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Sermon Poems in Uyghurs and Huis: A Comparison Approach toward the Socioreligious Representations of Muslim Minorities in China

In this paper, I mean to undertake comparison analyses on the religious representations appearing in the sermon poems composed by those mosque preachers both in the Uyghurs and Huis. By doing these, I aim at unfolding the process of the symbolic constructions in their sermon poems, and as a result, shedding lights onto their rich ways, different in literate styles and composition forms but similar in religious ideologies, to use Islam as a logic base. From the descriptions and discussions of this paper, we also can get useful information for understanding the Islamization of folk traditions in the localities of the Uyghurs and the Huis, and examine the methodological possibility of studying Muslim community constructions in terms of their universal Islamic identity.

Key words: islam, sermon poems, mosque, preachers, Uyghurs, Huis, Islamization of folk traditions, Islamic identity.

Джиэнксин В.

Huis мен Ұйғырлардың діни өлеңдер жинағы: Қытайдағы мұсылман азшылықтың діни әлеуметтік түсініктеріне салыстырмалы талдау

Аталмыш мақалада Huis мен ұйғырлардың мешіттерінде өлең түрінде оқылатын уағыздарының діни мәтіндері мен рәміздік түсініктеріне салыстырмалы талдау жасалған. Бұл салыстырмалы талдаудың басты мақсаты өлең-уағыздардағы рәміздік конструкциялардың мән-мағнасын ашу және де нәтижесі ретінде, грамматических стилі мен формаларының алуан түрлігіне қарамастан ортақ діни идеологияның болуымен, исламды логикалық негіз ретінде қолдануна ерекше назар аударылады. Бұл мақала huis пен ұйғырлар тұрған жерде халықтық дәстүрдің исламдануын тануға, исламдық бірегейлікті зерттеуде көмек болады.

Түйін сөздер: Ислам, уағыз, поэзия, мешіт, уағыздаушылар, ұйғырлар, Huis, ұлттық дәстүрлердің исламдануы, исламдық бірегейлік.

Джиэнксин В.

Проповеди в стихах Уйгуров и Хуэй: сравнительный анализ социорелигиозных представлений мусульманских меньшинств в Китае

В данной статье проводится сравнительный анализ текстовых композиций и символических высказываний религиозных взглядов, изложенных и читающих в мечетях в стихотворной форме проповедниками уйгурами и хуэй. Целью данного анализа является раскрытие символики в проповедях-стихах. Несмотря на различие грамматических стилей и форм, наблюдается общность религиозной идеологии, где в качестве логической основы выступает ислам. Данная статья может быть полезной в плане понимания исламизации народных традиций в местах, где проживают уйгуры и хуэй, а так же в плане изучения проблем исламской идентичности.

Ключевые слова: ислам, проповедь, стихи, мечеть, проповедники, уйгуры, Huis, исламизация народных традиций, исламская идентичность.

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OF MUSLIM MINORITIES
IN CHINA**

Introduction

In China, there are about 20 million Muslim population composed of ten different ethnic minorities (Turkic speaking Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Uzbek, Tatar, Salar, Indo-European speaking Tajik, Chinese speaking Hui, Mongolian speaking Dongxiang and Bao'an). Among these Muslim minority groups, the Uyghur and the Hui are accounted as the two largest Muslim groups, both because their huge population totally more than 18 million (about 90 % of whole Muslim population in China) and their literate and cultural traditions. The Uyghurs, concentrated in Xinjiang, use Arabic letters to spell their own Turkic language, and have closer relations in lifestyles and folk cultures to Muslim peoples in the Central Asian areas, while the Hui, scattering in everywhere of China, use Chinese letters and have folk traditions very close to the Han Chinese living in the mainland of China.

Islam in China exists in various local Muslim socio-cultural environments and functions differently in relation to the diversity of Muslim societies and cultures. Among the Uyghurs, Islam is a transcendent body of religious knowledge, being introduced ceaselessly into their socio-religious practices, such as the worship of saint mausoleums (Ma 1987, Wang 1996a), Shamanistic exorcisms and sorceries (Wang 1996b), through various chances of Islamic education, and therefore bound deeply with the folk knowledge systems of local Uyghurs. While in the Hui, the role of Islam has different significances depending on their various local traditions. In the southeastern coastal areas, the Hui have their education, kinship organizations and ritual customs parallel with that of the Han Chinese. Islam is significant as the source of recognizing the genealogical decent of the Hui to their Muslim ancestors (Gladney 1991). But in the northwestern corner, the Hui are strongly influenced by Islamic Sufi teachings. There, Islam contributes to the ritual perfection and the structural integration of kinship organizations in numerous mystic orders (Ma 1983, 2000, Zhang 1999).

However divert are the literate and folk traditions between the Uyghurs and the Hui, they have faced the similar social changes after the founding of the PRC, and therefore shared similar fortunes, and similar social experiences of using Islamic belief to

accommodating their ever-changing social realities. The socialist revolutions in China in the second half of the twentieth century made Muslim minorities experience violent social changes. Especially from the beginning of the 1950s throughout the end of the 1970s, the social order in Muslim communities was disturbed by socialist political movements. Islam together with Muslims' cultural traditions and mass education were criticized and repressed by revolutionaries with left-wing mass re-education. As a result, Islam stopped functioning as the traditional belief of Muslim peoples. This unprecedented historical period ended in 1978 when the national government issued its policy to open China. Muslims gradually revitalized Islamic education to meet their needs to reconstruct their religious beliefs and cultural traditions.

The frustrating social experiences, in the socialist movement and after, urge Muslims to use Islam as one of their important cultural resources to create group identities and establish cultural boundaries. For example, the Uyghurs in the southern Xinjiang areas keep mosques to function as local community centers and for Islamic education, where the residents confirm their group identity and search for protection when facing social pressures. Islamic instructors at the mosques actually play the role of community leaders, their opinions towards social events strongly influencing the attitudes of the ordinary Uyghurs (Wang 2004b). In the case of the Huis, from the middle of the 1980s, mystic Islam was revitalized quickly into a fully-reinforced religious tradition. Many mystic orders built and rebuilt their shrines meanwhile their membership increased rapidly. The leaders of the mystic orders have absolute mystic power in the eyes of their followers, not only in guiding the ways of ritual observations but also in providing them with an Islamic framework to understand social changes and mutual relations (Wang 2001, 2004b).

In this paper, I mean to undertake comparison analyses on the religious representations appearing in the sermon poems composed by those mosque preachers both in the Uyghurs and Huis, focusing on the ways of their text compositions and symbolic manipulations. By doing these, I aim at unfolding the process of the symbolic constructions in their sermon poems, and as a result, shedding lights onto their rich ways, different in literate styles and composition forms but similar in religious ideologies, to use Islam as a logic base to make comments and criticisms on the religious commitments and social events. From the descriptions and discussions of this paper, we also can get useful information for

understanding the Islamization of folk traditions in the localities of the Uyghurs and the Huis, from educational aspects all closely related to the mediating role of Islamic Leaders, and at last, examine the methodological possibility of studying Muslim community constructions in terms of their universal Islamic identity.

The founder of the interpretive theory of anthropology, Clifford Geertz, noted once: «religion is sociologically interesting not because, as vulgar positivism would have it, it describes social order, but because, like environment, political power, wealth, jural obligation, personal affection, and a sense of beauty, it shapes it» (Geertz 1975:119). However, I have to add, to this Geertzian proposition, that religion can shape social order but its role of cultural construction depends on the general social and political environments of various Muslim communities. Islam as I have observed among the Uyghurs and the Huis not only reflects preexisting social order but also shapes social order for them. This function of Islam among the Uyghurs and the Huis can be taken as the outcome of the recent development of Islamic education in Muslim localities in China.

Islam as a world civilization endows Muslim societies and cultures with appearances and contents different from those of the non-Muslim groups in China, while Islam itself is also fusing into local traditions strongly influenced by Chinese and Socialist traditions. This acculturation phenomenon in Muslim societies in China shows us that different civilization and traditions may conflict in some historical periods, but can also be harmoniously coexisting together. The uniquely local synthesis in a landscape of conflicts and accommodations between different civilizations that we can observe from inside Muslim cultures---such as what we see in the Uyghurs and the Huis---differs from Huntington's theory of the civilization clashes (1996).

Local Muslim Communities and Sermon Poems

The religious texts used in the comparisons of this paper were collected in my fieldworks in the past 20 years separately in the Turpan Basin of Xinjiang UAR for the Uyghurs, Sanying Town of Guyuan County, Ningxia HAR for the Huis. Both texts were composed by local mosque preachers (ahon) at the similar purpose of mosque sermons and daily religious exchanges.

The Turpan Basin is one of the desert oases densely inhabited by the Uyghurs, their population

was about 180,000 (Wang 2011). There, several ideological streams giving influences to local people's religious life. First, local governments have the strongest impact because of its official business of religious administration. While the government has a Socialist atheistic stance to religious affairs, its policy makes flexible compromises with religious realities aiming at popularizing gradually the atheistic ideology on the conditions of maintaining the country's political unity and keeping public stability. Second, those Uyghurs who are government officials and scientifically-educated intellectuals belong to a unique social group whose opinions and actions also influential to ordinary Uyghurs. Third, Islamic specialists, especially those preachers who have the state-approved privilege of making proselytizing at mosques, belong to a social group which gives their influences to the spiritual world of their fellow residents.

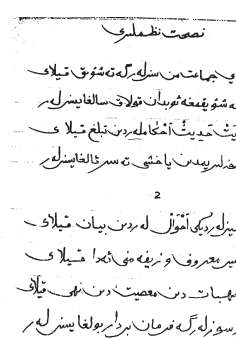
In such a socio-cultural circumstance, those mosque preachers who have strong influences to the spiritual world of local residents are actually functioning as local educators accommodating different socio-cultural realities. Comparing with various aspects of their religious services to local residents, such as lecturing to religious students, guiding mosque prayers and various ritual occasions, mosque preaching is the most important channel for them to express opinions upon many going-on social events. Their work can be taken as having three main directions: commenting on the negative effects of numerous politically-related social events, dealing with various social issues in relation to their bad influences to the standards of Muslim ethics, providing religious criticism upon those unhappy events according to Islamic believing and its theological doctrines.

Islamic sermons (khutba), undertaken by Uyghur preachers in the basin, are regarded an important part of the teaching activities of Islamic specialists from the Prophet Muhammad. The occasions for sermons are regularly fixed with Friday prayers and the prayers at Muslim festivals, and often delivered when eclipses and droughts occur. However, they have their own particular contents and styles. And as a rule in local Uyghurs, sermons must be made by erudite preachers (khatip or damolla), the most respected Islamic specialists.

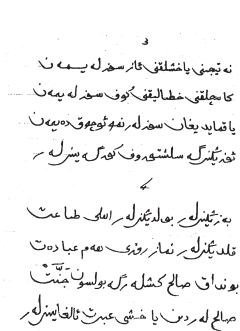
Their sermons, as a series of admonitions, may address a wide range of socio-cultural phenomena, from political issues, legal regulations and social problems to small particulars of Muslim life, but the contents of a single sermon must be specific, short and to the point. Therefore, well-prepared sermons

can evoke changes in the feeling of their audience, influence their opinions and get responses. During my twenty months field research in the basin, from the summer of 1993 throughout the autumn of 1995, I had paid special attention to mosque preaching and the contents of sermons. Without exception, capable Islamic leaders have the reputation of excellent mosque preachers. Some of them are known for their beautiful voices and humorous speeches, while others are respected by their fellow Uyghurs for their ability to make tactful criticism upon political corruption and bad social behaviors. All of them are serious about their sermons, since preaching is both a Sunna of the prophet they have to obey and their duty to serve their fellow Uyghurs.

Some of the preachers are using personally prepared texts and notes as aiding materials for their sermons. At the central mosque of the Yarbash Village Community, the chief preacher Ismayil Qarahaji, offered his own version of sermon texts, a manual including 100 monitory verses he edited for mosque sermons. He wrote the verses down in a 17.5 cm×12.5 cm large, flat, brown note book, with twenty-six pages. He told me that he composed some himself and collected others from other preachers over a long time. In 1984, he edited them into a unified anthology of «admonitory songs» (nashet nezimliri), also called simply «one hundred songs» (yuz qoshaq), for it contains 100 verses (samples verses 1-4 as shown in picture 1, 2). Since the texts were edited for the purpose of criticizing moral depravity and highlighting social problems in local communities, they reflect the opinions of many Uyghur residents. The preacher uses these folk songs also as teaching notes for his students at religious classes, as a folk reader to be exchanged with other Islamic intellectuals, and even as references for new sermons in his services of mosque preaching.



Picture 1



Picture 2

Just as what did I encounter in Turpan Basin, I fortunately found in later years that some religious leaders in the Hui communities also composed religious poems what we may call as «metrical verses» at the purpose of making sermons. I got two kinds of sermon poems in those interviews made to some members and religious leaders belong to a Sufi order called Linmingtang, one was dictated by the originator of the order, Ma Lingming, and another was written by a senior mosque preacher Ma Ximing. Lingmingtang is a very young Sufi order, being founded in 1915 in Lanzhou City and spread out its socio-religious organizations into the eastern and western parts of China within 100 years development, now it has already become a huge Sufi order with two branches and more than a dozen Mosques, totally about 250.000 members (Wang 2004).

The order has a literary tradition of recording the top leaders thinking and religious teaching about Sufi doctrines in Chinese poems. Though the poems have generally the style of epics, they do not make systematic descriptions of the order's history, and their rhythms or sentence patterns are rich. Some poems are generally loose in structures and rhythms, but some are strictly controlled in letter and rhythm patterns, all strongly aim at making clear the mystic origins of the order and the transcendent ideas of Sufi doctrines that all members have to understand and follow. There are many religious concepts and expressions in the poems that are difficult to understand, with their signification quite different from ordinary poems. There are also many religious concepts and ways of reasoning that parallel with the writings of the Islamic-Confucian scholars of the Jinling School, which is a most salient character of the poems.

The Hui sermon poems I gathered in Sanying have two different versions. One is something can be taken as the memoirs dictated by those top leaders, such as Ma Lingming the inventor of the Sufi order's memoir and the other is the sermon texts written by mosque preachers. The «Memoir of Master Lingming» (Lingming Shangren Luezhuan), is composed of 733 words. In addition to an introduction of 42 words, the main text of the memoir has three parts, which cover the origin of the order, the mystic views about the formation and movement of the universe, the theological recognition of the only God, general worldview, the essence of mystic practices, and the relations between Islamic theology and Confucian traditions (picture 3). The sermons poems by mosque preachers are poster size calligraphies with both Arabic and Chinese letters

for the purposes of proselytizing. As a rule, for preachers with greater literary ability, one customary commission is to produce some kind of religious text to use at sermon practices. They have duties to teach Sufi doctrines and the ways of conducting meditation to those who seek to learn more about Islam. In August 2003, I got to see seven such pieces of calligraphies hung on the walls of the prayer hall at the central mosque of the Sanying Branch of the order in Sanying Town (picture 4). Of the seven calligraphies, one describes the order's formation and development, two are titled respectively as «fate» (ming) and «mentality» (xing) and indicate the formation of the universe and the rules of its movement, and four explain the detailed processes and idealist essences of Sufi meditation (picture 4).



Picture 3



Picture 4

The last four calligraphies, which I will go to take as sample poems comparing with the Uyghur ones, are actually composed of a series of religious poems with four titles, «body» (shen), «heart» (xin), «fate» (ming), «mentality» (xing), corresponding respectively to the four different steps of Islamic religious practices, «daily routines» (shari'a), «Sufist meditation» (tariqa), «true meditation» (haqiqa), and «supra meditation» (marifa). The four calligraphies indicate the gradually reinforced process of Sufi meditation from the beginner level one to the highest level four. All the calligraphies are made of the same kind of yellow cloth. Each has four parts, with four lines of Chinese poetry located in the center describing the process and contents of the meditation at each step, an oblong frame of

Arabic calligraphic letters circling the poems, a title in Chinese at the top of the frame indicating the subject and nature of the respective meditation, and a concluding part under the frame pinpointing the result and virtue of the meditation. From the contents of the poems and their writing styles, we can argue confidently that the preacher who wrote the poems was not only sophisticated in Sufist practices, but also very familiar with Arabic and Chinese writing and able to express clearly by different languages what he wanted to say.

In the following sections, I will take 100 metrical verses (*yuz qoshaq*) in Uyghur language and the four calligraphies by the Hui preacher as comparison texts to unfold analyses on their textual characteristics and symbolic meanings. The reason of choosing these verses as analysis text is that both of those verses have similar compositional styles which we may call as «metrical verse» with four lines in every sentence, with strict rhythm rules attached to the ending words of sentences. Also, another important criterion to use those poems is that they were composed by preachers belong to different Islamic traditions. The Uyghur one is an ordinary type preacher serving at a mosque which may be taken as a community center being used equally by local residents, while the Hui one is special type preacher who serves at a mosque belongs to specific Sufi order which is a religious center used by only the local members of *Lingmingtang*. Therefore, the sermon poems by the Uyghur preacher aim at deal with social problems happening in the daily practices of all local residents, while the poems by the Hui preacher go to make clear the points of religious meditation needed for the members of their own religious organization. By such combination of text using, we can see much more clearly the common base of Islamic beliefs as well as the divert functions and ways of the localization of Islamic religion in different Muslim societies.

Literary Styles, Contents and Sentence Structures

In modern Uyghur literary composition, one of the important forms of folk rhymes is «people's songs» (*khaliq qoshaq*). These folk songs are usually composed of verses without strict limitation on their structure. The verses can be four lines each, or two lines or even an irregular number of lines. The most popular forms use four-lines or two-lines for each verse, with the number of verses depending on writer's purposes. Some rhyming rules exist for each line in a verse, but they are loose, leaving the

composer many choices. For example, one standard four-line love song goes:

Yarimning eti Niyaz (A)---My love's named Niyaz,
Ashqa salmiz piyaz (A)---In food we put onions,
Yaqshi yarini tapqanda (B)---On finding sweet love,
Ajirmaymiz qishmo yaz (A)---Divorce not: winters turn to summers .

Of these lines, three end with the same vowels and consonants for an AABA pattern, which is most popular and easy to recite. But, rarely the patterns can be abab, abca, abcd, etc.. Also, the lines can be shorter or longer with the numbers of letters unfixed. In a study of Uyghur literature, Zunon and Abdukirim classify these folk songs in two types. One is «ethnographical songs» (*etinograpiy qoshaq*) reflecting local customs, while the other reflects various life experiences. The second classification («local songs» *yerlik qoshaq*) is further divided into five types: work songs (*emgek qoshaq*), life songs (*turumush qoshaq*), political songs (*siyasi qoshaq*), love songs (*muhabat qoshaq*) and children's songs (*bala qoshaq*) (1982, pp. 84-162). Influenced by this classification, a recent collection of folk songs arranged them into six categories with the sixth as «ritual rhymes» (*murasim qoshaq*) corresponding to the ethnographical songs of the first work (*Turpan City People's Literature Collection Committee* 1990). This latter classification seems clearer as a single genre with subdivisions. However, if we add one more songs, «religious songs», then we can clearly see that the preacher applied one of the literary forms of poem compositions to serve his purpose of mosque sermons. Though each verse of the 100 songs can be taken as having an independent theme, as a whole, 100 verses are organized under twenty-eight topics relating to social issues in six categories or groups (excepting the four introductory and ten concluding verses).

The first group covers eight topics and altogether 16 verses on Islamic doctrine and Muslim's duties: two verses to encourage alms; one to observe daily routines; two to criticize non-Muslim elements at ritual events; two on dietary restrictions; one on idolatry; two on ineligible religious intellectuals; four on proper Muslim observances and two on mistaken religious practices. The second group consists of seven topics about cultural norms, manners and public morality, including 14 verses: two to criticize non-Muslim trends; three on westernized clothing styles; one on vulgar behavior at wedding ceremonies; one on despising farm work and peasants; four on making rumors and slander; two on irresponsible elders and one on business morality. The third

group consists of three topics, including nine verses respectively on new fashions, entertainment activities and manners of young people. The fourth group consists of eight topics about marriage and family, including altogether 21 verses: two comments on raising children; twelve on extorting money from marriage and bride prices; five on heartless wives, illegal pregnancy, abortion and adultery; two on divorce and separation nine on filial piety and two on the relations between husbands and wives. The fifth group consists of two topics including 12 verses with a nine of the verses criticizing local cadres and three more on countryside elections. The last group has two topics on delinquency including three verses, one on drug use and two on robbery.

All songs use a two-part structure: one part describes problematic phenomena and the other makes remarks referring to Muslim ethics or Islamic regulations. For example, a verse goes:

Going to steal when it becomes dark,
Never getting up until dusk after day begins,
Sticking what they see into their bosoms;
Please remember retribution after death!
(WT, p.363/401)

In the first three lines, the preacher makes description on thieves, their habits and values, then, gives his admonition in the last one referring to the Last Judgment. Another verse goes:

Away from places of virtuous conduct,
Throwing themselves into the sinful ways,
Actively participate in guilty deeds,
Beware the punishment after death!
(WT, p.361/396)

The first three lines contrast virtue and sin, to evoke rejection and the last promises hell for evil people (thus implying heaven for the virtuous).

In addition to this formula in meaning and structure, the preacher organized his songs using two or more verses to approach the same problem from different aspects, such as making comments on family disputes from both the husband's and wife's sides, on the new fashion of both boys and girls, or criticizing the corruption of communist cadres and ordinary Uyghurs, and so on. Here are two illustrations.

Muslim people have five duties to God,
Confession, Prayers, fasts, tithes and pilgrimages are compulsory,
Sultans fulfilled these as written in Islamic law (Shariyet);
Are there Muslims doing these among us?
(WT, p.366/407)

Some people are not firm in Islam,
Observing ritual prayers when in good moods,
But casting them aside when feeling otherwise;
Being Muslim or infidel depends on ritual prayers!
(WT, p.354/379)

The above two verses are both on Muslim duties, but use different approaches. The first invites comparison with the faithful, the latter with infidels.

The Prophet of God told us this Hadith:
The Cereals are lawful form of food,
Pigs are counted as prohibited in the Judgement Day;
Please learn well from this Hadith!
(WT, p.364/402)

Saying «I repent» when listening to Traditions,
After that continuing to eat prohibited things,
As if all things going down throats are lawful;
Remember that prohibited food is great sin!
(WT, p.364/403)

The above two verses are similarly about the food restriction, but where one stresses obedience or else, the focuses on hypocrisy and negligence. Here are some more two pronged approaches:

Boys and girls are excited at marriage ceremonies
New, new customs they have created,
Marriage and wedding separated from the faith;
Tell these youth to behave proper ways!
(WT, p.356/383)

Getting in the way of wedding guests,
Asking for presents as collecting taxes,
Letting none pass until getting money;
Please stop robbing at weddings!
(WT, p.359/391)

Both verses criticize the degeneration of wedding ceremonies, but the first one criticizes licentious youth while the other on the problem of parents extorting gifts and money.

Made-up in a way like women do,
Little difference to «female» guys,
Styling hairs the same as women;
Please you boys follow God's will!
(WT, p.356/382)

Going around with dyed hair,
Pursuing strange fashions,
Behaving in no way like Uyghur girls;
Please put on Muslim clothes!
(WT, p.357/386)

These two concern with the new fashions of young Uyghurs, but the first verse is directed to males while the second females.

Some men say talaq to divorce their wives,
Urging imams to pray for their marriage,
Getting no promise they blame preachers;
Please retreat from such conduct!
(WT, p.359/390)

Some girls go away from their husbands,
Staying many days without being together,
Shaming imam, muazzin and akhon;
Please pray for them to get God's teaching!
(WT, p.359/391)

The Prophet of God did his marriages as follows,
Marry someone with only 10 derhem ,
Marry the poor giving a ring;
Please let these weddings guide you well!
(WT, p.360/393)

The above three verses concern unfavorable relations between husbands and wives from different aspects: first is on husbands and then wives followed by the example of the Prophet. The following is an example of the criticism by the way of beating two birds with one stone:

Sometimes they are scholars reciting the Quran,
But also gathering with demons drinking alcohol,
Dangerous conduct swinging from the faith;
Hold to wholeness and never behave thus!
(WT, p.355/380)

Keeping their eyes on the wrongs of other's,
Asserting themselves as just and avoiding evil,
Holding stately rituals while mixing the lawful and forbidden;
Mossa outside, perikhon inside, are there such Muslims among us?
(WT, p.367/409)

These verses criticize two kinds of religious intellectuals: corrupt hypocrites and those with impure faith and superstitious inclinations.

Racking their brains to create and use budget,
Spending government money and wealth,
Bringing heavy taxes to the masses;
Work sincerely for your people!
(WT, p.363/400)

Getting swollen-heads after winning people's elections,
Eating and playing, profiting from powerful connections,
Becoming rich without work, benefiting from the peasants;
Are there such leaders eating people's blood among us?
(WT, p.370/419)

These last two examples address the corruption of government officials and village cadres: the first, embezzlers and the second, those that bribe higher-ups while exploiting those below. As the themes are written and used by religious preachers

in their sermons, their reasoning and logic are based on Islamic doctrines. By using folk songs as sermon texts, those preachers tactfully express their critical opinions toward social problems. They also recommend their Islamic solutions to their fellow Uyghurs. Therefore, these admonitory songs are good samples for observing the role of Islamic education in forming opinions toward social issues.

As to the Hui poems, they interestingly have a quite similar composition style to the Uyghur ones, even the two were written in totally different languages and sentence structures. One of the seven calligraphic verses I collected in the Hui community in Sanying Town goes like the next:

Zimu liuxing ershiba (A)---The language we use has 28 alphabets,

Yuanhua renshen xian zijia (A)---Verify that we are Islamic believers,

Xuanmiao yinji jian quanti (B)---The meanings of words conceal in bones but benefit body,

Zibai ziren fuyuanhua (A)---Prays oneself, recognizes oneself and return to the way of God's.

Clearly, three sentences among the four end by vowel a, with only the third sentence ends with a vowel i. So, the rhythm pattern of the song is AABA, and each sentence has exactly seven words. In the classification of Chinese classical poems, there are two kinds are most popular and important. One is called Qilu, the poem of this type has eight sentences with seven words in each sentence, another is Qijue, the poem has four sentences with also seven words in each sentence.

The following discussion addresses these four calligraphies and the light they shed on the theological ideas of Sufi doctrines and the cultural characteristics of the sermon representations.

(1) (Body: A hundred li a day as people walk a road)
Close six senses after raising your hands,
Concentrate the whole heart by removing tiny ideas,
Be quiet in body and heart when praying,
Make your rogation in front of God.

(Womb bead: The nature of growing; natural beings without life)

The topic of this calligraphy is body, describing the conditions of the first step of Sufist meditation. Here, the capacity of the human mind is based on only the energy provided by the body, therefore, the possible distance by walking on this path is only equivalent to about 50 kilometers a day. After that, the four lines go on with a balanced rhythm that makes the poem easy to understand and tells people

the necessary bodily and mental conditions they should achieve. At the end, the author uses «womb bead» to indicate the nature of this step, one that reflects how all species come to exist but without any separate mental capacity, just as with plants and minerals.

(2) (Heart: A thousand li a day as a ship moves in water)
Worshipping toward the west just as in front of Ka'ba,
Telling painfully with a fearful feeling,
Confessing deep guilt over what one has done,
Begging excuses from God.
(Silver bead: The nature of perception; birds and animals)

The topic of the second calligraphy is heart, illustrating the conditions of the next step of Sufist meditation. At this step, the human mind moves up to a more powerful condition. just like a ship moving on the water, the possible distance becomes about 500 kilometers, something well beyond the physical capacity of the human body. Through the meditation, believers can recognize their guilt for what they have done in the past, feeling pain for those acts and begging excuses from God. The mental capacity has risen further, the necessary conditions for better meditation come to be met, and the believers can move smoothly onward in the way of Sufist meditation. At the end, the author uses «silver bead» to pinpoint the nature of this step, identifying it with animals which are able to think and react to outside stimuli.

(3) (Fate: Ten thousand li a day as the wind blows)
Bow down with body become flat,
See the fire in the seventh hell,
Look up to the happy life in heaven,
Fly over all the nine layers of the skies.
(Sea lighting bead: The nature of soul, angels, gods and ghosts)

The topic of the third calligraphy is fate, explaining the conditions of «true meditation.» At this step, the mental quality of the believers becomes greatly different from that of ordinary people, just like wind by which the believers can fly to higher and farther places, and be able to see what is invisible to ordinary people. Go down to witness the fire in the seventh layer of hell, fly up to heaven in the ninth layer firmament, understand all the virtues and penalties. At the end, the author uses «sea lighting bead» as a symbol for this stage of meditation, telling the believers that here they achieve a supernatural power by which they can communicate with angels, ghosts and God. They have already arrived at a great wisdom.

(4) (Mentality: Immensity when running as light)
Reverting to the form of the original human by meditation,
In death, going to the ground that is also the place of birth,
Humans were created above all species,
Should we not thank God for living well in the world?
(Night lighting bead: Supra mentality; the light of the Prophet)

The topic of this calligraphy is «mentality», which belongs to the supra step of Sufist meditation. At this step, the believers have arrived at the highest, mentally omnipotent condition, by which human thought can fly as light into the unlimited universe. They can absolutely separate from ordinary conditions, commit what they want and never suffer from daily happenings, and eventually live complete and happy lives with the Prophet and with God. The believers who fulfill the tasks of this step's meditation will have achieved the highest dignity of their human potential, their mentality is equal to the level of God. The image for the meditation is «night lighting bead,» stressing that the believers at this step have achieved supra mentality which is equal to the level of the Prophet; they become the great masters of religious salvation for humankind.

From the above discussions on the contents of the four calligraphies, we can see that the author uses a «subject locating-describing-concluding» structure for his composition, which is very clear in meaning and rational in reasoning, and with a beautiful feeling of Chinese poesy and poem rhythms. The process described by the poems is from the first step until the highest level of Sufi meditation searching for being together with the Prophet and God. All the descriptions of the different conditions at each meditation stage are arranged in a particular pattern. That pattern is very similar to that used by the Islamic-Confucian scholar Liu Zhi in his papers titled as «The Chart for the Process of the Mentality Growing» (Lingxing Xianzhu Ciditu), «The Charted Description of Religious Meditation» (Xiujin Gongcheng Tushuo) and «The Chart for All Go to God» (Quanti Guizhen Tushuo). All these texts are collected in his well-known work «Islamic Doctrines» (Tianfang Xingli).

Comparisons: Commonalities and Diversities in Religious Representations

Here, in this section, I will undertake comparisons between the two kinds of sermon poems, making sure that to what extent, the Uyghur and the Huis use Islamic symbols in the process of religious representations, and to what extent, the contents of

their representations take relations with non-Islamic local social events and cultural traditions. My argument point is that though the Uyghurs and Huis have respectively their own historically-formed literate traditions and live in different geographic locations, they all face the similarly overall social changes in China, and their religious representations can be taken as the process of reinforcing their Muslim group identity as well as the process of acculturation between Islam and their local folk traditions, or even say, the localization of Islam in Chinese circumstances. Next, I use three tables made by taking information from the descriptions of the former section on contents of the Uyghur and Hui sermon poems, to undertake comparisons for

making clear my argument points. My discussions go on in three respectively independent spheres of their religious representations: 1) Islamic symbolizing, 2) literate media and composition styles, and 3) relations to local socio-cultural realities.

At first, Table 1 shows us a basic and common aspect of the sermon verses among Uyghur and Hui, which make emphases on the ethical base of Islamic religion in composing their religious representations. It can be understood as a religious phenomenon that Uyghur and Hui Islamic intellectuals construct their ethno-religious identity, both for constructing their cultural boundaries with other non-Muslim groups and the theological foundation of religious life.

Table 1 – Islamic symbolizing

poems \ items	Holy existence	rewards and warnings	panels
Uyghur	God, Prophet, etc.	God bless, virtue, life in Heaven, sin, the last judgment, etc.	Hell, burning fire etc.
Hui	God, Prophet, etc.	God bless, virtue, life in Heaven, sin, the last judgment, etc.	Hell, burning fire etc.

In the case of the Uyghur ones, the preacher used a binary logic or dual thought structure comparing, contrasting or pairing as good and evil (yaqshi vs. yaman), lawful and prohibited (halal vs. haram), virtue and sin (sawap vs. gunah), reward and punishment (mukapat vs. jaza), heaven (biyish) and hell (dozaq), etc. to present Islamic perspectives with all criticisms and insights to the related religious commitments and social events. All the logical bases of these comments on religious commitments and social activities go to the only God and what the prophet said and did. The Uyghur verses mention frequently the only God, when showing the origins of their ethical reasoning as well providing the prophet and his followers as the best samples in fulfilling Muslim duties to God. When encouraging good commitments and expected rewards, the expressions like God bless, virtue, life in Heaven, to be mentioned, but guilt, the last judgment come to be used as warnings cast onto those prohibited activities, and Hell, burning fire appear as symbols for those extreme panels to bad behaviors. Their common-sense recommendations come with repeated uses of five expressions: sin, answer to God, the Last Judgment, God's punishment and Hell as reinforcing sanctions against offending behavior.

As to the ways the Huis used in their religious reasoning, we can see similar wording and

expressions come to be effect, though the sentences concentrate on explaining the operational process of Sufi religious meditation. For example, «Rogation in front of God» indicates the deep piety and devotion from a Sufi practitioner, by doing that, one who can get God bless and collect enough virtues in the way of practicing mystic meditation, then at last live one's «happy life in Heaven» as the rewards. Of course, for those one who failed to complete the compulsory ritual duties, «death» insinuates the last judgement, and «seventh Hell», «fire in Hell» metaphor the extreme panels may come from God. Their language and literate media are different from what of the Huis, but the basic Islamic symbols they used are just common with that are applied in the Uyghur poems.

From able 2, we may note at least some very important literate phenomena which are not only tiny language items we can verify in the styles and compositions of those religious poems, but also are evidences for understanding the localization process of Islam in different Muslim societies in China. The Uyghurs use Arabic alphabets to compose their own Turkic language to express what they wanted to mean. From the point of literate media, it seems a language phenomenon having close relation to those peoples in central and west Asian countries and something alien to the literate traditions in

inland China areas and even quite different from the Hui. However, when we take a look at the latter two items, the composition styles and rhythm patterns of the two, things become totally reversed: both the Uyghurs and the Hui use the same metrical constructions and rhythm patterns which are no doubt literary heritages closely related to Chinese literary traditions which have been popular in the

country for several thousand years. To verify the specific process of the mutual influences between literary traditions, of the Hans and Muslims, is a hard task rather than anthropological field investigation could realize, but we can see the close relationship in the literary traditions between the inland Chinese and those Muslim groups from above illustrations in the table.

Table 2 – Literate media and composition styles

poems \ items	literate media	composing style	rhythm pattern
Uyghur	Arabic letters	metrical verses	AABA
Hui	Chinese letters	metrical verses	AABA

Table 3 illustrates an interesting phenomenon that the wording and expressions in both Uyghur and Hui poems have close relations with their locally-formed cultural traditions, therefore reflect vividly their socio-cultural realities which they are facing similarly in the socialist PRC.

In the case of Uyghur poems as stated in the former section, the editor cast very harsh criticism onto social problems. There are more than 50% of the verses aiming at making comments on the improper or bad social events and behaviors. Of the 100 verses, 38 criticize those moral decays such as abnormal behavior among young people, marriage disputes, alcohol and drug uses, adulteries, alien fashions, filial piety and daily manners. Also, seven verses criticize government officials and village cadres for their political corruption, and eight verses on unqualified religious professionals, 15 verses include the neglect of Muslim duties, betrayal trusts, hypocrisy and greed, blaming those Muslim

offenders but not stir too many villagers.

In order to emphasize the importance of Islamic belief and Muslim duties, preachers constantly refer to God's will, the Quran, Islamic law, the five pillars, virtue and heaven, the necessity of obeying the custom of marriage and family relations, etc., along with traditions (Hadis) from Muhammad periods which tell people what the prophet said and did when he was alive. When criticizing impure or heretical beliefs and superstitions using examples of good religious intellectuals (akhon, molla) or mentioning Moses (means Mossa and other related prophets familiar), meanwhile condemn mystic beliefs (supi, the local Uyghur spell of Sufi), shamanism and sorcery (buwi, perikhon). Such Islamic significance charges the points of those sermons with clarity and compelling compulsoriness. i.e., this rhetoric emphasizes how to be a proper Muslim, accumulate virtue, minimize sin and get a positive reward in the next world.

Table 3 – Relations to local socio-cultural realities

poems \ items	theological sources	local background
Uyghur	Quran, Hadith, Islamic law, five pillars, etc.	magician, selection, corruption, moral decays, drug problem, community administration, etc.
Hui	Quran, Hadith, Sufi-Confucian works	body, heart, fate, mentality, etc.

The symbolic effectiveness of their words comes from their reputations for erudition, judicious use of stereotypes and self-criticism along with simple rhetoric and charging everything with Islamic significance. For example, the stereotypes

under criticism are four types: (1) Infidels or non-Muslims are used basically to make being Muslim more desirable; (2) ordinary Uyghurs, theoretically all local Uyghurs, but actually only those offending Islamic regulations to strengthen the desire to more

than ordinary; again, a good Muslim; (3) government officials and village cadres who are a part of ordinary Uyghurs but privileged as community authorities, any problems, corruption, etc., with them are very serious for all; as also with (4) Islamic intellectuals, also a part of ordinary Uyghurs with authority through their duties of social organization and religious teaching. However, all these ethical judgments adopted from Islamic doctrines come to relate with the social activities of local Uyghurs in their daily practices, so that to relate to their ways of accommodating social changes, their attitudes and reactions to what happening in the recent economic development and social reform movements, official corruption, ethical decays, modern fashions, the legal regulation and ideological influences of the state. Therefore, though the Uyghurs use Turkic language and Arabic letters to compose their religious representations, their ways of accommodating social changes are something may be called as Chinese, or related very closely to what the other Chinese people do. Such contemporary relationship among the cultural traditions Muslim minorities also can be historically trait back into more than a thousand year past.

Now, as to the Hui poems, from the descriptions and discussions on the contents of the four calligraphies in the former section, we can see that the author uses a «subject locating-describing-concluding» structure for his composition, which is very clear in meaning and rational in reasoning, and with a beautiful feeling of Chinese poesy and poem rhythms. What critically important for the contents of the poems is that the editor adopted a wording system exactly from Islamic-Confucian scholars in 17-18 centuries in Nanjing (called as Jinling School of Islam), such as God (zhu), body (shen), heart (xin), fate (ming), mentality (xing), heaven (tiantang), hell (diyu), and the metaphoric descriptions on the process of Islamic Sufi meditations. The process described by the poems is from the first step until the highest level of being together with the Prophet and God. All the descriptions of the different conditions at each meditation stage are arranged in a particular pattern, which is very similar to that used by the Islamic-Confucian scholars Ma Zhu in his «Guidance to Islam» (Qingzhen Zhinan), Liu Zhi in his «The Chart for the Process of the Mentality Growing» (Lingxing Xianzhu Ciditu), «The Charted Description of Religious Meditation» (Xiujin Gongcheng Tushuo) and «The Chart for All Go to God» (Quanti Guizhen Tushuo), all of these articles contained in his well-known work «Islamic Doctrines» (Tianfang Xingli).

Here, clearly we see that the Hui poems have the literary power to learn and absorb the contents of Sufi doctrines just by using Confucian and Daoist concepts and expressions particularly as contained in the religious works written in Chinese by Islamic-Confucian scholars like Liu Zhi. The parallels are so extensive that it is reasonable to conclude that the sermon texts of Sufi order Lingmingtang take the works of the Islamic-Confucian scholars as their major thinking sources. This process of combinations among Islamic and Confucian-Daoist religious concepts can be taken convincingly as the verdicts for the acculturations between Islamic doctrines and Chinese cultural traditions, as well the localization of Islam in the Chinese localities.

Conclusion and Further Prospects

This paper made descriptions and analyses of the sermon poems composed by mosque preachers of two Muslim minorities in China, the Uyghurs and Huis. After introducing the literate and textual characteristics, sentence structures and specific contents of the poems, I did comparisons on the Islamic symbols applied in religious representations, and their relations with the local Chinese traditions and social realities. As the result of these comparisons, we can say that Islamic doctrines play the basic role of the symbolic construction of Muslim identity similarly in the two ethnic minorities, functioning as ethical standards in the process of accommodating social changes, meanwhile Islam also go down deeply in the way of acculturations with respectively Uyghur and Hui localities. Therefore, the specific wordings and expressions in the ways of composing religious representations can be good examples to observe the different patterns of Islamic localizations in various Muslim localities in China. This study suggests us also that various locally-produced religious texts which may be overlooked by the academic discipline of «religious studies», such as the sermon poems edited by the Uyghur and Huis, may be ideal materials for undertaking meaningful anthropological studies on religion. They may be greatly beneficial for our studies of cultural dynamisms within and between different religious civilizations, socio-religious organizations, various religious beliefs, and the related social practices in Muslim societies and cultures.

In the last twenty years, there has been a huge expansion of research and research materials on Muslim societies and their Islamic religion published in China. The results include the genealogical records and surname studies of Hui Muslims, collections

of epigraphs, various religious materials in Turkic and Arabic literatures (Machida 2003), Chinese-language scriptures (Murata 2000, Aoki 2006), transliterations and translations of Arabic-Chinese scriptures (such as xiao er jing, as introduced in Liu 2003), and religious acculturations between Islamic doctrines and Confucian traditions (Du 2001, Hua 2010), all of which are valuable bases for academic studies. The major problem we are facing now is not lack of religious materials but how to make use of the materials, how to understand and analyze the religious texts in daily practices and the dynamism of social activities of the Muslim people. Fortunately,

now we have so many materials available, including the related philological and religious history studies, that we have a sophisticated foundation for further studies. Meanwhile, many academic colleagues both in China and foreign countries keep continuously developing new fieldwork, which also promises a reliable base for undertaking comparative studies. This paper, with its attempt to balance two separate cultural and religious traditions and two different kinds of religious texts, is meant as a contribution to that the broader efforts in academic studies of Islam and Muslim societies in China.

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