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The Muslims under the Manchu Reign in China

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# THE MUSLIMS UNDER THE MANCHU REIGN IN CHINA

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“If politeness and ceremony be observed toward the Mahommedans, they imagine they are feared and become arrogant; but in showing severity and rudeness, they are impressed with fear and respect and they are supple and manageable”.

North China Herald <sup>(1)</sup>  
August 31, 1867.

This passage, which probably reflected popular and official sentiment in China during the Muslim rebellions of the 1850's and 1860's, epitomizes the disruption of the *modus vivendi* and the breakdown of the *modus operandi* that the Hui minority had worked out among the Chinese up to the advent of the Ch'ing <sup>(2)</sup>. This outright attack on Muslims, all Muslims, was uttered in public by a prominent Chinese figure at a time when an attempt was being made in official circles to distinguish between good Hui and evil Hui. The slogan was “Pu-fen

(1) At the height of the Muslim rebellions in Yunnan (1856-1873) and the Northwest (1862-1878), the North China Herald Editorial quoted a “popular Chinese author” as having said this.

(2) Before the Manchu reign in China, no Muslim uprisings took place in the Empire, despite the long record of Muslim settlement there which dates back to the T'ang.

Han-Hui, chih wen liang-yu" ("We do not discriminate between Han and Hui, we only distinguish between good and evil.").<sup>(1)</sup>

The implications of this attack are clear: "them" as opposed to "us". They are Hui, we are Chinese; they have definite barbarian and despicable characteristics; they are unable to grasp the meaning of politeness and ceremony. *Li* (ceremony) is reserved for us, the Chinese *chün-tzu* (gentlemen). There is no way to deal with their arrogance other than the rudeness and severity of *fa* (law). Only then might they become manageable like tamed animals or subjected barbarians.

The public Chinese figure who might have reasoned in this fashion in August 1867, was certainly well within his rights. The Taiping Rebellion, essentially a Han uprising, had nearly toppled the system, but it had finally been contained. But what about these barbarian Muslims in Shensi, Kansu, Yunnan and the far West? Not only were they not content with the bounty that the Emperor and the Empire had accorded them, but they, the ingrates, were now bent on wrecking havoc on Civilization and tearing apart what had been rescued from the Taipings.

To be sure, we are not speaking about an abrupt *volle-face* of the Ch'ing toward the Hui, a change from favoritism and harmony (which never existed) to discrimination and persecution (which did not always prevail). What generated the transition from coexistence under the Ming and previous dynasties, to confrontation under the Ch'ing, was not a clear qualitative change in the attitude of the Chinese toward the Muslims, but rather a quantitative intensification of previous trends that were inherent in the traditional Chinese system and in Chinese attitudes towards foreigners. The intensification of Chinese pressure was sufficient to tilt the precarious balance and set in motion the Muslim defence mechanisms which, when in full swing, followed their own dynamics and tended further to sharpen the crisis between the host and guest

(1) Chu, Wen-djang, *The Muslim Rebellions in Northwest China, 1862-1878*, Mouton, the Hague, 1966, p. 7. The author's translation of this slogan has been revised.

cultures. For the Muslims, there appear to have been three major factors which perhaps made them more responsive under the Ch'ing than before to these pressures. First, the ruling dynasty was alien; that is, if Muslims revolted they could always rationalize (as indeed they did) that their revolt was not directed against their hosts (whom they were eager to please) but against another non-chinese group who happened to have mustered enough power to rule both them and the Chinese. Second, the mounting self-awareness of Chinese Islam, generated by revivalist Muslim influences which seeped into China from India, or emerged domestically during the 18th and 19th Centuries, coincided propitiously with the mounting Chinese pressures upon the Muslims to forego their identity. Third, Muslim rebellions in China were part of, and took advantage of, the malaise of the Ch'ing dynastic decadence and all its manifestations: population growth, economic difficulties, rebellions, devolution of the central power, the breakdown of administration, etc. Granted that dynastic decline was not a Manchu novelty, it is nonetheless true that no major Muslim rebellions broke out during previous dynastic declines or during most of the period of the *pax sinica* of the High Ch'ing. But when rising Muslim awareness on the one hand and the intensification of Chinese anti-Muslim sentiment on the other converged with the dynastic crisis, the stage was set for Muslim uprisings on a grand scale. Despite the nostalgia with which some Muslim writers view the "Golden Age" of Islam in China under the Ming, and the negative light which they throw on the Manchus as the source of all Muslim trouble in China,<sup>(1)</sup> the picture cannot be really depicted only in black and white. During the Ming, some restrictions were imposed on Muslims (and other minorities)<sup>(2)</sup> on the one hand, and on the other; what amounts to truly benevolent statements were made about the

(1) See for example D. Ting, "Islamic Culture in China", in Kenneth Morgan (ed.) *Islam: the Straight Path*, Ronald, N.Y. 1958, pp. 350-1; and Pai Shou-i, *Chung-kuo Hui-chiao Hsiao-shih* (A short History of Islam in China) Chungking, 1944, p. 28. Many Chinese Muslims whom I interviewed in Taiwan hold the same view.

(2) Pai, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Hui by no other than the Manchu Yung-cheng Emperor himself:

“For years, people have submitted memorials claiming that the Hui follow one religion, speak a strange language and wear strange clothes; they are savage and outlaws. These people requested that the Hui be severely punished and restrained...

I know that the Hui inherited their religion from their ancestors... thus, the Muslims' use of mosques, different clothes and a different script, must be considered as resulting from differences in custom. Things such as the Muslim religion, which are not traitorous, lawless or deceitful to the people, should not give us any concern. Living in this Empire and benefiting from our enlightened rule, their faith is not exempt from observing the moral laws of humanity and justice. Therefore, how could they but cherish goodness and urge all to act similarly? Our Court looks on them with the same benevolence as with everybody... Among the Hui many achieved success in the civil and military examinations, received office and were promoted to high ranks... They became accomplished in the rules of propriety and in literature, thus demonstrating that they are no different from others... Not all are good people, there are certainly evil persons among them; but is this not the same among the Han?

Local officials must not discriminate against Muslims, but treat them as the rest of the population...”<sup>(1)</sup>

Yung-cheng's words, of course, indicate not only imperial concern for peace and quiet, and an attempt to avert open clashes between Han and Muslim while affording imperial protection to the latter, but also underline the strained relations between the two communities, and the demand by the Chinese populace and local officials for harsher treatment of the Muslims. The perennial quality of these two themes was in evidence when, a century and a half later, Tso Tsung-t'ang, the suppressor of the Muslim rebellions in the Northwest during the 1860's and 1870's, wrote:

“Shensi's gentry manifest a profound hatred for the Muslims. When they are asked their views about the Hui, they are always of the opinion that all Muslims should be killed... I fail to understand their reasoning”<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) This was an edict issued in the 7th year of the Yung-cheng Emperor reign 1729), concerning the Muslims of Shensi. The text is cited in Fu T'ung-hsien, *Chung-kuo Hui-chiao Shih* (History of Chinese Islam), Taipei 1969, pp. 116-117.

(2) *Tso Wen-hsiang-kung Shu-tu* (a Collection of Tso Tsung-t'ang's letters), Nanking, X, pp. 17-18.

After the advent of the Manchus, the Hui problem was complicated by the fact that the Dynasty did not see eye-to-eye with the Chinese on this issue. In order to try to disentangle the complex triangular relationship—Hui-Chinese-Manchu—one should analyze events from the viewpoints of all three components of the triangle. This article, however, will concentrate on the Manchu and Chinese stand, and first the Manchu rulers.

The Manchu Dynasty did not treat the Hui and other minorities uniformly throughout its rule. At first, as foreign conquerors, they adopted the *divide et impera* policy, keeping a delicate balance of power between the various peoples so that they could rule them all.<sup>(1)</sup> But with the increasing sinicization of the Manchus in the 19th Century, Ch'ing neutrality toward disputes between Han and Hui could no longer be maintained. Moreover, as dynastic decline began its swing, the border between Chinese and Manchu became so blurred that the dynasty was pursuing a Chinese policy, and the Chinese officials employed by the Dynasty were carrying out the Manchu government's policy, as it was obvious during the T'ung-chih Restoration (1862-74). This situation was, of course, reversed in the 1890's, when anti-Manchu sentiment began mounting again and tearing apart the unity that had prevailed since the 1860's.

During the hundred peaceful years which followed 1683, the exceptionally able first Ch'ing rulers maintained economic abundance, tax remittances, an artistic and literary boom, and an energetic administration, all of which provided for stability, a general feeling of euphoria and self-esteem. Under the indefatigable Yung-cheng Emperor (1723-35) in particular, the administration became centralized in his own hands. He personally read and commented on numerous memorials daily. His control of the officials was tight and autocratic, and enforcement of the law was inexorably and vigorously carried out. To prevent any possibility of secret opposition to his rule, he

(1) Chu, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

emphatically prohibited associations and cliques among scholars and officials, as evinced in his treatise "P'eng-tang lun" (On Parties and Cliques) of 1725. <sup>(1)</sup> He severely punished administrative irregularities and took egalitarian steps toward socially despised people. <sup>(2)</sup> It is in this light that Yung-cheng's benevolence towards Muslims must be seen; at the same time, however, the Emperor left no doubt as to his insistence on obedience to the law by Muslims, and his belief that Islam should be narrowly defined as an ancestral custom and a matter of creed, nothing more:

"Muslims should not set themselves apart as Muslims, but only as believers in the Muslim faith... In this way, the good will be rewarded and the evil-doers shall be punished... The Muslims in Shensi are far more numerous than in other provinces. How could I consider Muslims as a separate people from the rest of the population. Therefore, I call upon you, Muslims, to act in accordance with propriety, humility and generosity. Do not rely on force to hurt the weak, or take advantage of the ignorant to cheat him. Wrong-doing and cruelty are not permitted by the law, or by Muslim religion. Filial piety and loyalty are extolled by all religions, of which the Muslim religion is part. However, should anyone, by claiming adherence to a separate religion, or by following an heterodoxy, wickedly pursue his own interests, there are laws and statutes to deal with him. Do not imagine that I shall show you any leniency. It is incumbent upon all governors of the provinces where Muslims reside, to announce my intentions and ensure that they are known to everybody" <sup>(3)</sup>

In another Imperial Edict issued a year later (1730), in response to a proposal to oppress Muslims from an Anhui Taotai, Lu Kuo-hua, Yung-cheng dismissed the memorial as "reckless and outrageous" <sup>(4)</sup>, repeated his assurances coupled with warnings to the Muslims, and called Chinese officialdom to order:

"The Hui, having come to China in ancient times, are part of the people of this country. They are among the children of our land. Since I have ascended the Throne, I have showed them the same favor

(1) I. Hsü, *The Rise of modern China*, Oxford 1970, pp. 42-45.

(2) Pei Huang "Five Major Sources for the Yung-cheng Period (1723-35)", in *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVIII, 1968, p. 847.

(3) Fu, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-7.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 180.

as to all others. How could I single out the Muslim religion alone for disapproval?

...If the Hui transgress, they will be punished under the prevailing laws and statutes, which are not calculated to shield them in any way. But if the Hui do no evil, I shall harshly punish any official who, under the excuse of the insignificant differences which exist between [their and our] customs, submit memorials against them... Lu Kuo-hua is a petty official, undeserving of his title of Taotai... Instead of managing local affairs, which should absorb his attention, he meddles with the Hui customs, and even urges legal action against the innocent Hui people. He is motivated either by his private feelings or by his intention to disturb the Government. It is therefore, decreed that Lu Kuo-hua be arrested, interrogated and punished" (1)

One cannot help wondering whether this strong position taken by Yung-cheng reflected not only his concern for law and order, efficient government and justice for all, but also his strong conviction that any corporate activity of either the Muslims or their Chinese oppressors might potentially bear the seeds of cliquism and rebellion. For the Muslims, the Emperor's insistence on their definition as a creed "emanating from ancestral custom", and his assurances that he would shield them *as such*, betrayed his anxiety about the Muslims' forming gangs, concealing weapons, setting themselves apart, and outwitting the Chinese, especially in areas such as Shensi, where they were numerous and where their impact generated the strongest anti-Hui sentiments.

Yung-cheng's concerns may have been fostered by the Muslim rebellion which broke in Kansu in 1648, during the turbulent years when the Manchus were struggling for hegemony in China. That uprising, which had spread to a substantial part of the province, and had taken a year and a half to defeat with tremendous cost to both sides (2), must have reminded the Manchu rulers constantly of the potential dangers of the Hui. The ubiquitousness of Muslims in China made the problem impossible to solve by a military campaign such as those launched against the Ölod Mongols by the first

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) J. J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China*, Muller, Amsterdam, 1902-4, II, pp. 269-70.



Manchu Emperors. A pragmatic solution, combining accommodation and stiff controls, was necessary. Hence the promises of protection on the one hand, and threats of punishment on the other.

The danger of corporate activity by the Chinese with regard to the Hui also loomed as a reality, though very subtly so. Was not K'ang-hsi's insistence that bureaucratic disputes had weakened China <sup>(1)</sup> akin to Yung-cheng's castigation of Chinese officials who kept memorializing him about the necessity of a strong-handed policy toward the Muslims, despite his edicts to the contrary? <sup>(2)</sup> Was not the *unity of action* against the Hui, advocated by Chinese officials from Shensi, Anhui and other palces, a subtle manifestation of a corporate representation to the Throne? Even if it were not so, it might have looked so to this fanatically centralistic Emperor. Hence, his policy of dismissing these representations *one by one*, and even dismissing some of the officials who made them, in order to avert the potential turning of their cumulative effort into a corporate activity. The Manchu Emperors also had a positive stake in the preservation of the Hui integrity because of its implications regarding their own manchu-ness, namely their minority status. For Chinese respect for the integrity of the Hui would make an equally strong case for the integrity of the Manchus and their ruling House.

The Ch'ien-lung Emperor (1736-95) marked the peak of the Ch'ing rule and the beginning of its decline. Splendour and literary achievement, peace and territorial conquests, were coupled with a stern literary inquisition, tight social and ideological controls, and numerous uprisings. The Emperor's own boasting, in his *Shih Ch'uan Chi* (A Record of Complete Achievements), about the pacification of the Ghurkas, the

(1) F. Wakeman, "High Ch'ing", in J. Crowley (ed.), *Modern East-Asia: Essays in interpretation*, Yale Uni. Press, New Haven 1970, p. 17.

(2) Yung-cheng made no secret of his resentment on this matter. In his edict of 1729 he wrote: "For years, people have been submitting memorials stating that all Muslims etc."; and in the 1730 Edict: "The Muslims have been condemned in many earlier memorials, and I have strongly reprimanded Ch'en Shih-kuan for a memorial he submitted in 1723..." (See Fu, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-118).

Annamese, the Muslims of Turkestan, etc.,<sup>(1)</sup> was a sad reflection of the unrest which swept the Empire, particularly after 1775, when the corrupt Ho-shen held the reins of power. Ch'ien-lung's policy towards the Muslims remained conciliatory and benevolent on the surface, even in the wake of the Muslim uprising in Turkestan in 1758, making good the old Chinese device of "using barbarians to control barbarians", in our case "*I-Hui chih-Hui*" (use Muslims to control Muslims).<sup>(2)</sup>

In 1765, when Muslim unrest was again present in the Northwest,<sup>(3)</sup> the Central Government's budget provided for stipends to be paid, *inter-alia*, to Muslim nobles<sup>(4)</sup> in order to ensure peace. But while this treatment could be applied to Muslims on the fringes of the Empire, such as Turkestan, where the nomadic-tribal structure of these people allowed the Manchus to buy off their headmen, the settled and more sinicized Hui of China Proper, who submitted to no central authority of their own, had to be dealt with by ideological means. When Fu An-k'ang took up the post of Governor-General of Shensi-Kansu in 1785, he required all the inhabitants of these provinces, Muslim and Chinese alike, to attend the regular *hsiang-yüeh* sermons<sup>(5)</sup> and, eventually in 1797, the Hui of these two provinces were brought under the regular system of the semi-monthly lectures designed for the "edification of the ignorant rustics".<sup>(6)</sup>

Ch'ien-lung refused to yield to Chinese officials on the Muslim issue, even after the Kansu turbulence caused by the first New Sect-Old Sect controversy in 1781.<sup>(7)</sup> Either

(1) Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840-1928*, Stanford, 1956, p. 7.

(2) Wang Shu-huai, *Hsien-t'ung Yunnan Hui-min Shih-luan* (The Muslim Uprising in Yunnan 1856-73), Taipei, 1968, p. 45.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

(5) Hsiao, Kung-ch'uan, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the nineteenth Century*, The Univ. of Washington Press, Seattle, 1967, p. 192.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 191.

(7) See "Muhammedanism", in *Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics*, p. 894.

The doctrinal nature of the New Sect as compared to the Old Sect, has been under study by several researchers, including the present writer, but no conclusive

because he had not yet grasped the disruptive potentialities of these religious controversies, or because he was wise enough not to press the Muslims on religious matters, he turned out to be very lenient toward them, to the extent of undoing his own orders regarding the literary inquisition. While thousands of works were being destroyed by the inquisitors because of anti-Ch'ing insinuations, heterodox references, or merely seditions and abusive language,<sup>(1)</sup> the Emperor reprimanded Chinese officials who showed zeal in carrying out his orders, and confiscated Muslim books in Chinese and Arabic. Chu Wang, the Governor of Kwangsi, memorialized in 1782 concerning the arrest of a Hui "law-breaker"

"...in his luggage we found 21 books hand-written in the Hui script... but it is impossible to tell whether they contain anything illegal... There were, however, ten copies of a book in Chinese, *T'ien-fang Chih-sheng Shih-lu Nien-pu* (The True Record of the Life of the Highest Saint of Arabia) (\*)... and another called *T'ien-fang San-tzu Ching* (The Three Character Classic of Arabia) (\*)... The presumption of the title *True Record etc.* is unbearable, and its translation and printing by Your Majesty's subjects is *lese-majesté*...

I have examined the religious books in the Hui scripts, but due to my incompetence, it was impossible to ascertain whether they are illegal. But the Chinese books contain many ridiculous passages... Moreover, since the arrested Hui was on his way from Shensi to Kwangtung, he may be connected with the rebel group of Kansu Muslims... It seems necessary to investigate and punish anyone who stirs unrest among people... I am notifying other provincial governors

results have yet emerged; it is evident, however, that the New Sect element was politically more militant than the rest of Chinese Muslims, and stood behind Muslim unrest in 19th Century China.

(1) Justification for book destruction included: "although there is nothing to show evidence of treason in this work, still the words are, in many cases, lying nonsense, fishing for praise; it should be burned", or "This belongs in the class of fiction. Its words are very confused, it ought to be destroyed". Cited by Fairbank and Reischauer, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, p. 382.

(2) A biography of Muhammad, known in its Western versions as "The Life of Mahomet", published probably in the late 1770's by Liu Chih, by far the most prolific and respected Chinese Muslim writer. See D'Ollone, *Mission d'Ollone (1906-9)*, *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois*, Leroux, Paris, 1911, p. 413.

(3) Also attributed to Liu Chih. Its name derives from the fact that it resembles in form the Chinese "Three Character Classic" in that it is composed of three-character sentences. This book is a compendium of the creed and ritual practices of the Islamic Faith.

to confiscate the printing blocks of the books so that they may be destroyed... and to arrest and interrogate the translators, printers, distributors and authors of the books, so that they should be punished..."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Emperor swiftly retorted:

"The affair was mishandled... The Hui of the Old Sect are numerous all over China and in Shensi in particular... Their prayers follow tradition and have nothing seditious to them... The rebellion in Kansu last year was a result of the feud between the New Sect and the Old Sect, but their religious books were not a bone of contention... I am not to be influenced by any prejudice in dealing with government matters. Those responsible for seditious writings should be punished severely, according to the law, but this is not the case with these Muslim books, which have been inadequately misinterpreted. I see no excess in them. Chu Chang and Pi Yuan<sup>(2)</sup> are to take no measures. When books of this kind come to the attention of Governors, they ought to take no action against them"<sup>(3)</sup>

In another edict of the same year (1782), Ch'ien-lung reprimanded Sa Tsai, the Acting Governor General of Liang-Kiang, who had acted on Chu Chang's request to punish Muslims for disseminating their books. He wrote:

"Such foolishness is inconsistent with the conscientious way officials are supposed to carry out their duties... In past years; when Wang Lun in Shangtung, and Wang Fu-lin in Kansu revolted, some Hui people fought bravely against them; and when Su Ssu-shih-san<sup>(4)</sup> rebelled last year, Muslims of the Old Sect helped the Government to defeat and catch the rebels... I look upon the Hui people as my children..."<sup>(5)</sup>

The 1790's were, perhaps, the watershed in the fortunes of Manchu rule. With the outbreak of the White Lotus Rebellion (1796-1804), which brought to the fore the growing socio-

(1) The text of this and other documents, drawn from Wang Tai-yu's *Cheng-chiao chen-ch'üan* and Liu Chih's *T'ien-fang Chih-sheng Shih-lu*, were kindly brought to my attention and made available to me by Mr. Joseph Ford of Wimbledon, England. Hereafter, I shall refer to these documents as Ford's.

(2) The Governor of Shensi, who had also memorialized the Throne on the same matter in 1781.

(3) Ford Documents.

(4) A disciple of Ma Ming-hsin, the founder of the New Sect in China, who was apparently responsible for the New Sect-Old Sect feud in Kansu in 1781. See de Groot, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

(5) Ford Documents.

economic problems of China on the one hand, and exposed the impotence of the Manchu armed forces to deal with the situation on the other, the ground was ripe for widespread social unrest, of which the Muslim rebellions were part and parcel. In this situation, when central power declined and security became more and more a concern of extra-Imperial organizations such as local militia or secret societies, Muslim communities, like all others, took their protection into their own hands. But these organizations, being ideologically and practically undermining to the Chinese state, could, in turn, only be seen as heterodox and dangerous to the Manchu Government, which dealt with them accordingly. The more the Manchu Dynasty became unable to contain social disruption, the more intent it was on eradicating heterodoxy, a policy characterized by Schumpeter as the "radicalism of impotence".<sup>(1)</sup> The 19th Century was marked by a succession of rebellions which shook the entire country. No sooner had the White Lotus Rebellion been temporarily contained than the Eight Diagrams rose in 1813, followed by Muslim rebellions in Yunnan (1820-28, 1830, and 1846),<sup>(2)</sup> then the great rebellions of the mid-century: the Taiping, the Nien and the Muslims in the Northwest and the Southwest, all of them at a time when foreign powers were making inroads into China, progressing from "strangers at the gate" to "foreign devils" within the walls. How did the Manchu authorities regard these rebellions, and what could they do against them? China's rulers have always been forced to grapple with the frustrating problem of controlling the *hsieh-chiao* (heterodox groups), because of the difficulty of drawing a clear line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Under the traditional authoritarian system of control, religious movements which did not win recognition, as the three great institutional religions did, were forced to seek cover and frequently were ready to offer armed resistance to the threat of suppression in order to develop their own form of religious life. Of course,

(1) J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, N.Y. 1950, p. 328.

(2) Chan, Wing-tsit, *Religious Trends in Modern China*, Columbia Univ. Press, N.Y. 1953, pp. 209-10.

religions which claimed universal salvation and superior powers for their deities over the world order, a dogma implicitly offensive to the Chinese temporal power, would be considered heretical, because they were subversive to the system by definition.

In Ch'ing China, the contents of government ideology were narrowed down to Confucianism of the Chu Hsi brand, despite Emperor Shun-chih's admission that all three systems of teaching—Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism—were good. Emperor K'ang-hsi himself expounded Chu Hsi and elevated him in official worship. He selected slogans from Chu Hsi's system which were elaborated upon by Emperor Yung-chen and made a basis of continuous ideological indoctrination (Sacred Edicts). In practice, however, a wide gamut of extra-Confucian religious worships persisted, and the government had no choice but to establish a behavioral criterion for evaluating the potential or actual danger posed by heterodox groups. As long as any form of worship or religious creed appeared harmless to imperial security, it was tolerated by the government even if it did not conform to the basic Confucian tenets. But if any religious activity of the people tended to disturb the peace, or was found to have been carried out with seditious intentions, it was branded as *hsieh-chiao* or *yin-ssu* (heretical sect) and promptly persecuted.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Manchus, as an alien conquering power, were aware of the resistance with which they had been met by the Ming loyalists, of the disdain that eminent Chinese scholars felt towards them (e.g. Wang Fu-chih),<sup>(2)</sup> and of the suspicion with which the Chinese populace viewed them. Therefore, the Ch'ing Emperors, especially the early ones, were doubly vigilant with regard to manifestations of heresy among the Chinese and moved swiftly to burn heterodox books (Ch'ien-lung's Inquisition), to curtail interprovincial pilgrimages (1739), and to launch ideological war against distinctly heretical

(1) Hsiao, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-1.

(2) Wang Fu-chih is reported to have remarked that even barbarian poetry is stained by the smell of sheep.

societies such as the White Lotus<sup>(1)</sup>, as preventive measures to localize and isolate foci of trouble. But they cautioned against lumping together seditious elements with peaceful citizenry, just because the latter may have shared the same religious beliefs with the former. The Chia-ch'ing Emperor emphasized this point in an edict of 1800:

"The teachings of Confucius are honored forever. Other doctrines, such as Buddhism and Taoism, though not orthodox, have not been eradicated since Han and T'ang times to the present... Even the White Lotus believers do not differ from the common people in their mode of living and dressing. Officials fail to distinguish good elements from the bad among them, and thus force them all into rebellious conduct... I have written in my own hand an essay "On heretical Sects", in which I reiterated the principle that believers in heresies who obey laws, will not be placed under arrest, but only those who herd themselves together and break laws will be punished" (2)

This statement is very much akin to what Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung had decreed about the Hui. The Imperial attitude of benevolence and relative tolerance toward the Muslims could be pursued when heterodoxy in general was at a manageable level, and the Imperial policy was meant to maintain it at that level. But with the worsening of the socio-economic conditions in the Empire during the 19th Century, and the resulting heretical movements, heterodoxy got out of hand, and the Manchus had no choice but to order its persecution. At the same time, due to the accelerated sinicization of the Dynasty, the Ch'ing came to look at the Hui problem as the Chinese of the time did, with suspicion and hostility. This approach was, in turn, reinforced by the heterodox manifestations of 19th Century Islam—the Muslim rebellions.

The Ch'ing of the 19th Century were no longer concerned mainly about their rule in China as Manchus, but, like the Chinese Emperors before them, they became interested in the survival of the Dynasty. So while the basic distinguishing

(1) Hsiao, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-1.

(2) Cited by Hsiao, pp. 231-2.



characteristics of the Manchus were no longer being cultivated <sup>(1)</sup> and the Dynasty fell back on the Chinese bureaucracy for support, the Court, in concert with the gentry, was arrayed against any group which threatened their symbiotic political hegemony. Such groups were, first of all, heterodox organizations which used armed rebellion to resist the Imperial system, or even to attempt to overthrow it.

The worsening conditions of the 19th Century made this problem particularly acute due to the success of secret societies and other heterodox groups in gaining an ever-tightening grip on the people who fell victim to economic destitution, social disturbances and so on, to the point that they had nothing to lose by joining a rebellion. The Taiping Rebellion, which threatened the Confucian foundations of the Empire, brought the Manchus ("now consummately Chinese in culture") <sup>(2)</sup> closer than ever before to the Chinese gentry, who derived their status from the traditional system and had a stake in preserving it.

If we recapitulate the intricacies of Manchu policies toward the Hui, we can observe the following broad lines: At first, the Manchus struggled to establish their own rule over the Chinese amidst suspicion and hostility. The stratagem of "divide and rule" seemed to be the most workable at this point, and the Manchus made every effort to balance the Hui against the Chinese by refusing to leave the former at the mercy of the latter. Then, faced with sporadic Hui uprisings under Ch'ien-lung, the Manchus began to realize the strength of this community and chose to accomodate them rather than antagonize them.

(1) During the T'ung-chih Restoration, the Banner System lost almost all of its significance as a barrier between Manchu and Chinese, and the Manchus rapidly lost their special position in the bureaucracy. The general ban on inter-marriage with the Chinese lost much of its effectiveness, the Chinese population in Manchuria grew steadily after the 18th Century, despite Imperial prohibition. The Manchu language ceased to be a useful tool of the administration, and the hunting expeditions to Manchuria wound down to insignificance. (See Mary Wright, *The last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-chih Restoration*, Stanford Univ. Press, 1957, p. 52.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 53.



Inquisition laws were not enforced on Muslim writings, and Chinese officials who attempted to do so were unequivocally reprimanded. Even when heterodox Chinese movements were being persecuted, the Hui received a somewhat preferential treatment. It seems that over this period of time, the government was unaware of the inherent undermining quality of the Hui in general, and of their New Sect in particular, and dealt with local Muslim rebellions as pure outbursts of social unrest rather than heterodox activities. Even with the rise of the New Sect during the Ch'ien-lung reign, the Emperor remained uncertain as to its goals and elected to play it down rather than drum up its importance.

But with the recurrence of Muslim disturbances in the context of the ubiquitous social unrest of the mid 19th Century, the Manchus came to realize the dangers of Islamic movements as part of the widespread growth of sectarian movements in general. Thenceforth, the New Sect drew the blame for the trouble, and the Muslims in general, although nominally differentiated into the *liang-Hui* (good Hui) and *Hui-fei* (Hui bandits) categories, became, in fact, indirectly indicted *in toto* as a troublesome non-Han minority and as a dangerous sectarian organization.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Chinese were always ahead of the Ch'ing government in terms of desiring a harsh policy towards the Hui. Before the mid 19th Century, the Manchu rulers seemed to have difficulties in preventing their Chinese officials from going too far in their over-zealous anti-Hui approach, which no doubt reflected popular sentiment. At this time, intense Chinese dislike for the Muslims may have been generated not only by the cumulative effect of the negative stereotypes that had accompanied Hui existence in China for centuries but also by what social scientists have termed "displaced aggression".<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Chu Wen-djang, (*op. cit.*, p. 22) says that "at this time, the Manchu government would have liked to destroy all Muslims, but was short of the necessary force to carry it out".

(2) See G. E. Simpson and J. M. Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities, An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination*, Harper, N.Y. 1958, pp. 239, 248-51; and B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, Bantam, N. Y., 1972, p. 27.

The Chinese, because they had to submit to the humiliation occasioned by the Manchu rule,<sup>(1)</sup> and unable to avenge themselves of their oppressors, directed their frustration away from its primary source and towards the Hui, whom they thought they could mistreat without incurring the danger of reprisal.

Another reason might be that the Chinese, by pushing the Muslims to the lowest social stratum, thereby raised themselves from that position, though they remained subjugated to the Manchus. The Imperial protection afforded to the Hui certainly contributed to Chinese resentment of their guest minority, as reflected in the repeated memorials to the Throne on these matters and the ever-booming manufacture of new stereotypical tales about the repulsive nature of these arrogant and unreliable people.<sup>(2)</sup>

The fact that many Chinese Muslims were traders was not in itself conducive to harmony between the Hui and the literati either, for even during the High Ch'ing, strict Confucianists continued to believe that commerce created a class of social parasites, attracting men and resources away from agriculture, the nation's economic foundation. Trade, according to this view, also bred crime and corruption because its profits invited embezzlements, and also because it was associated with the underworld.<sup>(3)</sup> What easier way was there to discredit the Hui than to associate them with parasites and the underworld,<sup>(4)</sup> even though Muslims were not the only traders around?

All of these underlying tensions, although ever-present, probably had been considerably blunted by the general laxness of the High Ch'ing and the mood of self-confidence and self-

(1) The Manchus, for example, imposed the wearing of the queue on the Chinese under the threat "Keep your hair you'll keep your head; cut your hair, you'll lose your head".

(2) See e.g. O. Lattimore, *The Desert Road to Turkestan*, London 1938, pp. 165-6; 184; 202-3; and Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: a Neglected Problem*, Morgan and Scott, London, 1910, pp. 244-5.

(3) Wakeman, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

(4) A situation strikingly similar to Soviet Jews who, when applying for an exit visa, are branded as "social parasites" and associated with the intellectual underground.

esteem shared by Chinese and Manchu alike, as China entered an almost unparalleled age of peace and economic abundance. After the climax, however, the inevitable downhill journey began. In the 19th Century, demographic pressure made itself felt due to the doubling of the population since the advent of the Ch'ing. No parallel development of resources was available to match it, due to the declining waterwork systems and the lack of Imperial leadership in opening up new lands for cultivation. As prohibitive expenditure was undertaken to campaign against the White Lotus and other rebels, the inefficacy of the Manchu military system became more and more exposed. As insecurity and uncertainty prevailed, robbery and crime increased. In this situation of *saue qui peut*, a scramble for resources became the order of the day, and those who were better organized, more able to pool their resources and mount a program of mutual help, were more likely than others to make it through the crisis. Hence, the inflation of secret societies, sectarian movements, and other groupings, each struggling on its own for its own sake.

Among those who made it through the turbulent years were the Muslims. When famine struck and scarcity caused many deprivations among the masses, the Hui communities not only survived but took advantage of the situation to purchase Chinese children and raise them as Muslims. As the have-nots usually show hostility to the haves, the Muslims were probably more intensely hated because of success amidst widespread failure and their growth amidst death. This is a situation in which stereotypes of minority cultures are reinforced, and scape-goat hunting by the majority culture is stepped up. This is more true in areas where the guest culture constitutes a sizable minority, thereby posing a more serious threat, economic and otherwise, to the individuals of the dominant culture. In these areas, and under circumstances of sharp social unrest, time-old prejudices burst into outright persecution, and covert jealousies into overt competition. Thus, although the intensification of anti-Hui sentiment and policies was universal under the Ch'ing, we find the problem more acute in areas such as Shensi, Kansu and Yunnan, where

the Muslims constituted a high percentage of the population and where entire communities were Muslims. We have seen the insistence with which Shensi officials memorialized the Throne against the Hui of their province. Similar pleas originated from Kansu and Yunnan.

At the same time, because of the vast Muslim population and the resulting inability of Imperial troops to intervene efficiently in these regions, a contradiction developed between Chinese sentiment, which demanded total annihilation of the Muslims, and the official approach, Manchu and Chinese alike, which realized the unfeasibility of such a proposition and attempted to abide by the differentiation between good and bad Muslims. Ehr-lin, the Acting Governor General of Kansu during the Muslim rebellions of the 1860's, presented his policy to the court, bringing this problem into focus:

"There are among the Muslims evil ones, but also many who are peaceful and law-abiding. If we decide to annihilate them all, we will be forcing the good to join the rebels, and confront us with the huge and impossible task of killing all Muslims. Almost everywhere in Kansu, there are Muslims dwelling in the cities... If we persecute them all, we will cause irreparable damage... Therefore, I am issuing orders to my troops to distinguish between good and evil Muslims. I made it clear that I would pardon all those who yield to us and kill all those who resist. However, this policy has been opposed by local Chinese... I am asking your Majesty to provide a backing for my policy by announcing on your behalf the policy of 'no distinction between Han and Hui; only distinction between good and evil'... When this decree is copied and posted everywhere, all officials and people would know how to behave" (1).

In 1856, the Han-Hui unrest in Yunnan began brewing. A censor memorialized to the Hsien-feng Emperor:

"In the West part of Yunnan, Han and Muslim live intermixed. During the year 1845, a quarrel resulted in mutual killings. The former Governor of Yunnan, Lin Tse-hsü, settled the feud. It appears that the Han common people go about the cultivation of their soil for a living. The Muslims, however; do better in shop-keeping and in trading with goods, which results in their becoming rich and prosperous, and acquiring the best lands..." (2)

(1) Cited by Chu Wen-djang, *op. cit.*, p. 57. The translation has been slightly revised.

(2) *P'ing-ling Yun-nan Hui-fei Fang-lüeh* (Hereafter PTHF) (A strategy for the pacification of Muslim rebels in Yunnan), I, pp. 82-3.

This was the economic rationale for the trouble. On top of that, the Hui were thought to be inherently bad and dangerous, and some drastic measures had to be taken in their regard. Another official memorialized later that year:

“There are Muslims everywhere in the Yunnan province. Their number does not exceed 10 or 20 percent of the Han population<sup>(1)</sup>, but they are exceedingly strong. They are full of suspicion and hatred. Under the existing circumstances, their killings and arsons are particularly cruel and poisonous. The accumulated hatred among the Han has become outrage. People from all quarters are begging for troops to deal with the situation... I intend to investigate the situation in each location separately. If we succeed in one place, the rebels will be frightened in others. If we can force them to surrender their leaders all tied up, we shall be able to pacify the good citizenry. If we wipe them out, [others] will become aware of that and will be frightened...”(\*)

By the time the great Muslim rebellions broke out in the 1850's, heterodox movements had been teeming in the countryside, and the Taipings were in full swing in their endeavor to topple the Dynasty. Since the imperial armies were in a shambles, the government had no choice but to entrust the task of pacification to Chinese potentates such as Tseng Kuo-fan, Hu lin-i, Li Hung-chang and Tso Tsung-t'ang, who raised provincial or local militiae to that end. These prominent Chinese leaders, who had as much of a stake in repressing the rebellions as in preserving Confucian values, rallied around the Dynasty, the symbol and embodiment of Confucian rule, because they understood that those forces which threatened Imperial rule, posed as serious a threat to the Confucian system.

Thus, defence of the Ch'ing became synonymous with defence of the Chinese essence, and defeat of heterodoxy, *all* heterodoxy, was the means to achieve that goal. The Ch'ing Emperors, now more Chinese than Manchu, attempted to show that they were more Chinese than the Chinese, for their *raison d'être* at the top of the realm was preservation of the Confucian system and its defence against aggressors from inside and

(1) This estimate seems to be much lower than the actual figure. It may have been deliberately played down by the official in order to avoid accounting for massacred Muslims.

(2) PTHF, I, pp. 102-3.

outside the Empire. The anti-heterodox bias, which had been traditionally Chinese, was now theirs and very emphatically so, since the Chinese provincial leaders on whose support they depended were dedicated to the eradication of heterodoxy.

The convergence of Ch'ing rulers' and Chinese gentry's interests paved the way for a coordinated anti-Hui policy, which brought about the eventual repression of Muslim rebellions. To be sure, the Imperial (i.e. Chinese-Manchu) policy remained, officially, in favor of persecuting the evil Muslims and pacifying the good, probably because of the impossibility of total annihilation of large masses of people who were strong enough, determined enough, and skilled enough to stand up and fight when pushed to the wall; Tso Tsung-t'ang and other high officials were well aware of this over-all picture and were far-sighted enough to pursue this policy fairly consistently. Sometimes they attempted, rather naively, to identify bad Muslims with the New Sect, because this concept would neatly identify Old-sectists as good Muslims and New-sectists as bad (because they were heterodox). But this classification was not as neat in practice as it was in the Chinese minds. For not all those who rebelled were necessarily members of the New-Sect. Many of them joined the rebellion because the latter not only provided the Muslim version of the anti-state, at a time when the state failed to function properly, but it also militated for Islamic ideals and used Islamic symbols which appealed to the Muslim masses in general.

Whether the Chinese were aware of this fallacy and purposely contrived this distinction in order to discourage Muslims from joining the New Sect, or because they were themselves ignorant of internal Muslim sectarianism, is hard to tell. In practice, however, this distinction did not mean much to the Chinese anyway; many a petty official, and sometimes not so petty, came under the sway of the anti-Hui sentiment and took advantage of the remoteness of their localities from the policy-makers to support and even incite pogrom-style onslaughts against the Muslims, with or without the New Sect pretext.

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