



Exploring Hui Muslims' Utilization of Islamic Press for the Revival of Islam during the Republic of China (1912-1949)

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the utilization of Islamic Press by Hui Muslims for the revival of Islam during the Republic of China (1912-1949). The goal of this study is to show how the Hui Muslim *Da'wah* practitioners including intellectuals and Islamic scholars used Islamic Press, i.e., Islamic newspapers and journals, as the main Islamic *Da'wah* instrument to revive Islam and its teachings among the Hui Muslims as well as convey Islamic Message to non-Muslims. The research brings important insights into Islamic *Da'wah* efforts made by the Hui Muslims in the history of Islamic Revival Movement in China. The focus of discussion is on: origin of Hui Muslims; background of the Islamic Revival Movement; and Islamic Press. The historical, descriptive, and analytical methods are used in the entire research. This work finds out that the Hui Muslims during the Republic of China have responded proactively to the social and political changes in the Chinese society to advance the cause of Islamic *Da'wah*. By adapting to the environment and using the advanced available technology, it indicates their use of *Hikmah* (wisdom) in conducting the work of Islamic *Da'wah*.

Key words: Hui Muslims, Islamic Revival Movement, Islamic *Da'wah*, Islamic Press, Republic of China.

Introduction

In the recent years, there has been a growing anti-Islam and Muslim sentiment in the People's Republic of China (PROC). Outright hostility towards Islam and Muslims has increased magnificently especially on two of the most popular Chinese social media platforms: *xinlang weibo* (sina micro-blogging) and *weixin* (WeChat).³ The most worrisome, however, is a change of political attitude and policy towards Islam and Muslims in China. Multicultural tolerance and religious freedom, which Muslims in China had enjoyed for almost thirty years after China's Culture Revolution (1966-1976) has been replaced by new sinicization policy. A big

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³ Ma Haiyun, "The anti-Islamic movement in China". <<https://www.hudson.org/research/15095-the-anti-islamic-movement-in-china>> (accessed on July 4, 2021).

number of Islamic schools have been closed,⁴ many mosques are merged, and some mosques have been changed for other purposes.⁵ The most recent and typical example under this policy is hundreds of thousands of mosques' Arab doom style roofs have been demolished and changed to Chinese temple style in so called Islam sinicization campaign.⁶



Figure 1 The Hui mosques in China are forced to change Arab Islamic style of architectures to traditional Chinese style

Under such circumstances, the Hui – China's biggest Muslim ethnic group, is facing great challenge to maintain its Islamic way of life and preserve its Muslim identity. Indeed, this research paper is part of a systematic study on Hui Muslims' methodology of Islamic *Da'wah* prior to PROC. The purpose of the study is to explore the suitable methodology of Islamic *Da'wah* to cope with the current situation in PROC through examining and analyzing methodologies of Islamic *Da'wah* employed by the Hui Muslims during the Republic of China (1912-1949). The flourishing of Islamic Press, which includes Islamic newspapers and journals, is one of the most important characteristics of Islamic revival movement during the Republic of China. Most of studies on the Hui Muslim Islamic Press in Republican Era are done by Chinese scholars.

The Hui Muslim's publication efforts during Republic of China did not get much attention from western scholars. They were mentioned only briefly in some English literatures. The earliest such attempt was made by Marshall Broomhall who presented a brief introduction to one of the earliest the Hui Muslim magazines - Awakening the Hui (Xin Hui Pian) in his

⁴ Mimi Lau, "Chinese Arabic school to close as areas with Muslim populations are urged to study the Xinjiang way", <<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/>> (accessed on Dec 24, 2018).

⁵ Linxia huangniwan cun hebing qingzhensi, gajian fuping chejian he wenhua huodongshi [Huangniwan village in Linxia: Merge two mosques and change One to charity workshop and cultural activity room], <<http://www.lxgbtv.com/2016hhsyaowen/36023.html>> (accessed on Sep 22, 2021).

⁶ Bai Shengyi, "New mosque destroyed for being 'too Arabic'", <<https://bitterwinter.org/videos-new-mosque-destroyed-for-being-too-arabic/>> (accessed on Sep 22, 2021).



book Islam in China – a Neglected problem.⁷ Most of the studies on Hui Muslims' Islamic Press in the Republican Era are done by Chinese scholars. However, in Chinese literature, Hui Muslims' effort to revive Islam and its teachings as well as preserve their Muslim identity during the Republic of China is considered as Hui people's new cultural movement, a term coined by a famous non-Muslim Chinese historian Gu Jiegang.⁸ Consequently, all newspapers and journals published by Hui Muslims during this period are referred to as Hui people's press (huizu baokan); rather than the Hui Islamic Press.

According to researchers' observation, there is only one article written by Lei Xiaojing published in 1990 when another Islamic revival movement was taking place in PRC after catastrophic Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), uses the term Islamic Press (yisilanjiao baokan).⁹ In her study Lei Xiaojing analyses the general content of the Hui and Islamic newspapers and journals in Republican era. She finds out that the most common theme of all newspapers and journals published by the Hui Muslims in the Republic of China is Islamic revivalism. According to her, most of the Hui Islamic newspapers and journals during this period aimed at propagating Islamic doctrines, promoting the new type of Islamic education, reporting the latest information about the Hui communities, establishing, and boosting the relationship among the Hui communities, etc. For Lei, the general content of the Islamic newspapers and journals published during the Republican Era was on Islamic revivalism, which was the common theme used by Hui Muslims for the purpose of Islamic *Da'wah*.

Jin Jun investigates the factors, which led to the rise and development of the Hui Muslims' Islamic Press in the Republic of China.¹⁰ He argues that Hui's new cultural movement and the increasing Islamic religious activities are two of the internal factors and China's national survival crisis is one of the external factors. Another writer, Lei Xiaojing, analyses in his work the general content of the Hui and Islamic newspapers and journals in Republican Era. She finds out that the most common theme of all newspapers and journals published by the Hui Muslims in the Republic of China is Islamic revivalism.¹¹

Some scholars focus on specific journals published by the Hui Muslims during this time. Masumi's study on patriotism and nationalism as shown in Yue Hua (moon light) journal, which is the most influential and longest lasting journal of the Hui society in Republican period, reveals the role of this journal in introducing the Islamic revival and Islamic reformism in the

⁷ Broomhall, Marshall B.A. *Islam in China: a neglected problem*, (London: Darf Publishers Limited, 1987).

⁸ Gu Jiegang, "Huizhao wenhua yundong [Islamic cultural movement]" In: Li Xinhua and Feng Jinyuan (ed.) *Zhongguo yisilanjiaoshi cankaoziliao xuanbian* [Selected reference materials on the history of Islam in China](pp.912-915), (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1985).

⁹ Lei Xiaojin, "Zhongguo jinxiandai huizu yisilanjiao baokan de jueqi" [The rise of Hui and Islamic newspapers in modern time], *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 1, 1997, pp. 16-25.

¹⁰ Jin Jun, "shilun minguo chuqi huizu baokan fazhan de neiwai yuanyin"[Discussion about the internal and external reasons for the development of the Hui press in Republic of China]. *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 3, 1998, pp.77-81.

¹¹ Lei Xiaojin, "Zhongguo jinxiandai huizu yisilanjiao baokan de jueqi" [The rise of Hui and Islamic newspapers in modern time]. *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 1, 1997, pp. 16-25.



Middle East to the Hui society in China.¹² Li Xiwen writes an introduction to Qingzhen Xueli Yizhu (Journal of Islamic Studies and Translations), launched by Chinese Islamic Mutual Progress Association, is the most important journal of the Hui Muslim organization in the Republic of China.¹³ Other scholars focus on the specific issue discussed by the Hui Muslim journals in Republican period. For example, Liu Li discusses the marriage issues studied on the Hui Muslim journals.¹⁴ Zhong Yinmei explores the reports on Islamic world by the Hui Muslim journals.¹⁵ It is observed by the researchers, the focus of these studies has been on the aims and roles of the Islamic Press. They have failed to study its purpose, which is clearly stated on the first issue of Islamic newspapers and journals, that is to revive Islam and its teachings among the Hui Muslims in China.

Therefore, this study employs historical, descriptive, and analytical research methods to explore the very purpose of Islamic Press. This study starts with a brief introduction about Hui Muslim ethnic group, and then it continues with the social and political background of the Islamic revival movement in the Republic of China. In addition, the methods used by Hui Muslims in Islamic *Da'wah* are presented in the light of two examples from the Islamic Press during the Era of the Republic of China.

Who are Hui Muslims?

Hui is one of the major minority ethnic groups and the largest Muslim group in the People's Republic of China (PROC). According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, the total Muslim population was more than 23 million¹⁶ by 2010 and Hui Muslims alone were about 10.58 million, which accounts for nearly 46% of the total Muslim population in China.

The general view among the historians regarding the origin of the Hui Muslims in China is that the Hui people are the descendants of ancient Arab and Persian Muslim merchants who

¹² Matsumoto Masumi, *Rationalizing patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The impact of the Middle East on the Yue Hua journal*. In Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Hisao Komatsu, Yasushi Kosugi. (eds.), *Intellectuals in the modern Islamic world: transmission, transformation, communication* (pp.117-142), (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹³ Li Xiwen, "qingzhen xuelie yizhu jianjie" [Introduction to journal of Islamic studies and translations], *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2000, pp. 98-99.

¹⁴ Liu Li, "minguo shiqi huizu baokan guanyu hunyin wenti de taolun"[The discussion about the marriage on the Hui press in Republic of China], *Journal of Beifang University of Nationalities*, No. 6, 2013, pp. 33-36.

¹⁵ Zhong Yinmei, "huizu zhishifenzi yanzhong de guojiyisilan shijie"[The international Islamic world in the eyes of the Hui intellectuals]. *Social Science in Ningxia*, No.2,2017. pp.160-164.

¹⁶ This is an official figure. However, this figure is very much questionable. Contemporary scholars have very different opinions about the total population of Muslims in China. According to Syed Khalil Chisti, the total Muslim population in China had already reached 115 million in 1979. Yusuf Chang made a convincing argument about unreliability of Chinese government's official figure. He estimates that the total Muslim population in China is about 40 million by 1982. However, all scholars agree that the accurate figure of Chinese Muslims' population, especially the Hui Muslim, is still a myth. See: Chisti, Syed Khalil, "Muslim population of mainland China: An estimate", *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol, 1, No. 2, (1979/1980), pp. 75-85; Yusuf Chang, "The Hui (Muslim) minority In China: An historical overview", *Journal of Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1987, pp. 62-78; Pillsbury, Barbara L.K., "The Muslim population of China: Clarifying the questions of size and ethnicity", *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1981), pp. 35-58; and, *The Population of nationalities*, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/pcsj/rkpc/6rp/html/A0201.htm>, (accessed on September 5, 2021).



came to China through ancient overland and maritime Silk Road during the Tang-Song dynasties (618-1279 AD), and the war captives from Central Asia and Middle East transported to China by Mongol army in 13th century.¹⁷ The Hui Muslims were considered as foreign guests (*fanke*) during the Tang-Song Era. Their identity gradually evolved until they became full Chinese citizens and formed a distinctive ethnic group – the Hui, among other ethnic groups in China officially recognized by China's government in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties.¹⁸

Immersed in an environment where more than 90% of the total population is of the Han Chinese dominated by Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, the Hui Muslims have undertaken great pressures to resist cultural assimilation, social and political discrimination, and suppression. Responding to the declination of Islam and its teachings among the Hui Muslim community, the Hui Muslim *Da'wah* practitioners including the Hui intellectuals and Islamic scholars launched waves of Islamic revival movements to keep the Hui's Islamic identity alive. Two Islamic revival movements are the most important in Islamic history in China. The first started in the late Ming Dynasty and continued till the early Qing Dynasty, the second which is the focus of this study took place during the Republic of China.

Social and Political Background of Islamic Revival Movement

After almost three centuries, the Manchu Qing finally collapsed because of the Chinese nationalism movement. The Republic of China was established by revolutionaries led by Song Yat-Sen in 1911. However, the early Republic was unable to overcome the infighting between political and military factions. From the years 1916 to 1928, China's Warlord Era, competing military cliques supported by western powers like U.K., France, Germany as well as Japan, ruled a fragmented country by exercising power within their respective fiefs.¹⁹ A group of the Hui Muslim warlords emerged from the local elite to establish power over strategic areas such as Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai, building political leverage for the Hui Muslims. Non-Muslim warlords found it advantageous to team up with the local Hui Muslim leaders. By the end of the tumultuous Warlord Era, the Hui Muslims were a group of increasing strategic importance to the state.

Since the late Qing Dynasty till the end of Sino-Japanese war, foreign imperialism became the biggest threat of the very survival of China as an independent country. China's sovereignty and territorial rights were severely compromised. China was in fact under partial or semi colonization. Especially during the Sino-Japanese war, when vast territories of China were occupied by Japanese, millions of Chinese people were directly under Japanese rule, China was at the edge of total colonization by Japan. During the Sino-Japanese war, to encourage unrest and possible secession, Japanese agents emphasized ethnic differences among the peoples living in the Chinese state. Shortly after the establishment of the colonial state of

¹⁷ Huizu Jianshi Bianxiezu, *Huizu jianshi*, (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1978), p. 1.

¹⁸ Fu Tongxian, *History of Islam in China*, (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 2000), p. 54.

¹⁹ Hsi-hseng Chi, *The Chinese warlord system: 1916 to 1928*, (Washington: Center For Research In Social System, 1969), p. 20.



Manzhouguo (Manchuria) in Japanese-occupied northeast China in 1931, Japan founded Muslim associations that employed local Muslim leaders who were willing to cooperate in carrying out Japanese policies.²⁰ In the early 1930s, the Japanese army also began dropping propaganda leaflets from airplanes announcing its support for the creation of an independent Muslim state throughout Xinjiang and the Gansu corridor. This new Muslim country would be called *Huihuiguo* (The Hui State).²¹

The threats of imperialism and secessionism led to a change in the rhetoric of the Chinese nationalists from a Han-centered nationalist slogan, “*quchu dalu, fuwo zhonghua*” (Expel Tatar, restore the Chinese nation) to one emphasizing the equality of all ethnic groups, “*wuzu gonghe*” (The republic of five races), regardless of their religious, cultural, and ideological differences.²² Revolutionaries led by Song Yat-Sen declared that “China was the Republic of five *minzu* (nationality or race),” namely Han (Chinese), Hui (Muslims), Meng (Mongol), Man (Manchu) and Zang (Tibetan). All five *minzu* were in one single family, and all were equal.²³ After the victory in overthrowing the Manchu Qing, the Nanjing Provisional Government of the Republic of China headed by Song Yat-Sen, framed the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China in 1912. The constitution stated that “the people of the Republic of China are no different in race, class and religion before the law, all are equal” “people have the right of freedom of religion”.²⁴ For the first time in China’s history, the racial equality and freedom of religion were formally declared by Chinese government and written in the country’s constitution.

The Chinese nationalist movements and the nation-building project initiated by the nationalist government of the Republic provided a platform and good opportunities for Hui intellectuals and elites to actively participate in political arena of the Republic. During the Republican period, the Hui Muslims served extensively in the National Revolutionary Army and reached positions of importance, like General Bai Chongxi who became Defense Minister of the Republic of China. In the Northwest of China, Qinghai, Ningxia and part of Gansu province were controlled by four Hui Muslim military strongmen known as *xibei sima* (Four Ma of the Northwest).²⁵ The Nationalist parliament had many Hui Muslim members.²⁶ During the Sino-Japanese war, many Hui generals and soldiers fought fearlessly in the battles against the Japanese. Some became the national heroes, such as Yang Jinyu, Ma Benzai etc.²⁷

²⁰ Qiu Shusen (ed.), *The history of China’s Hui* (Zhongguo Huizu Shi), (Yinchuan: Ningxia People’s Press, 2012), p. 650.

²¹ Selcuk Esenbel, «Japan’s global claim to Asia and the world of Islam, 1900–1945», *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 4 (October 2004), pp. 1140-1170.

²² Wang Hui, *China’s twentieth century: revolution, retreat, and the road to equality*, (Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2016), p. 38.

²³ Yu Zhengui, *China’s successive governments and Islam* (zhongguo lidai zhengquan yu yisilanjiao), (Yinchuan: Ningxia People’s Press, 2012), p. 230.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ The famous Hui generals in anti-Japanese war, <<http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/whyj/mmxm/zmr/201412/14-7574.html>> (accessed on 3 March 2020).



In order to win over the Hui Muslims, the Nationalist government showed respect and support to Islam and Muslims. Song Yat-Sen and his successor Jiang Jieshi attended the conferences organized by the Hui Muslims appreciating Islam and Muslims' contribution to China, admitting the Hui Muslims' important role in nation building and calling for the Hui Muslims' support.²⁸ In January 1939 with the support of the nationalist government China Islamic National Salvation Association (Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo Xiehui) was established. Bai Chongxi, the Defense Minister of the Republic, a Hui Muslim himself, became the president. It was the first national Hui Muslim organization under the government and received financial support from the Ministry of Finance and Central Committee of the Nationalist Party.²⁹ During the Sino-Japanese war, the Military Committee of Nationalist Party put special notice in every mosque forbidding soldiers to stay inside the mosque, requesting soldiers to respect Islamic religion and improve the relationship with Muslims.³⁰

Prior to Republic of China, the Hui Muslims in China had never conducted Islamic *Da'wah* openly and rarely to non-Muslims due to the hostile social and political environment. Encouraged by the first democratic constitution which declared freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of association for all people in the Republic of China, and social-political conditions which were generally favorable for the development of Islam, the Hui Muslim *Da'wah* practitioners including intellectuals and Islamic scholars launched Islamic revival movement. Numerous Islamic associations were established, nearly three hundred newspapers and journals were published by the Hui Muslims during the Republican period.³¹ The new types of Islamic schools were founded all over China.³² Equipped with modern technology, Islamic *Da'wah* in China took a new form and was conducted on an unprecedented scale. For the first time in Islamic history in China, the Hui Muslims started to make Islamic *Da'wah* openly to both Muslims and Non-Muslims. Islamic Press as one of the major methods of Islamic *Da'wah* employed by the Hui Muslims played a very important role in Islamic revival movement during the Republic of China.

Islamic Press

The first modern newspaper launched by the Hui Muslim intellectuals appeared at the end of the Qing Dynasty, only a few years before the Republic of China was established. In 1906 Din Baochen, a Hui Muslim doctor published the newspaper The True Patriot Newspaper (zhengzong aiguo bao) in Beijing China.³³ Two years later, a group of the Hui Muslim students studying in Tokyo published the first quarterly magazine Awakening the Hui (xinghuipian) in

²⁸ Tongxian, *History of Islam in China*, p. 122.

²⁹ Zhengui, *China's successive governments and Islam* (zhongguo lidai zhengquan yu yisilanjiao), p. 253.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

³¹ Ma Bozhong, "The statistics table of China Muslim newspapers and journals during the Republican period" (minguo shiqi huizu baokan tongjibiao), *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 4, (2008), pp. 48-63.

³² Shusen (ed.), *Zhongguo Huizu shi* [The history of China's Hui], p. 652.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 655.

1908.³⁴ The magazine was to serve as mouthpiece of a new organization, The Islamic Educational Association of Chinese Students in Tokyo (liudong qingzhen jiaoyu hui). On its cover the magazine bore two titles: the first was in Chinese, Xing Hui Pian (Awakening the Hui); the second was in Arabic *Istiqaz al-Islam* (Awakening of Islam). Under the Arabic title, there was written in Arabic: *La ilaha illallah muhammadur rasulullah* (There is no God except Allah, Muhammad is Allah's Messenger).

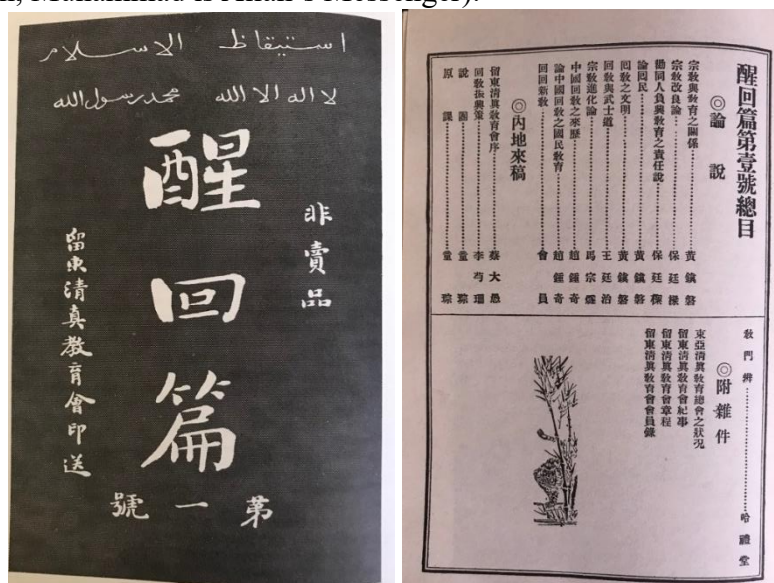


Figure 2. Awakening The Hui (xinghui pian) magzin (Pictures taken from *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem* by Marshall Broomhall)

This magazine is not for sale as printed on the cover page but is intended for distribution among the Hui Muslims in China. The content table of the first volume reads as follows.³⁵

1. The relation between religion and education.
2. Religious reform.
3. Exhortation to responsibility of educational revival.
4. Concerning the Hui.
5. Islamic civilization.
6. Islam and Bushido.
7. Religious evolution.
8. The origin of Islam in China.
9. Islamic education in China.
10. The new section of Islam in China.
11. Strategy of Islamic revival.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Broomhall, Marshall B.A. *Islam in China: a neglected problem*, (London: Darf Publishers Limited. 1987), pp. 282-284.



The articles of the magazine reflected Islamic revivalist thought among the Hui Muslim students in Tokyo, which started gaining its influence and popularity among the Hui Muslims at the end of the Qing Dynasty till the Republic of China. The True Patriot Newspaper and Awakening the Hui magazine show that the Hui Muslims had realized the importance of the mass media and earnest efforts were made to utilize the press for purposes of Islamic dawah. From the tone of the articles printed it was evident that the Muslim communities throughout China were feeling the general awakening which was affecting both the Hui ethnic group and China at large.

According to Ma Bozhong, there were 270 newspapers and journals published by the Hui Muslims during the Republic period.³⁶ Though these newspapers and journals have different focuses and emphases, the most common and distinct theme of all newspapers and journals by the Hui Muslims is Islamic revivalism.³⁷ Explaining and propagating Islamic teachings and improving Islamic education were two of the major aims of all the Hui Muslim newspapers and journals in the Republic. Other aims include religious reform, promoting new type of Islamic education, reporting the news about the Hui Muslims in different region and building up the contacts and connections among the Hui Muslim communities etc..³⁸ A large volume of articles and research papers regarding Islamic theology, Islamic *Sharia* and *Fiqh* were published. Many newspapers set up special column for Qur'anic studies. Important research papers about the Hui and Islamic civilization and development were published in serial in several volumes. The studies about the current situation and history of the mosques and the Hui communities in different regions were conducted and reported. Other important issues and topics such as fasting, the Hui Muslim youth, women and children, the famous Hui Muslim personalities and Islamic scholars were discussed in a special column or special issue.³⁹ Apart from focusing on Muslims and Islam in China, almost all newspapers and journals by the Hui Muslims had a special column providing information about Muslims and Islam in other Islamic countries such as Islam In and Outside China, News From Other Countries, News About Islam etc..⁴⁰ It is very interesting that many newspapers and journals published by the Hui Muslims bear two titles, one in Chinese and another one in Arabic. Some journals even had three, Chinese, Arabic and English.

³⁶ Bozhong, "Minguo shiqi huizu baokan tongjibiao" [The statistics table of China Muslim newspapers and journals during the Republican period], p. 48.

³⁷ Xiaojin, "Zhongguo jinxindai huizu yisilanjiào baokan de jueqi" [The rise of Hui and Islamic newspapers in modern time], pp. 16-25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ding Mingjun, "The characteristics of the times in modern Hui newspapers and journals" (jindai huizu baokan de shidai tezhen), *Huizu Yanjiu*, No. 1, (2017), pp. 81-89.

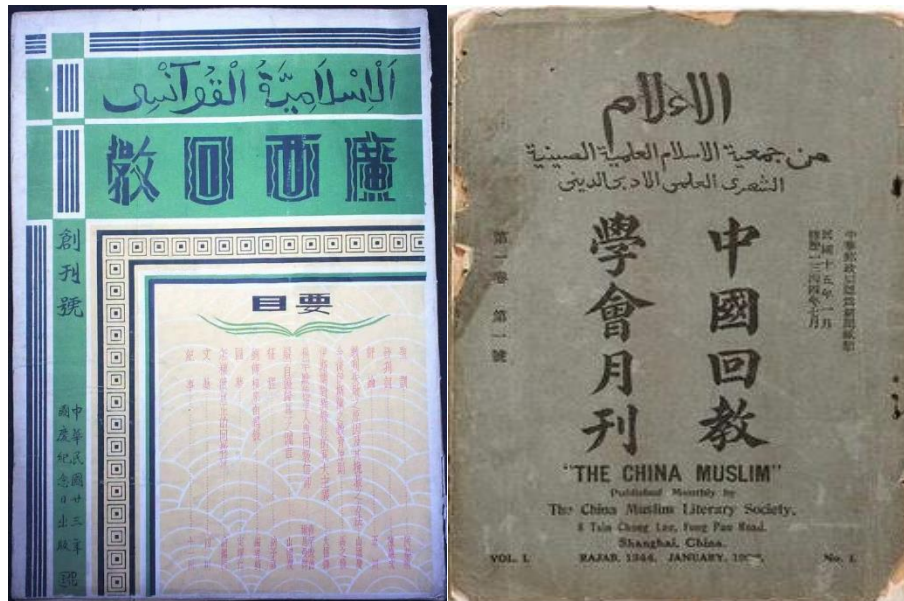


Figure 3. Cover of Islamic journals during the Republic of China.

Besides Islamic content, the Hui newspapers and journals also publish news and articles about the politics and political activities in China. For example, after Sino-Japanese war started, all the newspapers and journals by the Hui Muslims called on the Hui Muslims to stand together with the National government to fight against the Japanese.⁴¹ It is important to note that the publication of almost all the Hui newspapers and journals during the Republic of China period were run by Ahongs⁴² and Islamic scholars. Most of chief editors and writers of these newspapers and journals are Ahongs and Islamic scholars. Among all the Hui newspapers and journals, Qingzhen Duobao (Islamic Alarm Newspaper) and Yue Hua (moon light) journal are two the most important with the longest publication duration.

Qingzhen Duobao (Islamic Alarm Newspaper)

It is one of the famous Hui Islamic newspapers published during the Republic of China. Qingzhen Duobao was launched by China Islamic Mutual Progress Association Yunnan branch in February 1929.⁴³ Regarding the name of the newspaper, the editor explained that “our Islamic religion, just like a big muduo (wooden alarm) in the world”... “now the heavenly path is not clear to all, if we don’t make urgent effort, how can we awaken our people in the dream

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Ahong is from a Persian word Akund, means *Imam* (Islamic scholar).

⁴³ Ma Yunliang, *20 shiji qianban yunnan huizu de xinwenhua yundong* [The New Cultural Movement of Yunnan Hui Muslim In The Early 20th Century]. <<http://www.zghzxw.com/content-15-3438-1.html>> (accessed on August 9, 2021).

and guide them to the right path?... as such we name our newspaper as Islamic Alarm” ... “so that the truth can be clarified, the law of God is established, alarm and awaken our people, enjoin the good and forbid the evil”.⁴⁴ The aims of the newspaper were propagating Islamic teachings, appealing for change the Hui Muslims' bad customs and habits, studying and comparing the teachings of different religions, introducing the new culture of Islamic world, discussing the issues of Islamic education in China, calling for unity between the Hui and the Han, reducing the estrangements between the two ethnic groups.⁴⁵

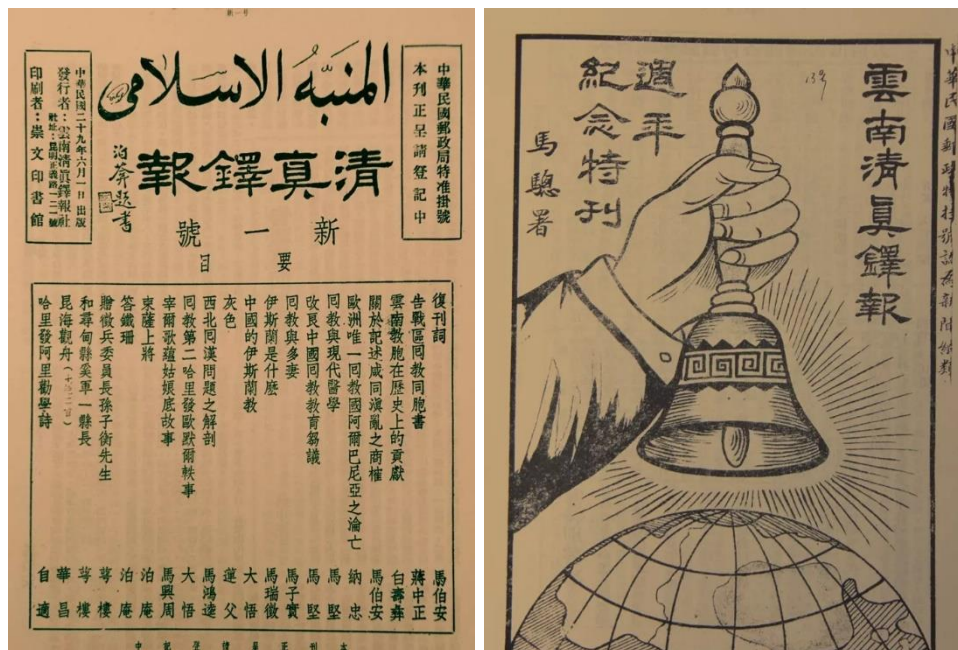


Figure 4. *Qingzhen Duobao* (Islamic Alarm Newspaper)

The publication of Qingzhen Duobao started from 1929 and stopped in 1948 with some interruptions in between due to financial and political reasons.⁴⁶ The distinguished Hui Islamic scholars such as Na Zhong, Ma Jian, Bai Shouyi etc. served successively as the chief editors of Qingzhen Duobao.⁴⁷ Other editors and writers were Ahongs or Hui scholars from Yunnan China.

⁴⁴ *Qingzhen Duobao*. <<https://baike.baidu.com/item/清真真報>>, and *Qingzhen Duobao*. <http://www.360doc.com/content/18/1009/16/58187616_793308560.shtml>, (accessed on 1 May 2020).

⁴⁵ Wang Biyun, “Qingzhen duobao yanjiu” [Research on qingzhen duobao], Master Thesis, (College of History and Culture of Northwest Normal University, 2018), p. 13.

⁴⁶ Mingjun, “The characteristics of the times in modern Hui newspapers and journals” (jindai huizu baokan de shidai tezheng), p. 86.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.



Wang Biyun analyzed 72 volumes of Qingzhen Duobao and categorized the contents of Qingzhen Duobao into 8 categories:⁴⁸

1. Reports on affairs of China Islamic Mutual Progress Association Yunnan branch and China Islamic National Salvation Association Yunnan branch.
2. Studies about Islamic doctrines, Chinese translation of Islamic text.
3. Islamic history and the famous Hui Muslim personalities in Yunnan.
4. Islamic educational reform.
5. Reports on the Hui Muslims' activities in Anti-Japanese war.
6. Reports on oversea Muslim affairs and activities.
7. About the development of Qingzhen Duobao.
8. Others, including novels, poems, etc.

Qingzhen Duobao published lots of articles covering four aspects of Islam, i.e. five pillars of Islam, Islamic way of human life, Islamic education and Islamic marriage.⁴⁹ Articles related with Islamic history introduced the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his great Companions.⁵⁰ Islamic education is another focus of Qingzhen Duobao. Apart from reporting about Islamic schools and mosques in Yunnan and other places in China, Qingzhen Duobao gave special coverage about the Hui Muslim students studying overseas.⁵¹

In 1930, one year after Qingzhen Duobao was launched, the circulation of the newspaper was about 400-500 copies. In 1948, the circulation had reached to more than 2000 copies.⁵² Qingzhen Duobao was mainly distributed in China, but a small number of copies were also sent to overseas such as India, Egypt, Germany, and Japan, etc.⁵³ In order to realize its aim of promoting Islamic doctrines, Qingzhen Duobao sent free copies to mosques since the first day.⁵⁴

Yue Hua (The Moon Light)

The most famous Hui Muslim journal during the Republic period is Yue Hua (The Moon Light). Yue Hua was published by Beipin Chengda Teacher's Academy – the most famous Islamic school during the Republic of China. Yue Hua started as a newspaper. On its first issue dated November 5, 1929, the editor introduced the aims of Yue Hua journal as follows:⁵⁵

1. to carry out Islamic doctrines consistent with modern trends,
2. to introduce news about Muslims in other parts of the world,

⁴⁸ Biyun, Qingzhen duobao yanjiu [Research on qingzhen duobao], pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-41.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Yue Hua (The Moon Light) Journal*, No.1, 1929.

3. to increase the knowledge of Muslims in China and improve their status,
4. to explain the misunderstandings between the new and old Muslim sects,
5. to strengthen the sense of country among Muslims in China, and
6. to promote education and a better livelihood for Muslims in China.

Starting from the third volume in 1931, Yue Hua newspaper changed to magazine and started bearing three titles, Chinese, Arabic and English.



Figure 4.4 Yue Hua (The Moon Light) Journal

From 1929 till 1948, the publication of Yue Hua lasted for nearly 20 years, the longest publishing time among all Hui newspapers and journals during the Republic period. It was also the most influential and the most circulated journal published by the Hui Muslims. At its peak, it sold more than ten thousand copies.⁵⁶ Starting from the third volume Yue Hua started reaching out to overseas readers, it circulated in many foreign countries such as Southeast Asian countries, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, UK, France, and USA, etc.⁵⁷ Twenty-two foreign Islamic journals in various languages, such as English, German, Arabic, Malay, and Turkish, made exchanges with Yue Hua.⁵⁸

The editors and writers of Yue Hua were famous Ahongs and the Hui Muslim scholars at that time, such as Ma Songting Ahong, the head of Chengda Teacher's Academy; Wang Jinzhai Ahong, one of the four most famous Ahongs in the Republic of China; Ma Jian, professor and translator of Quran into Chinese language, Bai Shouyi and Jin Jitang, the famous Hui Muslim historians, etc..⁵⁹ The topics covered by Yue Hua include history of Islam and the

⁵⁶ Bai Gui and Liu Hongliu. "mingguo shiqi huizu baokan shehui duihua huodong de jiben moshi" [The basic mode of the Hui newspaper in the social dialogue movement during the Republic of China]. *China Muslim*, No. 2, (2010), pp. 29-33.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Masumi, "Rationalizing patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The impact of the Middle East on the Yue Hua journal", p. 127.

⁵⁹ Mingjun, "The characteristics of the times in modern Hui newspapers and journals", p. 86.



Hui Muslims in China, *Qur'anic Tafsir*, *Hadith*, Islamic *Sharia* and *Fiqh*, Islamic education, Chinese mosques and Muslim communities, Islam and Muslims in the rest of the world, etc. Matsumoto Masumi listed an outline of the contents of Yue Hua since 1931 as follows:⁶⁰

1. Commentary of *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, *Tafsir*.
2. Translation of Arabic and English books and criticism.
3. Critiques of religious questions in China, of Hui education, Hui organization, economy, current issues, etc.
4. Reevaluation of Hui history in China and discussions of its intermingling with Chinese culture.
5. Research on various mosques and Hui communities in Anhui, Guangxi, Chahar, Suiyuan, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, Shanxi, and Gansu.
6. Introduction of Muslim personalities from the whole world. This entailed an introduction to Islamic revivalist trends and current issues in Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkey, Syria, Algeria, India, Yugoslavia, and Iran.
7. Literature.

Apart from articles by Chinese writers, Yue Hua also published many articles and books by prominent foreign Islamic scholars mainly from Egypt. Yue Hua regularly published articles on a variety of topics from the *Al-Manār* and *Al-Fath*, the two famous journals in Egypt translated by the Hui Muslim students studying in Egypt.⁶¹ In 1933, *Risālah al-Tawhīd* by Muhammad Abuduh was translated into Chinese by Ma Jian and serialized on Yue Hua till the end of 1934. Another Azhari graduate Pang Shiqian translated The History of Islamic Law by Professor Muhammad Khuzuli of the University of Egypt and began to serialize in 1933.⁶²

Conclusion

The social and political condition in the Republic of China provided golden opportunity for Islamic revival movement. The Hui Muslims responded proactively to the social and political changes in the society to advance the cause of Islamic *Da'wah*. Taking the advantage of modern mass communication technology, the Hui Muslim *Da'wah* practitioners utilized Islamic Press including newspapers and journals to make Islamic *Da'wah* openly to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The thriving Islamic Press during this period reflects four important consciousness of the Hui Muslim *Da'wah* practitioners, i.e., religious, political, transnational Muslim Ummatic and technological consciousness. This may provide important insight to the Hui Muslim *Da'wah* practitioners to cope with current situations in China.

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60 Masumi, "Rationalizing patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The impact of the Middle East on the Yue Hua journal", p 127.

61 Benite, Zvi Ben-Dor. *Taking 'Abduh to China: Chinese-Egyptian intellectual contact in the early twentieth century*. In James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (ed.) *Global Muslims in the age of steam and print* (249-267). University of California Press, 2014.p 253.

62 Masumi, "Rationalizing patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The impact of the Middle East on the Yue Hua journal", p. 131.



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