from North China. Both Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism were transnational ideologies, but beyond being simply reactions to western nationalism and imperialism, they presented disenfranchised peoples with an aspirational ideal. Japan provided a space for ideas about the commonalities between Muslims flourish: in the bustling metropolis of Tokyo, Muslims from all over the Islamic world met to learn, discuss, and debate the similar issues they were facing in their respective homelands. Looking beyond Pan-Asianism and Pan-Islamism as reactions to the west and examining the ways that people understood these ideologies in their everyday lives during the war highlights how Muslims leveraged the Japanese Empire to achieve their own

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objectives. In their overtures to Muslims from occupied China, the Japanese provided them with a space to operate between their local communities and global Islamic movements.551

The binary comparisons of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism also fail to address the importance of regionalism and the interactions between these transnational currents.552 Pan-alternatives were not purely an effect of the world order imposed by colonial powers, but a way for people to reconceptualise the inter-regional relationships between ethnicities and groups of people that long pre-dated western colonial incursions throughout Asia and the Middle East.553 In many ways, it was the “theoretical elasticity” of Pan-Asianism that made it broadly appealing and inclusive enough for many of those trying to figure out their place in the world during the war.554 Although they wrote about Pan-Islamism, the Japanese never promoted a specifically ‘pan-Islamic’ ideology. Ideologically, Pan-Islamism advocated the “unification of all the world’s Muslims,” and also embraced the centrality of the Caliph as an authority figure over Islam.555 Obviously, this was not in line with Japanese objectives in Greater East Asia, but the Japanese government, like the Communists government that followed them, did “assume the existence of

553 Duara, “The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism,” 100.
555 Jacob M. Landau, The Politics of Pan-Islam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). Muslims like Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) devoted a lot of thought to reconciling western state systems and the Caliphate as a system of religious authority that could be viable for the Middle East. Rida was an Egyptian (he was born in Ottoman Syria), and was influenced by both the Salafis and Islamic modernism. His writings resonated with many Muslims who were concerned with what the abolition of the Caliphate and what it meant for Muslims who sought both religious and political authority the modern Islamic state. Rida’s most influential work is the The Revelation to Muhammad, (1926).
a global community of Muslims, joined by a common faith [who were] inherently interested in the plight of their co-religionists many thousands of miles away.”

One of the appealing things about Pan-Asianism to the Japanese was the degree of ambiguity surrounding what the term actually meant. Because there was no consensus on what “Asia” was, the Japanese were able to manipulate the meaning of the term to suit their various needs at different times. In other words, Pan-Asianism was “[m]orally compelling and conceptually ambiguous enough to supersede immediate disagreements” about what the term actually meant. Efforts to define “Asia” are almost as old as the term itself. For the Ancient Greeks, Asia encompassed the regions of the Persian Empire that extended east of the Bosporus. The term was only introduced to China by Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth century, and in 1602, the term ‘Asia’ (yaxiya 亞細亞) appeared for the first time on Ming maps made under the supervision of Jesuit Matteo Ricci. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that the Chinese characters and their meaning gained currency in and around the Pacific: reacting to increased western aggression, the region came to see itself as a flexible geopolitical space. This space was not bounded by geographic borders, but by commonalities such as a shared history, a long record of diplomatic relations, trade exchanges, and later, the notion of a common

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557 Hotta, Pan-Asianism and Japan’s War 1931-1945, 184; 226. As see, Christopher W.A. Szpilman, “Between Pan-Asianism and nationalism: Mitsukawa Kametaro and his campaign to reform Japan and liberate Asia,” in Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, regionalism, and borders edited by Sveen Saaler and Victor Koschmann (New York: Routeledge: 2007), 53.
destiny. For the Japanese, it was the malleability of the term that made it so appealing. Of course, there was a certain degree of uniformity to the views on what Asia meant, but the differences in the ways that the region was defined in the twentieth century meant that the Japanese could manipulate the term to include Muslims from as far afield as South Asia to the Philippines into their expressions of what Asia should encompass.

In Japan from the late Meiji period, Pan-Asianism developed from a “vague romantic and idealistic feeling of solidarity into an ideology that could be applied in the sphere of Realpolitik.” When defining Asia, Japanese scholars relied on a number of amorphous terms to explain commonalities between peoples in the region: the idea of cultural unity (Jp. dōbun; Ch. tongwen 同文) and the notion of racial kinship (Jp. dōshu; Ch. tongzhong 同種) were concepts fluid enough to be broadly inclusive while appealing to the idea that Asians were united in a similar struggle. During the interwar period, the Japanese also relied more heavily on the concept of minzoku (民族) to elaborate on Pan-Asian thinking. Kevin Doak points out that by drawing attention to the ethnic and cultural ways that Pan-Asianism was developed allows us to “go beyond thinking about Pan-Asianism purely as racialist ideology,” and to think about “the value of ethnicity in creating a regional identity.” The term minzoku was useful for two reasons: it was adaptable, and it was able to relay the idea that “Asians” were an exceptional

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562 Kevin M. Doak, “The concept of ethnic nationality and its role in Pan-Asianism in imperial Japan,” in Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, regionalism, and borders edited by Sveen Saaler and Victor Koschmann (New York: Routledge: 2007), 168. No “shared religious identity” could possibly exist between Japanese and Muslims, unless the Japanese converted (a few did) or Muslims expanded their notion of religious identity to include non-believers, which few ever did.
group without disregarding the differences among them. The Japanese vision for Asia was meant to “transcend political and geographic boundaries”; this allowed the Japanese to present themselves as saviours in the region through the promotion of a “variety of social and political projects.” For Muslims, “Asia” could mean something different than it did for Buddhists or for Christians, and the Japanese understood this. As Muslims from North China who came under the Japanese imperial gaze connected to Muslims in Turkey, Sri Lanka, Egypt, India and beyond, they developed their own spatial understanding of what Asia meant to suit their individual needs. In this way, the relationship between the Japanese empire and Islam and was made possible as much by the geopolitical situation of WWII as by notions of a shared religious identity.  

**WARTIME INTERNATIONALISM AND ISLAM**

The international situation of the war shaped the emerging discussions about the place of Islam within Greater East Asia. As the Japanese Empire expanded into Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma after 1941, there was a pressing need for Japan to present itself as the protector of Islam in the East. Thinking about the wartime period as a time of increased internationalism presents the

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565 Conrad and Duara, “Viewing Regionalisms from East Asia,” 18. In the beginning, at least, many Malaya and Indian leaders were quite happy with the Japanese Pan-Asian vision. This was especially true for the Malayan Muslim community, who used their anti-Chinese nationalist stance as an opportunity to “ruthlessly eliminate” Chinese in Malaya (23). Please proofread fn557 carefully. What did the Malayan Muslims do about those Chinese who happened to be Muslims? Were they celebrated and welcomed as fellow believers or murdered as Chinese? Here “race” clearly triumphs over “religion.”

opportunity to think beyond nationalist representations of the war in East Asia and to expand the discussion of wartime experiences to encompass what Tessa Morris Suzuki calls “the transnational memory of war.”  

Morris Suzuki explains that by locating the history of the war in transnational and international wartime experiences, this period is then “not confined to a single national narrative, but [can] include intonations across Asia.” With Japanese support, Muslims from China left Asia and made connections based on their faith with Muslims around the world. By examining this “complex web of multi-directional interactions” beyond the locus of the nation-state, Morris-Suzuki highlights that we can see “iterations and influences” of prevailing pan-Asian discourses had on Islam, and on Muslims living in China who were trying to figure out their place in the world. Focusing on the ways that the Japanese supported these networks is not meant to detract from the terrible violence inflicted on the people of China, but it does allow us to think about WWII in East Asia as a “time of unprecedented intellectual and cultural exchange…complicated but not prevented by military and political turmoil.”

Furthermore, by appealing to the religiosity of Muslims, the Japanese were able to emphasize the differences between Han Chinese and the Muslims on the mainland. Chinese lack of understanding of Islamic religious beliefs and the economic disparity between the two communities often exacerbated existing tensions between the Han and the Hui, presenting a

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“situation custom-made for Japanese infiltration tactics.” The original interest in Islam in China lay in Japan’s fear of Russian encroachment in the region, but later, “Manchuria became a base from which Japanese activities among Muslims in other parts of China were directed, and also the testing grounds for organizing techniques later applied on a much larger scale in Occupied China,” and beyond. By focusing on the differences between the Han and the Hui, the Japanese were able to rally them behind the idea of a Greater East Asia.

**JAPANESE PAN-ASIANISTS AND ISLAM**

A number of Japanese pan-Asian thinkers in the twentieth century wrote extensively about the relationship between Islam and Pan-Asianism. The most influential Pan-Asian thinker of the 1930s, Ōkawa Shūmei 大川周明 (1886-1957), was deeply interested in the relationship between Islam and Pan-Asianism, especially after the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Ōkawa was politically active throughout his career and after the war gained notoriety as the only civilian to be tried by the International Military Tribunal in the Far East. He was declared unfit to stand trial and sentenced life in a psychiatric facility. During his time there, he worked on a translation of the Qur’an. Ōkawa argued that Islam could be used as another force in the battle against western imperialism by presenting all “Easterners” opposed in solidarity against the west. As Japanese involvement on the Mainland deepened after the Mukden Incident, scholars of Pan-Asianism such as Ōkawa Shumei looked to the history of

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Islam in Asia to help them “conceptualize the relationship between the universality of the Japanese Empire and local national cultures.” Ōkawa thought highly of Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism as models for helping create unity in East Asia because, as he saw it, there was a universal appeal to Islam that took precedence over the overwhelming diversity among peoples in the Middle East and throughout the Indian Ocean and South East Asia, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism, he argued, “could be an inspiration for rethinking the relationship between the empire and the national cultures in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as well.”

Another important Pan-Asian thinker, Tanaka Ippei 田中逸平 (1882-1934), was himself a convert to Islam. After graduating from Takushoku University (拓殖大学) in Japan, Tanaka spent most of the years between 1904 and 1920 on the mainland in China working as an interpreter and a translator. In China, he met Wakabayashi Nakaba 若林半, one of the early pioneers of Islamic studies in Japan. In 1924, after a number of years learning about Islam and interacting with Muslim communities in China, Tanaka converted. He was one of the first Japanese hajjis and the published chronicle of his pilgrimage was instrumental in introducing Islam to Japanese on the home islands.

In an essay called “Islam and Greater Asianism” (Isuramu to dai Ajia shugi) published in 1925, Tanaka emphasized the importance of Muslims in China to

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575 Aydin “Overcoming Eurocentrism?” 145-146.

Japan’s Pan-Asian vision. Tanaka’s views about the spiritual East in opposition to the materialist West were rather commonplace among Pan-Asian thinkers at the time, but his ideas about the potential relationship between Islam and Pan-Asianism distinguished him from his peers. Although some of his impressions of Islam were perhaps misguided, he was drawn to the syncretism of late Ming Chinese Muslim scholar Wang Daiyu 王岱舆 who “attempted a synthesis of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism within Islam.” In his writing, Tanaka developed a connection between the Kingly Way ( Özō 王道) and Islam. He also insisted that the Prophet Muhammad was similar to the Buddhist monk warriors ( sōhei 僧兵): both were courageous fighters devoted to their respective religious beliefs. Tanaka was never shy to propound how the virtues of Islam could be beneficial for Japanese imperial objectives: “Thus, in a period of decadence such as the present, we urgently need the temper of rigor and vitality found in the moral discipline of our Japanese spirit…I have no hesitation in affirming that the austere message of Islam will not only be very useful in the restoration of our country but will also prove indispensable both to the establishment of Pan-Asianism and to the completion of Japan’s imperial mission.”

Tanaka was also eager to proselytize Islam in Japan. Growing up, he attended a Protestant missionary elementary and secondary school in Japan, so he was intimately familiar with proselytization, and imagined converting large numbers of Japanese to Islam. Perhaps it was his disillusionment with the Christian West that led him to Islam. In his efforts to proselytize,

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Tanaka often showcased Japanese development work among Muslim communities in North China: in Muslims from China Tanaka had both a perfect model to prove Japan’s loyalty to Muslims and the religious tolerance of the Japanese Empire.581

In the late nineteenth century, the Japanese invested more time and energy into “constructing the political grammar of religion” to use for its own needs.582 Religion, especially Islam and Buddhism, gave the Japanese a “new political valence in Japanese efforts to sympathize with global currents.”583 At the same time, Japan observed how western powers used religion to foster “communal cohesion or division” throughout the Middle East and North Africa.584 The Japanese also became increasingly aware of the importance of the international “diplomatic climate” in “shaping the political conversation concerning religion in Japan.”585 In the tumultuous first decades of the twentieth century the Japanese imperial state was able to mobilize religion on the home islands in opposition to the growing threats of socialism, liberalism and anarchism.586 Rapid industrialization and urbanization during this period presented new threats to the kokutai in the form of organized labour movements and riots. Throughout this period, the Meiji and Taishō governments presented religion as a beacon of morality in opposition to the godless communists and anarchists who wrought havoc on urban centers around Japan.

581 Tanaka Ippei 田中逸平. Isuramu to dai Ajia shugi イスラムと大亜細亜主義. Tokyo, 1925.
582 Maxey, The “Greatest Problem”, 3.
583 Maxey, The “Greatest Problem”, 8.
584 Maxey, The “Greatest Problem”, 56; 90.
585 Maxey, The “Greatest Problem”, 56; 90.
586 Maxey, The “Greatest Problem”, 237.
During this same period, an increasing number of translations of the Qur’an appeared in Japanese. These translations are a noteworthy outcome of these intensified connections between Islam and Japan, as well as a testament to the skills of the translators who had to make foreign Islamic texts relevant and relatable to Japanese readers.\textsuperscript{587} As Japanese scholars of Islam searched for words in their lexicon to convey the meaning of Arabic words, they struggled with how to deal with “theologically charged concepts.”\textsuperscript{588} Translators wondered if they should “make use of pre-existing religious terminology to facilitate understanding and evoke religious associations, should they resort to seemingly neutral terms to avoid such associations, or should they even try to invent new words not tainted with potentially misleading earlier notions?”\textsuperscript{589} For instance, the word kami (神), which was deeply rooted in Japanese spiritual and religious traditions, was often used as a translation for Allah. Early translations of the Qur’an into Japanese represented a form of synthesis of Japanese religious expression and Islam.\textsuperscript{590}

\textsuperscript{587} Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 619-621. Krämer argues that the number of translations of the Qur’an in the early twentieth century—six in total—can be traced to interest in Pan-Asian thought by Japanese academics. His work suggests that there was a growing interest among scholars about Islam that went beyond achieving foreign policy objectives (620). Here, he is writing against prominent Turkish scholars of Islam in Japan such as Esenbel (2011), who argue that the Japanese had “purely political visions of an Asian awakening that would serve the Japanese Empire…” (200-201). Krämer’s contention that the sale of more than 100,000 Qur’an’s in the 1930s alone equates with a “genuine” interest in Islam by the Japanese populace might be a little far-fetched, but his point that “people in Asian countries engaged seriously with the ideas and philosophies offered to them” is an important one (621).

\textsuperscript{588} Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 621.

\textsuperscript{589} Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 621.

\textsuperscript{590} Krämer, “Pan-Asianism’s Religious Undercurrents,” 622; 627-631. A 1938 translation of the Qur’an translated Allah as Ōkami (大神). Ōkami generally refers to the Shinto goddess Amaterasu. The language of Buddhism speckled other translations of the Qur’an, such as Izutu Toshihiko’s (井筒俊彦) 1958 translation. This was the first translation of the Qur’an from Arabic into vernacular Japanese (kōgo 口語).
Suzuki Takeshi was another one of the few Japanese converts to Islam, and he went on hajj in the early 1930s. Like Tanaka Ippei and Tang Yichen, Suzuki published an account of his journey.\(^{591}\) Suzuki’s account of his pilgrimage begins by justifying Japan’s connections with Muslims in China: since there were few Muslims in Japan, the Japanese looked outward to Islamic communities on the mainland to help them connect with their “Muslim brothers” throughout the world.\(^{592}\) Japanese converts like Suzuki dreamed of visiting or studying in places where the majority of the population was Muslim, as in Egypt. However, to Suzuki, being a Muslim in Japan was not an unpleasant experience because of Japan’s policies of religious tolerance and the atmosphere of religious plurality on the home islands. Japanese people, he noted, were very curious to learn about Islam. In his journal, Suzuki argued that there was no inherent incompatibility with being an observant Muslim and being a subject of the Japanese Empire: the emperor had a divine duty to protect everyone under his authority, and since Japan was religiously tolerant by law, being a subject of the Japanese Empire and a Muslim was entirely possible.\(^{593}\)

The Japanese also drew on Sun Yatsen’s appeals to Muslims in China to support the Republican Revolution to connect themselves to Muslims in China. Sun Yatsen was an early proponent of Pan-Asianism. Having spent a number of years in Japan in exile, he was influenced by the circles of Pan-Asianist thinkers there. As Sun Yatsen grew increasingly frustrated with the factionalism and in fighting within the Chinese elite ranks and his inability to improve China’s position vis-à-vis other world powers, he thought that perhaps Pan-Asianism could be the answer.

\(^{591}\) Suzuki’s journal is introduced in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.
\(^{592}\) Suzuki *Nihon kai kyōto no Mekka junrei-ki*, 15.
\(^{593}\) Suzuki, *Nihon kai kyōto no Mekka junrei-ki*, 16.
to some of China’s problems. In 1912, Sun delivered a speech to Muslims in Beijing about how they could learn to incorporate his *Three Principles of the People* into their daily lives as Muslims living in the new Republic. At the time, Sun was already aware of the important connections between Muslims from China and the Middle East, and emphasized these links in his speech. Later, in 1924, Sun delivered a now famous speech about Pan-Asianism, the Three Principles of the People, and a common cultural heritage among East Asians that could be used to combat western materialism. However, it was only in late 1937 that the Japanese began to draw more heavily from Sun’s works on Pan-Asianism, and the region was very different then it had been fifteen years before. Sun’s speech about Pan-Asianism to an audience in Japan began with a rhetorical question: “What problem does Pan-Asianism solve?” Sun believed that Pan-Asianism was the means by which people from Asia would be able to resist imperialism and free themselves from western oppression. In 1924, he envisioned Japan leading the way in this battle: “Japan today has become acquainted with the Western civilization…but retains the characteristics of the Oriental civilization…Now the question remains whether Japan will be the hawk of the Western civilization…or the tower of strength of the Orient.”

Nationalist writers also used Sun’s legacy when writing about Islam and Pan-Asianism. Writing about new mosques being built by the Japanese in occupied China, one Nationalist writer also asked his readers to ponder a rhetorical question: “What will come of the more than

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two hundred mosques that have come under Japanese control?" This line of questioning indicates that the Nationalists were concerned about Japanese overtures to Muslims in North China. Nationalist Chinese Muslim writers urged those who might be reading to trust that Allah would protect them in the war against the Japanese, while at the same time to have faith in the Chinese nation: “Our Muslim Brothers, you are faced with a perilous situation and you need to act out against the savage atrocities against your fellow Muslim brothers in China. Your belief in Allah should always come first!” Religion was presented as a possible savior for the nation, and a strong faith in Islam should come before attachment to the nation, though the two were not incompatible. As “Chinese fellow-Muslims” (zhongguo de jiaobaomen 中國的教胞們), Muslims living in Free China had the duty to be good representatives of their religion within the larger community the dar-al-Islam. The term is interesting, as “Chinese” is modifying the religious identity: here, religion came first and Chinese were a type of Muslims, not Muslims as a type of Chinese. In this instance, Islam was presented as a tool to harness the national spirit.

Nationalist Muslims also used the Qur’an to justify the notion that religion and the modern state were not incompatible. Prominent Nationalist Muslim Ma Hongkui 馬鴻逵 often combined theological and nationalistic arguments in his writing. Citing verses from the Qur’an about the rise and fall of nations that did not follow the will of Allah, Ma argued that in order to defeat the Japanese and set China on its proper course of unity and development, Muslims

600 Wang, “Zuixin de kangzhan xingshi”, 41.
needed to follow the will of God and help the Nationalists defeat the Japanese.\textsuperscript{602} Ma’s overall point seems to be that only through their faith in Allah would Chinese Muslims be able to take their rightful place in the modern-nation state, and only after they had defeated the Japanese would Muslims finally become the compatriots of the Chinese.\textsuperscript{603} In part, Ma’s article addressed the ways that the Japanese were able to enhance the differences between the Han and Muslims in North China in a roundabout way.

**PAN-TURANISM—PARALLELS AND PRECEDENTS**

Beyond their interest in Islam, the Japanese also looked to other pan-ideological movements, like Pan-Turanism, to potentially serve their needs. Early on, at least, Pan-Turanism was used to justify imperial expansion throughout East Asia. “Turan” is a Persian word that is generally understood to encompass the geographic region between the Ural and Altay mountains north of the Iranian plateau.\textsuperscript{604} As an ideological movement, Pan-Turanism gained favour in the early years of the twentieth century as Hungarian intellectuals reacted to Pan-Slavic movements promoted by the Russian Empire and to Hapsburg encroachment from the west. Like Pan-Asianism, pan-Turanism claimed common ancestry of peoples living in the regions defined as

\textsuperscript{602} Ma Hongkui 馬鴻逵, “Xibei huiman wenti zhi jiepou” 西北回滿問題之解剖. *Qingzhen Doubao* 清真鐸報 1 (1940) 23-25. Although Ma does not give the citation for the Qur’anic verse he is quoting, I assume that it is Qur’an 13.2 8:18. These verses describe the destruction that Allah wrought on the tribes (nations) who did not obey his command.

\textsuperscript{603} Ma, “Xibei huiman wenti zhi jiepou,” 25.

\textsuperscript{604} It is important to remember that the rigid line separating Europe from Asia along the Urals and the Caucasus and out into the Mediterranean through the Dardanelles was not drawn by Russian geographers until the first quarter of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century.
encompassing Turan. The movement gained followers from Finland to Japan as Hungarian and Swedish scholars promoted the Ural-Altaic theory, the idea that languages spanning this vast region shared common characteristics, such as vowel harmony and a lack of grammatical gender (unlike Latin and Slavic languages). The appeal of pan-Turanism to Japanese intellectuals fell with the outbreak of WWII in Europe, likely because of Japanese connections to the Nazis. As allies of the Germans, it was hard for the Japanese to continue supporting a theory whose purpose was to differentiate Germans from many of the people coming under Hitler’s Empire. Nevertheless, interest in Pan-Turanism served a particular purpose at a particular time and also proved to be a useful parallel for scholars in Japan for thinking about ways to appeal to Muslims.

Recent work by Turkish scholar Sinan Levant examines the Hungarian Turantist Benedek Barathosi-Balogh’s visit to Japan directly after WWI. During his time in Japan, Barathosi-Balogh delivered a series of lectures on pan-Turanism. These lectures ignited an interest among scholars in Japan who were searching for a way to claim common ancestry with non-Han minorities in China and in the Soviet Union. For their part, Hungarians also observed Japanese expansion on the mainland throughout the 1920s and considered Japan to be an increasingly attractive ally. According to Levant, pan-Turanism was alluring to Japanese policy-makers

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608 Of course, the Hungarians had lost about a third of their territory and a sizable percentage of their population in WWI. Their feelings of isolation from the west in the aftermath of WWI and the growing fears of Bolshevist expansion led Hungarians and pan-Turanists to search for new allies, like Japan, in the face of defeat.
who were looking to justify expansion into Xinjiang because they were searching for ways to connect themselves to the predominantly Turkic Muslim populations in the region.

The most prominent Japanese Turanist was Imaoka Juichiro. In the early years of the 1920s, Imaoka studied Hungarian in Budapest. When Barathosi Balogh came to Tokyo, Imaoka helped him translate his speeches into Japanese. When Imaoka returned to Japan after another sojourn in Budapest in the 1930s, he took up a position at the East European Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was instrumental helping the Japanese government establish the Society for Islamic Culture (イスラム文化協会).609 Levant points out that, like scholars of Islam in Japan, Japanese Turanists published prolifically in important journals like Dai Ajia Shugi. In these articles, the Han Chinese were often presented as fundamentally different from those of Turan origin: “Manchurian people [Manzoku 滿族] are completely different in race from Han Chinese. They are closer to us Japanese. This is what modern science has shown us. Then what kind of race are the Manchurians and Mongolians? In terms of studies of comparative language, folklore and archaeology, they belong to Ural-Altaic, namely the Turanic race.”610

This was a strategy similar to the one used by Pan-Asianists in their appeals to Muslims in China. By presenting the Han as different from the peoples that the Nationalists claimed were an integral part of the Zhonghua Minzu, the Japanese challenged one of the key components of the Nationalists’ claims over non-Han peoples in China. In one inflammatory article in Dai Ajia Shugi, Imaoka even went as far as accusing the Han Chinese of “stealing” Japanese ancestors—

meaning the Manchus and the Mongolians—from them. Imaoka’s argument also had a geographic component: he asserted that the Han were not from areas north of the Great Wall so they could make no claims over the people who lived in these regions. Together, these arguments allowed him to lay both racial and geographic claims over Manchuria. Rather than having the “occupying Han Chinese” rule in Manchuria and Mongolia, Imaoka made it clear that the Japanese were much more suited to help the Manchurians and Mongolians govern their territories until they were ready to do it themselves.

Slavs and Russians were also perceived as a threat to Pan-Turan solidarity. Through Pan-Turanism, the Japanese made appeals to people living in both Outer Mongolia and the Soviet Union in an attempt to bring them under the Japanese sphere of influence. Pan-Turanism and Pan-Asianism were both ideologically anti-communist, and the Japanese argued that Turnanism could be used to create internal dissent within the Soviet Union. In these justifications, Xinjiang figured heavily into Japanese support for pan-Turanism throughout the 1920s. Bringing Xinjiang under Japanese control was seen as seminal to their plans for controlling Asia: Xinjiang was “not only the gateway of transportation between east and west, but also the key position for ethnic migrations.” This quote, from an article in Dai Ajia Shugi by Imaoka, makes clear the strategic importance that Japan placed on Xinjiang. For the Japanese military advisors, an extension of Japanese influence into Xinjiang would have potentially meant threatening Chinese,

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611 Levant “Turanism in Japan from Perspective of the Pan-Asiatic Journal,” 318.
612 Levant “Turanism in Japan from Perspective of the Pan-Asiatic Journal,” 316.
613 Juzi, “Riben chuangli huijiao xiehui zancheng,” 53.
Soviet and British interests in the region. By claiming a common cultural heritage with Mongolians, Manchus and Uyghurs through Turanic linguistic and ancestral connections, the Japanese presented a viable alternative to Bolshevism, Chinese nationalism, and British imperialism.

**NEW RELATIONSHIPS FOUNDED ON A LONG HISTORICAL MEMORY**

Through historical narratives and creation myths, the Japanese hoped to present Muslims in China as culturally and racially distinct from the Han Chinese and more similar to Arabs. The Japanese also projected the relationship between Muslims from China and Japan as far as back as the Ming Dynasty, and tied these connections to extensive networks of Muslim traders from China throughout the South China Seas and Central Asia. Linking themselves to Muslims through often imagined historical connections allowed the Japanese to legitimize their claims over Muslims throughout the region. These supposedly deep historical relationships between Japan, Muslims from China, and Muslims throughout the dar-al-Islam also gave the Japanese a rationale to forge relationships with Muslim communities in Greater East Asia and beyond.

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615 The Japanese also invited a number of Pan-Turkic scholars to Japan in the 1930s. For example, Iyad Ishaqi, a Kazan Tatar novelist and playwright came to Japan in 1933. After visiting Japan, he toured Manchukuo. Following his visit, the Japanese hosted a Turko-Tatar Muslim Congress in Kobe in May 1934 where both Ishaqi and Abürreşid Ibrahim were in attendance along with a number of Tatars, Turks, Bashkirs, Uzbeks, Kirghiz, and Sarts. At the conference the group discussed the possibility of a Turko-Muslim state in Asia. This state, which would potentially be in Xinjiang would be facilitated by the groups’ “cooperation with Japan to build the New Order in East Asia.” Little is known of what became of Ishaqi. Levant explains that he disappeared after calling on a Polish general in London in 1941 while in the company of an Azerbaijani refugee from Soviet Russia. Sinan Levant, “Images of Japan Created by the Inter-war Turkish Press: The Role of Cumhuriyet, Turkish Daily Newspaper (1933-1939),” *Annals of the Japanese Association for Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (2010): 125-128.
The origin stories about how Muslims had arrived in China were not new, but the Japanese used specific vocabulary and framed the narratives in ways beneficial to their imperial objectives. For example, it was true that Muslim traders had arrived in China during the Tang Dynasty from the same regions as the Manicheans (Manikyō 摩尼教). From that point on, however, one Japanese writer pointed out, there had always been problems and divisions between the Muslims and Chinese people (shinajin 支那人), and the Hui (minzoku 民族) remained distinct from the Han because they had special customs, habits, clothing, and beliefs.

Here, the choice of the word zhinaren to describe Chinese people is intentional and important: by not using the nationalist term of zhongguoren to talk about people from China, the Japanese were being purposefully pejorative while they were simultaneously dismantling nationalist rhetoric of the zhonghua minzu. Also, the idea that Muslims constituted a minzu was a distinctly modern nineteenth-century creation. In this instance, the Japanese writer used the cultural and religious differences between the Hui and the Han to point out the large cleavages between these communities since the Muslim arrival in China during the Tang.

As mentioned, Japanese scholars also tried to push their connection to Muslims from China back hundreds of years. A number of scholars claimed that the Japanese connections to Islam in China could be traced back to the Han Kitab (漢克塔布) and that Chinese works on Islam were widely read and appreciated by Japanese scholars during the Tokugawa period.

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617 Togō, “Mōkyō shūkyō no gai mí,” 16.
618 Juzi, “Riben chuangli huijiao xiehui zancheng,” 50-52. It is perhaps a slight overstatement to say that the Han Kitab was “widely read” in Tokugawa Japan.
Beyond this, some scholars tried to trace how Persian and Arabic scientific texts had made their way to Japan through Chinese translations. Connecting the dissemination of Arabic and Persian scientific texts to Japan served two purposes: it tied Japanese interests to the Muslim revival movements in the Middle East by highlighting how scientific innovation in the early modern Middle East was not lost on the Japanese; and it also connected Japan to the Middle East going back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, albeit through Chinese translations of texts. Yet another trope linking the Japanese to Muslims in China explained that since the Ming Dynasty, Arab traders in the South Seas had returned to Persia from Fujian with Japanese crafts and porcelains (*Bijutsu kōgei* 美術工藝), and that these crafts were prized throughout the Muslim world.\(^{619}\) For instance, the Mughals (莫臥兒) in India greatly appreciated Japanese craftsmanship and placed enormous value on white jade (白石) carvings from Japan. The white jade, of course, came from mines in Xinjiang where the population was predominantly Muslim.\(^{620}\)

In their descriptions of these connections, the Japanese presented Arabs as experienced seamen and great traders who had transported Islam like a piece of precious cargo from the Middle East to South Asia and East Asia. Over the centuries, Islam had disseminated throughout China, but Muslims in the region had maintained their Islamic entrepreneurial wherewithal. Because of this it was argued that Chinese Muslim traders were well positioned in trading


\(^{620}\) *Nihon to kaikyō to no kankei*, Chapter 9.
entrepôts throughout nan’yō (南洋). Muslims from China used Islam and what were described as their own inherent qualities as traders owing to their distant connections to Arab traders to forge long-lasting networks that connected them to South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. The Japanese thought that these Muslim traders from China could be used to spread the word about the benevolence of the Japanese Empire throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and beyond.

Another origin myth that connected people in East Asia to the Arabs drew on familiar biblical allegory. Japanese scholars argued that all Arabs (Arabia jinshu アラビア人種) were descendants of Ham (hamu jinshu ハム人種), Noah’s third son. Other Muslim nationalities that were also descendants of Ham were the Turks (Toruku jin 土耳其人), the Moors (muua ムーア), and the Persians (Perushia-jin 波斯人). The Japanese also asserted that several nationalities living in Greater East Asia were distantly related to Ham and his descendants, for instance, the Polynesians (Porineshia-jin ポリネシア人) and Mongolians (Mongoru-jin モンゴル人). Through the descendants of Ham, Islam had spread to people in grasslands (sōgen 草原), in deserts (Sabaku 沙漠), and in tropical rainforests (nettaiurin 熱帯雨林) all over the Eurasian

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622 Amakawa, “Daitōasensō to sekai,” 189.
623 In the Old Testament, Ham was Noah’s third son. Ham had four sons: Cush, Mizraim (the modern Hebrew word for “Egypt”), Phut and Canaan. In the Bible, Ham and his descendants were the progenitors of the peoples who inhabited Egypt, Palestine, and parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and thus Ham sometimes called the father of the Arabs. Ham and Noah had a falling out, and as a result Noah cursed Ham’s son Cush and banished him to Egypt with some of his brothers. Of course, it would be more than 3,000 years before the Prophet brought Islam to the people in the Arabian Peninsula.
continent and throughout Africa. Once again, tying the origins of Muslims from China to the supposed progenitor of all the Arabs allowed the Japanese to attempt to dismantle the Nationalists rhetoric of the *zhonghua minzu* by positing that the Hui had never, in fact, been Chinese.

In these narratives, Muslims from China had already established the networks the Japanese needed to develop their connection to Muslims beyond North China, and it was up to the Japanese to figure out how to use them to foster a growing and thriving religious community among believers throughout the region. From the perspective of Japanese diplomatic relations in the Pacific, China’s Muslims, with whom the Japanese had been working for years by the outbreak of the Pacific War, could be deployed to create links to Muslims coming under their control after 1941. Interestingly, the Japanese noted that China had long underestimated the clout of its Muslim population, especially with regards to making connections to countries in East Asia. By drawing on the historical connections of Muslims from China to Greater East Asia, Japan used Islam as a way to validate its incursions into these areas, and Muslims from China were an important part of how they hoped to legitimize themselves in this regard.

**The particular characteristics of Muslims from China that benefited Japanese visions for a Greater East Asia**

**Muslims as entrepreneurs with vast business connections**

Muslims from China were presented as having certain characteristics that not only differentiated them from the Han, but also made them good candidates to become loyal subjects of the

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624 Amakawa, “Daitōasensō to sekai” 184-186.
625 Amakawa, “Daitōasensō to sekai,” 208-209.
Japanese Empire. As noted, Muslims were presented as shrewd businesspeople descended from the Arabs. Their business acumen was seen as an asset for the Japanese, who hoped to expand their industrial enterprises throughout Asia and in the Middle East. Muslims, the Japanese argued, were also able separate religion from business: religion was religion and business was business. Unlike the Mongolians and the Tibetans, whose aptitude for entrepreneurship was not that great, Muslims could be used to create and foster business relationships with the Middle East and the Dutch East Indies, which were seen as key to Japan’s growth as an industrial power given the vast oil reserves that had recently been discovered in these places. As well, in places like Java and Burma, the Japanese noted that there were many overseas Chinese Muslim entrepreneurs (Kakyō no uchi mo kaikyō 華僑のうちも回教) where the majority of the population was Muslim.

Chinese with Islamic Characteristics—Governance, Peacefulness and Obedience

The Nationalists claimed that the Japanese only wanted to work with Muslims in order to tap into some primordial militant spirit of Islam and harness it for their military expansion on the mainland (see Chapter 1). However, in reality, the Japanese often admired Muslims exactly the opposite reason. They emphasized that Islam was a peaceful religion, and that the history of violent Muslim uprisings in China was due to the oppression Muslims had suffered at the hands

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626 “Nihon to kaikyō ajia” 日本と回教亜細亜, Dai Ajia Shugi 大亜細亜主義 6, no. 62 (1941): 28.  
“Shūkyō wa shūkyō shōbai wa shōbai na nodearu 宗教は宗教商賣は商賣なのである.”  

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of the Chinese, not some inherently violent characteristic of Islam itself. Writing in the Japanese-published journal *Huijiao*, Li Fushun explained that Islam had once thrived in China because there was a distinct separation of church and state from the Qin Dynasty onward that helped to foster an atmosphere of religious plurality in China. Thus, when Muslims had arrived in China during the Tang Dynasty, locals found parallels between the foundational teachings of Islam and “Chinese” religions such as Buddhism that allowed Muslims to relate to non-Muslims. However, during the Qing Dynasty, there had been numerous Muslim uprisings that were violently suppressed. Li never use the word “Manchu” when talking about the Qing consolidation of power during Kangxi’s reign in Yunnan and the suppression of the Panthay Rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century. The Japanese claimed a common cultural heritage with Mongolians, Manchus and Uyghurs through Turanic linguistic and ancestral connections, and tried to link these to Muslims in China as well, therefore they could not present the Qing as Manchus. These rebellions, Li argued, were not the fault of the Muslims, but of the Qing regime that suppressed the religious spirit of Muslims. Li went on to describe the optimism Muslims in China had felt after the overthrow of the Qing by the Revolutionary forces. However, this optimism soon turned to disappointment as Muslims became disillusioned with the new Republican government. It was only once Manchukuo had become an independent state, Li argued, that Muslims in North China were able to thrive. Li went on to say that in Manchukuo, Muslims were working with the Japanese with the hopes of bringing perpetual peace (*yongjiu heping* 永久和平) to East Asia. This state of peace would allow a return to a natural state for

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628 Li Fushun 李福順 “Zhuiyi jiwang yisi ji jianglai” 追憶既往一思及將來, *Huijiao* 回教 1, no. 8 (1939): 23.
Muslims, who had been embroiled in violent uprisings by the Qing, not because they were violent themselves. In fact, Li argued, Muslims favored Japanese rule because it brought peace and stability to North China. Muslims also wanted peace in East Asia because of certain characteristics associated with Islam, particularly obedience and servitude. Being a believer in Islam meant that every Muslim had a responsibility to be obedient to Allah, and also had a responsibility to serve the community. Li extended this argument to the larger community of Muslims throughout the world: by standing together with their Muslim brothers beyond the borders of Manchukuo, Muslims would be able to help their brethren come to peaceful solutions to the problems of colonialism which plagued the Islamic world.\footnote{Li “Zhuiyi jiwang yisi ji jianglai,” 24-25.} Although we could simply dismiss this as Japanese imperialist propaganda, it is important to note that unlike the Nationalist writers claimed, the Japanese often presented Islam as a peaceful religion.

The Japanese also addressed some of the specific concerns of Muslims in relation to Islamic governance. Unlike in many western nations, there was no separation of religious authority from the state in Muslim countries. The Turkish Republic had abolished the caliphate (halifa 哈里發) in 1924 under the Ataturk’s republican reforms, and was presented by certain Japanese scholars as un-Islamic. The Turks, they argued, had given into western ideas of separation of religious authority and the state.\footnote{“Huijiao yu erci zhanzhang”回教与二次欧戰, Zhongguo huijiao jinguo huixubao 中国回教救国会会报 1, no. 11 (1939): 10.} This weakening of Islamic forms of governance was attributed to the heavy-handed influence of Britain and France throughout the Middle East. In order to ensure that a republican government such as the one that governed Turkey did not
become the norm, Muslims from around the world to communicate with each other about how to rectify the modern state system with Islam.631 In this way, the plight of Muslims in faraway Syria, Pakistan and elsewhere became the plight of Muslims in China, as all were presented as fighting for the same objectives. These arguments went beyond simply propounding an ideological connection to Pan-Islamic movements that favoured reinstating the caliphate: they were meant to foster tangible connections between Muslims living in China and Muslims throughout the colonial world.

**Forging Connections with the Islamic World through Muslims from Occupied China**

As Japanese connections on the mainland expanded, so too did their interactions with Muslims in India, Turkey, Persia, and other newly formed “independent” states in the Middle East.632 By helping Muslims in China, the Japanese would contribute to the revitalization of Muslim communities there, which in turn would help the Muslims from China become leaders in the international community.633 According to one Nationalist source, by the late 1920s the Japanese were selling arms to the Saudis, and they were helping the Afghans upgrade their army.634 In a press release issued in both Chinese and Japanese, the Japanese stated that the “International Moslem [sic] Association” (written in English in both texts) of Tokyo was in full support of Muslim revival movements in the Middle East. As a modern nation, Japan had the capacity to

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633 Juzi, “Riben chuangli huijiao xiehui zancheng,” 52
help Muslims throughout the colonial world free themselves from oppression. The Japanese also understood the regional variations in the ways that Islam was practiced throughout Asia, and varied their tactics depending on the situation at hand. For instance, when discussing how to make connections with Muslims in India, the Japanese pointed to the uniqueness and particularities of Islam in South East Asia. The Japanese thought that there were too many cultural differences between Muslims from India and Muslims from South East Asia to overcome in the short-term, and focused their attention in India on supporting anti-British Nationalists, regardless of their religious beliefs. Throughout the 1930s, the number of Indian students from Calcutta University (Jiaergedage Daxue 加爾格達各大學) studying in Japan increased dramatically. When a number of the Nationalist-supported Muslims encountered a group of Indian hajjis on their pilgrimage to intercept the Japanese-sponsored hajj, they were outraged to hear that the Indian hajjis spoke highly of the Japanese Empire. The Indian hajjis told the Nationalist-supported Muslims that in recent years the Japanese promised India

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635 Juzi, “Riben chuangli huijiao xiehui zancheng.” 52
636 “Daitōsen to kaikyōken” 大東亞戰回教圈. Kaikyōken 回教圈 6, no. 1 (1942): 7. In their support for independence movements in India they frequently presented India as both the geographic and cultural center of Asia. (Zhu Jianmin 朱建民. “Riben yu Yisilanjiao” 日本与伊斯蘭教. Huijiao Datong 回教圖 8/9 (1938): 135.) By the 20s, there were a number of prominent Hindi Indian nationalists like Rash Behari Bose (1886-1944) living and working in Japan. Bose managed to avoid extradition by the British a number of times, and was naturalized as a Japanese subject in 1923. According to Japanese lore, he is also said to have introduced Indian style curry to Japan. In 1942, he convinced the Japanese government to establish the Indian Independence League in Tokyo. He used his Japanese contacts to campaign on behalf of Pan-Asianism and Indian independence and was an influential advocate of Japan centered Pan-Asianism. His compatriot Subhas Chandra Bose (no relation, 1897-1945) also worked with the Axis powers during WWII to try to rid India of British rule. Chandra Bose met with Hitler to marshal support for Indian independence and became the head of Rash Behari Bose’s Indian Independence League shortly after it was established (Saaler and Szpilman, “Introduction,” 23.)

liberation from the British and were sponsoring their studies in Tokyo.\textsuperscript{638} In Malaya, Muslims also looked to Japan as a potential liberating force from British imperialism. For example, the Malayan nationalist journalist Ibrahim bin Haji Yaacoob (1911-1979) founded Kesatuan Melayu Muda (League of Malay Youth) with Japanese support.\textsuperscript{639}

Prominent Muslims were also invited to Japan by military advisors and intellectuals to observe the treatment of Muslims living in the Japanese Empire. In 1938, an account of one of these visits was translated into Japanese from Arabic and published in a Japanese journal about Islam.\textsuperscript{640} Yahia Abdul Mesa (ヤフヤ・アブドウラー・ムーサー) was born in the Hejaz (ヒジャーズ) and later studied in Italy. Mesa stayed in Japan for six months in 1938 and attended the opening of the Tokyo Mosque. At first Mesa found few commonalities between Japan and the Middle East because all his experiences in Japan were so new and foreign to him.\textsuperscript{641} However, after some time, he came to understand and appreciate the similarities between Japanese morals and customs and Middle Eastern Islamic cultural mores. Although he acknowledged that there were important differences between Muslims from the Middle East and the Japanese, during his stay in Japan the exoticism (エキゾチズム) with which he had viewed the Japanese had been satisfied, and he explained that he came to see Asian people (Tōyō hito 東洋人) as much more compassionate and tolerant than westerners.\textsuperscript{642} After talking with Japanese people and traveling around Japan, Mesa decided to write the article because he wanted to present his impressions of

\textsuperscript{638} Zhang “Zhongguo Huijiao chaojin riji.” 33.
\textsuperscript{639} Saaler and Szpilman, “Introduction,” 24-25.
\textsuperscript{640} “Kaikyōto no Nihonoyobi nihonjin mi” 回教徒の日本および日本人観, Kaikyō Ken 2, no. 2 (1938): 98-103.
\textsuperscript{641} “Kaikyōto no Nihonoyobi nihonjin mi,” 98.
\textsuperscript{642} “Kaikyōto no Nihonoyobi nihonjin mi,” 98.
Japan to the Japanese people. He wrote that Middle Easterners had long admired Japan for its rapid modernization after the Meiji Restoration and the strength and courage it displayed standing up to the western imperialists. Mesa felt that the Middle East had a lot to learn from the Japanese and considered the country a strong ally.

In order to emphasize the similarities between the Middle East and Japan, as well as the differences between these two places in the west, the author cited Rudyard Kipling’s 奇普蘭 frequently mis-interpreted poem: “Oh, East is East, West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” However, the entire stanza of Kipling’s often-misquoted poem actually implies that there are no differences between the east and the west, and that all humans are in essence the same:

“Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
though they come from the ends of the earth!”

He described Japan as a safe, clean and modern place especially compared to the dirty streets of Rome and Venice, where he had studied as a young man. After a brief description of the escalation of tensions between China and Japan that had led the two nations to war, he stated that he had no reason to believe that the Japanese harbored any type of evil intentions on the mainland because of their continued support of Muslim populations there. Other imperial

646 “Kaikyōto no Nihonoyobi nihonjin mi,” 99.
powers suggested that the Japanese concealed their malicious intent towards Muslims because these powers had their own aspirations in China and Japan’s successes in the region impeded western imperialist agendas, especially in Xinjiang and Manchukuo. He argued that the Japanese were adamant about building a new Asia (*Shin Ajia kensetsu* 新アジア建設) and that Muslims needed to be a part of this vision: as neighbors and victims of western aggression, Asia and the Middle East had a lot more in common than might be imagined at first glance.\(^{647}\) Muslims all over Asia, he argued, had to have faith that the Japanese could save both Muslims and the region from western encroachment and the Soviets.\(^ {648}\) In his writings, Mesa used Muslims in China to showcase Middle Easterners’ awareness of Japanese outreach to Muslims, highlighting once again how Muslims from China remained integral to the expansion and maintenance of Japanese connections to the Islamic world.

**Conclusions**

Pan-Asianism and state-building were especially linked in Manchukuo. Recent scholarship on the topic highlights the importance of bringing “a cultural dimension to the discussion of Pan-Asianism,” rather than thinking of it solely as a political ideology.\(^ {649}\) Mariko Asano Tamanoi describes Manchuria not as a geopolitical entity, but as a space shaped by the concepts such as imperialism, Pan-Asianism, and other ideological forces like globalization and post-coloniality. Pan-Asian rhetoric “implied a cultural proximity” between the Japanese and Muslims on the

\(^{647}\) “Kaikyōto no Nihonoyobi nihonjin mi,” 102.  
\(^{648}\) “Kaikyōto no Nihonoyobi nihonjin mi,” 102.  
mainland, but it also gave Muslims from China the chance to partake in global Islamic movements, often on their own terms. For Muslim minorities living on China’s frontiers, transnational movements held a certain appeal since they offered those who had long “occupied a liminal or transnational space” a way to feel like they were part of something meaningful.

Scholars have often approached Pan-Asianism as a “defeated ideology.” After Japan lost the war, Pan-Asianism fell out of favour as people throughout East Asia were convinced that the ideology was only used to give credibility to Japanese militarism. However, this outlook fails to take into account the ways Pan-Asianism was used by Muslims in China to re-imagine their role in global Islam in relation to the rest of the Islamic world before and during the war. Working off the the assumption that Pan-Asianism is a defeated ideology blinds us to an aspect of wartime collaboration with the Japanese: after the war, both the Nationalists and Communists picked up on certain threads of Japanese Pan-Asian discourse in their own overtures to Muslim populations in China. The clearest example of this is perhaps Mao’s deployment of Muslims to the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the People’s Republic of China’s support for Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956.

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652 Hotta, Pan-Asianism and Japan's War 1931-1945, Introduction. Also, Prasenjit Duara writes: “That pan-Asian civilizations discourse in Japan had a violent dimension is well known, but the ideology itself cannot be dismissed merely as disguised imperialism.” (Duara, “The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism,” 111.)

Prasenjit Duara points out that in the 1930s as Japan expanded into North China, the Japanese competed with the Communists and the Nationalists for the allegiances of members of religious organizations. It became a priority for the Japanese to bring as many religious associations and organizations as they could under direct control of the imperial government. Under the Japanese, the goals of many of these organizations were reformulated to “resist Communism and uphold the East Asian new order.” The Japanese presented themselves to religious organizations as more tolerant of their religious beliefs, and collaborating with the Japanese often furthered the objectives of many of these groups.

The rhetoric of Pan-Asianism was often tied to discourses of redemption: Asia needed to be saved and so did Islam. Redemptive societies in China were not novel, yet the “new global context of the twentieth century significantly transformed the meaning of their projects…and these societies sought to supplement and correct the material civilization of the West with the spiritual civilization of the East. The resultant synthesis they envisaged took the shape of a religious universalism that included not only Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, but also Islam and Christianity.” The inclusion of Islam into the realm of these redemptive societies can be understood as part of an increased awareness about the role that non-westerners played in the ever-changing global dynamics of the 1930s. The Japanese “sought vehicles through which they could use local collaborations,” and “suddenly pushed the religious societies into prominence, and gave them official status and political power.” This was a different approach

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from the Nationalists and the Communists, who often censured religious societies, decrying them superstitious relics of the past. In this way, the Japanese used religious organizations to their advantage by “turning them into state-controlled civic organizations.”

Through the promotion of economic development among Muslim communities living in “strategic places” throughout East Asia, the Japanese sought to foster a sense of community among Muslim populations in the places where they had long felt overlooked. The Japanese presented an alternative vision for disenfranchised groups on the mainland who might not have been satisfied with the Nationalist or Communist visions for the Chinese nation-state. The Japanese also paid extra attention to religious minority groups because the loyalty of Muslims was so important for their visions of East Asia: “As a multiracial state, Manchukuo was meant to be a showpiece and a microcosm of a racially transcendent pan-Asian unity.”

While emphasizing a common lineage of all peoples in the region, the Japanese focused on showcasing how well integrated religious minorities, including Muslims, were into the Japanese empire.

Gray Tuttle’s work on Tibetan Buddhism explores how “both state actors and members of religious institutions readily adopted and adapted religious traditions in order to advance their

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659 “Nihon to kaikyō ajia” 日本と回教亞細亞, Dai Ajia Shugi 大亞細亞主義 6, no. 62 (1941): 28.
661 For example, Japanese-sponsored newspapers published in North China such as the Shengjiang Times made a concerted effort to include images and stories about Muslims, and “the images of religion featured in the Times were inextricably related to both sweeping social trends and particularistic political needs.” (Dubois, “Japanese Print Media and Manchurian Cultural Community,” 232-233.)
respective interests” in Tibet. Tuttle presents a case for thinking beyond the dichotomous framing of religion as traditional and the state as modern, and his work showcases how “the state can ‘use’ religion for its ends, such as to divide or unite an ethnic group,” and how “religious institutions can also ‘use’ the state to accomplish certain goals, such as the maintenance of prestige or property.” Transnational Buddhist networks were developing throughout the twentieth century, largely with the help of Japanese Buddhists. Through these expanding connections to the outside world, Tuttle argues that Tibetan Buddhists were deeply involved in the “remaking of religion as a political enterprise, [that was] intimately linked to the imagination of a new social and intellectual community,” among the global community of Buddhist believers. The idea of a world religion, be it Buddhism or Islam, was central to this formulation, and as connections between disparate religious communities developed, they started the “forging of international links” that superseded the nation-state through a (perhaps imagined) common religious identity. In this sense, Islam in China, much like Tibetan Buddhism, was swept up in the currents of globalization and tied to larger, international political movements. Throughout this process, both the Japanese and Muslims living under occupation began to understand how to utilize Islam to link it to larger, global religious ideologies, such as Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism.

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664 Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists and the Making of Modern China*, 83.
665 Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists and the Making of Modern China*, 68.
By aligning their interests with the interests of Muslims in China, the Japanese were able to position themselves as allies to the Middle East even though the two were geographically and culturally distant. Critics of Japanese efforts, such as the Nationalist government in Chongqing and American observers were quick to point of the incompatibility of Islam and Shinto. Tenuous cultural connections between Japan and the Middle East might have seemed far-reaching to many, but they prove a point: in order to make any tangible connections to the Middle East, the Japanese needed Muslims from China. Writing in 1941, a Japanese scholar of Islam evoked the imagery of a green and fragrant spring in Tokyo to explain the relationship between Islam and Japan: green is symbolic in Islam, as it is reportedly the Prophet’s favorite color, and spring represents a time of rebirth and flourishing. However, the Japanese did not limit their efforts to the realm of the rhetorical, and committed themselves to tangible projects to show their support for Islam. The opening of the mosque in Tokyo in 1938 was important for Muslims in Japan, but it was also meant to foster mutual understanding and cooperation between Muslims throughout the world. At the opening of the mosque, the Japanese pointed out they had built over a hundred mosques in China to prove their intentions toward Islam were pure. Thus, in their appeals to Muslims around the world, the Japanese showcased the efforts they were making on the mainland to support Islam.

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669 “Nihon to kaikyō ajia” 日本と回教亞細亞, Dai Ajia Shugi 大亞細亞主義 6, no. 62 (1941): 28.
670 “Nihon to kaikyō ajia,” 28.
671 “Nihon to kaikyō ajia,” 28.
CONCLUSIONS

A TELLING VIGNETTE

In the early 1950s, a British consular officer in Karachi sent a number of dispatches to the British offices in Taiwan to request information about a group of Muslims from China who were stranded in Pakistan having been denied entry visas to Saudi Arabia to go on the hajj. The consular officer in Karachi was curious to learn about the relationships and allegiances between Muslims who had fled to Taiwan with the Nationalists, Muslims who had remained on the mainland, and the Chinese Communists. The response from Taiwan explained that in the 1930s and 1940s there were competing groups and factions of Muslims whose loyalties to each other shifted as frequently as their political allegiances, depending on who could successfully meet their needs and demands throughout the wartime era.\textsuperscript{672} The dispatch clarified that by the late 1940s, the main political players influencing Muslim populations (often against each other) were the Nationalists and the Communists, but prior to that the Soviet Union and Japan had exerted

\textsuperscript{672} British National Archives, Military Intelligence Division Regional File relating to China, 1922-1944, 2610.50/2.
considerable influence over Muslims from Xinjiang to Heilongjiang. The British bureaucrat in Taiwan explained that the Japanese were initially more successful than either the Communists or the Nationalists at working with Muslims because of their strategies and tactics: the Japanese had directed their efforts at recruiting lower-level local elites who stayed in the occupied areas, and appealed to disgruntled Muslims who felt neglected and unsure of their place in the both the Nationalist and Communist visions for the future of the Chinese nation-state. The report went on to note that the Japanese had used the support of Muslim populations living under occupation against the Soviets, the Chinese Communists, the Nationalists, as well as against British and American imperial ambitions in the region. Although the bureaucrat was unclear about the reason the particular group of Muslims in question had been denied entry to Saudi Arabia, he speculated that their wartime affiliation with the Axis powers might have been the reason.

This vignette presents a complicated picture of many actors vying for the loyalty of Muslims in China during the 1930s and 1940s. China was not a unified nation-state at any point during this time and throughout the war close to 200 million people were at one time or another under the purview of the Japanese occupying forces. Nationalist assertions of a unified China and the anti-Japanese rhetoric that accompanied it differed wildly from the conditions and

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673 British National Archives, Military Intelligence Division Regional File relating to China, 1922-1944, 2610.50/2.
675 British National Archives, Military Intelligence Division Regional File relating to China, 1922-1944, 2610.50/2.
situations experienced by most people during the war. Although Japanese intentions can be
construed as nefarious, Japanese policies and practices had a tangible impact on Muslim
populations under their control.

Post-war scholars and politicians have characterized the Japanese imperial efforts to
mobilize Muslims in this period as evil and ultimately failed efforts. The idea that Japan’s
attempts to co-opt Chinese Muslims might have shaped the state-building efforts of Chinese
leaders, Nationalist and Communist, is all but inadmissible in the politicized post-war discourse
regarding ethnicity and the Chinese nation. And yet GMD policy-makers and the Japanese were
clearly engaged in a serious and protracted battle to win the hearts and minds of Muslims on the
mainland, the results of which were not predetermined. Japanese policies influenced how the
GMD addressed important issues facing Muslim communities all over China. Thus when we
discuss the construction of ethnic minority identity, and the role of non-Han minorities in
twentieth-century China, we must consider Japanese ideology and the Japanese presence in
North China among the components shaping that construction.

The Nationalists knew how vulnerable the borderlands were, and the “degree to which
Japanese encouragement of ‘ethnic independence’ was fostering irredentism among the people of
China’s periphery.”676 When the war ended, the Nationalists did not see it as just the victory over
Japan, but also as a way to begin to consolidate the borders of the Chinese nation-state. After
1945, the Nationalists were finally presented with the opportunity to draw the borders where they
had wanted them to be for almost forty years, and their vision of the “territorial extent of China

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676 Diana Lary, “Introduction,” in Negotiating China’s Destiny in WWII, edited by Hans van der Wen,
was close to those later adopted by the Communist government.” However, when the war with Japan ended, the Civil War between the Chinese Communists and the Nationalists began almost immediately, and the Nationalist government continued to experience “unexpected and overwhelming” problems when attempting to bring the borderlands and the peoples who inhabited them under their control.  

**ITERATIONS OF JAPANESE OVERTURES IN THE PRC’S APPROACH TO MANAGING MUSLIMS**

“Even if the Japanese lose the war and have to withdraw from the Chinese mainland, they may be able to leave behind a disaffected, pro-Japanese minority group that they can continue to control.”

Although this never happened, the OSS agent who filed a top-secret report concerning Japanese infiltration among Muslim populations in North China presented it as a possible scenario as late as August 1944. The outcome of the war abruptly ended Japanese influence among Muslim communities in North China, but many of the Japanese policies and approaches were later echoed in the ways that the PRC government handled their interactions with the Hui. In his ongoing work about the changing meaning of citizenship in Africa throughout the process of decolonization, Fredrick Cooper posits: “if we begin with the premise that sovereignty meant a division of the world into distinct and equivalent political entities, we will miss the ambiguities and conflicting conceptions that surrounded the concept [of citizenship] in the mid-twentieth

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678 Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China’s Frontier*, 159.
This valuable insight is important for those of us who study collaborative imperial spaces in the twentieth century because it highlights the fact that there were viable options to the nation-state system for many people living throughout the turbulent wartime period. Both the Nationalists and the Communists project back an infallible notion of what it meant to be Chinese throughout the twentieth century. Yet, failing to look at the ways that collaborating with the Japanese Empire appealed to Muslims from North China during the war discounts the many different ways that people living under occupation envisioned their place in the world and their ever-changing relationship to the state during this time.

After 1949, iterations of Japanese overtures to Sino-Muslims on the mainland can be seen in some of the ways that the government of the new People’s Republic of China articulated their understanding of the place of Chinese Muslims in the nation-state. In a recent article about the relationship between the PRC and Gamal Abdel Nasser during the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, Kyle Haddad-Fonda argues that the “actual impact of imperialism—whether American, British, or Japanese—on the psyche of the Chinese people,” was lasting and that “what matters most is that the CCP was consistently able to utilize imperialist rhetoric as a way of appealing to its citizens. It is, therefore, important to distinguish between imperialism as a historical reality and the idea of imperialism as manifested in the collective memory.”

In the early 1950s, China was looking to assert itself on the international scene and saw the co-optation and support of its Muslim population as one way to achieve this. The new

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Communist regime “downplayed its Marxist ideology and focused instead on its commitment to thwarting imperialism around the globe,” and they did this by showcasing their Muslim population to the world. Throughout the Suez Canal Crisis, the PRC government gave consistent, if not outspoken, support to Nasser’s government in Egypt. When the crisis culminated in the invasion of Egypt by the United Kingdom, France, and Israel, the PRC contributed 20 million Swiss Francs to subsidize the Egyptian war effort. This symbolic gesture should be understood as part of the anti-imperialist struggle for Third World sovereignty and solidarity in the post-WWII era as well as an effort on the part of the Chinese to deviate from the Soviet line in international politics. Egypt was a new and close ally, and the first Arab nation to formally recognized the PRC. While trying to secure legitimacy at home, the Chinese looked to countries like Egypt to bolster their reputation internationally, especially among their large and divided Muslim population. During the Suez Crisis, Mao, like both his Nationalist and Japanese predecessors before him, paid disproportionate attention to Chinese Muslims and rallied them behind the cause. Evoking the rhetoric of pan-Islamism and solidarity among the non-aligned nations gave the PRC leverage with minorities populations at home: they could present themselves as helping Muslims in distant lands in their efforts to stand up to the British.

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682 Haddad-Fonda writes: “While the popular reaction to the Suez Crisis temporarily consumed all segments of urban Chinese society, both the media and the government places particular emphasis on Chinese Muslims, who were accorded a special role in the demonstrations by virtue of their religious link to the Egyptian people. This focus must be seen as a political statement on the part of the PRC government, which had long endeavoured to include Muslims—as well as other minority religious and ethnic groups—within its definition of the Chinese nation.” (The Domestic Significance of China’s Policy Toward Egypt,” 46.)


In this way the PRC was able to cast itself as an anti-imperialist regime who was sympathetic to the plight of other states struggling to find their way in the new world order. But this rhetoric was not new: it had been used successfully by the Japanese during the Second World War to align the struggles of Muslims in China to those of Muslims throughout the colonized world.

In many ways, then, the PRCs mobilization of the Hui in Ningxia in recent years to forge economic and cultural connections with the Arab world is in no way unprecedented. The Hui, under the guidance of the PRC, “underwent an ethnic turn in the revival of Silk Road connections, which shifted from being the Han man’s burden to a potential asset of the People’s Republic.” The PRC succeeded in accommodating Hui Muslims from Ningxia by adjusting their ethnic policies to ensure that they were are well positioned to deal with the Middle East.

In it also imperative to remember that the Hui, not any of the Xinjiang Turkic-speakers, have been drafted into this role because they are Chinese by culture and by language and this fact flies in the face of their definition as a separate minzu, but the PRC hasn’t had any trouble eliding this contradiction owing to their usefulness and relative complicity in the Chinese Communist nation-building project. In the post 9/11 world, the Hui have become an important asset for the PRC as it develops stronger economic ties with North Africa and the Middle East. As the Middle East also turns its gaze to China, the PRC government has “appropriate[d] its own ethnic Muslim heritage to meet the changing global order by making use of the Hui Muslims to forge a closer

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687 Ho, “Mobilizing Muslim for China’s Development,” 84. This, of course, is done at the expense of other Muslim minorities in China such as the Uyghurs.
alliance with the Muslim world.”\textsuperscript{688} Perhaps taking a closer look at Japanese imperial ambitions with Muslims on the mainland will give us a better understanding of the how the PRC understands the place of Muslims in China today.

\textsuperscript{688} Ho, “Mobilizing Muslim for China’s Development,” 106.
APPENDIX

Figure 1

Figure 1: Organizational Charts of the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly

Source: Diplomatic Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1-2-1-1-2/5
"Hōkushi kaizyō minzoku kyōkai seisetsu-an" 北支回教民族協会設立案

中國回教總聯合會
1. 西南聯合總部 (組織籌備中)
2. 華南聯合總部 (組織籌備中)
3. 華中聯合總部 (組織籌備中)
4. 外蒙古聯合總部 (組織籌備中)
5. 西北聯合總部 (組織籌備中)
6. 華北聯合總部
   a. 河南區本部(河南省全境) 「分會：一寺一分會」
   b. 包頭區本部(綏遠省全境) 「分會：一寺一分會」
   c. 張家口區本館(察哈爾省全境)「分會：一寺一分會」
   d. 太原區本部(山西省全境)「分會：一寺一分會」
   e. 濟南區本部(山東省全境)「分會：一寺一分會」
   f. 天津區本部(市四十縣－河北省東部二)「分會：一寺一分會」
   g. 北京區本部(市八十六縣－河北省西部二)「分會：一寺一分會」
Figure 2: Organizational Charts of the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Muslim General Assembly
Source: Diplomatic Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1-2-1-1-2/5

"Hokushi kaisho minzoku kyokai setsumi-an" 北支回教民族協會設立案
Secret Military Document, 1939
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