Contemporary Ethnic Identity Of Muslim Descendants Along the Chinese Maritime Silk Route

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At the end of five day's journey, you arrive at the noble-and handsome city of Zaitun [Quanzhoui] which has a port on the sea-coast celebrated for the resort of shipping, loaded with merchandise, that is afterwards distributed through every part of the province .... It is indeed impossible to convey an idea of the concourse of merchants and the accumulation of goods, in this which is held to be one of the largest and most commodious ports in the world.

Marco Polo

In February 1940, representatives from the China Muslim National Salvation society in Beijing came to the fabled maritime Silk Road city of Quanzhou, Fujian, known to Marco Polo as Zaitun, in order to interview the members of a lineage surnamed "Ding" who resided then and now in Chendai Township, Jinjiang County. In response to a question on his ethnic background, Mr. Ding Deqian answered: "We are Muslims [Huijiao reo], our ancestors were Muslims" (Zhang 1940:1). It was not until 1979, however, that these Muslims became minzu, an ethnic nationality. After attempting to convince the State for years that they belonged to the Hui nationality, they were eventually accepted. The story of the late recognition of the members of the Ding lineage in Chendai Town and the resurgence of their ethnoreligious identity as Hui and as Muslims is a fascinating reminder that there still exist remnants of the ancient connections between Quanzhou and the Western Regions, the origin points of the Silk Road.

Outside of Quanzhou, there are thirteen villages with the single surname of Ding, numbering over 16,000 and known as "wan ren Ding" (the 10,000 person Ding). When I spoke with members of the Ding lineage in 1984, they also strongly affirmed their ethnic identity as Hui people (Huimin), the 20th generation ascendants of Arab and Persian ancestors. They pointed to an abundance of preserved family genealogies, grave stones, stele inscriptions and dynastic records as undeniable proof of their claim. For these Hui, their claim to ethnic status is based on the veracity of their ancestral heritage.

If the evidence is so overwhelming that the Ding lineage are descendants of Arab and Persian ancestors, why did it take so long for them to be recognized officially as members of the Hui minority? The answer lies in the nature of their lifestyle and the evolving policy of ethnic

identification in the People's Republic of China. With the changes in the policy of State nationality in China since 1980, many of the links of China's lineal descendants of the early Silk Road communities are coming to light.

Along China's southern coast are several lineages of Hui for whom the truth of foreign ancestry is critical to their ethnic identity and understanding of themselves. Most of the lineages which were not recognized, and several that are yet to be officially accepted as Hui, are located along the Southeast Coast and include Hui surnamed Ding, Guo, Jin, Bai, Ma, Huang, and Pu. In Quanzhou, a typical response to a question about Hui ancestry was:

> Of course I know my family descended from foreign Muslims. My ancestor was an Arab, and our name was changed to Jin in the Ming dynasty. We have our family genealogy to prove it.... We are Hui because we are descendants of these foreign ancestors.[1]

This response was provided by a member of a Hui household that no longer practiced an Islamic lifestyle, yet fully believed they were members of the Hui Muslim nationality in China, and had recently been recognized by the government as such. This recent recognition of these descendants from the earliest Muslim communities who settled in Quanzhou on the maritime silk and spice route evidences the resurgence of these identities and their connectedness to the origin points of the silk route, which, in this case, is the Muslim land of the Middle East.

Chendai Hui in almost every respect are culturally similar to their Han nationality neighbors: they speak the Southern Min (Hokkien) dialect, practice coastal fishing and limited sericulture, light incense to their ancestors in the lineage temple, and have many members who possess only the faintest memory of Islam. That the Ding by and large no longer practice Islam is most critical for understanding why it has taken so long for the Ding in Chendai to attain recognition as being Hui.

The Hui are the largest of 10 Muslim nationalities in China, accounting for nearly half of China's 20 million Muslims (see Gladney, Forthcoming 1991). But unlike the other 9 nationalities who are generally identified by the languages they speak (Uighur, Tatar, Uzbek, Tadjik, see Gladney 1990), the Hui do not share any cultural trait with all other Hui. They do not all speak the same language, are spread thinly throughout the entire continent of China, and are engaged in a vast array of economic activities, from butchers to factory workers, wheat agriculturalists to wet rice farmers, and Party cadres to Imams. The Hui were recognized during the 1950s, in the nationality identification campaigns in China as the one ethnicity which is identified by the religious tradition of Islam. There is no other ethnicity in China identified by religion alone, and no other ethnicity as internally diversified as the Hui. While most Hui are no longer practicing Muslims, indeed some are committed Party members, or secularized workers. Islam has played an important role in defining and shaping the construction of contemporary Hui identity. That the Ding in Quanzhou no longer practiced Islam was one of the main

reasons the State refused to recognize them as members of the Hui nationality in the 1950s. In 1979 they were finally recognized, though many members still maintain very little Islamic knowledge or practice. The process of the recognized and revitalized identity of the Ding is significant for our understanding of ethnoreligious identity along the ancient Silk Road.

The purpose of this paper is not only to introduce the ethnographic data of a controversial southeastern Hui lineage, but also to analyze why the existing ethnic identification policy in China has difficulty justifying their inclusion as part of the Hui nationality. Since they have been recognized as members of the Hui minority, the influence of local government policies has led to further changes in their ethnic identity. I also provide an example of the very similar "Taiwanese Hui" in Taiwan, who have almost lost their ethnic identity under unfavorable government policies and now state that they are "not Hui" (Pillsbury 1973:145). By contrasting these two examples of the Hui Minority in Fujian and Taiwan, I will illustrate the dynamic nature of ethnic identity along the ancient Silk Road, and the importance of the interaction of the memory of that earlier migration with current government policy.

THE CULTURAL BASIS FOR CHENDAI HUI IDENTITY

The essence of ethnic identity is the idea of descent; the idea, factual or fictive, of belonging to a group of people descending from ancestors different from others with whom a group interacts. Discovering how these ancestral connections are transmitted and then appropriated in a socially relevant way is one of the primary tasks in the study of ethnic identity. Records, legends, stories, symbols and rituals become the most critical texts by which people transmit their sense of "otherness." In the case of the Hui in Chendai, they are in the unique position of possessing numerous historical artifacts that authenticate their descent from "foreign" ancestors who arrived on the Southeast Coast along the maritime silk route. For the Hui in Chendai, their otherness has been etched in stone.

Investigations in Quanzhou over the last few decades have unearthed "more than 200 pieces of structural stone components of Islamic gravestones, grave cover stones, mosques, and Muslim residences" (Huang and Liao 1983:201). [2] While many of these stone inscriptions are unintelligible to present Hui descendants of the Ding lineage in Chendai, the symbolic fact that their ancestors' graves bear Arabic inscriptions hold great import for their identification with these "fan ke" (barbarian guests) or "semu ren" (Central Asians)--the official Chinese terms for foreign Muslim residents of Quanzhou before the Ming dynasty when the term "Huihui" became widely used. Present Ding residents can point to the graveyards of their ancestors as important texts of their present Hui identity.

Historical Monuments to Hui Islamic Heritage

In a highly symbolic move, the Ding lineage relocated its earliest ancestors' graves to the historic Lingshan Holy Islamic Tombs outside Quanzhou in August 1980. These historic tombs are among those monuments preserved by the Chinese government's Historic Artifacts Bureau, and generally belong to foreign Muslim or famous Hui personages buried in Chinese soil. These include the various tombs and monuments erected for the supposed Muslims who served as officials, militia and merchants from the Southern Song through Qing dynasties (11th through 19th centuries) and are buried in special graveyards in southern China, especially Quanzhou, Guangzhou, and Yangzhou. Historic tombs also contain the graves of Hui who played a major role in China's development and interaction with the West. These individuals included Zheng He, Hai Rui, Sai Dianchi (Sayid Edjell), Li Zhi and, more recently, the Panthay rebellion leader, Du Wenxiu (see Gladney, Forthcoming, a).

Historical arguments regarding the Muslim ancestry of certain figures like Hai Rui, Li Zicheng or Li Zhi have little bearing on this study. More important is the recognition the Chinese government accords to the significant role these purported Muslims played in China's development. The acknowledgement of the contribution they made to Chinese history greatly influences the self-understanding of a modern Hui. Many Hui look to these historic figures as foreign Muslim ancestors who legitimize their descent from a high religious and cultural tradition. This knowledge also figures prominently in present day Hui interaction with government policy and leads to a growing awareness of their place internationally.

The historic tombs of Arab and Persian ancestors of the Hui in Quanzhou are also important in the interaction between Islamic identity and government policy.[3] In 1961, the Fujian provincial government declared the Lingshan Muslim tombs and the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou (founded in 1009-1010 AD) to be historic monuments.[4] Since 1979, the State, provincial and city governments have provided substantial funds to restore these structures, to the extent that now the tombs have been refurbished and rededicated with a large tract of land and a sign at the entrance proclaiming: "Lingshan Holy Islamic Tombs." All tourist maps for Quanzhou city highlight these two Islamic sites as important attractions.

The Lingshan tombs are primarily those of two Muslim saints, who according to legend were said to be sent to China by the Prophet Muhammad and were buried in their present location during the Tang dynasty (7th to 1Oth Centuries). According to He Qiaoyuan's 1629 Minshu, the two Muslim saints buried in Quanzhou are Imam Sayid and Imam Waggas from Medina. These were two of four foreign Muslims said to have visited southern China during the Wu De period of the Tang Emperor Gao Zu (618-626 AD). [5] Substantial research has been carried out on the more than 300 Islamic carvings and artifacts left by the Muslim communities concentrated in Quanzhou when it was a key international harbor on the Southeast Coast from the Tang to the Yuan dynasties (7th to 14th centuries).[6] The

government's efforts to refurbish historic Islamic monuments in China have attracted increasing foreign Muslim attention and investment.

The Ding graveyard is presently located on the southeast hillside of Lingshan Hill outside the Renfengmen Gate of Quanzhou. It was moved to this location and refurbished by provincial authorities and members of the Ding lineage in August 1980. The style of the two tombs is similar to those found in other Muslim graves in Quanzhou, with what has been called a pagoda-shaped tomb cover (Chen 1984:56) resting on a rectangular stone base of five tiers. Each tier is intricately carved with Islamic designs of clouds, lotus flower petals, a full moon, and Koranic inscriptions (for translation and description, see Chen 1984:107-1 08). Behind the tombs is a tablet in Chinese and Arabic indicating that this is the first ancestor of the Ding lineage in Chenjiang (now Chendai) and the ancestor of the fourth generation of the Ding lineage from Jinjiang County (see Ouanzhou 1983:207-213). On the back of the tablet is the following Chinese inscription:

> I bought this famous hill luyuan and it was my intention to have my parents buried here, my brothers all agreed with me without objection. Litchis are planted to give shade just as our ancestors shall protect us forever. Mind you, my descendants safeguard this important place. Written by Uncle Chengzhai in the eighth month of the second year of Xuantong (1910 A.D .) [In Chen 1984:1 08].

This verse is significant for it clearly sets forth the “rights and obligations” of Ding descendants to maintain the traditions of their ancestors. In return for preserving their identity, they will be "protected forever." The survival of the Ding lineage as people supports the veracity of this promise. "Ethnicity in its deepest psychological level is a sense of survival. If one's group survives, one is assured of survival, even if not in a personal sense" (DeVos 1975:17). If nothing else, the Ding are tenacious survivors.

In addition to stone inscriptions on tombstones attesting the Ding lineage's descent from foreign Muslim ancestry, there are numerous imperial edicts originally inscribed in public places depicting the important historical position of their Muslim forbears. [7] While these do not specifically name Ding members as descendants, and are written in a classical style (wenyan) unintelligible to modern Chinese speakers, they do serve as important symbols signifying the glory of Hui past. Ding residents of Chendai Town pointed out several of these important edicts inscribed in the ancient Quanzhou Qingjing mosque. One such inscription is on a pedestal built against the east wall under the second arch in the passage from the entrance. It dates from 1407 A.D. and reads:

> The Emperor of the Great Ming instructs Miri HaJi: I think he who is sincere and honest will revere God and serve the Emperor; he will also guide the good people, thus giving invisible support to the royal system. Therefore God will bless him, and he shall enjoy infinite bliss.

> You, Miri Haji, have long since followed the teachings of Muhammad; you are pious and honest, and are guiding the good people: you also revere God and serve the Emperor with loyalty. Such good deeds deserve praise and approval. Thereby I am giving you this imperial edict to protect your abode. No official, military or civilian personnel should despise, insult or bully them: whoever disobeys my order by doing so should bear the blame. This edict is hereby issued on the eleventh of the fifth month of the fifth year of Yongle [In Chen 1984:11]

The original scroll from which this edict was copied was discovered in the home of Mr. Lan Xiaoyang, the hereditary Imam of the Puhading Mausoleum in Yangzhou, and is now kept in the Beijing Minorities Cultural Palace (Chen 1984:11-12). This edict, originally composed in Chinese, Persian and Mongolian, was posted in mosques all over China by Hui in order to protect themselves against discrimination at that time and to document imperial endorsement for future generations. It is an important text for the Ding lineage and other Hui in attesting that theirs is a religious and cultural heritage that was valued by the Chinese host rulers since imperial times. This text legitimates the dignity of their ancestry in the face of ethnic discrimination. It also documents the Ding lineage's early incorporation into the Chinese State system. The text thus becomes meaningful to Hui both then and at any time when their cultural traditions are brought into question.

Ritual Remembrance of Ding Identity

Probably more significant for the Hui descendants of the Ding lineage than stone inscriptions, which rarely impinge upon their daily lives, are the prescriptions for properly remembering their ancestors recorded in their genealogy.[8] These prescriptions are adhered to four times a year when the Ding lineage celebrates the traditional Chinese agricultural holidays and remembers its ancestors. Like their Han Chinese neighbors, Ding members go to their ancestral lineage temple, burn incense, perform "baizu" rituals, and make offerings. Unlike their Han neighbors, however, they strictly prohibit the use of pork or pork byproducts in the ancestral offerings. When asked why, they say: "lt is because we are descendants from Hui ancestors, and they have instructed us in our genealogy not to offer them pork." This is spelled out in the siyue (offering arrangements) section of their genealogy in the following prescriptions:

> On the dates of the ancestor's birth and death, the offerings for the worship are the same. But on the death date, a whole ox should be added in the worship. The ox used should be of the size of the ox which was offered in the worship of the feudal princes. Since our ancestors have served as high officials of the State since long ago, the offerings have been used until now, in order to spread out the honors of our ancestors .... Our ancestors' instructions must not be disobeyed (Ding 1980:42-43).

ln addition to beef, several vegetables, and seafood, including razor clams, are prescribed. Tea is also placed on the ancestral altar, to assist the departed in "cleaning his mouth" of any pork residue before encountering his ancestors. Most significantly, instead of the traditional paper money that is burned by Han villagers as an offering to the ancestors to be used in the afterlife, these Hui have burned red paper with Koranic inscriptions. I could not find out where this tradition originated, but local Hui said that when there was an Ahong available in the mosque they would ask him to write Koranic scriptures on the paper. They said that it would help "purify" the deceased upon his meeting with Allah in the afterworld. With the Han, the burning of the object is for the use of the ancestor in the afterworld. Yet this also parallels the placing of Koranic text inscribed bricks and other objects with the deceased in the graves that I have witnessed in the Northwest. For most Hui, and Muslims throughout Central Asia who do not have access to the Koranic text in Arabic, the text itself takes on talismanic quality and is used in burial, healing, and adornment to gain protection and power.

Other distinctive characteristic that the Ding members maintain include the making of a certain Hui food, a large deep-fried pastry, known as "youxiang," on holidays. On the first day of the sixth month according to the agricultural calendar, this youxiang cake is prepared and the day is referred to as baibinq jie "cake offering day" (see Huang 1983:179). Eating this food on holidays is distinctive of Hui throughout China. That these rituals have been continued through the centuries attests to the Ding lineage's strong desire to "not disobey" the demands of their ancestors.

The regularity of these rituals at the lineage temple also helps to reinforce the ethnic identity, the "otherness" (DeVos 1975:26), of the Ding lineage. While modern Ding members might not be able to read their genealogies in classical Chinese, or explain why they cannot eat or use pork on ritual holidays, nevertheless they are regularly reminded that their ancestors are different, and so are they by maintaining ritual remembrance of them. Pu Zhenzong in 1940 told his interviewers that even though he is no longer Muslim, he descended from Muslims, and that “the Pu family has had a secret custom -- never offer pork in ancestor worship” (Zhang 1940:2).

Ding members have maintained this taboo against pork during ancestral rituals for centuries. They have an explanation for this in the form of an often-told legend, which was related to me as follows:

> Our ancestors were very sincere Muslims. At the time of our eleventh generation ancestor, Ding Qirui, who served during the Ming dynasty as a government secretary in the Ministry of Justice, he was accused with a trumped-up charge of attempting to usurp the throne of the emperor. Because of this the emperor attempted to exterminate the Ding family. The main mark of the Ding family was their being Muslims. In order to save their lives, the Ding family could not "practice Islam (religion) for a hundred generations" (Baidai Zhanyanq). Thus, at that time we began become assimilated to the Han (tonghua).

This is the same story, almost word for word, told to the investigation team that interviewed the Chendai Hui, Ding Deqian, in February 1940 (Zhang 1940:2). It has become an accepted text that explains the reason for the Ding's ancestors leaving Islam and losing many of their cultural distinctives as Hui. In the 1940 interview as well as in mine, the Ding members explained that the phrase "practice Islam for a hundred generations" is taken from an inscription on a wooden tablet on the front of their lineage temple, parallel to another inscription on the temple itself: "pacify ourselves for future success" (suiwo sicheng).[9] In both interviews, the Ding speakers pointed out that the structure of their ancestral temple was built in the shape of the Chinese character for "Hui" one small square within a larger one, signifying they are of the Hui people. Most Han ancestral halls have covered corridors connecting the hallways on the perimeter with the main hall in the center of the courtyard. The absence of these connecting corridors is the one feature that differentiates their hall from most other Han lineage halls.

The forced-assimilation legend is extremely important for providing textual support through which modern Ding members interpret their behavior. More than the genealogy and stone inscriptions, the legend not only ties them to their ancestors but explains the difference between them and their Han neighbors, as well as why they differ from other Hui who maintain Islamic customs. The legend summarizes a common experience of suffering and persecution that Hui throughout China say took place during the Ming dynasty when, by imperial decree. They were no longer allowed to speak Arabic or Persian, wear foreign dress and live in completely separate Muslim communities. It was at that time, they say, that Hui lost their former high status under the fallen "foreign" Mongolian dynasty and were forced to be Sinicized in a Chinese dynasty that prohibited foreign names, clothes, and languages (see Chan 1953:209).

The Ethno-genesis of Hui Identity

This common experience of suffering and forced assimilation may have been what galvanized the Hui ethnic consciousness into a single minority where there were once Arab, Persian, Turkish or Mongolian Muslim communities living in China. More than anything else, this may have forged a "pan-Hui" identity where there was none before (see Bai 1951). Members of the Pu lineage in Quanzhou discuss how as a consequence of their persecution as Hui, they changed their name from the foreign sounding "Pu" to the more Chinese "Wu" character. On their tombstones they often wrote "Wu's tomb" on the front side, but secretly inscribed "Pu's tomb" on the back (Zhang 1940:2). This is in response to the widescale persecution of the descendants of Pu Shougeng, the influential Hui customs master in Quanzhou, at the end of the Yuan dynasty (Leslie 1986:65-66; Chen Ziqiang 1983:251-55).

The legend of Ding persecution for practicing Islamic Hui customs, coupled with the texts and stone inscriptions that document their history, provide a powerful identity which present-day Ding lineage

members draw upon in the midst of social change. What is important is not the historical veracity of these texts, but how they become meaningful to the Ding today. In other words, the ability to claim membership in a distinct ethnic group by tracing one's ancestry to a common ancestor is not significant if it does not serve as the basis for social action. If the texts discussed above were not salient for current Ding members' social life, they would not occupy a place of importance in their claim to ethnic identity. In China, however, the social and cultural significance of these texts may not lead to State recognition, as was the case of the Ding until 1979. These texts gain even more significance when they may serve to legitimate cultural claims to ethnicity. Under a Stalinist nationality policy in China that stresses historical cultural traits for ethnic identification, if is not surprising that these texts, which evidently have always been available to the Ding, have once again become crucial to their recognition by the State and the rediscovery of their ethnic roots. The reemergence of this relevance is related to changes in the social context as a result of recent government policies. The validity of one’s ethnic ancestry has now become an important issue in this altered sociopolitical setting.

Socioeconomic Factors in Chendai Hui Identity

The Ding have lived in Chendai since the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty (1573-1620) where they supposedly fled from Quanzhou to avoid persecution. Since that time they have been known for their specialized aquacultural economy. The Chendai Town is on the Fujian coast and well suited for cultivating razor clams for which the Ding lineage are famous. Before 1949 they were not only engaged in this industry, but also produced opium and had many small factories that made woven bags and sundry goods. These goods were exported extensively and led to the migration of many Ding Hui to Southeast Asia and Hong Kong in their business endeavors. After 1955, when private industries were collectivized in China, these small factories were either curtailed or transferred to the larger commune of whom the Ding lineage occupied seven brigades.

Since 1979 and the implementation of the economic reform policies in the countryside, the Ding members have once again become engaged in private small factories producing leather shoes and plastic goods, like the brightly colored plastic sandals, rugs and other sundries found in most Chinese department stores.[10] Of the 3,350 households in the seven villages (former brigades) in Chendai (in which 92% are Hui) over sixty run small factories. In larger factories there are over a hundred workers and in smaller ones only ten or more. Workers can work as long as they wish, usually eight to ten hours a day, seven days a week. As a result, they have begun to do extremely well and several Ding families have registered as "wanyuanhu" (1 0,000 yuan families), with one family presently banking at least 100,000 yuan (33,000 U.S. dollars). Average annual income in Chendai in 1983 was 611 yuan per person, in Jinjiang county it was only 402 yuan in 1982 (Population Census Office 1987:175). By

1984 Chendai income reached 837 yuan per person for the town, while the Hui average 1100 yuan. Their income increased 33 percent in 1985 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Chendai Factory and Industry Income,

1979-85

1979	1,440,000 (Yuan)	1983	8, 780,000
1980	3,220,000	1984	29,040,000
1981	5,630,000	1985	35,000,000
1982	6,150,000		

Source: Township Records

As income from small enterprise has risen, the structure of the labor force has changed dramatically. Involvement of laborers in industry has grown to almost three times that of 1978 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Chendai Town Change in Labor Force, 1978-85

	Agriculture	Industry
1978	69.9%	30.1%
1984	19.9%	80.1%
1985	14.0%	86.9%

Finally, income from sideline enterprises in agriculture and small industry has also grown at an incredibly rapid rate (see Table 3). Although the Hui only occupy one-seventh of the town's population, they account for over one-third of the income (Township Records). In 1984, Chendai was the first town in Fujian province to become a yiyuan zhen (1 00,000,000 yuan town). Over half of the Hui in the town have their own two-story homes paid for with cash from their savings. Color television sets are owned by almost every household and there are over 550 motorcycles in the seven all-Hui villages. This growth has signaled new prosperity for the Ding as they seek to take further advantage of favorable government policies.

Table 3

Chendai Town Change in Income from

Agricultural and Industrial Sideline

Enterprises, 1979·84, in 1000 Yuan

1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
334	492	746	1,177	1,388	1,777

Source: Township Records

Ethnic Aspects of Ding Prosperity

Ding Hui do not attribute their prosperity to industriousness alone. Since they were recognized as part of the Hui nationality in 1979, they became eligible for assistance as members of an underprivileged minority. They have received several government subsidies that have spurred their economy. From 1980 until 1984, the government has given over 200,000 yuan to the seven Hui teams. With the funds they built a running water system, ponds for raising fish and the means to expand their razor clam industry. The Ministry of Education has given 40,000 yuan to build a Middle School, and 33,000 yuan for a primary school. They also receive benefits as a minority nationality in preference for high school and college entrance. Under special birth planning policies for minorities, they are allowed to have one more child than the Han. Hui representation in the local government is also higher than their proportion in the population. Two of the ten party committee representatives (chanqwei) are surnamed Ding, as well as the town's party secretary.

Due to a long tradition of contacts with Muslims along the maritime trade routes throughout South and Southeast Asia, over 50 percent of the Ding lineage members have overseas relatives -- mainly in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore – a higher proportion than among their Han neighbors. They have reestablished communication with these relatives and have been assisted by frequent remittances. This outside income is an important factor in the rapid economic development of the seven Ding villages. All seven Hui villages have elementary schools, thanks to donations from overseas relatives, averaging 20,000 yuan each. Neighboring Han villages have one elementary school for every three or four villages. The Ding say that their close and frequent contact with overseas relatives is a result of their strong feelings of ethnic identity, which they say surpasses that of neighboring Han lineages with their overseas relations.

These government subsidies and special benefits are important factors in the Ding Hui claim to ethnic minority status. The manipulation of ethnic identity for special favored treatment has been well documented by anthropologists and is an important factor in explaining why the Ding lineage's ethnic identity has become even more relevant. Changes in socioeconomic conditions and the local political economy are conducive to rapid ethnic change. Even before such policies were promulgated, however, Ding Hui occupied a distinct ecological and commercial niche that they had maintained for generations. It is significant that part of the jipin (requirements of remembrance) stipulated in their genealogy was the offering of razor clams to their ancestors (Ding 1980:30). This indicates that almost

an ethnic specialization of labor was maintained in southern Fujian where Hui were known to be involved in selected aquacultural industries. The Guo in Xiamen city were known before liberation to be excellent repairmen and builders of motorboats. Virtually all mechanical repair shops were staffed by these Hui.

Hui were known throughout Chinese history as specialized tradesmen in such areas as transport, wool trade, jewelry, and small food stands. Specializations ranged widely in scale and varied regionally according to the socioeconomic position of the Hui in urban or rural settings. These ethnic specializations were virtually lost after the 1955 collectivization reforms but have rapidly returned since the 1978 economic liberalization policy. Not only in Quanzhou, but throughout China, Hui have prospered at an incredible rate through strong participation in small private businesses and industry -- in many places far surpassing their Han neighbors. Local Hui say that they are gifted as small businessmen and new economic policies have allowed them to express that aspect of their ethnic identity.

Ethnic Preservation and Marriage Endogamy

Ding members also maintained control over out-marriage through the centuries. A cursory reading of the Ding genealogy reveals a high number of marriages with the mainly Muslim surnames of Guo, Bai, Yang, Jin, Ma, Huang, and even Ding. While surname endogamy is not preferred among the Ding lineage, they have a significantly higher number of in-marriage with other same surname lineage members than the Han in Jinjiang County. About ten percent of the Ding lineage is married to same surname spouses. I do not have information for the pre-1949 endogamous practice among the Hui, and while James Watson (personal communication) reports that surname endogamy rose sharply in the Pearl River Delta in the 1950s and 1960s, the local Han and Hui agree that Hui endogamy is still much higher than that of the Han. Marriage is officially prohibited, however, between those related more closely than five generations. With the recent increase in Ding prosperity, there has been an increase in surname endogamy among young people who are unwilling to marry poorer people outside the lineage. I interviewed one Ding family from Huatingkou village in which their 30-year-old son was married to a 26-year-old woman also surnamed Ding.

When the Ding do marry out, spouses are often found among the four other Hui surname groups in Quanzhou. The head of one Hui household in Quanzhou surnamed Jin said his family traditionally were only allowed to marry those with the surnames Guo, Ding, Bai, Ma, and Jin -- mainly Hui surnames in Quanzhou.[11] Even though this household does not practice Islam, they claim descent from Arab ancestors and referred to their preserved genealogy which demonstrated it was so. The front gateway to their home had an Arabic and Chinese duilian which stated they were a Muslim household

(Musilin zhi jia). At the same time, in their courtyard a small incense shrine to a local deity was mounted on a large ornamental rock. Such are the seeming contradictions in Hui life in Quanzhou.[12]

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC POLICY: THE "TAIWANESE MUSLIMS"

The "Taiwanese Muslims" are those Hui descendants described by the Taiwan Chinese Muslim Association (1969:4) as "20,000 Taiwan-born descendants of Chinese Muslims who came to this island 300 years ago with the hero Koxinga [Zheng Chenggong]." They are concentrated in several coastal towns and share a limited number of surnames including Guo, Chen, Hong; Fu, Mu, and Pu. Their most prominent lineage is the Guo lineage in Lugang of which one section is named for and inhabited mainly by this lineage "Guo Zhu Li" (Guo Family Section) (See Ts'ai 1973). There is good evidence to suggest that these Guo are descendants from the same ancestors as the Guo lineage in Fujian, Huian County, Baiqi Township. Both Guo lineages claim descent from the Tang dynasty General Guo Ziyi (Pillsbury 1976:31), although the accuracy of this claim has been questioned.[13]

There is evidence that an ancient mosque formerly stood in Lugang and the Chinese Muslim Association once sent mainlander Hui from Taibei to Lugang to instruct the "Taiwanese Muslims" in Islam and help bring them back into the faith. In a similar move, from 1983 to 1985 the Chinese Islamic Society in the People's Republic of China brought four Ahong from the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region to teach in the four remaining Mosques in Fujian in order to help instruct the newly recognized Hui in the Islamic faith. Both attempts in Taiwan and Fujian were ineffectual, however, and the last Ahong in Fujian returned to Ningxia over the 1986 Spring festival. The reason - why there is a need for such Instruction on both sides of the Taiwan strait is the same: both communities practice Chinese folk religion, do not maintain Islamic lifestyles, and in most other respects are culturally indistinguishable from the Han communities in which they live.

The Guo lineage on the mainland, however, was recognized by the Chinese Nationalities Commission as being Hui in the early 1950s. After some political lobbying, they were able to convince the State of their claims to minority status, a process that took the Ding another twenty years. The Guo in Taiwan, however, no longer claim that they are Hui, nor do they seem to have any interest in doing so. While the Guo in Fujian recognize themselves as Hui, their relations in Taiwan "except for those about fifty or older -- say they are not" (Pillsbury 1973:145). Pillsbury (1976:34) continues: "Except for the elderly who still remember having once "done Hui" -- having once lived the Hui "way of life" -- virtually all Taiwanese of Muslim descent agree they are no longer Muslims."

Like the Chendai Ding lineage, these so-called "Taiwanese Muslims" claim descent from Arab and Persian ancestors, and it is because of this recognition that they do not include pork in the food offerings to their ancestors, lest they "ruin their mouths." "As their descendants, the Kuos [Guo} must

be filial and take pains not to offend them" (Pillsbury 1976:33). This recognition of descent from Muslim ancestors is critical for understanding why Hui on one side of the strait claim to be Hui, and why those on the other side of the strait feel they are no longer able to be considered so. It may be premature to predict that "It may well be that visitors to Lukang, Taiwan, a mere decade from now might likewise find no more Hui" (Pillsbury 1973:240)

This prediction, while giving insight into the changing identity of Hui in interaction with the Han majority and Taiwan government policy, does not adequately take into account the enduring presence of what it means, or meant, for these "Taiwanese Muslims" to be different from their Han neighbors. Confusion also arises in this approach when the analytical distinction between being Hui and practicing Islam is not made. The "Taiwanese Muslims" are certainly not practicing Muslims, but that does not mean that Hui identity might no longer relevant to them. The maintenance of the pork taboo in ancestor worship indicates that at the ritual level there is still some significance attached to Hui identity among the Taiwanese Muslims. In the present social context their ethnic identity may continue to recede in significance and total assimilation may very well take place . But it is also possible that Hui identity might become more relevant to them if Taiwan's policies toward ethnic minorities ever undergo reform similar to those on the mainland. This is all the more plausible given the increasing discussions of reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. In that case, the Lugang Guo would certainly be recognized as members of the Hui nationality and eligible for the attending privileges. Hui ethnic identity, though presently almost totally lost, would once again be socio-politically salient.

It is not surprising that the Lugang Guo have adopted many of the customs of their Taiwanese neighbors given that their social context has been unfavorable to the expression of ethnic identity for centuries. They have been dispersed among a Han majority for 300 years. In the Nineteenth Century, they experienced 50 years of a policy of assimilation under the Japanese administration who discouraged "foreign religions." They have been subjected to the Nationalist policy that identifies Hui primarily in terms of their religious belief (see below). And, they have been geographically and linguistically isolated from other mainland Hui who arrived with the Nationalists. What is significant is that these individuals maintain any recognition at all of their separateness from their Han neighbors and that this is still salient for their lives in terms of ritual and social interaction. What is at issue here is not whether they are descended from Hui ancestors, which is clearly the case. Rather, we need to examine how relevant that ancestry is for their daily lives, and how that idea has changed in its expression over time, as I have argued for the Chendai Hui above.

An important factor is the role of the elderly in maintaining and transmitting the sense of Hui identity to future generations. While younger Guo in Lugang have evidently rejected Hui identity, this identity is apparently acknowledged by their parents and grandparents. In a fascinating story, the Taiwan

anthropologist Robert Weller (personal communication), recounted how after working with his research assistant in Taiwan for over a year, he discovered for the first time that she was descended from Hui ancestors when he attended baizu rituals in their home. The parents would only offer beef to their ancestors, not pork, in deference to their Hui ancestry. This ancestry also came as a surprise to the research assistant. Previously, she had no idea why her parents had refused to offer pork to their ancestors. Their ancestors continue to receive recognition as Muslims through regular rituals. These rituals perpetuate an idea of separateness which may lead to a reemergence of ethnic identity should the social context and government policy change. I have noticed that ethnic identity among China's Hui often does not become especially salient until retirement years. While Hui identity may not presently be meaningful to the youth, this does not guarantee that it will continue to remain meaningless as they grow older.

A certain Guo lineage of 383 members who migrated from Baiqi, Huian County to a village outside Xiamen, have also lost all major outward cultural traces of their ethnic ancestry. Despite their practice of Chinese folk religion, they maintain they are different than their Han neighbors, even though they feel that the label "Hui" might no longer be appropriate for them. I submit that it may be possible that while the younger Guo in Taiwan no longer feel they should be called Hui, they may be reluctant to view themselves like their non-Hui neighbors in every respect. This sense of otherness is often seen as the basis for ethnic identity. "It is this sense of belonging to a particular people in contrast to some other people or peoples that constitutes the essence of ethnic identity" (Keyes 1983:4). While it may no longer be meaningful for young Guo in Taiwan to identify with Mainland Hui, they probably still retain some kind of psychological sense of belonging to their own people. Hui identity is often compared to American Jewish identity (Pillsbury 1976:5-6), and this same sense of belonging is portrayed well by Theodor Reik, a psychoanalyst who explained his feelings about Jewish identity in the following:

> By this admittedly very personal concept of one's people as an extension of one's family I am attempting to explain to myself emotional facts that, often elusive in character, are hard to comprehend. A man can prefer to be together with others and even avoid his own people: he can feel estranged from them --but he can never be a stranger to them. The very intimacy of the experience, which is nothing but common memories that have become unconscious, excludes the possibility of cutting a lie that was formed, not alone by the same blood, but by the same rhythms of living It is neither congeniality nor consanguinity that speaks here, but the common destiny of our ancestors of ourselves, and of our children, which forms a bond stronger than relations of any other kind (Quoted in Bentley 1983a:52).

Islamic Belief And Hui Identity

At issue here is not the Lugang Guo lineage's identity as Hui, but their inability to admit Islamic belief, which disqualifies them as Hui under Nationalist policy. This policy regards the Hui as a religious group, not an ethnic group. Until 1939 the Hui were regarded as Huimin (Hui people) under Sun Yatsen's policy of the five peoples of China, including the Han, Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchurian, and Hui (meaning all the Muslim peoples of China). The policy changed when Chiang Kai-shek presided over the first national congress of the Chinese Hui People's National Salvation Association in Chongqing and declared that all non-Han groups within China are subvarieties of an ancient Chinese race. Under this policy the Hui were not considered a separate minzu (people, nationality), but a religious group with special characteristics, and are to be referred to as Huijiaoren or Huijiaotu.[14] For Lugang Guo, who are certainly no longer Muslim in religious belief and ritual, it becomes irrelevant and perhaps impossible to call themselves "Hui" under current Nationalist policy.

A result of the Nationalist policy, which maintains all Chinese peoples are descendants of one race, is that ethnic differences in Taiwan tend to split along Mainlander/Taiwanese and class lines (see Gates 1981). Only the aborigines (Gaoshan zu) receive a nationality status, similar to that on the mainland. The Hui are not regarded as an ethnic group, because there is no such category under the current policy. The Hui associate with the broader Taiwanese society of which they are a part.

The communist party leaders of the People's Republic of China have recognized that the Hui are a distinct minzu (nationality, people) since before the 1949 revolution, brought home to Chairman Mao Zedong and other early party leaders on the Long March . This historical experience and rationale has influenced considerably the PRC's policies toward the Hui and other minorities. The divergence of the PRC and Taiwan policies regarding religion and nationality has also affected the relevance of Hui identity and its expression in both societies. It is particularly relevant to understanding the recent ethnic transformation of the Hui in Chendai, as I will discuss below.

Renewed Muslim Contacts Along the Ancient Marine Trade Route

PRC policy that accords special privileges to these recently recognized Hui along the Southeast Coast and encourages their interaction with foreign Muslim governments has had a significant impact on their ethnic identity. Fujian provincial and local municipal publications proudly proclaim Quanzhou as the site of the third most important Islamic holy grave and the fifth most important mosque in the world.[15] Religious and government representatives from over thirty Muslim nations were escorted to Muslim sites in Quanzhou as part of a State-sponsored delegation in spring 1986. Foreign Muslim guests are frequently hosted by the local Quanzhou City Islamic Association.

As a result of this contact, construction of the Xiamen international airport was partially subsidized by the Kuwaiti government. The Kuwaitis were also assisting in the building of a large hydroelectric dam

project along the Min river outside Fuzhou. A Jordani businessman visiting in spring 1986 offered to donate 1.5 million U.S. dollars to rebuild the Qingjing mosque.[16] The many Islamic relics in Quanzhou are evidence of a long history of friendly exchanges between China and the Muslim world (Min 1983:131-135). As a result of China's growing trade with third world Muslim nations, it is only natural that these historical treasures should be displayed and made available to foreign Muslim visitors. It is also not surprising that the descendants of these early foreign Muslim residents in Quanzhou --the Ding, Guo, Huang, Jin and other Hui lineages -- are interested in further interaction with distant foreign Muslim relations.

The historic Hui tombs take on added international significance in the present government's improving relations with foreign Muslim governments. These tombs have become objects of ethnic tourism and pilgrimage by foreign Muslims, as well as urban and Northwest Hui in China who wish to explore their Islamic "roots." Hui party cadres often make a point of visiting historic Muslim tombs, such as the large monument and public park outside Kunming, Yunnan dedicated to the father of Zheng He, the 15th century Ming explorer and Muslim eunuch. Hui visitors to these historic Muslim tombs reaffirm their international Islamic heritage.[17] As Eaton (1984:355) has found for pastoral nomads in Pakistan, tombs often serve to link local systems of culture into a larger cultural framework. In this case, historic shrines as objects of veneration and tourism remind local Hui of their international and religious roots (see Gladney 1987:497-507). Before Zheng He departed on his early 15th century voyage to Hormuz Island in Persia, he inscribed the following request for protection, thus demonstrating the significance the tombs represented at that time for China's Muslims:

> The imperial envoy, general and eunuch Zheng He went to Hormuz and other countries in the Western Seas on an official mission He offered incense here on [May 30, 141 7]. May the saints bless him. This was recorded and erected by the Zhenfu Pu Heri [In Chen Dasheng 1984:96].[18]

International Islamic attention cannot but influence the self-perception of the Ding lineage as Hui descendants. It has also led to a kind of ethnic revitalization and rediscovery of their Muslim heritage. In 1984, the possibility was raised of constructing a mosque in Chendai so that the Hui there could begin to learn more about Islam. The Quanzhou mosque is too far from Chendai (15 kilometers) to be of practical use for them, and it is now without a resident Ahong. In November 1984, a grass roots organization of Ding Hui leaders was recognized by the government as “Jinjiang County Chendai Town Commission for Hui Affairs”. This is quite significant in that formal voluntary associations outside of initial government sponsorship are generally considered illegal in China, and in this case the State recognized the organization well after it was established.

One of the commission's first acts was to establish a small museum in the ancestral hall displaying articles substantiating their foreign Muslim ancestry. The ancestral hall possesses the usual ritual

objects and ancestral tablets on the domestic altar as other Hokkien temples (Weller 1987:26-27). Locals affirmed that daily rituals of the domestic cult, lighting incense on a daily basis, and providing special offerings on festivals and feast days, was similar to other Fujianese families. Perhaps more importantly, this ancestral hall received special township level support and approval. Ancestral halls are now allowed in China, but generally not patronized by the State. The township provided some funding for the ancestral hall, reasoning that it also contained a historical museum of the history of the Hui, and thus, it pertained to foreign relations in China. I have never seen another ancestral hall with a museum inside, and it was the nicest hall that I visited in Fujian.

The commission has also asked to be recognized as an autonomous minority county, but this has not been worked out because of redistricting difficulties. The committee even suggested that in 1987 they would have a Ramadan celebration, and in 1988 they wanted to encourage many of the Ding to fast. This possible revitalization of a new Islamic identity for the Hui in Chendai is important to watch as it becomes increasingly relevant for them in their altered social context.

Prosperity has come to the Ding lineage as a result of government minority assistance and of increased contacts with overseas relatives. Although the Ding lineage only occupies one seventh of the town's population, it accounts for over one-third of the total area's annual income. Economic prosperity has been accompanied by ethnic and even religious revival. The growing Muslim identity of the Fujian Hui in interaction with changing sociopolitical conditions and government policy reveals a dialectical process that is the basis for ethnic change. These lineages have always maintained a Hui identity that, in conjunction with recent events, only now is beginning to take on a decidedly Islamic commitment.

The benefits attached to recognition of the Ding as members of the Hui nationality has led other southeastern lineages with traditional Hui surnames to apply for minority nationality status. As a result, the population of the Hui in Fujian is growing at a rapid rate. Ding lineage members have been located on Pingtan Island (over 5000 Hui were recognized in 1982) and several other areas in smaller numbers.

Hui Identity Among Southeastern Lineages On The Maritime Silk Route

Examination of this case of changing Hui identity on the Southeast Coast has demonstrated the influence of government intervention and policy in shaping the resurgence of ethnic identity and practice. Under China's socialist policy, which especially since 1979 has distinguished clearly between the ethnic and religious expressions of a nationality's identity, Hui such as the Chendai Ding are given the option to express their ethnic identity without reference to Islamic belief and practice. Under Taiwan's Nationalist policy, which stresses the Islamic nature of Hui ethnicity, Guo lineage members in Lugang who no longer practice Islam have no grounds for being considered as Hui. I submit that

discussions of who the Hui are will only be fruitful if we examine how they have adapted under different socioeconomic circumstances and how their expression of ethnic identity and its relevance differs in those situations particularly with reference to the historical memories of migration and origin, especially for those peoples who arrived in China along the ancient silk and trade routes.

The Hui discussed in this chapter are not overly concerned with the Islamic ritual purity of a Muslim lifestyle. The core of their ethnic identity is stripped bare in their emphasis upon the truth of their genealogy. Their purity as Hui resides in the truth of this ancestry, which is rooted in the idea of descent from foreign ancestors who came from the West along the ancient marine route. Over the entrance to the tomb of the second Islamic saint in Yangzhou was displayed a Chinese epigraph proclaiming the foreign origin of Islam: "The Dao Originates in Western Lands" (Dao yuan xi tu).

Unlike other ethnic groups who appeared and then disappeared through the centuries of China's development, such as the Xiongnu and the Jews, and even some who ruled dynasties, like the Khitan, Tangut and Jurchen, the Hui survived. While the Hui along the southeastern coast have lost much of the cultural and religious distinctiveness normally associated with Hui identity, they have somehow managed to preserve the core of that identity. In the midst of a vast Han majority and beset by many centuries of assimilative policies, their identity has reemerged as socially relevant in the context of a new State policy that allows the expression of ethnic identity along the maritime Silk Road.

[1] See Huang and Liao 1983 regarding the changing of the surnames of several Hui lineages in Quanzhou during the Ming dynasty. Bai and Ma 1958 discuss the background for this discriminatory policy.

[2] Artifacts discovered thus far have been laboriously catalogued, photographed and translated into Chinese, Arabic, and English by the Fujian Foreign Maritime Museum(Chen 1984). The representations, calligraphy, and photography are all excellent in this significant volume, which is largely a reproduction and expansion of Wu Wenliang's Religious Inscriptions in Quanzhou (1957). While the translation from Chinese to English is quite good, it is hoped that future editions might consider translating the Arabic on the stone inscriptions directly into English, rather than having the English translations based on the Chinese translations of Arabic.

[3] Shichor's (1984, 1989] analysis of the interplay between Middle Eastern foreign relations and China's treatment of its Muslim minorities does not reflect the importance of the minorities themselves in interacting with policy. See also Voll's 1985 analysis that distinguishes important differences between Muslim identity in China and Russia resulting from divergent ethnic policies.

[4] For important discussions of the dating and name of the Persian style Ashab mosque in Fuzhou, see Chen Dasheng 1984 :8-10 ; Wu 1983 :83-101 ; Zhuang 1983 : 65-82.

[5]Wahb Abu Kabcha is said to be buried in Guangzhou's famous 'Bell tomb'. The fourth saint is buried in Yangzhou(See Liu and Chen 1962). The early Tang date of this visit by foreign Muslims is hotly debated by Chinese Muslims and scholars—see Chen Dasheng 1983b:167-76, 1984:95-101; and Yang Hongxun 1985: 16-38.

[6]Clark's(1981) dissertation provides a wealth of information regarding the early rise of Quanzhou as a key maritime harbor, with particular attention paid to the role of local elites in its development. For his discussion of the early Muslim community in Quanzhou and their role in its economic development, see pp. 60-65, 216-217. For the influence of Islam on Quanzhou's history and customs, see Huang and Wu 1986: 64-68

[7]In a recent paper, Chen Dashteng(1989), traces the important role that mosques played in reviving the Muslim communities along the Southeast Coast. Like the Ashab mosque, it was generally rebuilt as first act of reformers who sought to re-islamicize the assimilated former Muslim communities.

[8]The importance of genealogy is not its authenticity, but its acceptance by the current members of the ding clan as validating their desecent from Foreign Muslim ancestors. It is also the basis for their continuing ancestral rituals. For an excellent analysis of the genealogy, see "A Study of the 'Ding' Clan" by the Investigation Section of Quanzhou Foreing Maritime Museum, 1983b.

[9]Ding shares the belief that they descended from the Nasredin, the son of Dianchi, the famous governor of Yunnan, Sichuan, and Shaanxi during the Yuan. They say that the third characters of both texts cited above, when put in alignment, are the characters "zhan si", the Chinese personal name of Nasredin (Ding Zhansi), indicating a hidden reflection of their foreign ancestry in the inscriptions over the entrance to their ancestral hall.

[10] The party secretary of Chendai Town said they made enormous profits from a recent exhibition and sale of their leather shoes in Beijing. The exhibition opened on August 20, 1986 in Beijing and the entire stock was sold out within three days, although they had reserved the hall for ten. They made a profit of over 10,000 yuan each day. Ding relatives from overseas bring shoes with them on their visits to the villages. "When we get a new show", he explained, "we tear it apart and copy it as fast as we can. People like our new foreign styles."

[11] Ding relatives from the Philippines visited Chendai recently, revealing that they were members of a "Five Surname Association"(waxing hui) of Hui in Southeast Asia, including Guo, Ding, Bai, Jin, and Ma.

[12] I have refrained from referring to Hui such as the Ding, Jin, and Guo as the "Quanzhou Hui" in general, as some publications do, since there are other later Hui immigrants from Shandong, Anhui. And Henan living in Quanzhou, Fuzhou and Xiamen who are more culturally Muslim in their lifestyles(see Terada's 1986 article "General Study of Ming dynasty Quanzhou Hui).

[13] See The Investigation Section of Quanzhou Foreign Maritime Museum's report, 1983a: 213·216, where it is demonstrated that the Guo genealogies do not support the claim to descent from Guo Ziyi. Elderly Guo in Baiqi, Fujian , however, still speak of being descended from Guo Ziyi, and their ancestral home, they claim, is Fenyang, Shanxi, where Guo Ziyi originated. During ancestral holidays before liberation, Guo ancestral halls displayed small lanterns adorned with the characters for Fenyang, referring back to their ancestral home. Even recent funerals of elder Guo have had the characters for Fenyang printed on a red cloth that is buried on top of the coffin.

[14] For Chinese translations and terms of reference for "Islam," see Gladney and Ma 1989.

[15] See the pamphlet compiled by the Committee for Protecting Islamic Historical Relics in Quanzhou and the Research Centre for the Historical Relics of Chinese Culture. Yang Hongxun 1985:1-15.

[16] A resolution on the use of the funding has not yet been reached however, as local authorities are afraid of causing damage to the remains of the Ashab mosque during restoration. The Jordani. however, are not willing to construct a new mosque with their funds. The influx of this large contribution has caused considerable dissension among the Hui community.

[17] See Jamjoom 1985 for an interesting account of a Saudi delegation's visit to Islamic sites in China.

[18] Compare Eaton's (1984:341) Punjab case of the power of Saba Furid to protect a certain Abel Allah Rumi from highway robbers as he traveled southwest from Ajudhan to Mullan in the early 16th century. Mills (1970:1-34) provides a discussion of Zheng He's voyages and a translation of Ma Huan's 15th century Chinese account, including a visit to Mecca, the city of the "Heavenly square" (tian fang), and the miraculous "bright light" that he reported rose from the prophet's tomb in Medina (1970:173-79). The influence of this account among China's early Muslims may account for the belief that the Holy Islamic Tombs in Quanzhou also emitted a bright light at night, thus the name of their location became Ling shan ("spiritual or brilliant mountain") (see He Qiaoyuan Minshu 1629 (7) :21) .

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