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China’s Islam in Xinjiang: from functionalization to elimination

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4. The Chinese Nation's Vision for Islam

State actions towards Islam in Xinjiang cannot be understood in isolation from central CCP principles on religion. Based on policy papers, political speeches and legislation, this chapter clarifies the position of the Chinese Communist Party towards religion since the 1980s and shows how that position explains both the repression and functionalization of religious practices. The CCP chose to contain religion where it was deemed dangerous and to use it where it was deemed useful. This chapter explains, moreover, how political loyalty was a central condition for Party tolerance of religion, and that CCP worries about religion were primarily connected to issues of ethnicity and nationalism. For the case of Islam, we then examine the measures that the state took not only to control Islam, but actually to incorporate it into what I will call the "nation narrative" and thereby to define the role that it should serve in Chinese society.

4.1. Religious Policy of the Chinese Communist Party since the 1980s

The basic religious policy principles of the post-Cultural Revolution CCP were laid out in the 1982 CCP Central Committee's landmark paper "Document 19: The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during our Country's Socialist Period," generally referred to as "Document 19."[247] The document carefully distances the Party from the harsh crackdowns of earlier decades, blaming the mismanagement of religion on leftist extremists who misunderstood Marxist principles on religion. Arguing against the coercive removal of religion, Document 19 says that people who rely on coercive measures "are entirely wrong and will do no small harm."[248] In 1990, President Jiang Zemin likewise condemned the "left" approach and pleaded for long-term considerations when dealing with religion:

> We must not be too hasty to deal with the problem of religion. We cannot repeat the "left" approach in the Cultural Revolution and must have long-term considerations and must work in a practical manner. – Jiang Zemin, CCP Secretary-General 1989-2002, PRC President 1993-2003 (1990)[249]

[247] Donald E. MacInnis, transl., "Document 19: The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during our Country's Socialist Period," in *Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 8-26. Translation reprinted on Religlaw, accessed June 25, 2015, https://www.religlaw.org/content/religlaw/documents/doc19relig1982.htm.
[248] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter I.
[249] Jiang Zemin, "Yiding yao zuohao zongjiao gongzuo" 一定要做好宗教工作 [Must do a good job of religious work], December 7, 1990. Published in *Xin shiqi tongyi zhanxian wenxian xuanbu (xubian)* 新时期统一战线文献选编（续编） [Selection of Literature of New Era United Front Documents (sequel)] (CPC Central Party School Press, July 1997), 287. Republished on CPC News "Religious Work," accessed October 29, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64171/65717/65721/4461297.html.

According to Document 19, the use of these incorrect leftist theories contradicted the theory of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought, and "basically did away with the work the Party had done on the religious question." [250] In this way, the Party wants to create the illusion that the Party has always been correct as it shoves the blame onto "antirevolutionaries" who intentionally misinterpreted Marxist theory. Document 19's basic ideas about how the CCP should view religion still hold ground today.

The constitutional right of "religious freedom" (*xinjiao ziyou* 信教自由) in China has been defined by the differentiation between recognized "religion" and illegal "superstition."[251] After 1949, the CCP developed a definition of religion which ascribes universal qualities to religion such as logic theosophy, scriptures, professional clergy and fixed religious sites. Only Buddhism, Daoism, Protestantism, Catholicism and Islam were seen as fitting this description.[252] Other activities were condemned as feudal superstition (*fengjian mixin* 封建迷信), referring to pre-Communist "feudal" society. But this does not mean that every activity that is conducted under the label of official religion is tolerated, and every activity that falls outside of its scope is banned. A 1979 CCP article in the People's Daily clearly shows the arbitrary line between tolerance and suppression:

> By religion, we chiefly mean worldwide religion, such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and the like. They have scriptures, creeds, religious ceremonies, organizations, and so on (…). Religious freedom, first of all, refers to these religions (…). It is true, real life is much more complex than simple concepts and definitions. There still are, among the people, certain long-standing activities such as ancestor worship and belief in ghosts and deities. Although they are a kind of superstition, we generally do not prohibit them as long as they do not affect collective political and economic activities(…). (People's Daily, 1979)[253]

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[250] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter III.

[251] Vincent Goossaert, "State and Religion in Modern China: Religious Policies and Scholarly Paradigms," *Communication au colloque du cinquantenaire de l'Institut d'Histoire Moderne de l'Academia Sinica* (2006): 4, <halshs-00106187>. Historian Rebecca Nedostup has argued that the fundamental aspect of the redefinition of religion by early Chinese modernizers was the overall condemnation of "superstition" (Ch.: *mixin* 迷信). Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3, 18. The label "superstition" was institutionalized in the *Guanli simiao tiaolie* (Regulations for the Supervision of Monasteries and Temples) in 1915. The difference between real religion and superstition was further emphasized during the Smashing Superstition campaign in 1929. At the time of the campaign, the government announced that Buddhism and Daoism were "pure religions" and were under legal protection. Yoshiko Ashiwa, and David L. Wank, "Making Religion, Making the State in Modern China: An Introductory Essay," in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, eds. Ashiwa and David L. Wank (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 9.

[252] Ashiwa and Wank, "Making Religion, Making the State in Modern China," 9.

[253] "Zongjiao he fengjian mixin" 宗教和封建迷信 [Religion and feudal superstition], *People's Daily*, May 15, 1979. Accessed online through People's Daily Graphic Database, data.people.com.cn.

So even if many activities officially fall under the label of illegal superstition, this religion/superstition categorization is overruled by the main concern for political and social stability.[254] Even activities that would fall under the five officially sanctioned religions fall prey to state sanctions if they are considered to cross the ever-shifting line of political tolerance. The Chinese state frames its criminalization of superstition, fortune telling, and other unwanted religious activities as a way of protecting normal religious activities, depicting the state as acting in religious groups' best interest. It portrays itself as the protector of righteous religious activities, protecting religion against abuse by criminals:[255]

> […] superstition has neither coordination of worship, nor the established purpose, rules or rituals, nor a common place of activity. Objects of superstition may be fairy ghosts, it may be mountains and trees. Superstition generally refers to gods, witches and superstitious professionals who use witchcraft to carry out activities such as fortune telling, divination, drawing lots, glyphomancy, reading dreams, calling upon immortal beings, and looking at *feng shui*. The masses consult these just to foresee their future fate, and they do not use it to shape a worldview of their own. Superstitious professionals use these activities to extract money, as a means to make a living. ("The Difference between Religion and Superstition", CCP website)[256]

The distinction between religion and superstition is by no account merely a state-imposed concept. Rather, it is a perception of religion that has equally developed within religious communities themselves, which have also sought professional training of clergy and the elimination of practices they deemed incorrect.[257] The position of the state, as legislator and administrator, on the definition of religion does carry a significant weight if it chooses to enter the debate. As Ashiwa and Wank have stated, the dynamics of religious modernity are marked by negotiations among multiple parties. Religions accommodate the state institutions to ensure their existence, while the state proves itself modern by acknowledging the existence of those religions.[258]

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[254] For a similar argument, see Zhang Qianfan and Zhu Yingping, "Religious Freedom and its Legal Restrictions in China," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2011, no. 3 (2011): 784-85.
[255] For an overview of Chinese policy towards unwanted spiritual and religious groups until the early 21st century, see Kristin Kupfer, "'Häretische Lehren bekämpfen': Der Umgang der chinesischen Regierung mit spirituell-religiösen Gruppierungen seit 1978," in *Religion und Politik in der Volkrepublik China*, eds. Wiebke Koenig and Karl-Fritz Daiber (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2008): 251-88.
[256] CPC News, "Zongjiao yu mixin de qubie" 宗教与迷信的区别 [The difference between religion and superstition], n.d., accessed October 29, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64107/65708/66067/66082/4468773.html.
[257] Ashiwa and Wank, "Making Religion, Making the State in Modern China," 3-8.
[258] Ashiwa and Wank, "Making Religion, Making the State in Modern China," 8.

Even when the Chinese state has allowed a place for religion in society since the late 1970s and early 80s, it is only under an atmosphere of tolerance.[259] Document 19 links the existence of religion to negative societal circumstances that generate the need for religion's existence. These negative circumstances being "natural and man-made disasters," the continued existence of class struggle within certain limits, and a "complex international environment."[260] The document further explains the Party's religious policy, which states that religion will gradually disappear with the development of a socialist civilization.[261] It foresees a future where social circumstances allow for citizens to "deal with the world and our fellowmen from a conscious scientific viewpoint, and no longer have any need for recourse to an illusory world of gods to seek spiritual solace."[262] The Party officially does not wish to eradicate religion from society, as it is convinced that religion will disappear over time, when social conditions allow for it. Meanwhile, as an atheist political party, it has to consolidate its atheist worldview with the management of religious communities. One of the main instruments for achieving this is its specific understanding of "religious freedom." The Party understands freedom of religion as the freedom to believe, but also *not* to believe, in religion:

> The religious worldview and Marxist worldview is fundamentally opposed. Communists are atheists, and the communist Party members' worldview should be a Marxist worldview. Communists not only cannot believe in religion, but also have to promote atheism, and propagate a scientific worldview. For us Communists, we must adhere to the Marxist view of the world, but also conscientiously implement the national constitution of the religious freedom policy, that is, each citizen has both freedom of religious belief, but also the right not to believe in religion. – Jiang Zemin (1990)[263]

The apparent contradiction between a government that firmly supports atheism and believes in the gradual extinction of religion over time while at the same time claiming to uphold the constitutional freedom of religious belief has been a debated topic since the early years of CCP rule. A People's Daily article from 1956 states that "freedom of religion" is meant in the sense that the state cannot forcibly remove religion from society, but has to let it fade away by educating the people and raising the standard of living.[264] By this interpretation, freedom implies a *laissez-faire* attitude, and at most a formal protection of religious organizations and religious individuals against being persecuted

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[259] Goossaert, "State and Religion in Modern China," 11.
[260] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter I.
[261] MacInnis, chapter XII.
[262] MacInnis, chapter XII.
[263] Jiang Zemin, "Yiding yao zuohao zongjiao gongzuo" [Must do a good job of religious work], 287-88.
[264] Ceng Wenjing 曾文经, "Xuanchuan wushenlun he zongjiaoxinyang ziyou shi chongtu de ma" 宣传无神论和宗教信仰自由是冲突的吗 [Are atheism propagation and freedom of religious belief in conflict?], *People's Daily*, February 29, 1956, database accessed December 7, 2017, http://pdul.egreenapple.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/index2.htm

because of their belief. But given the priority of national security over individual rights, this protection is negated once there is a general assumption that one's religious activities endanger a healthy societal development.

The Party seeks to protect the right not to believe in religion by banishing religion from the public and official environment. State propagation of a "scientific" worldview is seen as giving each religion equal chance, and thereby ensuring said "freedom." It is the Party's duty to promote an atheist, scientific worldview. Document 19 stipulates the Party has to use a Marxist worldview of science and reason, which is then used to criticize "idealism," which includes religion:

> An important task for the Party on the propaganda front is the use of Marxist philosophy to criticize idealism (which includes theism), and to educate the masses, especially the broad mass of young people, in a dialectical and historical materialist and scientific worldview. To do this, we must strengthen our propaganda in scientific and cultural knowledge as these relate to an understanding of natural phenomena, the evolution of society, and of human life, with its old age sickness, death, ill and good fortune. (Document 19, 1982)[265]

There is an underlying idea of reason and knowledge being able to defeat religion in the battle for the construction of social reality.

The CCP's prevailing sense of having to deal with religion, even though they prefer to see it gone, affects the policy on how state administrators should handle religious officials and religious communities. Document 19 clearly states that the policy of freedom of religious belief "is not applicable to Party members" and that they should uphold an atheist worldview. But it does make an exception for ethnic minority Party members. The document claims that it is difficult for many ethnic minority Party members to shake off the religious influence in their lives, but that many of them are very loyal to the Party and run an effective administration according to Party policy. Because of these members' Party loyalty, Party organizations should not exclude religious minority members but instead just guide them in obtaining a religious-free worldview.[266] According to a 2005 publication by Chan and Carlson, it is a public secret that even some Han Party members are religious. This situation is tolerated as long as these members do not publicly denounce atheism or participate in any public religious ceremonies. Chan and Carlson even state that the Party has refused the dismissal of religious cadres several times since it would affect the Party's prestige in some areas.[267] In a similar

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[265] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter XII. As a side-note, the word *shisuhua* 世俗化, commonly translated as "secularisation," can also be used to refer to the idea of disenchantement, the collapse of idealism and holding on to cosmological worldviews. See Goossaert, "State and Religion in Modern China," 9.
[266] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter IX.
[267] Kim-Kwong Chan and Eric R. Carlson, *Religious Freedom in China: Policy, Administration, and Regulation: A Research Handbook* (Santa Barbara: Institute for the Study of American Religion, 2005), 3.

line of reasoning, Document 19 also advocates leniency towards non-religious cadres serving in minority areas who attend religious funerals, weddings and other religiously inspired festivities. If the Party would forbid them from attending, it would cause Party cadres to lose their "close links with the masses."[268] Also religious community leaders are seen as helpful links between state administrators and the religious communities. A 2011 book for cadre education on religion and ethnicities recalls Jiang Zemin's welcoming of religious community leaders on Zhongnanhai in January 1991, where he said they need to "cooperate when it comes to politics, and have mutual respect when it comes to belief."[269] The cooperation and relation with religious clergy is described as "seeking common ground while accommodating differences" (*qiutong cunyi* 求同存异).[270]

4.2. China's Nation Narrative and Religion's Place in It

After the Cultural Revolution, patriotism has been a pillar of CCP legitimacy. As researcher Christopher Hughes has argued, Deng Xiaoping Theory shifted ideological orthodoxy from socialist egalitarianism to Chinese nationalism and political loyalty to the Party.[271] In 2000, Jiang Zemin introduced the theory of the "Three Represents" (*sange daibiao* 三个代表) as a means of expanding the social base of CCP rule. The Three Represents theory asserts that the CCP represents the advanced productive forces, advanced culture, and the interests of the masses. In doing this, the development into a prosperous nation was being inherently tied to CCP leadership. Hu Jintao's ideology of a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会) equally enacted the idea of development and achieving the utopian state of a socialist society, with the CCP at its helm.

After religion had become a legitimate part of post-Mao China, religious communities gradually resumed their activities. In the CCP's post-Cultural Revolution "trade-off," as sinologist Pitman Potter has called it, of broader socio-economic autonomy in exchange for political loyalty, religion presented a specific challenge. In the eyes of the Chinese state, religious communities carried several risks that could undermine the idea of complete loyalty to the Chinese nation and the CCP. Religious communities were meant to participate in the development of the Chinese state, but only within the limits prescribed by the state, and not in some form of political activism that could challenge state authority. [272] The granting of religious autonomy served as a basis for CCP legitimacy, while at the same time, that autonomy could not be allowed to become a threat to CCP authority. In order to

[268] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter IX.
[269] Chen Xiaolong 沈小龙, *Minzu zongjiao zhishi ganbu duben* 民族宗教知识干部读本 [Cadre Handbook on Ethnicity and Religion] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou Renmin Chubanshe, 2012), 78.
[270] Chen Xiaolong, *Minzu zongjiao zhishi ganbu* duben [Cadre Handbook on Ethnicity and Religion], 77.
[271] Christopher R. Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era* (London: Routledge, 2006).
[272] See for example, Richard P. Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

ward off that threat, the Chinese state has sought a way to give religion a place in China's nation narrative. The appropriation of religious communities in China's patriotic history allows for the Chinese government to support and stimulate religious communities, and thus maintain its basis of legitimacy, while concurrently aligning the communities' interests with those of the state, averting thereby challenges to its authority.

CCP Concerns About Religion

Central government concerns are different for each religion. To the government, all religious or spiritual communities are possible platforms within civil society that could harm the political status quo, a fear that has been amplified since 1999 by the unexpected political harm done by Falungong protestors.[273] But although the basic reason for state caution with religion is the same for every religion, each religion has its own specific perceived level of threat and sensitive issues. For Buddhism, Tibetan separatism and the Dalai Lama present particular challenges. For Catholicism, underground Churches and the authority of Rome are difficult issues. For Islam, the state has mostly been concerned with international terrorism and Uyghur separatism, but has also had to conform to a growing Islamophobic discourse in Chinese society. The problematics presented by Islam are also, just as is the case with Buddhism, closely connected to issues of ethnic identification.[274]

Religion and China's Minzu

An essential element of the Chinese nation narrative, as well as of religious issues, is the official categorization of China's population into "ethnicities" (*minzu* 民族).[275] Officially, the Chinese state has 56 ethnicities, one Han majority and 55 minorities.[276] The CCP walks a thin line between recognizing and even imposing these different ethnic identities within its borders, while at the same time demanding that these ethnicities uphold the national unity and identify as Chinese citizens. Calls for "ethnic unity" (*minzu tuanjie* 民族团结) have the aim of uniting the different ethnicities for the

[273] In the early 1990s, Falungong still enjoyed official recognition. For a discussion on the crackdown on Falungong and how it relates to China's human rights protection and its emphasis on public order, see Ronald C. Keith and Zhiqiu Lin, "The 'Falun Gong Problem': Politics and the Struggle for the Rule of Law in China," *China Quarterly* 175 (2003): 623-42. For a general discussion on the Falungong, see James W. Tong, *Revenge of the Forbidden City: The Suppression of the Falungong in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[274] See for example Mackerras' observations on the entwinement of minority education and religion, where he stated that "[f]or the Islamic and Tibetan Buddhist nationalities, the religious revival is closely related to the preservation of national cultures." Colin Mackerras, "Religion and the Education of China's Minorities," in *China's National Minority Education: Culture, Schooling, and Development*, ed. Gerard A. Postiglione (New York: Palmer Press, 1999): 48.

[275] In compliance with the customary English translation of *minzu* in PRC government documents and bodies, I will use the terms "ethnic" and "ethnicity" for *minzu*. For a brief discussion on the semantic problems of the term *minzu*, see Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs*, 16-17.

[276] For an excellent account of the process of ethnic categorization in the early PRC, see Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

greater cause of building a prosperous China. Since 1988, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC) has held six National Conferences on the Advancement and Commendation of Ethnic Unity.[277] The *minzu tuanjie* program received an extra push after protests by Uyghurs and Tibetans in 2008 and the July 2009 rioting in Urumqi between Han and Uyghur that claimed almost 200 lives. In November 2008, the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission issued the "Guiding Program on Ethnic Unity Education in Schools (Trial)," and in 2009 included this ethnic unity program in primary, secondary and higher education examinations.[278] The program's goals are stated as follows:

> [The goal of ethnic unity education is] to enhance the understanding of students of every ethnicity about the common cause of the great motherland history of all ethnic groups in our country, to enhance their sense of responsibility and self-awareness in safeguarding ethnic unity, safeguarding national unity and opposing separatism. [They should] recognize and understand the basic Marxist concepts on ethnic issues and the Party's and the nation's ethnic affairs policies. [They should] have the basic qualities of correctly handling and dealing with ethnic issues in their social relations. [They should] consciously safeguard the socialist relations of equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and harmony among all ethnic groups in our country and promote the common progress of all ethnic groups and the prosperity of the motherland. (Ministry of Education and State Ethnic Affairs Commission, "Guiding Program on Ethnic Unity Education in Schools [Trial]," 2008)[279]

The emphasis of *minzu tuanjie* education is on the preservation of national unity and on fighting the threat of separatism. *Minzu tuanjie* stimulates the idea of every ethnicity's share in the building of the great Chinese nation (*zhonghua minzu* 中华民族). However, the representation of China as, in the words of anthropologist Thomas Eriksen, "a mosaic of ethnic groups" has proven difficult, and carries the potential of enhancing differences between China's ethnic groups.[280] It is not only the

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[277] Respectively held in April 1988, September 1994, September 1999, May 2005, September 2009, and September 2014.

[278] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of all Ethnic Groups," September 27, 2009, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7078073.htm. For an account of how the *minzu tuanjie* policy was implemented in Urumqi, see David Tobin, *Nation-Building and Ethnic Boundaries in China's Northwest* (PhD diss., The University of Manchester, 2013).

[279] Ministry of Education and State Ethnic Affairs Commission, "Xuexiao minzu tuanjie jiaoyu zhidao gangyao (shixing)" 学校民族团结教育指导纲要（试行）[Guiding Program on Ethnic Unity Education in Schools (Trial)], November 27, 2008, https://www.cecc.gov/resources/legal-provisions/guiding-program-on-ethnic-unity-education-in-schools-trial-chinese-text. This section of the Guiding Program's text is also found in the introduction of the 2014 ethnic unity education schoolbook: Kang Ding 康定, *Minzu tuanjie jiaoyu: 30 jiang* 民族团结教育: 30 讲[Ethnic Unity Education: 30 Essays], Shanghai Jiading Nr. 1 High School Training Material (Shanghai: Shanghai Sociology Department Press, 2014), 2-3.

[280] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London and New York: Pluto Press, (2010), 141. The differentiation between "us" and "them" is a basic principle of ethnicity and of

perceived difference between different ethnicities that can prove a problem for China, but also the claim to superiority by the majority Han. From imperialist until current Communist times, Chinese politics have had a civilizing approach towards those who were considered "other," and have considered themselves the epicenter of civilization.[281] Frank Dikøtter has argued that, with the rise of Chinese modernist nationalism, cultural definitions of "civilization" versus "barbarism" were transposed into binary oppositions between "advanced" and "backward" groups of people.[282] In current times, Han chauvinism towards other ethnicities is very apparent. There is a distinct air of "otherness" in the portrayal of non-Han *minzu*, which negates the claim that the Chinese government considers all nationalities to be equal. The idea of Han exclusivity and superiority is apparent in one of the central tenets of *minzu tuanjie*: the concept of "the three inseparables" (*sange libukai* 三个离不开), which holds that "the Han cannot go without the ethnic minorities, ethnic minorities cannot go without the Han, all ethnic minorities can never go without each other." This concept was reconceived by Jiang Zemin during a visit to Xinjiang in 1990, and is still present in the current *minzu tuanjie* program taught in schools.[283] Although the concept is meant to counter Han nationalism and local ethnic nationalism, it reinforces the idea of Han exclusivity by upholding a categorical boundary between Han and non-Han ethnicities. Culturally, the Han are set apart and portrayed as the neutral modern spearhead of Chinese civilization, while the portrayal of minorities is mostly limited to dance, song and dress. A cadre handbook for *minzu tuanjie* education does not mention Han culture and only teaches that minority cultures (*shaoshu minzu wenhua* 少数民族文化) have to be protected and preserved.[284] The Party does not see a problem in the patronizing role of

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nationalism. According to historian Prasenjit Duara, this process entails the hardening of previously soft boundaries. When a master narrative tries to define and mobilize a group, it usually does this by privileging one or more cultural practices, such as language, religion, or a specific event, as the basic principle of the community. This enhances the awareness of the self in relation to others, and determines the lines along which the hardening of boundaries will take place. Duara claims that every available cultural practice is a potential boundary marking the community, and the narrative is the one that decides which ones will determine the group's composition. See Prasenjit Duara, "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 49.

[281] In an example of how the CCP portrays itself as the savior of poor, backward minorities, the State Council's 2009 White Paper "China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of all Ethnic Groups" describes the pre-1949 situation as such: "The ethnic minorities led a life full of misery. Life was even worse for those living in the mountainous and desert areas, where a dearth of food and clothing was common. For months almost every year they would run out of grain and had to survive on wild fruits, and in the harsh winter they had nothing to keep out the cold but straw capes." Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of all Ethnic Groups," September 27, 2009, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7078073.htm.

[282] Frank Dikøtter, "Introduction," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Frank Dikøtter (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 7.

[283] Kang Ding 康定, *Minzu tuanjie jiaoyu: 30 jiang* 民族团结教育: 30 讲[Nationality Solidarity Education: 30 Essays], Shanghai Jiading Nr. 1 High School Training Material (Shanghai: Shanghai Sociology Department Press, 2014), 137-42.

[284] Yang Zhanwu 杨占武, *Minzu tuanjie jinbu duben* 民族团结进步读本 [Handbook on the Promotion of Ethnic Unity], *Xinshiqi musilin zhishi duben* (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 2012), 8-9.

the Han majority. The problem to them is Han nationalism (*da hanzu zhuyi* 大汉族主义), which can be summarized as "not being helpful or respectful to minority nationalities."[285] State development programs encourage the view that minorities such as the Uyghurs have to be given a hand to reach the same level as the Han majority.

Religion as the state views it fits this civilizing idea, since religion is considered a product of unwanted societal circumstances that will wither away in the ideal future modern socialist society. Religion is seen as a part of social behavior and tradition that needs to be rooted out with the right education and guidance. The idea of a Han majority that needs to guide minorities into a modern, prosperous lifestyle enhances the perceived link between minorities and religion. There is a certain reluctance to ascribe religiosity to the Han nationality. In the enumeration of ethnicities and their religions, a 2011 CCP cadre handbook on ethnicities and religion (Cadre Handbook on Ethnicities' Religion (*minzu zongjiao zhishi ganbu duben* 民族宗教知识干部读本) never mentions the Han.[286] In similar trend, Document 19 tries to soften the image of a religious Han majority, saying that although Buddhism and Daoism still exercised considerable influence, "there are a considerable number who believe in spirits, but the number of those who actually adhere to a religion is not great."[287] With the Han as the poster child for a modern, secular Chinese society, state categorization places ethnic minorities at the other end of the scale.

The official link between religion and ethnicity is complicated. Ethnic categorization into one of the fifty-six nationalities carries more weight than religious categorization. Ethnicity is designated on one's identity card, and entitles one to certain rights.[288] Religion is often treated as an aspect of ethnic issues, or at least spoken of in close connection to ethnic issues, specifically ethnic minority issues:

> Freedom of religious belief involves ethnic policy, especially in China, where ethnic minorities are most problematic in religious belief issues. We must implement the correct ethnic policy, we must implement freedom of religious belief. – Deng Xiaoping (1979)[289]

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[285] Chen Xiaolong, *Minzu zongjiao zhishi ganbu* duben [Cadre Handbook on Ethnicity and Religion], 11-12.
[286] Chen, 33-35.
[287] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter II.
[288] As Frauke Drewes points out, the emphasis on ethnic categories instead of religious categories in China is in strong contrast to the situation in Europe, where religion is increasingly important in social categorization. Frauke Drewes, *Orientalisiert - Kriminalisiert - Propagiert? Die Position von Muslimen in Geselschaft und Politik der Volksrepublik China heute* (PhD. diss., Münster University, 2016) (Würzburg: Ergon), 366.
[289] Deng Xiaoping, "Huijian yingguo zhiming renshi daibiaotuanshi de tanhua" 会见英国知名人士代表团时的谈话 [Speech at the meeting with a delegation of British dignitaries], October 15, 1979. Published in 邓小平思想年谱 [Deng Xiaoping Thought Chronology (1975-1997)] (Central Literature Press, November 1998), 134.

Although there is a reluctance to equate ethnicities with religion, ethnicity and religion are invariably mentioned as interconnected issues. The CCP maintains a difficult differentiation between ethnic cultural practice and religion. Religion is often spoken of as culture (*wenhua* 文化) instead of religion (*zongjiao* 宗教).[290] This culturalization of religion changes the paradigm of religious issues, in a way depriving religion of its sacred nature:

> Although many of the traditional marriage and funeral ceremonies and mass festivals among these ethnic minorities have a religious tradition and significance, they have already essentially become merely a part of ethnic custom and tradition. (Document 19, 1982)[291]

It thus becomes easier to think about religion as a set of practices that people perform just as part of their traditional lifestyle, or, as the abovementioned passage from Document 19 says, as "*merely* [emphasis added] a part of ethnic custom and tradition." It allows for a separation of the practices from ideas of transcendental authority. From another viewpoint, the culturalization of religion can allow for a pragmatic management of religious activities. This culturalization of religion can be a practical tool for administrators as well as researchers to deal with religious communities without drawing unwanted questions and suspicions.[292] The other side of the coin is that the connection between culture and religion feeds the idea that religion naturally belongs to certain ethnic groups. There are attempts on the side of the state to counteract simplifications and prejudices, as shown by this statement in the 2011 CCP cadre handbook:

> Religion is only one part of the life of ethnicities, and the religion's characteristics are also just one part of the ethnicity's characteristics. We cannot equate or mix up the characteristics of the religion with that of the ethnicity, and we definitely cannot say the characteristics of the ethnicity are solely determined by the characteristics of the religion.[293]

But these attempts are often just one drop against a tide of cultural essentialization by the state. As anthropologist Louisa Schein has argued in her work on the Miao minority, "ethnic work" (*minzu gongzuo* 民族工作) by the Chinese state is characterized by a limited conception of cultural diversity.

Republished on CPC News "Religious Work", accessed October 29, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64171/65717/65720/4461147.html.

[290] Drewes, *Orientalisiert - Kriminalisiert - Propagiert?*, 96.

[291] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter IX.

[292] Zhang Qianfang and Zhu Yingping have stated that because China's ethnic policy requires that the enforcement of the Criminal Law take into account ethnic customs, especially those involving religious beliefs, many local governments in minority areas modify provisions of laws or administrative regulations to adapt them to local customs. Zhang and Zhu, "Religious Freedom and Its Legal Restrictions in China," 801. I myself was often given the advice not to mention the word religion when asked about my research while in China. Topics such as "education" or "tradition" were seen as less sensitive, although any research on Uyghur history or culture quickly became a no-go area in the years after starting the official project in 2014. For similar observations, see also Drewes, *Orientalisiert - Kriminalisiert – Propagiert*, 96.

[293] Chen Xiaolong, *Minzu zongjiao zhishi ganbu* duben [Cadre Handbook on Ethnicity and Religion], 31.

Minzu gongzuo has created a specific habitus wherein notions about historical stages of social development, cultural essences of discrete groups, and naturalized official group ethnonyms have become the framework of ethnicity in China.[294] In the end, the state's vision of a multicultural China involves a very static, essentialist idea of what these cultures are.

Religion's International Connections

The multiple ways in which members of China's religious communities can connect to foreign identities are considered both a threat and an opportunity to China. The government wishes to use the international connections of China's religious communities narrowly to promote the political and economic ties with other countries. To maintain good diplomatic relations, the state portrays a positive image of Chinese religious minorities through, for example, tours to important religious sites or through documentaries targeting international audiences that depict the situation of religious minorities to the outside world as harmonious and prosperous.[295] This state propaganda has met with varying success. In contrast to the peaceful image presented by Chinese media, reports by international human rights associations on religious rights abuses in, for example, Tibet or Xinjiang have occasionally provoked severe international criticism. But the impact of such international outcries is limited. The Chinese administrative rhetoric tends to stress China's conformity with international standards, while at the same time stressing that religious management is an internal issue. The 1997 White Paper on Freedom of Religious Belief sums up the relevant international regulations, saying that the legal protection of freedom of religious belief is "basically in accordance with the main contents of the concerned international documents and conventions."[296] China also

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[294] Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 95. In an example of how China essentializes ethnic minority culture, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission in October 2013 announced the Ethnic Minority Film Project. The project aims to create feature films for each of China's fifty-five ethnic minorities that colorfully portray the minorities as happy and patriotic. The selection requirements include: Article 16: "The selected works must be highly ideological. The contents of the work should be positive and healthy, promote the main theme of loving the motherland, loving the ethnicity, safeguarding ethnic unity, inheriting the excellent ethnic culture, and promoting the common prosperity and development of all ethnic groups." Article 17: "The selected works shall have strong ethnic characteristics and reflect various aspects of the history, culture, geography and social life of ethnic minorities." Article 18: "The selected works shall be beautifully shot, highly artistic and ornamental." State Ethnic Affairs Commission, "Zhongguo shaoshu minzu dianying gongcheng ruxuan zuopin pingxuan banfa" 中国少数民族电影工程入选作品评选办法 [Selection Method for Selected Works of the Chinese Ethnic Minority Film Project], June 22, 2016, http://www.seac.gov.cn/art/2016/6/22/art_9551_259221.html.

[295] For example China Global Television Network, "Buddha's Birthday celebrated in China," YouTube, May 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKeK-rpNFfY. At the end of the video, the commentator calls the celebration "a display of Chinese history of 4000 years and Chinese civilization". Another example is CGTN America, "Ramadan in Xinjiang," YouTube, July 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjFDE-UXMBk. The commentator remarks that the mosque community receives a free iftar meal, and the mosque imam praises the government for providing them with supplies and spacious offices.

[296] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "White Paper: Freedom of Religious Belief in China," Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, October 1997, trans. M.E. Sharpe, *Chinese Law and Government* 36 no. 3 (2003): 11.

uses international guidelines to justify the principle that religion needs to be loyal to the Party-state, on the grounds that international human rights conventions consider religious activities that "endanger social security" and "breed hate and intolerance" as illegal.[297] China's rising economic dominance increasingly quells any objections raised by foreign governments, or at the least minimizes the impact of criticism and symbolic protest, as foreign entities hold less leverage.

While the government seeks to take advantage of the international connections of its religious communities, it attempts to maintain tight control in order to avoid undesirable foreign influence:

> Facts have proven over and over again that if we handle the domestic situation well, then all hostile religious forces from abroad will have little or no opportunity to exploit the situation to their own advantage. Then the international contacts undertaken by religious groups will make smoother and sounder progress and the positive function they should have will be given full play. (Document 19, 1982)[298]

Religion's international connections are perceived as a threat to the Chinese state because they provide a way for Chinese citizens to have unwanted connections with foreign entities. Foreign connections of religious communities are not only brought about by a shared religion, but also through institutional authority (e.g. the Vatican, the Dalai Lama) or linguistic and ethnic affiliation. After the Cultural Revolution, the Reform and Opening Up campaign under Deng Xiaoping was implemented to break up China's global isolation, but the government was aware of the challenges that this increased connectivity brought with it:

> At the present time, contacts with international religious groups are increasing, along with the expansion of our country's other international contacts, a situation which has important significance for extending our country's political influence. But at the same time there are reactionary religious groups abroad, especially the imperialistic ones such as the Vatican and Protestant Foreign-mission societies, who strive to use all possible occasions to carry on their efforts at infiltration 'to return to the China mainland.' Our policy is to actively develop friendly international religious contacts, but also to firmly resist infiltration by hostile foreign religious forces. (Document 19, 1982)[299]

China has long been on guard for what it sees as ideological besiegement by the West, often termed as "peaceful evolution" (*heping yanbian* 和平演变). In the 1950s the term was used to describe U.S.

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[297] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "White Paper," 11.
[298] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter XI.
[299] MacInnis, transl., "Document 19," chapter XI.

tactics to turn the socialist block more democratic and capitalist,[300] and Jiang Zemin used it in the 1990s to describe the unwanted political influence of foreign hostile forces.[301] One of the key issues surfacing in official rhetoric on religious work is the national independence of religions in China, in the sense of religious groups not being subject to any foreign interference. In the early CCP years the rhetoric's focus was on Christian missionary activities who were accused of trying to undermine internal stability in China. Party officials named the Church a tool for imperial aggressors.[302] To the Chinese government, the Vatican is in the first place a political entity, and attempts to strengthen papal authority within China have been seen as attempts to interfere with Chinese internal affairs "on the pretext of religious affairs."[303] The Chinese government subsequently cut off administrative ties with the Vatican, saying that internal affairs such as the appointment of bishops were to be handled independently by the Chinese Catholic Church, based on the principle of independence, autonomy and self-management (*duli zizhu ziban* 独立自主自办).[304] Since 2018, however, the Vatican and the Chinese government signed a controversial agreement which would recognize the Pope as the head of the Catholic Church in China and which allows him to veto bishop appointments in China. In return, the Pope recognized seven previously excommunicated bishops that the Chinese state had appointed. The agreement was met with mixed reactions, as critics viewed it as a knee

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[300] Chan and Carlson, *Religious Freedom in China*, 19. Mohammed Al-Sudairi, "Changing State-Religion Dynamics in Xi Jinping's China: And its Consequences for Sino-Saudi Relations," *Dirasat* 19 (2017): 10-11 and footnote 13.

[301] "Domestic and foreign hostile forces have used religious infiltration as an important means of their peaceful evolution of our country. This is essentially a political issue." (transl.) - Jiang Zemin. In Jiang Zemin, "Baochi dang de zongjiao zhengce he wendingxing he lianxuxing" 保持党的宗教政策的稳定性和连续性 [To Maintain the Stability and Continuity of the Party's Religious Policy], January 30, 1991. Published in 新时期宗教工作文献选编 [Selected Works of Religious Work in the New Period] (Religious Culture Press, August 1995), 210. Republished on CPC News "Religious Work", accessed October 29, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64171/65717/65721/4461297.html.
"The religious question is a big problem. Because it is related to the unity and solidarity of our entire country, the unity of the nation, the reunification of the motherland, the whole of our socialist material civilization and spiritual civilization, but also related to penetration and counter-penetration, peaceful evolution and anti-peaceful evolution struggle. That is to say, if religious work is done well, it can play a good role in promoting socialist construction; if done badly, it will be used by hostile forces both at home and abroad. Therefore, doing religious work is of great significance." (transl.) - Jiang Zemin. In Jiang Zemin, "Yiding yao zuohao zongjiao gongzuo" [Must do a good job of religious work].

[302] See for example Deng Xiaoping: "[…], the Vatican must respect the principles of independence, autonomy and self-management of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which is a necessary policy required by China's historical conditions. In the past imperialist aggression against China, the church was an important tool." (transl.) - Deng Xiaoping. "Huijian yidali tianzhujiao minzhudang fushuji kelongbo shi de tanhua" 会见意大利天主教民主党副书记科隆博时的谈话 [Talk at the meeting with Italian Christian Democratic Party Deputy Secretary Colombo], December 12, 1981, published in *Deng Xiaoping sixiang nianpu* 邓小平思想年谱 [Deng Xiaoping Thought Chronology (1975-1997)] (Central Literature Press, November 1998), 134. Republished on CPC News "Religious Work", accessed October 29, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64171/65717/65720/4461147.html.

[303] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "White Paper: Freedom of Religious Belief in China," 17.

[304] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "White Paper: Freedom of Religious Belief in China," 17.

bend to Beijing, while the Pope emphasized the importance of working relations.[305] As for Buddhism and Islam, they were typically labelled as harmful because of their "system of feudalism and oppression." [306] Since the 1990s, the emphasis has shifted to the connection with foreign authorities. For Chinese Buddhism, the person of the Dalai Lama is seen as a special threat, which China has sought to curb by claiming the right for the official appointment of living Buddha reincarnations.[307] For Islam, global concerns have gained prominence due to increased international communication and mobility and because of the threat of religious extremism and international terrorism after September 11, 2001. This does not only entail international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, but also foreign governments.[308]

One of the ways in which the CCP seeks to keep ethnic nationalism and foreign authorities in check is providing the ethnic minorities with a clear narrative telling how each religion belongs in the Chinese nation. In the second part of this chapter we will see how the state has accomplished this for Islam.

4.3. How China Seeks to Nationalize Islam

The place of religion and religious communities within the idea of a Chinese nation narrative is a challenge to the CCP. Historian Rebecca Nedostup has shown that when the Chinese Nationalist KMT government (1929-1949) tried to construct a national narrative, it deliberately wanted to create a secularist system, and separated itself from the idea of a state religion. The KMT sought to replace

[305] The agreement was renewed in 2020. Vatican News, "Holy See and China renew Provisional Agreement for 2 years," published October 22, 2020, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-10/holy-see-china-provisional-agreement-renew-appointment-bishops.html. Bartosz Kowalski, "Vatican's Rapprochement with China, Three Years On," published December 29, 2021, https://chinaobservers.eu/vaticans-rapprochement-with-china-three-years-on/.

[306] J"In the past reform of the religious system it was absolutely necessary and correct to reform the aspects of imperialistic manipulation and control in Catholicism and Protestantism and to form an independent, autonomic and self-managing association. And [it was absolutely necessary and correct to reform] the system of feudalism and oppression in the areas of Buddhism and Islam. It allowed our religious community to take an important step to adapt to socialist society." (transl.) – Jiang Zemin. In Jiang Zemin, "Zai quanguo tongzhan gongzuo huiyishang de jianghua" 在全国统战工作会议上的讲话 [Speech at the National United Front Work Conference], November 7, 1993, published in "Overview of National United Front Work Conference and Literature (1988-1998)" (China Press, September 1998), 163-164. Republished on CPC News "Religious Work", accessed October 29, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64171/65717/65721/4461297.html.

[307] State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism," July 18, 2007, trans. International Campaign for Tibet for Congressional-Executive Committee on China website, https://www.cecc.gov/resources/legal-provisions/measures-on-the-management-of-the-reincarnation-of-living-buddhas-in-0.

[308] The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) was reportedly founded in late 1997 by Hasan Mahsum, a Uyghur from Kashgar. The ETIM was put on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations in 2002, but experts have expressed doubts about its size and actual operations, instead suspecting that it serves as an umbrella name for several splintered terrorist activists.

the superstitious ideas of the past with faith in the nation and in the leading party.[309] The CCP has kept to the same avowedly secular ideological stance, but has, just like the KMT, made use of ideas and vocabulary similar to religious utopianism. Historian Vincent Goossaert goes so far as to say that the Maoist regime provided the most explicit and forceful expression of the utopian recycling of vocabulary and symbolic resources available from various religious traditions.[310] So while Chinese nationalism was deliberately built without and even partly against religion, it also bears great resemblance to it in terms of devotion and utopianism. The state wishes to inspire people with an evolutionist vision of a prosperous nation. In this vision, there is no room for irrational religion that could lead people away from productive choices. Instead, the state requires a rational devotion to the Chinese nation and the CCP.

Since the 1980s, the integration of religious communities into the Chinese nation narrative has seen a gradual increase. In the 1980s, national religious associations were reinstated and an institutional framework for religious management was rebuilt, but the state was still relatively unobtrusive towards religious communities. This changed in the 1990s under President Jiang Zemin's policy of mutual adaptation of socialism and religion.[311] In 1993, Jiang Zemin called for religious communities and socialist society to "mutually adapt" (*xiangshiying* 相适应):

> Religion is a historical phenomenon that will exist for a long time in a socialist society. If religion and socialist society will not mutually adapt, conflict will occur. This adaptation does not require religious believers to abandon the theistic ideas and religious beliefs, but asks of them to politically love the motherland, support the socialist system, and support the leadership of the Communist Party, as well as to reform religious systems and religious doctrine that does not adapt to socialist society, and to use the positive factors of religious doctrines, religious teachings and religious morality in service of socialism. – Jiang Zemin, Speech at the National United Front Work Conference (1993)[312]

Since Jiang Zemin's call for mutual adaptation, the Chinese state has been very open concerning its utilitarian view of religion. Religious communities were seen as possible positive forces in Chinese society and where possible to be used to the state's advantage.[313] The central precondition to this

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[309] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 24.
[310] Goossaert, "State and Religion in Modern China," 4.
[311] Pitman B. Potter, "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China," *China Quarterly* 174, vol. 174 (2003): 319-324.
[312]Jiang Zemin, "Zai quanguo tongzhan gongzuo huiyishang de jianghua [Speech at the National United Front Work Conference]."
[313] For example, in the harsh winter of 2008, then Politburo Standing Committee member and CPPCC chairman Jia Qinglin called upon religious communities in South China to carry forward "the religious tradition of our society to serve the community" and aid with disaster relief. CPC News, "Jia Qinglin yu quanguoxing zongjiao

idea of cooperation between the state and religious communities was unquestioned political loyalty of religious circles to the Chinese state.[314]

Institutional Context: Administrative Bodies for Religious Affairs

Different departments of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC, *guojiaminwei* 国家民委) implement ethnic affairs policies. An important task of the Culture and Propaganda Section of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission is to manage and support cultural traditions, and to make sure no conflicts arise because of cultural differences. This is but one part of an overall propaganda system, in which the United Front Work Department, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Central Propaganda Department determine the themes that are to be addressed, such as, for example, religious extremism.[315] The United Front Work Department (UFWD, *tongzhanbu* 统战部), a Party body which takes its direction from the CCP Central Committee, determines the general policies towards ethnic minorities. Reestablished after the Cultural Revolution in 1979, the official task of the UFWD is to ensure good cooperation between Party and non-Party organizations such as other political parties, religious communities, and other interest groups.

The State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA, *guojia zongjiao shiwuju* 国家宗教事务局) is responsible for drafting rules and regulations on religious affairs, as well as for implementing those rules and regulations.[316] SARA and its local Religious Affairs Bureaus (RAB) are responsible for the management of religious affairs that are deemed legal, and have to coordinate with public security organs for handling illegal religious activities.[317] SARA is officially the head of seven national religious associations: the China Patriotic Catholic Association, the Chinese Catholic Bishop's College, the China Christian Council, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the China Buddhist Association, the China Taoist Association and the China Islamic Association. These national religious associations were not a new phenomenon. National religious associations were founded already under the Republican

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tuanti zerenren juxing yingchun zuotan" 贾庆林与全国性宗教团体负责人举行迎春座谈[Jia Qinglin and the heads of the national religious groups held a spring discussion], February 3, 2008, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64094/6859707.html.

[314] Jiang Zemin, "Baochi dang de zongjiao zhengce he wendingxing he lianxuxing" [To maintain the stability and continuity of the Party's religious policy]. Duan Dezhi 段德智, *Xin Zhongguo zongjiao gongzuo shi* 新中国宗教工作史 (A History of Religion Work in New China) (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2013), 272.

[315] Anne-Marie Brady, "'We Are All Part of the Same Family': China's Ethnic Propaganda," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 4 (2012): 161-62.

[316] SARA's predecessor, the Bureau of Religious Affairs, was founded in 1954 as a ministry under the State Council, and renamed to the State Administration for Religious Affairs in 1998. Ashiwa and Wank, "Making Religion, Making the State in Modern China," 9, 11.

[317] Articles 42, 62, 69, 71, 73, 74 of the Religious Affairs Regulations drafted in 2016, finalized in 2017, enacted as of February 1, 2018. China Law Translate, "Religious Affairs Regulations 2017," http://www.chinalawtranslate.com/宗教事务条例-2017/?lang=en. Original Chinese text consulted on http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2017-09/07/content_5223282.htm.

government. Although the associations of Republican times did not survive very long, new ones were very soon set up under the PRC. Rebecca Nedostup argues that it was a certain "cultural and governmental logic" that made the model of a national religious association equally valid for the PRC government.[318] These associations are meant to serve as bridges between state administration and religious communities.[319]

The China Islamic Association (CIA, *zhongguo yisilanjiao xiehui* 中国伊斯兰教协会) has administrations on the national, provincial and local levels. It is responsible for organizing religious activities, developing Islamic literature, organizing Islamic education, organizing the pilgrimage to Mecca, and more.[320] The CIA often has to work together with the local Religious Affairs Bureaus and the United Front Work Department, and in general needs to cooperate with an array of Party and state institutions.[321] The cooperation and power balance between these different institutions varies per region and administrative level.[322] On the national level, positions within the China Islamic Association are closely overseen by the state. In 2000, the frequency of the CIA's national congress changed from every four to every five years, a change which was explicitly intended to agree with the National People's Congress' and the People's Consultative Conference's schedules, "so as to duly and properly consider personnel arrangement as well as the arrangement of our association's work and conferences."[323] On the local level, local power politics, varying degrees of pressure from upper levels, and different responses by the communities to state measures all lead to different situations on the ground. Researchers have found that, institutionally, the horizontal financing of local China Islamic Associations strengthens this local diversity in handling Muslim communities.[324] At the same time, the reliance on government funding for Islamic Associations adds to the dependence of the religious communities on political goodwill. The CIA has gradually become more and more associated with the government rather than with the religious community it is supposed to represent. In many

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[318] Rebecca Nedostup, "The Transformation of the Concept of Religion in Chinese Modernity," in *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, eds. Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 161.
[319] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "White Paper: Freedom of Religious Belief in China," 7-20. State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Tianzhujiao" 天主教 [Catholicism], last modified on October 23, 2017, http://www.sara.gov.cn/zjbk/zjzs/575178.htm. State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Jidujiao" 基督教 [Protestantism], last modified on October 23, 2017, http://www.sara.gov.cn/zjbk/zjzs/575179.htm.
[320] China Islamic Association, "Xiehui jianjie"协会简介 [Short Introduction to the Association], accessed January 5, 2013, http://chinaislam.net.cn/about/xhgk/about132.html.
[321] Jérôme Doyon, "The Local Islamic Associations and the Party-State: Consanguinity and Opportunities," *China Perspectives* 4 (2014): 49.
[322] Chan and Carlson, *Religious Freedom in China*, 2.
[323] As quoted from an amendment to Articles of the China Islamic Association (2000) in Zhang and Zhu, "Religious Freedom and Its Legal Restrictions in China," 815-17.
[324] Erie, "Defining Shariʿa in China," 98. Also see Doyon, "The Local Islamic Associations and the Party-State," 45-52.

places, the CIA has become the mouthpiece for the government, with similar objectives, tenets and post qualifications.[325] This state control over the CIA becomes more problematic when we take into consideration the association's monopoly on community representation. As anthropologist Matthew Erie has observed, the CIA marginalizes grassroots Muslim organization by monopolizing the space for civil society between the state and the Muslim communities.[326] All Muslim communities within China are obliged to turn to the CIA for authorization and officiation. It is the only association that can offer legality to religious activities and sites. This leaves no room for alternative associations. It means that individual believers or groups of believers that do not comply with the CIA's directives, automatically find themselves outside of officially sanctioned Islam. This of course does not mean no organized religious activities take place outside of the CIA. It just means that these activities are pushed to a gray area of illegality, where they can become a liability, the seriousness of which depends on the political environment.

State-Led Islamic Education: Restrictions and Possibilities

Education is an important medium for the CCP to implement the state functionalization of Islam. The training and co-optation of patriotic religious clergy was already mentioned in 1982 in Document 19:

> To win over, unite and educate persons in religious circles is the primary task of religious professionals. It is also the essence of the Party's religious work and most important condition and prerequisite for the implementation of the Party's religious policy. (Document 19, 1982)[327]

Document 19 talks about "winning over" senior religious personnel, and about training new religious personnel through seminaries, in order to "create a contingent of young religious personnel who, in terms of politics, fervently love their homeland and support the Party's leadership and the socialist system and who possess sufficient religious knowledge."[328] In the 1980s, several Scriptural Institutes (*jingxueyuan* 经学院) for higher Islamic education were set up in the provinces, totaling nine institutes.[329] Although the public schooling system only teaches a Marxist secularist version of religion, the state supported the education of Islamic clergy through the official Islamic Scriptural Institutes, whose graduates would often become state officials, interpreters, and imams.

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[325] Zhang and Zhu, "Religious Freedom and Its Legal Restrictions in China," 817.
[326] Erie, "Defining Shariʿa in China," 100.
[327] MacInnis, transl., Document 19, chapter V.
[328] Document 19, chapter VIII.
[329] The first Scriptural Institute had been set up in Beijing under the CIA in 1955. Allès, "Muslim Religious Education in China," 7. Dru C. Gladney, "Making Muslims in China: Education, Islamicization and Representation," in *China's National Minority Education: Culture, Schooling, and Development*, ed. Gerard A. Postiglione (New York: Falmer Press, 1999), 84.

I interviewed a Uyghur alumnus of the Beijing Islamic Scriptural Institute who studied there between 2001 and 2006. He described aspects of the education in the Institute as skeptical of and sometimes hostile to religiosity. Some courses directly taught the idea that religion will wither away as society progresses: "They teach us in the Islamic Institute that every religion will die. It needs time, so they say we must be patient, we need to be tolerant. We just wait. 'Why we work here, why you study here, is just control. We must control this religion developing.' The Chinese say that if we do not control this religion, it will be a disaster."[330] The need to educate people in religious knowledge was explained by the institute in terms of making sure religion did not stray onto a path that might become harmful to society. The principle behind the institute's curriculum was that while it was not right to ban religious content, content needed to be shaped into a form that aligned with CCP interests. Indeed, if guided correctly, Islam could be useful. The alumnus, Sultan, told of a curriculum that was replete with Arabic language instruction as well as PRC religious policies. The knowledge of Arabic was practical for international relations, while religious leaders could serve as bridges between the Party and religious communities, and Islamic scripture contained ideas that aligned well with socialism. Institute graduates were trained to be advocates for both sides: On the one hand, they could argue Islam was a valuable resource in Chinese socialist society, countering the hardline stance that argued for the elimination of religion. And on the other hand, they could argue against people who resisted state intrusion in religious affairs that religion could be abused to harm society and therefore required state guidance.

The alumnus did not regard the staff working at the China Islamic Association and the Institutes as high religious authorities, saying rather that the teachers were always "researchers on Islam […], not religious functionaries."[331] The same lack of religious authority in the CIA was noted by researcher Matthew Erie, saying that most Hui scholars did not consider the people who were selected by the China Islamic Association to compose the official interpretation of Islamic scripture as possessing the required knowledge or authority: "Most *ahong* and almost all Hui scholars discredit the EAGC as China's *ulama*, citing the committee members' lack of credentials to interpret shari'a."[332] But even when not all functionaries working in the CIA or in the Institutes were regarded as religious authorities, the organization was attractive since it possessed resources not available to non-state organizations. State imams were given a salary, and the Institutes received government funds and were under certain circumstances allowed to use foreign support for their development.[333]

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[330] Author's interview with Sultan, January 2016.
[331] Author's interview with Sultan, January 2016.
[332] The EAGC was the Educational Administration Guidance Committee, set up by the CIA in 2001 to develop a standard curriculum for Islamic education. Erie, "Defining Shari'a in China," 108.
[333] Erie, *China and Islam*, 201.

Despite the general lack of legitimacy that the Institutes had in the eyes of Hui and Uyghur Muslims, it did still attract numerous students throughout the country. For the 2001 enrollments at the Beijing Islamic Institute, Sultan said there were around 5000 Uyghur applicants from Xinjiang, of whom 600 were allowed to participate in the entrance exams after background checks, and thirty eventually went on to study there. Sultan said that one of the Uyghur CIA teachers was a friend of his father, and it was he who made sure that Sultan passed the background check. Another one of my interviewees, when asked about the Institutes, said that he was not able to study there even though he had wanted to at some point. To me, this indicated not a wholesale rejection of the CIA and its Institutes, but a relationship ruled by interests.

Fellow students of Sultan have gone to work as imams, or as editors and writers at the *China Muslim* magazine. Sultan studied at the Institute to learn Arabic, motivated by the idea of helping his father do business with Arabic countries. Eventually, after his graduation, he worked in a Beijing trading company that had a project with an Arabic country. After two years he moved to Urumqi to work at the Religious Affairs Bureau as an ancient book translator and researcher.[334]

But working for the government did come with restrictions. Sultan said he was happy with the translation work and research work, but disliked that after a few months he also had to do translations for officials and law enforcement, such as checking online posts or checking suitcases of pilgrims returning from Hajj for Arabic works. He could not refuse those tasks, he said, for fear of getting into trouble himself.[335] Sultan also experienced situations where his function as a government official conflicted with his Muslim identity:

> As an official, I was not allowed to pray and fast. For the New Year's party, the commissary came to my table and told me to drink a glass of wine. I told him I never drank wine before, and that I am a graduate of the China Islamic Institute, and that it was not good for our image. You know that if I drink this, it is not good for our institute's image. He told me he wanted to speak with me later. So two weeks later, we talked, and he was very angry about me refusing his offer in front of 300 people. For the Chinese, they do not respect one another. You must completely obey.[336]

In the confrontation with the Party official, being a graduate of the Islamic Institute was used by Sultan to justify a level of religiosity, in this case not drinking alcohol. Even though Sultan was skeptic

[334] Author's interview with Sultan, January 2016.
[335] Author's interview with Sultan.
[336] Author's interview with Sultan.

of the true religious nature of the Islamic Institute, he did feel that its status as an approved state institution could protect his decision not to drink as an official.

Although the CIA and the Institutes often meant restrictions and a means of control over religious activities, we should not presume that people involved in the organizations had solely abusive intentions. The State Administration for Religious Affair, the China Islamic Association and the Scriptural Institutes enabled a pragmatism that allowed for Islam to function within the legal bounds of the Chinese state. The CIA and its Institutes were a buffer that worked both ways: On the one hand, the state could not be accused of wanting to eliminate religion, since it invested resources in the education of religious clergy. On the other hand, religious behavior could not be accused of being reactionary, since it was officially legitimized by a state institute. This allowed for people with a diversity of interests to work within the state-approved religious settings.

Scriptural Interpretation: Cultural and Political Nationalization of Islam

Around the turn of the 21st century, the state set out to standardize the curriculum of Islamic education. At a 1998 conference on Islamic education, the CIA argued that Islamic education suffered from a lack of standard textbooks.[337] In 2001 they established the Educational Administration Guidance Committee (*jiaowu zhidao weiyuanhui* 教务指导委员会 , EAGC) and organized a Symposium on National and Local Scriptural Study Institutes' Teaching Materials Work.[338] The following year, the CIA set up the Office for Coordinating the Editing of the China Islamic Association Teaching Material (*zhongguo yisilanjiao xiehui jiaocai bianshen xietiao bangongshi* 中国伊斯兰教协会教材编审协调办公室), which was in charge of producing state-approved interpretations of Islamic scriptures, also known as the *jiejing* 解经 (scripture interpretation) project. The Committee chairman Chen Guangyuan's explanation for the *jiejing* project was that it offered explanations from the angle of religious doctrine and rules, in line with both Islamic belief as well as the needs of modern society ("*shidai fazhan de yaoqiu* 时代发展的要求").[339] The *jiejing* project was a coordinated effort to communicate what the government expected Islam to profess. On the basis of the officially sanctioned curriculum, religious personnel were given instruction about what religious messages they could and should communicate to the religious community. The series of textbooks for the

[337] Gao Zhanfu 高占福 , "Yisilanjiao jingxueyuan tongbian jiaocai diyi jieduan renwu yuanman wancheng" 伊斯兰教经学院统编教材第一阶段任务圆满完成 [The successful completion of the first phase of Islamic textbooks], November 26, 2013, http://wap.cnki.net/touch/web/Newspaper/Article/CMZB201311260073.html.
[338] Chinese: Q*uanguo he difang jingxueyuan jiaocai zuotanhui* 全国和地方经学院教材工作座谈会. Erie, "Defining Shari'a in China," 92.
[339] Li Dekuan 李德宽, *Minzu zongjiao falü zhengce duben* 民族宗教法律政策读本[Handbook on Minority Religion Legislation and Policy] (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 2013), 61-62.

Islamic Institutes covered topics such as Islamic law, history, and Qur'an and Hadith, providing a uniform curriculum for all Institutes.[340] The Handbook for Islamic Patriotism (*musilin aiguo zhuyu jiaocheng* 穆斯林爱国主义教程) which appeared in 2006 was focused on a narrative that equated Islamic piety with good PRC citizenship.[341] It used Islamic scriptural quotations as well as historic figures and events from Islamic communities in China to display what patriotic Islam looks like.

The tightening of political "guidance" (*dao* 导) over the education of Islamic clergy coincided with a wider interest in patriotic education for religious personnel in the early 2000s. Kuo Cheng-tian related how, after relations between the Chinese government and the Vatican deteriorated due to China's appointment of its own bishops in 2000, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Catholic Bishop Conference published the *Chinese Catholic Textbook of Independent, Autonomous, and Self-Management Churches* in 2002, which sought to express and stimulate the patriotic nature of the Chinese Catholic community.[342] State Administration for Religious Affairs employees took an interest and wanted to expand the project of religious patriotic handbooks to other religious communities. In 2005, SARA published the "Guidelines for Implementing Patriotic Education," edited by a group of scholars at the Renmin University in Beijing specialized in Marxism and Leninism. Following SARA's guidelines, publications on patriotic education for Muslims (*Musilin Aiguo Zhuyi Jiaocheng*, Beijing: Zongjiao Chubanshe, 2006) and for Catholics (*Jidujiao Aiguo zhuyi jiaocheng*, Beijing; Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 2006) followed in 2006. These books were to be distributed among the religious communities, who had to appoint special teachers to teach the separate curriculum on religious patriotism.[343]

The scripture interpretation project provided a blueprint for all media aimed at Muslim communities. Several articles have appeared in Islamic publications making an effort to explicitly state the compatibility of Islam and CCP China. A 2012 article in the *China Muslim* journal aims to show how Islamic doctrine is compatible with Chinese socialist thought. The article gives an extensive overview of "harmonious" thought in Islam, going deeper into doctrinal principles saying that believing in God is the fundamental core of harmonious thought in Islamic culture which drives social development and scientific progress, and that the idea of rewards in the afterlife "requires not only the personal self-cultivation, but also the fulfillment of personal, family and social responsibilities […]."[344] The

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[340] Erie, "Defining Shari'a in China," 102. Allès, "Muslim Religious Education in China," 9.
[341] China Islamic Association, *Musilin aiguozhuyi jiaocheng (shiyongben)* 穆斯林爱国主义教程（试用本）[Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition)] (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua chubanshe, 2006).
[342] Kuo Cheng-tian, "Chinese Religious Reform: The Christian Patriotic Education Campaign," *Asian Survey* 51, no. 6 (2011): 1055.
[343] Kuo, "Chinese Religious Reform," 1042-43.
[344] Ma Wenyang 马文祥, "Lun yisilan wenhuazhong hexie sixiang de qianti goucheng" 论伊斯兰文化中和谐思想的潜体系构成 [On the Formation of the Potential System of Harmonious Thought in Islamic Culture], *Zhongguo Musilin* 2 (2012): 12. DOI:10.16293/j.cnki.cn11-1345/b.2012.02.004.

article starts by saying how high Party officials have affirmed that Islam contains ideas that are in congruence with the harmonious societal view of the CCP:

> On November 7, 2009, Premier Wen Jiabao pointed out in a speech at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo: "Islamic civilization also contains the concept of advocating peace and advocating tolerance. There are more than one hundred places in the Qur'an that talk about peace." Comrade Jia Qinglin further pointed out at the 10th Anniversary Summary Meeting of the Islamic Exegesis Work held in April 2011: "Standardize the content and form of the lectures, and more effectively promote the ideas of peace, unity and patriotism in Islamic teaching among the Muslims." This is the Party's and country's high affirmation of the harmonious ideas in Islamic culture.[345]

The focus of this patriotic narrative does not only lie in Islam's cultural connection with China, but also very specifically with its political loyalty to the Chinese state. The 1997 White Paper of Religious Belief in China stated that "[i]n the course of the country's long history, the various religions in China have become part of traditional Chinese thinking and culture," and saying that it is "traditional for Chinese religious believers to love their country and religions."[346] As Dru Gladney has argued, the discussion on the Sinicization or Hanification of China's minorities tends to submerge the aspect of minorities' political integration into the Chinese state (*Zhongguo hua*)."[347] A 2011 Cadre *Handbook of Muslim Aiguo Aijiao* ("Muslim Love Your Country, Love Your Religion") published with the Ningxia People's Press describes historic figures of the Hui community with the help of more than 40 questions such as "Who were the three Hui heroes of the May 4th Movement [of 1919]?", "Who was the Hui hero during the Resistance War who was known as the "one-armed warrior?" and "Why do we say that the expeditions of the Hui sailor Zheng He is one of China's, and even one of the world's, greatest heroic acts?"[348] The 2006 *Handbook for Islamic Patriotism* is a good representation of the general lines of the nation narrative that the state promoted around Islam. The book is divided into several sections: the first section explains how Islamic doctrine calls for patriotism. Developing towards a socialist society is presented as being in conformity with divine will, exemplified by several scriptural extracts. The second section explains how Muslim ethnic minorities in China contribute to the country's economy, scientific advancement, and culture. The following sections take on Muslims'

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[345] Ma Wenyang, "Lun yisilan wenhuazhong hexie sixiang de qianti goucheng" [On the Formation of the Potential System of Harmonious Thought in Islamic Culture], 10. Jia Qinglin was a high-profile CCP political figure and Politburo member who functioned as the Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference from 2003 to 2013.

[346] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "White Paper: Freedom of Religious Belief in China," 9.

[347] Gladney, *Muslim Chinese,* 318.

[348] Wang Fuping 王伏平, *Musilin aiguo aijiao duben* 穆斯林爱国爱教读本 [Handbook for Muslim Love Your Country Love Your Religion] (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 2011).

history in China, explaining how Muslims have contributed to the founding and unity of the People's Republic by resisting foreign imperialist powers, advocating socialism and helping in the Liberation War. The last two sections show what patriotic actions have been taken in recent Communist times. On the one hand it focuses on policies of societal advancement such as China's Reform and Opening-up, the Western Development Program, and developing modern education. The other focus is on acts that safeguard national unity, such as resisting East Turkestan forces, taking part in the state-organized Hajj, and maintaining friendly international relations. Religion is portrayed as an integral part of the Chinese nation narrative in two ways: cultural belonging and political loyalty.

To illustrate how the state functionalized Islamic scripture to urge believers to be patriotic, here following is a selection of quotations used in the *Handbook for Islamic Patriotism* in the chapter about Patriotic Thought in the Qur'an and Hadith.[349] The chapter says that the Prophet Muhammad "during his life when he was preaching Islam (610-623), did not only vigorously propagate Islam, but also instructed Muslims to love their hometown, to love their country."[350] To support this point, the text recalls the following sayings by Muhammad: "I swear it by Allah! Indeed, you (Mecca) are the most beloved for Allah. You are also my most beloved land. If they would not have driven me away, then I would not have left you."[351] Several other Hadith are used to support the idea of establishing a thriving land, such as: "Lord! I ask you to give us auspiciousness in this land! I ask you to give us the rich fruits of this land! I ask that we make friends with the kind-hearted villagers."[352] The handbook also mentions a Hadith from Al-Bukhari in the context of prosperity: "God, make us love Medina like we loved Mecca, or even more so. I ask you to make Medina prosper, I ask you that we have ample food and clothing."[353] A central topic in this patriotic narrative is the need to counter separatism. A verse that is frequently used for this purpose, not only in textbooks, but also in state-approved sermons and other propaganda texts, is Qur'an Surah 3, verse 103: "You all should hold on to the

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[349] China Islamic Association, *Musilin aiguozhuyi jiaocheng (shiyongben)* [Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition)], 31-35.
[350] Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition), 32.
[351] Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition), 32.
[352] Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition), 32.
[353] Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition), 35. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1889, Book 29, Hadith 23) Chinese: "*Zhu a! Qiu ni shi women xi'ai maidina, youru xi'ai maijia huo geng shen. Zhu a! Qiu ni shi maidina fanrong, qiu ni shi women fengyi zushi ba!*" 主啊！求你使我们喜爱麦地那，犹如喜爱麦加或更甚。主啊！求你使麦地那繁荣，求你是我们丰衣足食吧!
Arabic: اللَّهُمَّ حَبِّبْ إِلَيْنَا الْمَدِينَةَ كَحُبِّنَا مَكَّةَ أَوْ أَشَدَّ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي صَاعِنَا، وَفِي مُدِّنَا، وَصَحِّحْهَا لَنَا وَانْقُلْ حُمَّاهَا إِلَى الْجُحْفَةِ
English: O Allah! Make us love Medina as we love Mecca or even more than that. O Allah! Give blessings in our Sāʿ and our Mudd [measures symbolizing food] and make the climate of Medina suitable for us, and divert its fever towards Aljuhfa.

rope of Allah, you should not break up."[354] The handbook also provides scriptural examples on how to deal with non-Muslims, most notably Surah 49, verse 13. Interestingly, the Chinese version of this Qur'anic verse differs from the Arabic and the Uyghur one. The Chinese version says that God created mankind into different peoples and religions (Chinese: *wo shi nimen chengwei xuduo minzu he zongjiao* 我使你们成为许多民族和宗族), whereas the Uyghur and Arabic versions merely mention peoples and tribes, not religions (Arabic: *wa jaʿalnākum shuʿūban wa qabāʾila* وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ, Uyghur: *nurghun millet we uruq* نۇرغۇن مىللەت ۋە ئۇرۇق).[355] These quotes from the Qur'an and Hadith are used frequently in speeches, sermons and publications that expound the state's vision on Islam.

Presenting patriotism and loyalty to the state as an act of piety is also a way to circumvent any possible troubles with regard to Islamic law. The Institute handbook on Islamic doctrine is very careful to treat Islamic law not as a transcendental universal law for humankind, but as rules of conduct applicable to the local *minzu*.[356] Besides the Institute handbooks, the *jiejing* project also led to the publication of collections of fatwas (*jiaowu zhidao tongxun* 教务指导通讯). By the time of my fieldwork in 2015, however, the six collections of fatwas that were published between 2001 and 2011 had been taken out of circulation. Scholar Matthew Erie remarks they have most likely been censored by the state because of their sensitive content.[357]

Another type of publication to come out of the *jiejing* project are the collections of sermons (*xinbian wo'erzi yanjiangji* 新编卧儿兹演讲集 *Collections of Newly Edited Wa'z Sermons*). The collections of sermons have proven to be the most important medium for the state to spread its narrative of a

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[354] China Islamic Association, *Musilin aiguozhuyi jiaocheng (shiyongben)* [Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition)], 33. Chinese: "*Nimen dang quanti jianchi zhenzhu de shengsuo, bu yao ziji fenlie.*" 你们当全体坚持真主的绳索，不要自己分裂。
This is the full Qur'anic verse 103 in Arabic: وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۚ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ
Full Qur'anic verse 103 in English: And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.

[355] China Islamic Association, *Musilin aiguozhuyi jiaocheng (shiyongben)* [Handbook for Muslim Patriotism (Trial Edition)], 33. Qur'an surah 49, verse 13. For the Uyghur and Arabic version, I consulted Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Islamic Association, *Quran Kerim - Uyghurche terjimisi* قۇرئان كەريم – ئۇيغۇرچە تەرجىمىسى [The Qur'an – Uyghur translation] (Urumqi: Xinjiang People's Press, 2012), 517.

[356] Editorial Commitee for the China Islamic Association National Institutes' Uniform Teaching Materials 中国伊斯兰教协会全国经学院统编教材编审委员会, ed., *Yisilanjiaofa jianming jiaocheng* (shiyongben) 伊斯兰教教法简明教程 （试用本） [Concise Handbook on Islamic Doctrine (Trial Edition)], (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2008, 2013), 103-5. Also see Erie, *China and Islam.*

[357] Topics discussed included the definition of *jihad* and dress codes. The editors said that foreign authorities were consulted in the writing process. Erie, "Defining Shari'a in China," 104-8.

nationalist Islam. We will go deeper into the contents of such speeches in the following chapter on the implementation of the functionalization policy in Xinjiang.

4.4. Conclusion

The CCP's ideas of how religion fits into Chinese society as laid down by the 1982 Document 19 have held ground throughout the years. Officially, religion is an unwanted factor in society, but it should not and cannot be done away with overnight. And so, religion is provisionally allowed to hold a place in society, as long as it does not stand in the way of the political and social goals of the CCP. Due to its potential for social organization, its connection to issues of ethnicity, as well as the possibilities it offers for connecting to foreign authorities, religion remained an object of political scrutiny.

The government kept religious communities in check through administration and legislation. But it also saw the need to align religious communities' interests with those of the Chinese nation. This has driven initiatives to educate its own religious staff, who were seen as an instrumental link between the government and local communities. There was a need for a professional, patriotic group of religious leaders who could ensure that religious teachings were always deployed in the interest of China, and not in the interest of foreigners or ethno-nationalists. Projects such as the *jiejing* were efforts at aligning religious discourse with ideas about social order as envisioned by the CCP. This nationalist religious discourse was twofold: it not only intended to bind religious communities to China in a historical and cultural sense, but also emphasized political loyalty to the CCP.