

EXPLORING THE ROLE AND EFFORTS OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS IN REVIVING ISLAMIC FAITH AMONG THE HUI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY IN CHINA

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Abstract: This paper seeks to explore the role and efforts of Islamic organizations in reviving Islamic faith among the Hui Muslim communities in early 20th century in China. The study shows how the Hui Islamic organizations led by the Hui Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals actively engaged in various types of programs and activities to revive and promote Islamic faith among the Hui Muslim communities in China. It brings important insights into the history of Islamic revival movement in China. The focus of discussion in this study is on: Background of the Islamic revival movement and the Hui Islamic organizations. The historical, descriptive and analytical methods are used in the entire research. The study finds out that the Hui Muslims during Republic of China period responded proactively to the social and political changes in the society to advance the cause of Islamic revival. Two strategies are identified, i.e. adapting to the environment and reviving and promoting Islamic faith through Islamic organizations led by religious leaders and intellectuals. This could provide some insights to the Hui Muslims to cope with current situations in China.

Keywords: *Hui Muslims, Islamic revival movement, Islamic organizations, Republic of China*

A. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing anti-Islam and Muslim sentiment in People's Republic of China (PRC). The majority Han Chinese supremacism and outright hostility toward Islam and Muslims has increased magnificently on Chinese social media such as *xinlangweibo* (sina micro-blogging) and *weixin* (WeChat).¹ Scholars believe that the anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamic phobia in contemporary China has its historical roots prior to PRC.² This paper is part of a systematic study on approaches of the Hui Muslim - China's biggest Muslim ethnic group, in promoting Islamic faith and preserving their Muslim identity in a very hostile environment prior to PRC. The purpose of the study is to explore the suitable approaches to cope with the current

¹Haiyun, Ma. (2021). *The Anti-Islamic movement in China*.

²Jingyuan, Qian. (2019). Historical Ethnic Conflicts and the Rise of Anti-Muslim Sentiment in Modern China.

<https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3450176> Accessed on 12 July 2021.

situation in PRC through examining and analyzing the approaches employed by the Hui Muslims in promoting Islamic faith and preserving their Muslim identity in Ming-Qing dynasties (1368-1911) and Republic of China (1912-1949).

In early 20th century the Hui Muslims launched Islamic revival movement in response to declination of Islamic faith among the Hui Muslim communities in China. The proliferation of the Hui Islamic organizations was one of the most important characteristics of Islamic revival movement during this time. This paper seeks to explore the role and efforts of the Hui Islamic organizations in reviving Islamic faith and preserving Muslims identity among the Hui Muslim communities in China.

Western scholars paid little attention to Islamic organizations in late Qing and Republic of China period. Only brief introductions about some important Islamic organizations appeared in a few western literatures.³ Most of studies on the Hui Islamic organizations in this period are done by Chinese scholars.

Attributes the flourishing of the Hui organizations during Republic of China period to the development of the Hui's New Cultural Movement (huizuxinwenhuayongdong) – the term coined by Gu Jiegang, a famous non-Muslim Chinese historian in Republic of China.⁴ Guo Qingxiang observes that strong religious consciousness was one of the important characteristics of the Hui Islamic organizations in the Republican period.⁵ Ma Ai and Huo Weiyao studies the interactions between the Hui Islamic organizations in China and the Arab world during the Republican period. They assert that the rise of the Hui Islamic organizations during the Republican period is, in certain extent, the result of the Hui Muslim's learning from their coreligionists in Arab countries.⁶ Yang Rongbing's and Zhang Shuhui's study focus on the Hui Muslim regional Islamic organizations in Shanghai and Guangzhou respectively during Republic of China.

While providing politically-orthodox interpretations of the Hui Islamic organizations' activities in this period, the role and efforts of the Hui Islamic organizations in the revival of Islamic faith among the Hui Muslim communities in China was largely ignored by these studies.

This study employs historical, descriptive and analytical research methods to achieve its goal. The paper firstly introduces the social and political background of the Islamic revival movement in early 20th century, then the paper discusses and analyzes how the Hui Islamic organizations contributed to Islamic revival movement by presenting three examples.

³Dillon. Michael, *China's Muslim Hui Community*. (London: Curzon Press, 1999), 84.

⁴Jingyuan. Qian, (2019). *Historical Ethnic Conflicts and the Rise of Anti-Muslim Sentiment in Modern China*. <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3450176> Accessed on 12 July 2021.

⁵Qingxiang, Guo. (1990). Luelun 20 shijiqianbanqi de huizushetuan [Brief Introduction To The Hui Organizations In The First Half Of 20th Century]. *Ningxia Social Science*, No 1. pp 55-61.

⁶Ai, Ma and Weiyao, Huo., (2016), Jindaihuizushetuayuzhong a wenhuajiaoliulunshu [The discussion on modern Hui organizations and their communications with Arab world]. *Ningxia Social Science*, No. 6. pp 167-174.

B. Result and Discussion

1. Social and Political Background of Islamic Revival Movement in Early 20th Century

After almost three centuries, the Manchu Qing Empire finally collapsed in the wave of Chinese nationalism movements. The Republic of China was established by revolutionaries led by Song Yat-sen in 1912. However, the early republic was unable to overcome the infighting between political and military factions. From the years 1916 to 1928, China's Warlord era, competing military cliques supported by western powers like UK, France, Germany as well as Japan ruled a fragmented country, exercising power within their respective fiefs.⁷ A group of the Hui Muslim warlords emerged from the local elite to establish power over strategic areas such as Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai, building political leverage for the Hui Muslims. Non-Muslim warlords found it advantageous to team up with the local Hui Muslim leaders. By the end of the tumultuous Warlord Era, the Hui Muslims were a group of increasing strategic importance to the state.

Since the late Qing dynasty till the end of Sino-Japanese war, foreign imperialism became the biggest threat of the very survival of China as an independent country. China's sovereignty and territorial rights were severely compromised. China was in fact under partial or semi colonization. Especially during the Sino-Japanese war, when vast territories of China were occupied by Japanese, millions of Chinese people were directly under Japanese rule, China was at the edge of total colonization by Japan. During the Sino-Japanese war, in an effort to encourage unrest and possible secession, Japanese agents emphasized ethnic differences among the peoples living in the Chinese state. Shortly after the establishment of the colonial state of *Manzhouguo* (Manchuria) in Japanese-occupied northeast China in 1931, Japan founded Muslim associations that employed local Muslim leaders who were willing to cooperate in carrying out Japanese policies.⁸ In the early 1930s, the Japanese army also began dropping propaganda leaflets from airplanes announcing its support for the creation of an independent Muslim state throughout Xinjiang and the Gansu corridor. This new Muslim country would be called *Huibuiguo* (The Hui State).⁹

The threats of imperialism and secessionism led to a change in the rhetoric of the Chinese nationalists from a Han-centered nationalist slogan, “*quchudalu, fanvozhonghua*” (Expel Tatar, restore the Chinese nation) to one emphasizing the equality of all ethnic groups, “*wuzugonghe*” (The republic of five races), regardless of their racial, religious, and cultural differences.¹⁰ Revolutionaries led by Song Yat-sen declared that “China was the Republic of five *minzu* (nationality or race),” namely Han

⁷Hsi-hseng, Chi, *The Chinese warlord system: 1916 to 1928* (Washington: Center For Research In Social System, 1969), 20.

⁸Shusen, Qu., *Zhongguohuizushi [History of the Hui in China]*, (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 2012), 650.

⁹Shusen, Qu.,..., 553).

¹⁰Hui, Wang, *China's twentieth century : revolution, retreat, and the road to equality*, (Brooklyn, NY : Verso Books), 38.

(Chinese), Hui (Muslims), Meng (Mongol), Man (Manchu) and Zang (Tibetan). All five *minzu* were in one single family, and all were equal.¹¹ Furthermore, after the victory in overthrowing the Manchu Qing, the Nanjing Provisional Government of the Republic of China headed by Song Yat-sen, framed the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China in 1912. The constitution stated that “the people of the Republic of China are no different in race, class and religion before the law, all are equal” “people have the right of freedom of religion” (Zhengui, 2012: 231). For the first time in China’s history, the racial equality and freedom of religion were formally declared by Chinese government and written in country’s constitution.

The Chinese nationalist movements and the nation-building project initiated by the nationalist government of the Republic provided a platform and good opportunities for Hui intellectuals and elites to actively participate in political arena of the Republic. During the Republican period, the Hui Muslims served extensively in the National Revolutionary Army and reached positions of importance, like General BaiChongxi who became Defense Minister of the Republic of China. In the Northwest of China, Qinghai, Ningxia and part of Gansu province were controlled by four Hui Muslim military strongmen known as *xibeisima* (Four Ma of the Northwest) (Zhengui, 2012: 251). The Nationalist parliament had many Hui Muslim members. During the Sino-Japanese war, many Hui generals and soldiers fought fearlessly in the battles against the Japanese. Some became the national heroes, such as Yang Jinyu, Ma Benzhai etc.

In order to win over the Hui Muslims, the Nationalist government showed respect and support to Islam and Muslims. Song Yat-sen and his successor Jiang Jieshi attended the conferences organized by the Hui Muslims acknowledging and appreciating Islam and Muslims’ contribution to China, admitting the Hui Muslims’ important role in nation building and calling for the Hui Muslims’ support.¹² During the Sino-Japanese war, the Military Committee of Nationalist Party put special notice in every mosque forbidding soldiers to stay inside the mosque, requesting soldiers to respect Islamic religion and improve the relationship with Muslims.¹³

Due to the hostile social and political environment, the Hui Muslims in China had never established an Islamic organization to promote Islamic faith and protect the Hui Muslim’s interest until the end of Qing dynasty. Just a few years before the collapse of Manchu Qing and birth of Republic of China, there had started a trend to form various types of regional associations and societies in China.¹⁴ This trend gained momentum after Republic of China was established.

¹¹Zhengui, Yu., *Zhongguolidaizhengquanyuyisilanjiao* [China’s Successive Governments and Islam]. Yinchuan: Ningxia People’s Press, 2012), 230.

¹²Tongxian, Fu., *Zhongguobujiaoshi* [History of Islam in China]. Yinchuan: Ningxia People’s Press, 2000), 122.

¹³Zhengui..., 249.

¹⁴Ai, Ma and Weiyao, Huo. (2016). JindaihuizhushetuayuZhong a wenhuajiaoliulunshu [The discussion on modern Hui organizations and their communications with Arab world]. *Ningxia Social Science*, No. 6. pp 167-174.

Encouraged by the first democratic constitution which declared freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of association for all people in Republic of China, and social-political conditions which were generally favorable for the development of Islam, the Hui Muslim intellectuals and Islamic scholars launched Islamic revival movement. Numerous Islamic associations were established, nearly three hundred newspapers and journals were published by the Hui Muslims during the Republican period,¹⁵ and the new types of Islamic schools were founded all over China.

2. Islamic Organizations

In as early as 1906, a few years before Chinese nationalism revolution and establishment of Republic of China, a Hui Muslim intellectual Tong Cong established East Asia Islamic Education Association (*dongyaqingzhenjiaoyuzonghui*) in Zhenjiang China to promote Islamic education among local Hui Muslim communities.¹⁶ In the following year, a group of the Hui Muslim students in Tokyo formed Islamic Education Society in Tokyo (*liudongqingzhenjiaoyuhui*) aiming at awakening the Hui Muslim's religious and ethnic consciousness and promoting Islamic educational reform among the Hui Muslims communities in China.¹⁷ After Republic of China was established in 1912, the number of the Hui Islamic organizations increased significantly.

According to Guo Qingxiang, from 1900 till 1949, there were more than 100 the Hui Islamic associations established by the Hui Muslims at provincial and national level.¹⁸ Scholars have made different categorizations for these organizations from different perspectives.¹⁹ However, based on their main objectives and major activities, the Hui Islamic organizations during this period can be generally divided into five groups. First, pure religious organizations, such as China Islamic Propagation Society (*zhongguohuijiaoxuanchuansuo*) and Islamic Proselytization Society (*yisilanbudaohui*). Second, educational organizations, such as East Asia Islamic Education Association (*dongyaqingzhenjiaoyuzonghui*) and Lanzhou Islamic Education Society (*Lanzhou huijiaoquanxuesuo*). Third, academic and cultural organizations, such as China Islamic Cultural Association (*zhongguohuijiaowenhuaxiehui*) and China Islamic Literary Society (*zhongguohuijiaoxuehui*). Fourth, political organizations, such as China Islamic National Salvation Association (*zhongguohuijiaojiuguoxiehui*). Fifth, charity organizations, such as Islamic Charity Society (*qingshan tang*) and Xi'an Islamic Disaster Relief Society (*xi'an huijiaojuzaihui*). However, there

¹⁵Bozhong, Ma., *Mingguoshiqizhongguomusilingbaokantongjibiao* [The Statistics Table of China Muslim newspapers and periodicals During the Republic Period]. *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 4, pp. 48-63.

¹⁶Mingjun, Ding. (2011). *Mingguoshiqihuishetuanzuzhijigongnengyanjiu* [A Study Of The Hui Organizations In The Republic Of China And Their Functions]. *Journal of Beijing University of Nationalities*, No. 3, pp 19-30.

¹⁷Broomhall, Marshall B.A., *Islam in China: a neglected problem* (London: Darf Publishers Limited, 1987), 282.

¹⁸Qingxiang, Guo. (1990). *Luelun 20 shijiqianbanqi de huizushetuan* [Brief Introduction To The Hui Organizations In The First Half Of 20th Century]. *Ningxia Social Science*, No 1, pp 55-61.

¹⁹Shusen, Qu., *Zhongguohuizushi* [History of the Hui in China]. (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 2012)

is no strict line to demarcate these organizations as the objectives and activities of some associations overlap with each other. For example, China Islamic National Salvation Association (*zhongguohuijiaojiuguoxiehui*) did many works to promote Islamic culture and education.²⁰

Bodde (1946) claims that the Hui Islamic organizations during the Republican period were indicative of the Hui Muslims' increasing consciousness and a feeling of solidarity. According to GuoQingxiang (1990), the Hui and Islamic associations in the Republican period demonstrate strong religious consciousness. This is reflected in the name, membership and main activities of these associations. Most of organizations established by the Hui Muslims used "Islamic" (*huijiao*) in the name of the organization. Such as: China Islamic Mutual Progress Organization (*zhongguohuijiaojujinbui*), China Islamic Literary Society (*zhongguohuijiaoxuehui*), Xi'an Islamic Disaster Relief Society (*xi'anhuijiaojiuzaibui*), etc. Except a few, most of these organizations state in organizational charter that "as long as the Hui Muslims" or "Muslims" can join the organization (Qingxiang, 1990: 59). The main activities of these associations were centered around studying Islamic culture, propagating Islamic doctrines, promoting religious and educational reform, etc.

Another important characteristic of the Hui Islamic organizations during this time is many important the Hui Islamic organizations in Republic of China were initiated or established by the Hui religious leaders and intellectuals such as Ahong²¹ and Islamic scholars. For example, China Islamic Mutual Progress Association (*zhongguohuijiaojujinbui*) was established by Wang Haoran Ahong who was one of the most famous Islamic scholars and educators in modern history of Islam in China. China Muslim Literary Society (*zhongguohuijiaoxuehui*) was formed by Ha Decheng Ahong who was one of the four great Ahongs in the Republic of China. China Hui People National Salvation Association (*zhongguohuimingjiuguoxiehui*) was originally founded by Wang Jinzhai Ahong and Shi Zizhou, the two Quranic translators, in 1937, and later it changed the name to China Islamic National Salvation Association (*zhongguohuijiaojiuguoxiehui*) and chaired by Bai Chongxi, the Hui Muslim Minister of Defense of Republic of China.

The Hui Islamic organizations especially during Republic of China period vigorously engaged in organizing and conducting various kinds of programs and activities to propagate and promote Islamic faith openly to both Muslims and non-Muslims in China. Their major efforts included publishing and distributing Islamic newspapers and journals, building and opening new Islamic schools, translation of Islamic books, surveying and collecting information about mosques and the

²⁰Zhengui, Yu., *Zhongguolidai zhengquanyiyisilan jiao [China's Successive Governments and Islam]*, (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 2012).

Hui communities in China, training teachers for Islamic schools, conducting Islamic charity programs etc.

After Sino-Japanese war began, many the Hui Islamic organizations actively participated in anti-Japanese war efforts. Apart from publishing articles on the press calling the Hui Muslims to support the government and join the war against Japanese, some organizations organized the Hui Muslim propaganda teams to go to battlefields to encourage Muslim soldiers to fight bravely.²²

Of all the organizations that emerged in this period, three are significant.

a. China Islamic Mutual Progress Association

China Islamic Mutual Progress Association (*zhongguobuuijiaojinhuì* or CIMPA) was established by Wang Haoran Ahong in 1912 in Beijing. CIMPA was the first centralized, nationwide Muslim association in China, it attempted to act as a centralized organ for China's scattered Muslim communities. The mission of CIMPA as written in its charter was "unite all Muslims in China to support the republic (political system) and country's unity, achieve mutual progress so that the foundation of the country can be consolidated and Islamic teachings can be promoted" (Juling, 2001: 101). Its main activities included the publication of journals and Chinese translations of Islamic texts, the establishment of the Hui Muslim schools and vocational training programs, the surveys on the current social conditions of Chinese Muslims, and the propagation of virtues such as frugality, hygiene, and nationalism.²³

The headquarter of CIMPA was in Xidan Mosque in Beijing. Its members were mainly comprised of the Hui Muslim intellectuals, Ahong, politicians and businessmen. Led by reformist Ahong with experience abroad in the Middle East, the CIMPA reached out to Muslim communities throughout the country to encourage the creation of local branches. The CIMPA branches were established in every province at provincial, city and county level. By 1923, the number of branches created had reportedly risen to three thousand.²⁴

CIMPA launched one newspaper – *musbengyuebao* (Muslim's Voice Monthly) and two journals – *muguangbanyuekan* (The Light of Muslims Biweekly) and *qingzhenxueliyizhu* (Translations of Islamic Principles).²⁵ *Qingzhenxueliyizhu* was a pure religious journal. The editors and writers of *qingzhenxueliyizhu* was consisted of several most distinguished Ahongs in the Republic of China such

²²Shouyi, Bai. (ed.), *Zhongguobuui min zushi [History of the Hui Muslim people in China] 2 Volumes* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007).

²³Juling, Zhang., *Zhangjulinghuizushilunxuan [The Collective Articles of the History of the Hui]*, (Beijing: Mingzu Press, 2001), 102.

²⁴Bodde, Derk., *China's Muslim Minority. Far Eastern Survey.*(Vol. 15, No. 18., 1946), 283.

²⁵Zhihe, Qian. (1994). *Jindaizhongguohuuijiaojvjinhuuiyuhui de xinwenhuayundong [China Islamic Mutual Progress Association and Hui's cultural movement in modern time]. Chinese Muslim*, No.3. pp 13-15.

as Wang Haoran, Wang Yousan, Wang Jinzhai, Zhang Ziwen etc.²⁶ Although *qingzhenxueliyizhu* published only one volume, but it started a very important work – translation of holy Quran. In 1922, the complete translation of the holy Quran was finished by CIMPA.²⁷

One of the important contributions of CIMPA for the development of Islam was opening new type of the Hui Islamic schools, mainly primary schools in China. Within a decade, more than six hundreds of primary schools together with many night classes were opened by CIMPA and its branches in Beijing and many provinces in China.²⁸ Among all branches of CIMPA, the works of Sichuan and Yunnan branch were quite outstanding. In 1927 CIMPA Sichuan branch opened classes for uneducated the Hui Muslim young men, built a primary school for the Hui Muslim women, offered interest-free loan to the Hui Muslims, set up Islamic books office for those non-Muslims who were interested in Islam, and opened a public library. The branch also opened night classes for religious school students in three different places (Mingjun, 2011: 22). CIMPA Yunnan branch together with another Muslim association Zhenxue She (Islamic Education Society) established famous Mingde Islamic Middle School in 1929. The school cultivated many students who later went to study in Azhar University in Egypt and became famous Chinese Islamic scholars. The Yunnan branch also published three Islamic newspapers successively, *qingzhenyuebao* (Islam Monthly), *qingzhenxunbao* (Islam Biweekly) and *qingzhenyuebao* (Islamic Alarm). *Qingzhenyuebao* (Islamic Alarm) became one of the most important Hui Muslim newspapers in the Republic. In 1936, CIMPA was closed by the government.

b) China Muslim Literary Society

China Muslim Literary Society (CMLS) is one of the most famous religious academic associations in the Republic of China. It was founded by a distinguished Ahong – Ha Decheng who was one of the four great Ahongs in the Republic of China, together with some Hui Muslim intellectuals in 1925. The main mission of the CMLS was to propagate Islamic principles, promote Islamic education, establish the relationship between Muslims in China and other countries, and assist Islamic charity works. CMLS focused on three main tasks to fulfill its mission. The first was translation of Quran to Chinese language. CMLS set up an Islamic books translation committee responsible for translation of all type of Islamic books, of which the most important was the holy Quran. Beginning in 1926, within three years, Ha Decheng Ahong and another two members of the committee finished the translation of five chapters from the Holy Quran. Three chapters were

²⁶Juling..., 112.

²⁷Juling..., 113.

²⁸Jiegang, Gu., Huijiaowenhua yundong [Islamic Cultural Movement]. In Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan (ed.), Zhongguo Yisilan jiaoshicankao ziliao xuanbian [Selected reference materials on the history of Islam in China] (pp. 912-915). Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1985, Vol. 2.

published on CMLS journal.²⁹ Unfortunately, the translation work was interrupted by Sino-Japanese war. The second important work was publishing CMLS journal. CMLS journal was a religious academic journal and the first Islamic journal in Shanghai. Its main aim was advocating religious reform and propagating Islamic teachings. The third work was building Islamic schools to promote Islamic education. In 1928 CMLS opened Shanghai Islamic Teacher's School (*Shanghai yisilanshibifanxuexiao*) in Xiaotaoyuan mosque in Shanghai. Da Fushen Ahong became the principle and Ha Decheng Ahong was the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Islamic school invited many distinguished Ahong and Islamic scholars including two foreign teachers to teach the students (Ai, 2013). The students were required to study in four languages, Chinese, Arabic, Persian and English. Every year during the month of Ramadan, the students from Shanghai Islamic Teacher's school were invited to give religious talks in local mosques and the Hui Muslim associations.³⁰ The famous Chinese Islamic scholar and Quran translator Professor Ma Jian studied in this school before going to Egypt. Besides Shanghai Islamic Teacher's school CMLS also built Dunhua primary school catering for the poor Hui Muslim children.

c) China Islamic National Salvation Association

In 1938 the distinguished Ahong and Quran translator – Wang Jinzhai Ahong with another Quran translator and the Hui Muslim politician – Shi Zizhou established China Hui National Salvation Association (*zhongguohuimingjiuguoxiehui*) in Henan province China. In 1939, the association undertook organizational reform and changed its name to China Islamic National Salvation Association (CINSA) (*zhongguohuijiaojinguoxiehui*), the Hui Muslim military strongman Bai Chongxi – the defense minister of the Republic was elected as the president of CINSA (Lei, 2019: 4). Soon CINSA became the biggest Hui Muslim organization nationwide, it received the support from the Nationalist government both politically and financially. CINSA set up branches and sub-branches throughout China at provincial, city and county level. In 1942, China Islamic National Salvation Association changed its name again to China Islamic Association (Lei, 2019: 13).

The initial mission of CINSA was to promote Islamic teachings, unite the Hui Muslims in the country, and salivate the country from the war (Qingxiang, 1990: 57). It set up several societies and working committees, such as The Society of Islamic World Studies, Society of Northwest Affairs Studies, Translation Committee, etc. In 1939, CINSA set up the Society for Islamic Culture Studies, many prominent non-Muslim Chinese intellectuals in the Republic like Gu Jiegang, Guo Meruo, Laoshe, etc. joined the society (Zhenyi and Shuying, 1998). Like other the Hui Islamic organizations

³⁰Zhichen, Zhang, Ershishijichu shanghai yisilanjiaoxueshuwenhuatuanti – zhongguohuijiaoxiehui [Shanghai Islamic academic association in early 20th century – China Muslim Literary Society]. *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 3. pp 80-86, 1992.

in the Republic, CINSAs engaged in various types of activities and programs to promote Islam, such as building Islamic schools, translating the holy Quran, establishing Islamic educational found, training Ahong who were illiterate in Chinese language, sending Ahong propagating team to encourage and motivate the Hui Muslim soldiers to fight against Japanese, organizing special team to reconcile the ethnic relationship between the Hui and the Han in the northwest, etc. (Zhenyi and Shuying, 1998). For both political and religious purposes, CINSAs sent several the Hui Muslim goodwill mission delegations to Muslim countries in southeast Asia and Middle east to enhance the relationship between Muslims in China and Muslims in these countries, get support, both political and financial, for Chinese Muslims in particular and China in general in the war against Japan.³¹

One of the most important works done by CINSAs was conducting the survey of mosques and Muslim communities in many provinces in China. Ahong and students from Islamic schools actively participated in this important job. In 1940, Zhang Yuguang Ahong was sent by CINSAs to visit the Ding and Guo clan in Chendai and Baiqi, the two famous Hui clans in Fujian province who have been assimilated to the Han Chinese completely since Ming dyansty. Zhang Ahong was shocked by the situation he saw. So worried about the future of Islam here, Zhang Ahong decided to stay in Baiqi and teach Islam for the local Hui people. He selected three young men from Guo clan together with others from Hui communities elsewhere to undergo Islamic education at the Chengda Teacher's Academy, the most famous Islamic college in Republic of China. Due to the effort of Zhang Ahong, there was a slight recovery of consciousness in Islamic religion and Muslim identity among the local Hui communities until Zhang Ahong died in 1942.³²

C. Conclusion

The social and political changes in early 20th century in China provided the Hui Muslims good opportunity for reviving their Islamic faith and consolidating their Muslim identity. The democratic political system and constitution which declared the racial equality, the political instability, and infightings between military cliques, and more importantly the Sino-Japanese war all contributed to the rise of the Hui Muslims' social and political status in the Republic. Additionally, the nation building project initiated by the nationalist government which promoted ethnic integration and unity further reduced the ethnic tensions between the Hui Muslims and the majority Han Chinese. The Hui Muslims responded proactively to the changing environment by establishing various types of the Hui Islamic organizations to propagate Islamic teachings and revive Islamic faith among the Hui Muslim

³¹Qingxiang, Guo. Luelun 20 shijiqianbanqi de huizhushetuan [Brief Introduction To The Hui Organizations In The First Half Of 20th Century]. *Ningxia Social Science*, No 1.pp 55-61.

³²Ke, Fan. (2003). Ups and Downs: Local Muslim History in South China. *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol, 23, No. 1.pp 63-87.

communities in China. Systematic and well-organized efforts were made by the Hui Islamic organizations such as China Islamic Mutual Progress Association, China Islamic National Salvation Association and China Islamic Literary Society along with many other Islamic organizations at different levels. Islamic organizations played a vital role in Islamic revival movement in this period. Two strategies of Islamic revival can be identified, i.e. adapting to the environment and reviving and promoting Islamic faith through Islamic organizations led by religious leaders and intellectuals. This could provide some insights to the Hui Muslims in China to cope with current situations in China.

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