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## The Hui Muslims' Identity Negotiations

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1. For the Hui Muslims following the Sharīa law, though to various degrees, defines their identity of being a Muslim, and respecting and being subjects of the Chinese law defines one's Chineseness.

2. In traditional Chinese society, although no major wars or battles existed in the process of the introduction and localization of Islam in China, from the outset of Islam in Chinese history, Muslims have been facing the challenges of how to live in China and get along with the Chinese. This involved reconciliation with a strong and powerful tradition that had already established itself before Islam and Muslims reached China. It is the institutionalized and legalized Chinese tradition that made it challenging for the Hui Muslims to become Chinese.

3. Instead of being a uniform and fixed system of static norms, the Sharīa has been defined and practised in diverse ways in different Hui Muslim communities over the changing dynamic of the Chinese socio-political contexts. Both the Chinese and the Islamic (legal) traditions have provided, and indeed functioned as, the grounds on which the Hui Muslims' social identity is built.

4. In the context of traditional Chinese society, the tensions between the Hui Muslims' practice of the Sharīa and the Chinese legal system were partly the result of the tradition which constructed the very idea of China as a geographical, cultural, racial, and most importantly, a monotheistic divine entity. In the context of the modern Chinese nation state, the Sharīa and the state legal system are not necessarily incompatible with each other. In other words, the Hui Muslims' practice of and identification with the Sharīa does not necessarily lead to a decrease in their "Chinese" identification.

5. Two general and fundamental Chinese approaches to dealing with non-Chinese, including the Hui Muslims, could be observed, that is, what I termed as the "separative" and the "assimilative" approaches. The former held that the non-Chinese should be separated and excluded from China and the Chinese, while the latter held that the non-Chinese could and sometimes should be assimilated to the Chinese.

6. Among the initiators of various Chinese nation-building projects was a shared belief of the superiority of the Han Chinese over the non-Chinese, the minorities, as well as the Hui Muslims. The traditional Chinese perception of the superiority of the Han Chinese over the minorities has not only been unchanged and unchallenged in the context of the Republic of China, but has indeed been reinforced. To achieve a Han Chinese nation-state required not only expelling the Manchus but indeed all non-Han Chinese. This was crucial for all the non-Han Chinese peoples, including the Hui Muslims, to redefine their identity, for this indicated that to be a Chinese then was to be a Han.

7. The Jingtang education came about when the Chinese Ming Dynasty imposed discriminative laws and policies against the Hui which resulted in a religious (and later economic and political) crisis. The modern educational reformers targeted either the traditional Jingtang education that was overly influenced by Chinese culture, or the new situation in which the Hui Muslims were supposed to live, cooperate, and, maybe more importantly, compete with the Chinese. Public and private systems of education have been playing a crucial role for the Hui Muslims in China to negotiate among competing and conflicting sets of norms and ideals. The Hui Muslims' Islamic education projects, both the traditional Jingtang education and the modern educational reforms, have been a channel through which the Hui Muslims tried to deal with the internal and external crisis, chances, and challenges.

8. Hajj is a religious activity, but also has significant social, political, intellectual, and economic implications for the Hui Muslims. It has facilitated the introduction of Sufism in China, which added a unique layer of identity among the Hui themselves, the menhuan 门宦 (Sufi orders). In the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hajj turns out to be an essential source for the building of the Hui Muslims' Chinese identity, particularly in their understanding of the relations between being a pious Muslim and a patriotic Chinese nationalist.

9. Marriage contributed to the introduction and localization of Islam in traditional China. During the Republican period, the modern national legal system and the Islamic Shari'a norms are not necessarily incompatible or irreconcilable with each other. How the Hui Muslims would deal with the Shari'a marriage rules, to what extent they would refuse the state law and follow the Shari'a law, and vice versa, have largely been determined by how the Hui Muslims were positioned and treated by the cultural, the socio-legal, and the political spheres in Chinese society.