

Na Homestead graveyard attached to mosque within the confines of the village. Main tombstone belongs to Na Yongxiang (1906-1982). Hui Muslim at prayer with Ming dynasty mosque (c. 1522-1567) in background. Photo: Gladney

THREE

*Ethnoreligious Resurgence in
a Northwestern Sufi Community*

*The loathsome mask has fallen,
the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed,
but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless.
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself, just, gentle, wise,
but man.*

—Percy B. Shelley, Prometheus Unbound

Na Homestead (Najiahu), in Ningxia Hui autonomous region, is, in many respects, typical of other Hui Muslim communities throughout the northwest. A collection of adobe houses clustered around a central mosque, Na Homestead has been the site of an Islamic resurgence in recent years. As several visitors to other northwestern Muslim communities have noted, Islamic conservatism has become more pronounced among the Hui since 1979.¹ This rising radical, even fundamentalist, emphasis upon Islamic purity (*qing*) in Hui communities has caused concern among local government cadres.

In Ningxia Hui autonomous region, where over 1.2 million of China's Hui minority reside, local cadres and government researchers are alarmed about the possibility of an Islamic "revival" among Hui youth.² They are also questioning whether the private-responsibility system has engendered too much personal and religious freedom in rural

areas. Cadres are surprised to find that some Hui peasants hold the mistaken idea that the Party not only allows religious belief, but encourages it.³ In order to quell these rising concerns, studies by local academies of social sciences in Muslim areas are used to show that, while ethnic customs are maintained, religious belief is not necessarily strong.⁴ Reflecting traditional Chinese policy toward nationality religions, this approach clearly distinguishes between the minority itself and its religion. The policy often encourages the expression of traditional nationality customs and culture, while depicting religion as extraneous to ethnicity.⁵

In this chapter, I argue that Hui ethnic identity in the northwest is inseparably identified with an Islamic tradition handed down to them by their Muslim ancestors. It is more than an ethnic identity; it is ethnoreligious, in that Islam is intimately tied to the northwest Hui's self-understanding. Recent reemergence of the meaning of Islam and stress upon the requirements of a decidedly Islamic *qing zhen* lifestyle represent a return to northwestern Hui ethnoreligious roots. In this regard, an examination of Na Homestead discloses some of the expressions of this northwestern Hui ethnoreligious identity as well as its recent transformation in the midst of rapid socioeconomic change. A close analysis of salient Hui institutions, rituals, and texts reveals that a policy that seeks to make a clear distinction between religion and ethnicity is based on an inadequate understanding of Hui identity. The resurgence of Islamic practice and conservatism in Na Homestead, under recent liberalized policies, illustrates the importance of Islam in this context. The interaction of Na ethnic identity with recently liberalized government policies has also led to important changes in the expression of that identity and in the reformulation of local nationality policies.

A FUNDAMENTALIST REVIVAL IN NA HOMESTEAD?

Na Homestead is part of Yongning county, Yang He township, 15 km. south of Yinchuan city in central Ningxia.⁶ Traveling south on the main north-south highway linking Yinchuan with Wuzhong city and southern Ningxia, one finds a dirt road leading off to Na Homestead at the main intersection of the Yongning county seat. Separated from the

intersection by 3 km. of fields, Na Homestead is a somewhat isolated, formerly walled community of mud houses clustered around a central mosque (*qing zhen si*). The sloping eaves of the mosque rising up above the flat-roofed houses are visible from the road, providing a striking visual contrast with other surrounding communities.

This compact collection of households comprises 9 teams that are almost 100 percent Hui, a rarity in central and northern Ningxia, where Hui are thinly distributed among the majority Han population (see Table 5). Yongning county is only 12.9 percent Hui, a relatively small minority in contrast to neighboring Lingwu county in the southeast, which is 47 percent Hui, and southern Jingyuan county, which is 97 percent Hui (the highest concentration of Hui in one county in China, see Map 2).

Just north of the all-Hui community in Na Homestead, separated by about 2 km. of fields, is another collection of households belonging to the village administratively and containing 2 teams (numbers 1 and 11) of mixed Han and Hui. All 22 households (264 people) of the Han families belonging to Na Homestead are located in this smaller community, separate from the 9 all-Hui teams. Based on 1984 statistics, Na Homestead comprises 767 households, with a total population of 3,871. Hui households number 745, amounting to more than 95 percent of the population. Over 60 percent of the Hui in the village are surnamed Na.

RELIGIOUS REVITALIZATION IN NA HOMESTEAD. I first became aware of changing Hui-Han social dynamics in the village from a discussion with one of the Han villagers in Team 1. She explained:

Since 1979, we have had less and less social contact with the Hui in the other teams. There are no problems between us, but the Hui are more devout (*qian-cheng*) now and less willing to come to our homes and visit or borrow tools. We raise pigs in our yards and eat pork, so they are afraid it will influence their religion (*yingxiang tamende jiaomen*).

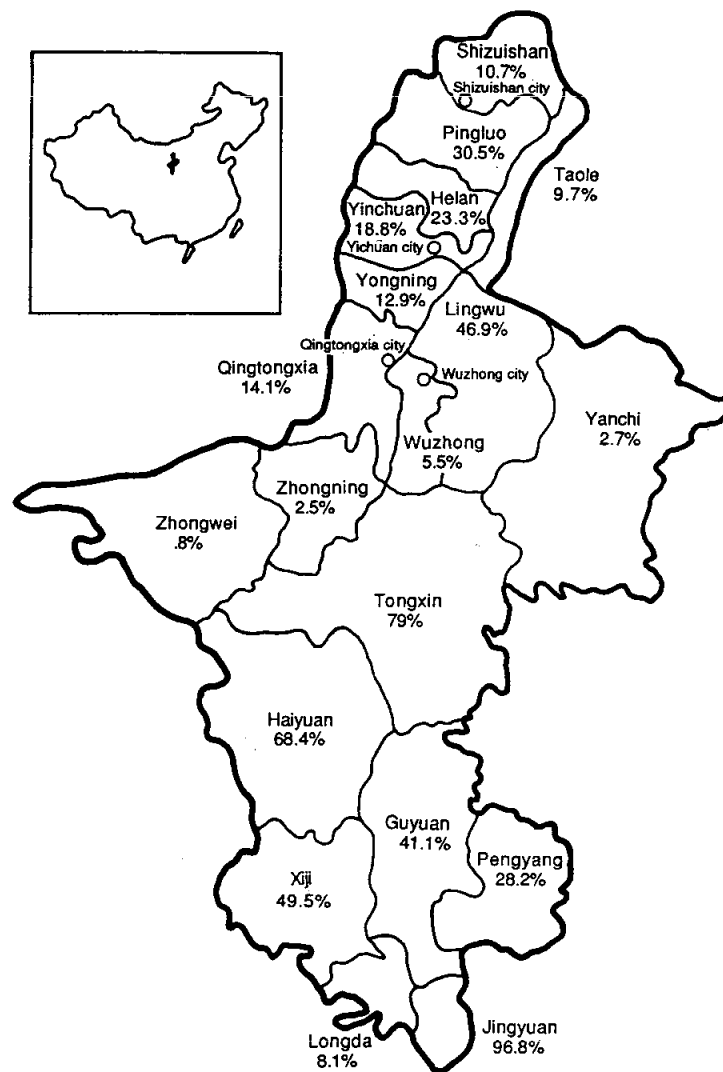
Like many conservative northwest Hui, most Na villagers have become more conscientious about Islamic purity (*qing*) through attention to dietary restrictions. In order to preserve one's *qing zhen* lifestyle, conservative Hui who do visit Han homes accept, at the most, sunflower seeds or

TABLE 5 Population of the Hui Nationality in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region by City and County, 1983

County or City	Total Population	Hui Population	Percent of Hui in County Population	Percent of Regional Hui Population in County
Jingyuan	82,464	79,823	96.8	6.3
Tongxin	218,967	172,906	79.0	13.5
Haiyuan	249,672	170,732	68.4	13.4
Xiji	316,298	156,477	49.5	12.3
Lingwu	184,289	86,424	47.0	6.8
Guyuan	377,634	154,875	41.0	12.0
Pingluo	234,375	71,511	30.5	5.6
Pengyang	186,334	52,636	28.3	4.1
Helan	159,953	37,337	23.3	2.9
Yinchuan	371,250	69,636	18.8	5.5
Qingtongxia	188,362	26,510	14.1	2.1
Yongning	156,504	20,282	13.0	1.6
Shizuishan	301,957	32,422	10.8	2.5
Taole	19,017	1,842	9.7	0.1
Longde	162,572	13,233	8.1	1.0
Wuzhong	217,704	12,081	5.6	9.4
Yanchi	121,741	3,274	2.7	0.3
Zhongning	180,778	4,463	2.5	0.3
Zhongwei	251,329	1,924	.8	0.3
Total:	3,981,200	1,168,388	29.3	100.0

Source: 1983 Regional Census

fruit when offered by their host. When Han come to their homes, Hui offer them tea from a separate set of cups that the family itself does not use, lest the family *qing zhen* utensils become contaminated. Hui are also free to offer Han prepared dishes of lamb and beef, but the Han cannot reciprocate. Gradually this imbalance of obligation leads to less and less contact. Increased scrupulous attention to the culturally defined notions of Islamic purity—especially in a culture that traditionally



MAP 2 Distribution of the Hui Minority in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region by Percentage of County

places high priority on extending social courtesies—has increasingly limited Hui-Han social interaction. This is not surprising. Careful Hui attention to this tradition maintains the purity/impurity power reversal in which Han, who can never fully reciprocate Hui hospitality by offering them social prestations and offerings of food in return, are placed in an inferior power relation to the Hui. As Marcel Mauss has so eloquently described, “The thing given is not inert,”⁷ and Hui refusal to receive Han gifts places them in a position of moral superiority, though they may occupy a socially inferior and marginal position in the socioeconomic and ethnic context of Northwest China.

This rise in religious activity and conservatism in Na Homestead stands in stark contrast to the closed mosques and restricted religious behavior common elsewhere in China since the 1958 Religious System Reform Campaigns (*Zongjiao Zhidu Gaige*). Frequent Na-villager participation in mosque ritual is also noticeably different from the lack of popular participation in urban mosques in northern and southern China. In those areas—with the exception of holidays, where large turnouts of the Hui community are becoming common—mosques are generally frequented only by a few bearded old men sitting on benches and sunning themselves while awaiting the next call to prayer. Not so in Na Homestead.

The Hui of Na Homestead are associated with the Khufiyya brotherhood, a very popular Sufi order in Ningxia that developed from a branch of the Naqshbandiyya introduced through Central Asia in the seventeenth century (see Chapter 1). Yet Na villagers, like many Khufiyya in Ningxia, do not subscribe to the *menhuan* that venerate the descendants of Sufi saints. Hence, they resemble an isolated mosque-centered Gedimu community that maintains Sufi forms of ritual. Although they regard themselves as Khufiyya, Na villagers are not connected to the other Sufi Khufiyya networks extending throughout Northwest China. This is not unusual in northern Ningxia and other areas where the Khufiyya have become more decentralized. While they are thus not closely connected to other Khufiyya orders, their Sufi background continues to influence daily life and ritual.

On any weekday morning, at least 150 people kneel at prayer on the hard floor of the mosque an hour before dawn. One wintry morning,

I arose from my warm *kang* to the call for prayer (heard throughout the village) at 6:00 a.m. and walked over to the mosque. In this season, the ground is frozen and the temperature hovers around 13 to 14 degrees below zero centigrade. I was surprised to find the large prayer hall full of men when I arrived, illustrating that, though China was on one time zone, these villagers lived life according to a different clock. Many villagers prayed 5 times a day and followed the Islamic calendar, suggesting that the rhythm of their lives was much different than for the rest of China. As the service began, 2 or 3 stragglers came running up, hastily donning fleece-lined coats over their bare backs and removing their boots as they entered the prayer hall. They prayed in unison on the bare concrete floor for the duration of the 30–45 minute service, some of them kneeling upon lamb pelts or on small carpets purchased from a Zhejiang factory that makes the colorful rayon Islamic-style prayer mats sold throughout the northwest. Because of the sermon, the main prayer on Fridays (*zbuma ri*) generally lasts over an hour. This differed markedly from mosques in other parts of China where latecomers straggled in at the last minute, knowing they could always “make up prayers” (*buli*) later.

One official count of attendance on a Thursday morning in January 1985 recorded 141 worshipers, including 31 between 14 and 50 years of age.⁸ On Fridays, an attendance of up to 500 worshipers is not unusual (13 percent of the village), with an average of 100–200 praying at least once in the mosque during the week. On holidays, the whole village, including women and children, turns out. While some say that participation has not yet reached 1950 levels, this is perceived as a new peak (*gaofeng*) since 1949 of religious activity among the Hui.⁹ During the month of Ramadan in 1984, the mosque reported that one third of all households had at least one member who took part in the fast. I have also visited concentrated Hui areas such as Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture, Gansu province, and southern Ningxia where 100 percent of the villagers above the age of 12 (boys) or 9 (girls) fast. The level of participation in the fast among Na villagers is still considered rather high in a predominantly Han area.

Mosque income (*sifei*) derived from offerings (*nietie*) has also risen dramatically. According to the mosque’s own careful accounting records,

in the last 2 years it averaged over 20,000 yuan (\$6,700 US) annual income from offerings. Based on an outside study, over a 4-month period during 1984 and 1985, offerings of grain produce, goods, or money totaled 8,997.23 yuan (about \$3,000 US). An economic survey of expenditures of 113 Hui households in Na Homestead revealed that average giving to the mosque was 47 yuan per household, or 8.40 yuan per person in 1984.¹⁰ If this average is applied to the entire Hui community of the village, then the mosque's total income last year was well over 32,500 yuan (\$10,833 US). The money supports the staff of 7 ahong including 1 "teaching" or head ahong (*kaixue ahong* or *jiaozhang*), and 4 student ahong (*balifat* from *khalifa*, "successor," or *manla*, from *mullah*), and the daily upkeep of the mosque.¹¹ Offerings are given during the 3 main religious holidays and to individual ahong when they read the Quran at weddings, funerals, and naming ceremonies. Giving at funerals by the family to guests and to the mosque ranges from 100 to 1,000 yuan. As much as 2,500 yuan has been reported when the status of the deceased was extremely high.

On one holiday celebrated in Na Homestead, the "Prophet's Day" or "Muhammad's Birthday" (*Shengji*) on 7 December 1984, I witnessed offerings brought by children and adults—bags of flour or rice and fistfuls of money. A group of mosque officials dutifully registered each offering according to amount, name, and team number. Gifts totaled 3,000 kilograms of wheat, 2,500 kilograms of rice, and 300 yuan (\$100 US), equal to approximately 3,313 yuan (\$1,100 US). None of the donated money is required for the restoration of the mosque building (*qianliang*). The mosque has received over 90,000 yuan (\$30,000 US) from the State Nationalities Affairs Commission since it was identified as a national monument in 1981. Dating from the Ming dynasty's Jia Jing period (1522–1567), it is the oldest remaining mosque in Ningxia.¹²

Donations to the mosque come from a village considered fairly poor by neighboring village standards, with an average annual income of 300 yuan (about \$100 US) per household.¹³ Average per capita annual income in Yongning county for 1982 was substantially higher, 539 yuan according to the Population Census Office.¹⁴ Poor households (*pinkun hu*) occupy 2 percent of the village.¹⁵ Mosque income, however, does not necessarily reflect total giving per household. The mosque also

received income from outside the village, such as from the state or from other Muslim communities. A study of 17 households from 3 different villages belonging to different Islamic orders found that, out of an annual average income of 96.67 yuan, 8.96 yuan (9.26 percent) was given to religious concerns in 1980.¹⁶

THE ASCENDANCE OF QURANIC EDUCATION. A decrease in public-school enrollment, and an increase in children studying the Quran in private *madrassah* attached to local mosques is another phenomenon that concerns local cadres. This growing interest in pursuing religious education has not yet reached large proportions among the Hui in Na Homestead, since only 10 school-age children were not attending public school in 1985. Instead, they are studying the Quran at home privately. There are 4 officially permitted *manla* in the village. In more heavily populated Hui areas, however, this is becoming a more noticeable practice. In Guyuan county, Jiefangxiang (Liberation township), only 12 out of 104 school-age children in the village are attending school, and 27 of those not in school are studying the Quran in the mosque.

This trend has become even more pronounced in conservative Muslim areas such as Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture, in Gansu province, where Muslim minorities are 52.7 percent of the population.¹⁷ School enrollment has regularly decreased since 1978, from 77.2 percent to 66.6 percent in 1979, to 60 percent in 1980, to 57.3 percent in 1981, and to a low of 50 percent in 1982. In Hanfeng commune, a completely Han area, enrollment of children has reached as high as 93.9 percent; among girls it is 79 percent. In the neighboring mountainous Badan commune, an all-Muslim area, enrollment was 23.9 percent in 1982, with only 9.05 percent of girls enrolled. By the end of the school year, only 2.9 percent of the girls remained in school. This reflects the common practice of children attending school for the first few weeks of registration, but returning full time to the farm before completing the term.¹⁸

In a *China Daily* front-page article entitled "Keep rural girls in school," Liu Su,¹⁹ Vice-Governor of Gansu province, reported that, out of 157,300 school-aged children not in school in Gansu, 85 percent were girls. Children leave school for a variety of reasons, including the farm's

need for income-producing labor under the newly introduced responsibility system. Yet many Hui point to traditional Islamic views that have made them reluctant to send their children, especially daughters, to public schools.

When asked about such reluctance, Na Homestead parents expressed doubts about "the value of learning Chinese and mathematics." "It would be much more useful," I was told by one mother, "for our children to learn the Quran, Arabic, and Persian." If a child excelled, he or she might become a *manla*, and eventually perhaps an *ahong*. Their status in the village would be much higher than the average middle-school or even high-school graduate, as would their income (estimated at 100 to 500 yuan a month for a well-known teaching *ahong*). Children who are in poor health are often kept at home to study the Quran. In large families with more than one son, generally one child is encouraged to study to become an *ahong*. Although the government officially allows each mosque to support from 2 to 4 full-time *manla*—who should be at least 18 years old and junior-middle-school graduates—many younger children study at home without official approval.

Ningxia, as the only autonomous region for China's Hui Muslims, tends to monitor *ahong* training and religious practice more closely than other areas where Hui are concentrated. In Yunnan's Weishan Yi and Hui autonomous county, several mosques had over 20 resident *manla* studying under well-known *ahong*. In Gansu's Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture, at the South Great Mosque there were over 130 full-time students. In Linxia city's Bafang district, where most of the Hui are concentrated, there were at least 60 full-time *manla* in each mosque. Mirroring the spiritual importance of Mecca and the centrality of theological learning of the Iranian city of Qum for China's Hui Muslims, Linxia's famous mosques and scholars attract students from all over China.²⁰

Renowned mosques in Yunnan's Shadian and Weishan counties tend to attract students from throughout the southwest, including Hainan Island. At an ordination (*chuan'anyi*) service I attended at the Xiao Weigeng Mosque in Weishan county in February 1985, the 10 graduates included 1 Hainan Island student and 6 students from outside the county who had studied there for 5 years. The Hainan student had a

brother studying the Quran in Beijing. The next class admitted 30 students, 10 from the local village, 10 from other villages, 10 from outside the county, including 1 from outside Yunnan. The fact that these *manla* travel long distances to study under celebrated *ahong* demonstrates that national ties continue to link disparate Hui communities. It also reveals the growing importance of religious education in the countryside.

THE RISE IN ISLAMIC CONSERVATISM. The increasing conservatism of the Hui in Na Homestead, noted by the Han villager above, is apparent to any visitor. Smoking and drinking are now prohibited in the village for the simple reason that "the elders are against it" (*laoren fandui*). When pressed for their reasons, the elders invariably refer to the dictates of maintaining a pure (*qing zhen*) lifestyle according to Islamic prescriptions. According to the local store clerk, very few people buy cigarettes anymore. Smoking and drinking were commonplace in the village during the Cultural Revolution. The clerk now keeps only a few bottles of low-alcohol-content "champagne" (*xiangbin jiu*) under a back shelf for rare occasions when outside cadres need to be entertained. When young men want to drink or smoke, they go outside the village to the Yongning county seat or to Yinchuan city. It came as quite a shock to the elders of this village when visited by foreign Muslim "friendship delegations" who openly drank or smoked.

While only the older women wear the head covering (*gaitou*) associated with the Muslim custom of *pardah*,²¹ younger Hui admit that male-female interaction is much more restricted than in neighboring Han villages.²² Men and women rarely work together in the fields, and the majority of marriages are arranged through introductions. In a survey of 50 newly married young couples, only 8 (16 percent) met their partners on their own, without an intermediary. The average courtship period was less than 5 months for 76 percent of the couples surveyed.²³ While some younger Hui complain about this conservatism, change in the near future appears unlikely. In fact, "modern" marriage practice has continued to decline since the high point of male-female "free love" (*lian'ai ziyou*) encouraged during the Cultural Revolution. The only "love match" I knew of took place between a local Na villager who had met his bride while studying for 2 years at a vocational training college.

One of a handful to receive higher education above the middle-school level, the case of this young intellectual was anything but typical.

When I asked several Hui villagers if there was anyone in their team who did not believe in Islam (*buxinjiao de buizu*), I was always told that they did not know of anyone. By contrast, in urban areas such as Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia region, Hui youth often openly discuss their belief in Marxism or secularism and the lack of relevance of Islam for their lives.²⁴ Several have told me that they believe in neither Marxism nor Islam, but in "individualism," or only in "making money." This attitude is even more prevalent in cities like Beijing and Shanghai where urbanized Hui youth are becoming attracted to Western ideas (see Chapter 4). One Shanghai Hui youth married to a Han woman told me: "Buddhism is for peasants, Islam is for old Huihui, and Christianity is for those interested in the West."

In Na Homestead, however, even the local cadres who say they do not believe in Islam and belong to the Communist Party always invite the *ahong* to read the Quran at their family weddings, funerals, and parents' deathdays. The chairman of one team in Na Homestead, a prominent Party member, openly invited the *ahong* and participated in the reciting of the Quran at his son's wedding.²⁵

Perhaps of greatest concern to local Party officials in Ningxia is the lack of participation in the local Party apparatus and the "problem of Party members who believe in religion" (*dangyuan xinjiaode wenti*). There are 63 Party members in Na Homestead, representing only 1.7 percent of the total population. Of those 63, 22 publicly worship at the mosque and say they believe in Islam. Three of these believers go to mosque 5 times daily, and one has officially quit his Party membership in order to become an *ahong*.²⁶ Many of these Muslim Party members have at one time been team-level chairmen, and 4 have been brigade (*dadui*) Party vice-secretaries in the past. The United Front Department estimated that 70-80 percent of Party members in Hui villages take part in religious activities, and about 10 percent openly admit they are believers in Islam.²⁷ When I asked one Hui state cadre who openly prayed at the mosque in another city about this contradiction, he rationalized, "I believe in Marxism in my head, but I believe in Islam in my heart."

Mason remarkably reported a similar explanation offered by Confucian Hui officials in the Qing dynasty:

It may be added that military officials in the Manchu times were not altogether exempt from certain ceremonies of worship at temples; but Moslems seem to have made a compromise with conscience and went with the rest; one said to me long ago in Szechwan that though his bodily presence was there, and he shared in the prostrations, his heart was not there, so it didn't matter!²⁸

Local cadres give many reasons for religious behavior among Hui Party officials. In Na Homestead, it is explained that 80 percent entered the Party in the 1950s and are too old and uninvolved with Party affairs.²⁹ As they grow older, these veteran Party members are becoming more interested in religion. Yet it should be noted that no one has been admitted to the Party in Na Homestead since October 1976.

Involvement of Party members in religious activities, state support of mosque reconstruction, and recent visits by foreign Muslims and guests to the historic mosque have been interpreted by some Hui as the Party's encouragement of religion. Na villagers have been quoted as saying: "Whoever does not believe in religion does not do good works (*xingshan*) and does not carry out the policy of the Communist Party."³⁰ Acceptance of the Party's position on atheism has been declining in religious minority nationality areas, to the extent that some youths accept Islamic doctrines such as the creation of the world in place of scientific materialism. These trends have led many local cadres to argue that there has indeed been a revival of Islam among the Hui to the point of fundamentalist "fanaticism" (*kuanre* or *zongjiao re*, "religious heat.")³¹

ISLAMIC CONSERVATISM AND GOVERNMENT POLICY. What is the official response to these accelerating trends in religious conservatism? Based on several interviews with local and state officials, I find 3 approaches. (1) More conservative cadres say these religious activities and excesses should be stopped (*shoule*) immediately. (2) Others propose that political thought-reform campaigns should be taught again in the countryside to correct these misunderstandings of Party policy. (3) More moderate cadres would suggest reforms in the local Party itself rather than

changes in policy; they point to recent research by Chinese sociologists that suggests Islam's influence is only superficial and is not important to youths and others in the village who are pressured to conform by mosque leaders³² and claim that Islamic activities merely represent maintenance of minority customs, not real religious belief.

To support this last position, a Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences (NASS) survey on religious belief was conducted among 60 Hui secondary-school graduates under 30 years old; 14 said they did not believe in Islam, while 46 professed either complete or partial belief. Of those who did not believe, 5 expressed belief in Marxism, 4 in "individualism" (*geren zhuyi*), and 5 in both Marxism and Islam.³³ Of those 46 who said they believed in Islam, 26 expressed complete adherence, while the others professed only partial belief and unbelief. When the 26 believers were asked if this meant that they believed in an afterlife, heaven or hell, only one said he did. At one point, the young believers were asked: "When you say you believe in Islam, can it be that what you believe is that you shouldn't smoke, shouldn't drink, shouldn't eat pork, and should go to mosque on holidays and give offerings?" The natural response was "That's exactly what we mean."³⁴

The NASS researchers cite this response to support their claim that few young people have "objective" reasons for believing in religion. Objective reasons, they maintain, would include beliefs in an afterlife, in the involvement of God in personal prosperity, and in Islam as the right religion. The researchers argue that most believe in Islam for "subjective" reasons, in which they include social pressure and ethnic background. The most common "subjective" answer given was: "We believe in Islam because we are Hui."³⁵ This response, and the fact that over 70 percent of those who attend daily prayer service are over 50 years old, demonstrates that religion is unpopular among the young, according to the researchers. When the Hui villagers say they believe in religion, according to these observers, they have confused the influence of ethnic customs with Islamic belief.³⁶

Moderate cadres point out that many social benefits have derived from the relaxed religious policy. One of the most important advantages is the opportunity to use the mosque for disseminating Party and government policy. Imams have begun to preach both government pol-

icy and religious practice at the Friday prayer in a new style of preaching called *chuan jiang* ("combined talks"). Since 1979, the crime rate and social-disturbance problems that I was told were "fairly messy" (*bijiao luan*) in Na Homestead have declined dramatically. Wang Xiren of the Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences reported that only 0.06 percent of the whole Hui population had been charged with committing crimes, while the Han crime rate was 0.1 percent.³⁷ The government's family-planning policy and other reforms have been carried out quite effectively compared with other areas, a fact attributed to the willingness of the ahong to permit use of the mosque for promoting public policies. On 17 November 1984, the government invited 63 ahong from throughout the region to gather at the Yinchuan Hotel where they were praised and encouraged in their efforts to raise the educational level of Hui in their areas, at a "Meeting Praising the Services of Islam in Building the Four Modernizations," a ceremony reported in the national press.³⁸ Most important, the religious policy has instilled in the villagers a new openness to dialogue with the Communist Party³⁹—a trust strongly shaken during the Cultural Revolution's "10 years of internal confusion" (*shinian neiluan*).

Moderate cadres argue that the solution to the misinterpretation of the Party's free-religion policy does not lie in restricting religious activity or returning to the reform campaigns of the Gang of Four period. Rather, they advocate resolving the problems and contradictions in the local Party apparatus whose inactivity and "paralysis" (*tanhuan*) is responsible for these false conceptions of Party policy.⁴⁰ Errant Party members who openly believe should be educated or asked to resign. While the Party policy is one of "freedom of religion," it should be clearly explained that the Party itself does not promote religion and still regards it as an "opiate" that deters the masses from better production.⁴¹ As one cadre in Yinchuan explained to me:

The Hui are allowed to maintain their ethnic customs that are influenced by Islamic traditions, but religion and ethnicity are two separate matters and should not be confused.

THE REROOTING OF IDENTITY IN NA HOMESTEAD

The policy of clearly distinguishing between religion and ethnicity is becoming the most important formula applied to the minority-religion question.⁴² This distinction is useful to cadres working in urban or Han-majority areas among minorities who no longer practice their traditional religion but who maintain certain ethnic customs. Many Beijing and Shanghai Hui who do not practice Islam continue to maintain Islamic dietary restrictions and celebrate traditional Islamic holidays (Chapter 4). The distinction between ethnicity and religion is particularly evident among Hui along the southeastern coast; these recently recognized Hui eat pork and practice Chinese folk religion (see Chapter 6). What might be applicable to ethnic policy in these areas, however, does not make sense for the majority of Hui in the northwest. Nevertheless, this policy is promoted in these areas, as the cadre's comment above demonstrates.

The distinction between Hui ethnicity and Islam was an important corrective to the traditional Chinese idea that Islam was the "Hui religion" (*Hui jiao*), rather than a world religion in which most Hui believe.⁴³ Controversy has arisen recently, however, over the idea that the Hui can be entirely separated from the Islamic religious tradition.⁴⁴ This debate came to a head during the 1983 Northwest Five Province Islamic Studies discussion meetings held in Yinchuan. Conferees concluded that, while the Hui nationality must be distinguished from Islam analytically, nevertheless Hui cultural heritage has been intimately influenced by Islam. Without Islam, there would be no Hui minority.

The policy of distinguishing between religion and ethnicity arises from a Chinese Marxist approach to ethnicity that tends to view ethnic consciousness, customs, and religion as circumstantial, epiphenomenal traits. These cultural traits are often class-based, and assume importance only in the competition for scarce resources. Like Barth's "situational" approach outlined above,⁴⁵ ethnic identity will lose its relevance when socioeconomic conditions change, and eventually should disappear with erosion of class or interest-based differences. Yet, for Na villagers, the religiosity is not instrumental;⁴⁶ it is part of their very sense of self and identity.

Islam is integral to their self-perception as Hui—it is part of how they see and construct their world.⁴⁷ What some might regard as a revival of Islamic fundamentalism in Hui communities is, I argue, but one aspect of a general return to and reinterpretation of their ethnoreligious roots. The resurgence in the countryside has come about in the midst of rapid socioeconomic change in the last few years since the liberalization of religious and economic policies. Current developments in Na Homestead illustrate that accepted cultural meanings of Hui identity are becoming more relevant in the social context under liberalized government policies that allow freer expression of Hui identity.

ETHNORELIGIOUS ROOTS

When I made my first visit to Na Homestead during a short 1983 trip through central Ningxia, I was immediately presented with the story that the Na villagers like to tell about their ancestry. This origin myth was often repeated to me throughout 1984 and 1985:

We are all Muslims in this village. Most of us are surnamed Na. The Chinese character for "Na" is not in the classical book of Chinese surnames, and this proves that we are descended not from Han Chinese but from a foreign Muslim from the west. Our ancestor was none other than Nasredin, the son of Sai Dianchi (Sayyid 'Ajall), the Muslim Governor of Yunnan under the Yuan dynasty. Nasredin had four sons, and those sons changed their names to Chinese under the Ming government's ethnic-oppression policy. The four sons adopted the surnames "Na, Su, La, Ding" corresponding to the four Chinese characters that made up his name. This is why so many northwest Huihui in the Ming dynasty had these surnames. The son surnamed Na moved to this place and had five sons, of which we still have five Na leading lineages (*men*) in the village. There is also a Na village in Yunnan province, Tonghua county, where some of our relatives live.⁴⁸

Based partly on historical records and partly on oral traditions that may or may not be accurate, this story is nevertheless critical for illuminating Na self-understanding. The ability to trace ancestral origins to the 5 leading Na lineages is an important aspect of personal status in Na Homestead. Those surnamed Na are buried together in one part of the large cemetery connected to the mosque and village. The cultural reck-

oning of their descent from an ancestor not only foreign but Muslim is critical for Na self-identity.

The Na have maintained this cohesive identity over centuries of interaction with Han neighbors and in the face of prolonged oppressive local-government policies and socioeconomic instability. Na villagers are proud that their ancestors participated in Ma Hualong's Northwest Hui Rebellion (1862-1877). They say they surrendered to the Qing army general, Zuo Zongtang, only after 3 months of siege by 2 of his commanders with over 12,000 troops. They often mentioned to me that Ma Hualong's birthplace, Jinji, and gravesite, Dong Ta, are within 40 km. of Na Homestead.⁴⁹ While Zuo Zongtang's commanders spared most of the men because they surrendered, the Hui say his soldiers carried off many of their women to Henan. According to some elders, the Sichuan general Wang Tuan and his army fought the Hui for over 3 years but were never able to enter the walled village. During a conflict in the 1920s with the local Han warlord, Sun Dianying, Na villagers resisted his efforts to incorporate them into his domain. When many of the Na men were inducted into the large standing army of the Ningxia Hui warlord, Ma Hongkui, Hui women in Na Homestead refused to marry men outside the village. Unmarried girls wore their hair up, so that Han men would think they were married and not approach them (*mei bianzi, mei hanzi*, "no ponytails, no men"). One ahong, they say, even agreed to marry a young girl to a chicken, so she would not have to leave home. Ethnic independence and a proud tradition of Muslim self-reliance during periods of adversity are reflected in these stories.

After 1949, Hui ethnoreligious identity was profoundly influenced by political campaigns that discouraged "local nationality chauvinism" (*difang minzu zhuyi*) in favor of "nationality unity" (*minzu tuanjie*). Liu Keping, the first Hui Chairman of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, in a *Beijing Daily* speech criticized minority groups with "separatist ideas" who desire "the right of self-determination" or "independence." There was concern that the Hui in Ningxia might be influenced by Tibetan separatist movements and seek to turn the newly established Ningxia autonomous region into their own "Israel."⁵⁰ During the 1958 Religious System Reform Campaign (*Zongjiao Zhidu Gaige*) most of Ningxia's smaller mosques were closed in order to concentrate worship

in larger mosques. As the largest and oldest in the area, the Na Homestead mosque was not closed and remained the main mosque in the area until the advent of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. In the mid-1950s, Na village had been recognized as an autonomous Hui village (*Najiahu Huizu zizhixiang*). However, with the 1958 drive to establish communes in the countryside, Na Homestead was incorporated as Chaoyang brigade of the Yongning county Yanghe commune. It was not renamed Na Homestead and recognized as an official village (*xinzheng cun*) of Yang He township until 1983. Since many of the religious restrictions imposed upon Muslims in China began with these campaigns in the late 1950s, and were not lifted until the 1979 reforms, many Hui referred to this period as the "20 lost years" instead of the "10 lost years" (*shinian haojie*) generally restricted to the Cultural Revolution.

A cadre from another area told me that, at a 1960 Northwest Region United Front meeting, several cadres outside Ningxia advocated a policy of requiring Hui to raise pigs. This was in response to Chairman Mao's call during the Great Leap Forward for every household to raise pigs, the perfect "fertilizer factory," reflected in the saying: "The more pigs, the more manure; the more manure, the more grain; the more grain, the greater contribution to our country." Hui who were reluctant to raise pigs risked criticism for feudalistic ideas and refusal to answer Mao's call.

Despite resistance by some local cadres who were later accused of "local ethnic chauvinism" (*difang minzu zhuyi*), by 1966 at least 10 Hui households in Na Homestead were raising pigs. Most of these were cadre activists who volunteered. Some ahong in other villages also volunteered in order to show their support for the Party. These were later disparagingly called "policy ahong" (*zhengce ahong*) and recently have been rejected by many Hui as unqualified to be religious leaders.⁵¹

Na villagers say that many people got sick and died in the village during the time when they were forced to raise pigs. Hui regard pigs as dirty and unhealthful animals, the very antithesis of *qing zhen*.⁵² A neighboring Han villager told me that many of the Hui who raised pigs did not take care of them well, and, consequently, many of the animals died prematurely. One Hui villager recounted a familiar story of the dilemma of having to feed the pig or face criticism. He would look at

the animal and say: "Oh you black bug (*hei chongzi*, a Hui euphemism), if you get fat, you will die. If you get thin, I'll die!"

By 1966, during the Cultural Revolution's Smash 4 Olds (*posijiu*) Campaign, the mosque was closed and the ahong worked in the fields with the production teams. Other local ahong often returned to their original homes. Na Youxi, head ahong of the neighboring Xinzhaizi (New Stockade) Mosque, left to join his relatives in northern Ningxia, where he worked in a store.⁵³ I was told that no local youth took part in the Red Guard activity of that time. The mosque was converted to a county ball-bearing factory, and, although it was reopened for prayer in 1979, the factory was not relocated until 1981. By 1982, open participation in mosque affairs had resumed. Throughout this stormy period, the Hui in Na Homestead maintained their ethnic identity, and there were no cases that I could find of people attempting to deny or conceal their Hui heritage.

Reactions to oppressive policies in Na Homestead were apparently milder than in other parts of China and Ningxia. There were reported Hui uprisings in Ningxia shortly after 1949 and during the Great Leap Forward. In 1952, the "2 April" and "4 April" uprisings took place in Guyuan (now southern Ningxia) and Zhangjiachuan, Gansu, led by Ma Zhenwu's Jahriyya order. Other local uprisings by Hui followed, disenchanted by the failed promises for religious freedom and autonomy. In 1953, an "independent Islamic kingdom" was declared during an uprising by a Hui group in Henan. In Ningxia, Ma Zhenwu supposedly issued *pierhan* ("letters of introduction to the afterworld") for those who might fall in battle defending the mosques, Daotang, and tomb *waqf* lands that were being confiscated under land reform. Labeled the "protecting the Gongbei" movement, it gained wide support, before it was finally crushed on 1 June during another attempt at local control.⁵⁴ Ma Zhenwu was arrested in 1958 and publicly criticized in the news media throughout the country as a "counter-revolutionary" and exploitative "religious landlord," due to his control over the Sufi order's large *waqf* holdings. Ma Zhenwu died in prison, but was posthumously rehabilitated in August 1983 as a victim of "leftist radicalism."

THE SHADIAN INCIDENT. During the Cultural Revolution there were several minor protests led by Hui in Beijing, Ningxia, Henan, and Hebei, and at least one major uprising. This became known throughout the country as the "Shadian Incident," and is the only large-scale ethnic rebellion that I know of during the Cultural Revolution. Though the details concerning the event are unclear, based on refugee accounts and unpublished reports,⁵⁵ one new private publication was issued by the Shadian Hui History Committee in 1989, in which one essay is entitled, "A General Account of the 'Shadian Incident.'" Many of the details of the article were confirmed by several interviews I conducted in 1985 with nationality officials and eyewitnesses to the event in Yunnan.

The Shadian Incident took place in a small Hui village that is located in the southwestern corner of Yunnan, near the border of Vietnam, in Ahmi prefecture, Mengzi county, Jijie township.⁵⁶ Muslims frequently passed through the area as a result of its location on a major trading link near the Burma Road between Vietnam, Burma, and Southeast Asia, and thus one of the main overland routes for Muslim merchants traveling to the Malaysian Peninsula and the Bay of Bengal with its famous port of Chittagong near the Ganges River Delta, and from there to the Middle Eastern pilgrimage cities. With the widespread use of Muslim muleteers for transport along the Burma Road, Muslim villages still dot the old trade route from Sichuan to Burma. As a result, a flourishing Muslim community was established in Shadian as early as the Ming dynasty. It became a center for Islamic learning throughout Southeast Asia and Southwest China, producing the first Chinese translation of the Quran and several famous Muslim Chinese scholars. It was also a silver-mining and weapons-manufacturing center that played an important role in the Panthay Muslim Rebellion of 1855-1873.⁵⁷

Though the actual uprising and massacre did not take place until 1975, the incident had its roots in an earlier conflict that took place during the height of the Cultural Revolution's "Smash-4-Olds" attack on "feudalist" practice. One of these "olds," of course, was religion, and a well-known center of Islam such as Shadian was an obvious target. The initial conflict began in July 1968 and was confined within the Hui community itself, and not along Hui-Han ethnic lines. After "Leftist" and "Revisionist" factions emerged in the village, the Leftist faction, located

near an army base in the mountains, obtained weapons from the base and the conflict escalated, with several on both sides killed in related incidents of violence. In November, a People's Liberation Army propaganda team of mainly Han soldiers was welcomed by leaders of the village in order to help restore order, but they accomplished this in the full spirit of the Cultural Revolution by criticizing the "feudal" ahong and religious leaders of the village. According to the reports, over 200 Hui were struggled against, with the criticisms taking particular aims at such "backward" customs as pork avoidance and Islamic practice (shades of the Salman Rushdie scandal two decades later). Under the slogan "Purifying Class Ranks," those being criticized were not only required to denounce themselves, but also eat pork, and even imitate pigs, by being forced to "cry out," "crawl," and "roll" like the animals. One pregnant woman who was forced to undergo this humiliation suffered a miscarriage, according to the reports. Pork bones and carcasses were thrown into the water wells located in the mosque courtyard, polluting the main source of *qing zhen* water for the villagers.

By 1973, as in most of China, the situation had stabilized with life gradually returning to a semblance of normality. Several villages near Shadian had begun to reopen their mosques and openly practice their faith. When the elders at Shadian made the request to reopen their mosque, prefectural and county level cadres refused, stating: "National struggle is actually a form of class struggle," equating interest in reviving Islam with "local nationalism." About the same time, Jiang Qing, Chairman Mao's wife and member of the Gang of Four, made her famous statement: "Why do we need national minorities anyway? National identity should be done away with!" In Shadian, this meant further repression and refusal to reopen the mosque. When they attempted to celebrate Ramadan, it was labeled a "counter-revolutionary meeting" (*fan geming jihui*).

In October 1974, leaders from Shadian went to Kunming, the capital, to request that the state honor the freedom of religion and nationality laws of the Constitution. They were accused of "making a disturbance" (*nao shi*) and "opposing the leadership of the Party" (similar to the charges brought against the students of Tiananmen in 1989). When a Han "people's militia" was formed in the Jijie township to oversee the affairs in Shadian, they in turn organized their own "Huihui militia." In

late December, the two well-armed militias clashed, leaving several dead. This incident came to Beijing's attention, and Hui leaders from Shadian were brought to the national Capitol to explain their position. Under Premier Zhou Enlai's guidance, they agreed to lay down their arms and were allowed to reopen their mosque.

In mid-February, another clash occurred between the two rival militias, leaving 9 Hui dead. After yet another delegation to Kunming, and further incidents, they were required to turn over any remaining arms and allow People's Liberation Army troops to enter the village and help restore order. However, the government sent many more troops than the villagers expected, and they surrounded the village. The villagers had originally welcomed the troops, but they balked at the large occupation force. In mid-July the villagers complained:

We don't have any new weapons, and therefore, of course, have no more real arms to hand over to the soldiers. As to homemade weapons (*tu wuqi*), everyone agreed that we would hand them over if they accepted the masses' one condition: We welcome a select few of the troops to enter our village and implement the state's policy (*luo shi zhengce*). Shadian is such a small village, how can it hold several regiments of troops? At the time of Shadian's liberation [in 1949], only one small company of People's Liberation Army was needed to throw out the Nationalist regiment; why do you need so many regiments now to carry out the policy in Shadian? What are you planning on doing? The lesson we learned from letting in the army in 1968 is still fresh in everyone's mind.⁵⁸

When this response was received by the central authorities, the Shadian Hui were accused of opposing the Party and "attempting to establish an Islamic state" like the Panthays before them. A crackdown was ordered in the middle of the night on 29 July. At 3:00 a.m. several regiments of PLA soldiers entered the village and began firing indiscriminately. Fighting in the streets, homes, and mosque lasted until noon. On 30 July the entire village was razed, and the conflagration spread to surrounding villages. "It was a nightmare," one villager told me; "every family had someone killed, and some entire households were wiped out." After 7 days and 8 nights of fighting, there were more than 1,600 Hui massacred, with 866 coming from the village of Shadian alone (whose individual names and production teams are listed in the village

history).⁵⁹ One eyewitness told me that in the "clean-up" (*qing jiao*) campaign, the village itself was leveled, destroying 4,400 houses, which were completely reduced to rubble no higher than one meter. Another eyewitness reported that, in addition to using heavy cannon and artillery, the army called in Chinese MIG jets to fire rockets into the village.

It was not until February 1979, following the fall of the Gang of Four, that those responsible for the crackdown on the village were criticized, apologies were made, and reparations paid to the surviving relatives. The village was entirely rebuilt, and 7 new mosques have been constructed by the government in the area. Though the city is now open to foreign tourists as a "model community," and the government has recognized its grievous error, few are still willing to speak openly about the incident, since some of the provincial-level leaders involved in the crackdown are still in positions of influence. No one knows when the policy might reverse itself again.

With such shifting policies, the rehabilitation of the "evil landlord" Ma Zhenwu, the reparations made to Shadian, and the admissions of past "Leftist" mistakes by former leaders of the Party, it is no wonder that Hui villagers in Na Homestead, who were well aware of these events in Yunnan and elsewhere, remain skeptical about the current reforms. Most of them, when they look at all, turn instead to traditional sources of authority. As one Na villager told me, "No matter which political winds blow, I am going to stick to Islam—the Quran doesn't change its mind."

THE RECURRING TEXTS OF NA ETHNORELIGIOUS IDENTITY: Recurrent rituals play an important role in reaffirming and maintaining a group's ethnic identity. DeVos proposes:

A major source of ethnic identity is found in the cultural traditions related to crises in the life cycle, such as coming of age, marriage, divorce, illness, or death. It is particularly in rites of passage that one finds highly emotional symbolic reinforcement of ethnic patterns.⁶⁰

Keyes,⁶¹ following Ricoeur,⁶² has also stressed the importance of ritualized behavior, or "texts," in expressing and informing ethnic identity. In the life of Hui villagers in Na Homestead, these texts are frequently and

regularly reinforced. They have become a part of the daily practice of communal life.⁶³ On the 3rd day after the birth of each child, every Na villager invites the local ahong to come to the home, read the scriptures, and give the child a Quranic name (*jingming*). Usually based on Arabic or Persian, such Muslim names as Muhammad, Yusuf, Usiar, Dawud, Salima, and Fatima are often heard around the Hui household.⁶⁴ Chinese names, or *Hanming* (Han nationality names) are used for official purposes and in school (sometimes referred to as *xiaoming*, literally, "school name"). After the naming ceremony, a large feast and *nietie* are provided for the ahong and guests.

At weddings, every Hui family invites the ahong to come to the bride's home, read the scriptures, and then accompany her to the new home. At one of the weddings I attended, the ahong arrived with the bride at about 8:00 in the morning. The father and mother of the groom came out of the house into the yard and everyone gathered for the reading of the special Quranic text reserved for weddings (*nikaha*). The ahong first addressed a series of questions (*yizabu*) to the father of the groom, interestingly enough, and not to the groom himself. "Are you the father of this boy?" "Do you agree to the marriage with this girl?" "Do you guarantee that their children will be raised as Muslims?" Following the father's affirmative replies, the ahong turned to the groom and asked him to quote the *Shahadah*. The groom then proclaimed the monotheistic formula (*qing zhen yan*) in fluid Arabic, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." The ahong then recited the scripture and signed their marriage certificate, at which time the guests repaired to the groom's home for a large feast. The symbolic import of reinforcing group corporate identity through rites of passage is illuminated by Bourdieu:

Rite must resolve by means of an operation socially approved and collectively assumed—that is, in accordance with the logic of the taxonomy that gives rise to it—the specific contradiction which the primal dichotomy makes inevitable in constituting as separate and antagonistic principles that must be reunited in order to ensure the reproduction of the group. . . . Marriage rites and ploughing rites owe their numerous similarities to the fact that their *objective intention* is to sanction the union of contraries which is the condition of the resurrection of the grain and the reproduction of the group.⁶⁵

The Hui not only regularly reaffirm their group solidarity to themselves through rites of passage, but it behooves them to demonstrate their unique ethnic separation from the outside Han world. Thus, the Islamic content of the rituals becomes particularly powerful. Perhaps underscoring the responsibility of the parents and elders for maintaining ethnoreligious tradition, male guests were seated in the main room of the house, with the ahong and several elders on the *kang* in the front, while the groom and his friends waited on the tables. It is the responsibility of the elders and the whole community to make sure ethnoreligious identity is impressed upon each new generation. Thus, marriage and parenthood, the increasing of the community, are indivisible actions that must receive sanction through Islamic ritual that stresses the purity of their identity.

Funerals are a significant part of Na community life, ensuring that ethnoreligious identity is crucial in death as well as life. Membership in the community does not end with the last breath. Death ceremonies do not terminate after the funeral, which must take place within 3 days after death (Hui use the Buddhist term *wuchang*, "impermanence," not the normal Chinese term, *chushi*). Important commemoration rituals take place on days 7, 14, 21, 40, 100, and years 1 and 3 after the death date. At one 21-day commemoration ritual (*jinqi* or *sanqi*) for a 92-year-old man, there were separate prayers and banquets at the older and younger sons' homes. The prayer began when the ahong sat down on the *kang* in the front of the younger son's house. A semicircle of other ahong and village elders was formed around him facing the gathered men. The women packed into the back room of the house or stood outside and participated in the prayer. Several people who could not fit into the small room, crowded with over 100 men, knelt on the ground in the freezing weather outside. The prayer began with a loud chanting of the *Shahadah* in unison, then a recitation by the assistant head ahong (whose voice was stronger than the 77-year-old head ahong's) of several passages of scripture with others joining, and a final chanting of the *Shahadah* by all present, including the women.

Although the Na villagers are members of a Khufiyya Sufi order, they do not practice the silent *dhikr* traditionally associated with the Khufiyya. As described above, when the Khufiyya order was first intro-

duced to China it was known for promoting the silent *dhikr*, as opposed to the later Jahriyya order, known for the vocal use of the *jabr* in remembrance. However, like many Khufiyya members in north and central Ningxia, the Na villagers now practice an oral *dhikr*. Local historians suggest that the interesting combination of Jahriyya and Khufiyya ritual practices among the Na may result from their participation in Ma Hualong's Jahriyya-led uprising (1862-1876), after they had already been Khufiyya for many generations.⁶⁶ As a result, when they pray in unison at certain rituals, the *dhikr* is expressed aloud.⁶⁷

At this ritual, they chant the *Shahadah* in a rhythmic cadence unique to their Khufiyya order. The last syllable of the *Shahadah* receives special stress; participants raise their voices and sway their bodies rhythmically from side to side. It is from this movement among Sufi Hui that their religion became known in earlier accounts as the "shaking-head religion" (*yaotou jiao*).⁶⁸ As I sat in the rear, wedged between several older men, I had no choice but to be swayed back and forth with them. I tried to accustom my ears to the loud chanting that went on for 15 to 30 minutes. It was always under the control of the lead ahong, and occasionally "primed" by worshipers when the reciting began to die down in intensity. After some duration, the lead ahong intoned a sort of "mm" sound and the service ended. As the men departed, each received a small donation (*dajiarwangren*) of about 2 to 4 *mao* (7 to 13 cents), while several stayed for a 9-course banquet.

Following the meal, the entire ceremony was repeated in a more elaborate and lengthy fashion at the older brother's home. Mourners also chant the *dhikr* at funeral ceremonies (*zhenazi*). There, men remove their shoes and kneel in orderly rows behind the deceased, whose body is placed upon a mat on the ground and wrapped in a white shroud. After the recitation of remembrance, the body is carried by hand from the mosque environs where the ceremony is performed to the grave site. At one funeral I attended in Xining, the men carried the body for over 50 km. from the mosque to the "Public Hui Graveyard" (Hui Gong Mu) in the mountains behind the city. The rest of us went by truck. At the grave site, to the accompaniment of several readings or recitations of Quranic *suras*, the body was lowered into the earth in the shroud without a coffin, whereupon most of those present assisted in replacing the soil.

As an outside observer who has attended other Muslim funerals and Sufi rituals in Central Asia, I was struck by the attention paid to order in these ceremonies. Chanting and remembrance of the *dhikr* in most Sufi rituals often leads to trance states and loud singing, shaking, and even dancing. Funerals are often accompanied by loud mourners and community tumult. While the more silent Khufiyya tradition may have had some influence, I was told by Na villagers that they did not want to arouse the suspicions of their Han neighbors or the state, so they took care not to let things get out of control. One Han joked with me that, in the old days, after the loud chanting in the mosque, the Hui would run out excitedly shouting, "Kill the Han!" The slightest hint of this kind of activity is quashed by the Hui. Allowing me, a foreigner, to attend to the ritual, generally closed to Han and non-Muslims, is certainly an indication of their desire not to appear secret in their practices. In Islamic ritual in China, the far-reaching hand of the state is heavily felt.

I subsequently learned that the prayer and funeral ceremony for this 92-year-old man were more elaborate due to his venerable age and standing in the community. Well over 1,000 yuan in *nietie* were distributed to those attending.⁶⁹ By contrast, while I was there, another man was given a very simple funeral. One older man complained: "Only 250 yuan was distributed to guests." He explained that this particular individual was not well cared for by his family, nor very religious. He was often left alone in a room and died at the comparatively young age of 60. "No wonder he died young," one villager told me; "its like repairing old pants. If you just keep patching them rather than caring for them or getting new ones, when winter comes they won't last." Consequently, fewer than 100 villagers attended his funeral, the others displaying their disapproval by their absence.

Hui often say that longevity is the result of Allah's blessing (*Zhenzhu baoyou*) for a devout *qing zhen* life. They attribute their good health to their maintaining Islamic dietary restrictions and attention to personal hygiene. Hui say they are cleaner than Han because they must engage in the "small wash" (*xiao jin*) 5 times a day before prayer, and the "complete wash" (*da jin*) every Friday. Hui are proud to note that, though the Hui are only one third of Ningxia's population, the 1982 census

revealed 21 of the 23 centenarians in Ningxia region were Hui⁷⁰—veritable proof of the benefits of living a pure *qing zhen* life.

Wang Zixiao is held up by the Na villagers as an example of God's blessing. At 101 years old, even though his legs are too weak for him to go to the mosque, Wang Lao still regularly prays at home. The walls surrounding his warm *kang* are covered with Arabic texts and flowery Islamic paintings containing Quranic verses arranged in traditional Chinese *duilian* style. His wife lived to 113 years old, and his eldest son is 86. His mother was a Han woman who converted to Islam at marriage, and her children were raised in a strict Muslim household. When I asked Lao Wang what his secret was for longevity, he responded; "good religion" (*jiaomende hao*). The Hui in Na Homestead feel that Allah rewards a *qing zhen* lifestyle with health and longevity. Religious devotion is critical to this understanding of *qing zhen*, where purity (*qing*) exemplifies the authenticity (*zhen*) of one's religion.

Along with rituals that take place at important stages of the Hui life cycle, Islamic holidays interrupt the normal course of the agricultural year. In addition to the Ramadan and Corban festivals, Na-village Hui celebrate the Prophet's Day, or Muhammad's Birthday, as well as Fatima's Birthday. When I attended the Prophet's Day Festival, I was surprised by the turnout of the entire village for the event. The men attending the festival entered the mosque and knelt for prayer in the front with their shoes off, while the women and children assembled in the back of the mosque. The presence of women and men together in a mosque anywhere in the Muslim world is rare, and China is no exception. This allowance was perhaps due to the fact that the mosque was under construction, and the place where the women stood was not yet repaired and well behind the men. There are no women's mosques in Ningxia, and only one women's prayer room that I know of, located in the Yihewani "South Great Mosque" in Wuzhong city. The women wore shoes and many of their heads were uncovered, but they continued to recite the scriptures in unison.

The ahong, elders, and several young *manla* were the last in a procession to enter the mosque. They were seated in a circle at the front around low tables on which they had placed the Quran, divided into 30 separate chapters. After a short sermon (*hutubai*) on the significance of

the Prophet's birth, the men divided up the chapters and simultaneously read the entire Quran (*yuanjing* or *da nian*). The ahong later explained that this was so the entire village would receive the benefit of being present when the whole Quran was read, since most of them could only recite memorized Quranic texts and could not read them. Young *manla* who learn to read the Quran are often employed by villagers to read portions at the graves of their ancestors. They are accorded high status in the village. Hence, several of the young *manla* were seated at the head of the mosque in front of the entire village to read the Quran along with the other elders and ahong. As the worshipers left the mosque they were given traditional Hui pastries, "fragrant oil cakes" (*youxiang*), with a slice of boiled mutton on top.

THE CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF NA IDENTITY. The cultural organization of space in Hui villages and homes also distinguishes them from their Han neighbors. Hui homes are often decorated with brightly painted mirrors depicting Mecca or Medina as well as ornate Quranic calligraphic drawings and paintings in Chinese and Arabic. These mirrors and texts are generally placed where Han traditionally would have their ancestral altars. Hui homes, like those of the Han, usually open to the south, but for the Hui there is generally no communication or doorways linking the side homes of the sons with the central hall of the parents. Hui claim that this reflects a more conservative perspective because the women are more secluded from their in-laws. The gates of Hui homes are less ornate than Han and not fixed according to *fengshui* (geomantic) principles. Hui also say their houses are cleaner than Han houses. Unlike most Han, the Hui usually do not allow domestic animals like dogs or chickens into the home. Hui often set aside places for ritual washing, and some even build separate small prayer rooms for the women to use. Hui pay scrupulous attention to order and cleanliness in their homes. I turn again to Cable and French for a pithy description of northwestern Hui homes where they spent much time, which they contrasted with Han and Central Asian Muslim homes:

In the home of the Tungan [Hui] there is neither shrine nor ancestral tablet, but its pattern is as defined as the ancestor-controlled home of the Confucian,

only here the scheme of life is ordered by the rules and regulations of the Islamic faith. Five times a day, beginning with the hour of sunrise, the man must prostrate himself with face toward Mecca and recite the liturgy of the hour. He never dares to neglect the endless ceremonial purifications which his religion demands, and for one full month of each year he observes the exacting and rigid fast of the *Ramazan*. . . . A visit to a Turki home is quiet unlike a stay in a Tungan house. In the latter all is order, thrift and propriety, for existence has progressed on definite and established lines until it has mastered the technique of orderly conduct. Among the Turkis all is noise and turmoil. Gay clothing, swinging draperies and light muslin veiling combine with the rapid talk of girls and the gutturals of men's voices to fill the air with noise and movement.⁷¹

The central location of the mosque in virtually every Hui village marks its importance as the focal point of the village in ritual and social organization. A Han temple, by contrast, is traditionally located wherever the *fengshui* determines best, which may place it either within or well outside the village. Those who maintain Han temples are not necessarily regarded by the locals as leaders or integral to the affairs of the village. The ahong in a Hui village, however, are regarded as the primary actors. They must approve every marriage and are intimately acquainted with the villagers' lives. Most ahong are regularly invited to Hui homes for meals on a revolving basis (*chuanfan*). The ahong also often assist in resolving local conflicts. For example, I witnessed the intervention by a Na-village ahong in one dispute over the construction of a water pipe that one villager thought was being installed too close to his yard. If the pipe broke, the spillage would ruin his grain storage. As the argument escalated to the point of violence, several villagers ran to get the ahong to help settle the matter. When he arrived, the dispute calmed down considerably.

Unlike their Han neighbors, Hui often build their graveyards either adjacent to or within the confines of their village. This land is held in common by the community and often frequented by the villagers for regular prayer and meditation. Ekvall also noticed this unique aspect of the Hui social landscape:

The Moslems take great pains to make their graveyards like parks or semi-public groves, which become places for informal religious meditation and acquire a peculiar odor of sanctity. Among the Chinese the graveyards are

open, and there is no prejudice against allowing sheep or cattle to graze over them—in fact, they are in a way community pastures.⁷²

Lattimore described two Hui graveyards outside Huhehot, Inner Mongolia, where “good Moslems” are buried in grave sites separate from the “backsliders.”⁷³ In Na Homestead, an average of 4 to 8 individuals went to the graveyard (*shangfen*) every day to pray, with 30 or more visitors on Fridays. Someone from the extended household made at least one trip a week to the graveyard. Hui do not believe in ghosts and gods like their Han neighbors, and are not afraid of the graveyards at night. A popular Hui folk saying is:

When on the road the safest place for Hui to sleep is the Han graveyard; the ghosts won't bother us because we don't believe in them, and local Han bandits won't bother us because they are too afraid of the ghosts.

In his book, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow*, Francis L. K. Hsu⁷⁴ relates that, in the religious cosmology of Han villagers (actually, they were Bai),⁷⁵ the Hui's ancestral spirits were neither feared nor welcomed: “They do not influence the West Towners' relations with the other world at all.” Hence, Han, and, in this case, Bai villagers, did not object to the close proximity of a neighboring Hui village's graveyard. Red Guard desecration of graveyards and tombs in Hui areas during the Cultural Revolution led to major and minor confrontations throughout China.

The role of the graveyard among the Hui and the influence of the ancestors buried there resembles the place of traditional temples dotting the Taiwan countryside.⁷⁶ Women often take their daughters to these temples, seeking otherworldly help for them to have sons, or resolving financial problems. Miracles also are known to occur in the vicinity of these folk Chinese shrines, and they influence the natural powers of the earth, bringing good weather and fruitful harvests.⁷⁷ Local communities may adopt non-lineage ghosts and historic heroes as patron deities over time.⁷⁸ Similarly, among the Hui, especially well-known deceased religious leaders or *hajji* are often honored with local tombs (*tu gongbei*) that are patronized like these traditional Han temples. Deceased Sufi saints are built more elaborate tombs and shrines.⁷⁹ The value attached to these local symbols has often been viewed as a threat to the state.

While criticizing the Jahriyya *shaykh* Ma Zhenwu in 1958, prosecutors representing the state recorded the following ways in which he supposedly extorted money from his followers:

Before the Liberation, Ma Chen-wu even sold his hair, beard, the dirt from the “kung-pei,” his household firewood ashes, dry bread, small pieces of his ragged clothes, and even his own manure to the Hui masses as “miracle drugs” to cure their diseases. By so doing, he not only has swindled big sums of money but also has caused many deaths.⁸⁰

While Hui do not have any known institutionalized practice of geomancy (*fengshui*) with professionals skilled in selecting sites for buildings and graves, it is interesting that many of these graves are placed in similar locations. Many Hui graveyards and tombs are on the sides of hills with a stream or plain below. The most notable example is the graveyard and *gongbei* complex at North Mountain, in Linxia, Gansu. Following their own Islamic customs, Hui arrange their graves on a north-south axis, with the entrance to tombs almost always to the south. The body lies with the head to the north, the feet to the south and the face turned west, toward Mecca.

Near the famous Bell Tomb of a Muslim saint buried outside Canton (see Chapter 6), there is a tombstone for the “Pure and True Religious Leader Ma Ahong by the Name of Yunting” (*qing zhen jiaozhang Ma lao abheng zi Yunting*) dated 1939. It is engraved with the following epitaph: “Another Home for Purity and Truth (Islam)” (*qing zhen bieshe*). This marks the graveyard, and the ancestors buried there, as a powerful focal place in the *qing zhen* Hui village.

THE SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT

Shared ideas and rituals illustrate the solidarity of the Hui community and the important role the texts of their faith play in defining ethnic identity. The texts become particularly meaningful during periods of intense socioeconomic change. The years since 1979, not to mention the “10 catastrophic years” (*shimian haojie*) of the Cultural Revolution, have called into question the relevance of Islam, and the nature of Hui identity in Na Homestead. Hui identity has also been expressed and

altered by interaction with recent government policies and renewed participation in the marketplace under the private-responsibility system.

Na Homestead has 5,036 *mu* (805.7 acres) of land under cultivation, planting mainly rice, winter wheat, sorghum, and some fruit in a few orchards. Average land per person is 1.37 *mu* (0.21 acres), and 6.95 *mu* (1.1 acres) per household, somewhat less than in neighboring Han villages. Average grain yield per *mu* in Na Homestead is about 200 kgms., less than the regional average of 238 kgms. Important shifts in the involvement of the local labor force since the private-responsibility system was introduced in 1979 include a significant decline in collective activity and power since the dismantling of the commune, as documented elsewhere in China.⁸¹ In 1978, 27.8 percent of the village population was involved in the labor force. However, by 1984, that figure had grown to 49.6 percent of the village, reflecting pre-1950 levels (see Table 6). Agriculture and husbandry, industry and construction, and small sideline enterprises (such as cottage industries, private shops and food stands, transportation and service industries) are the 3 main sectors. A significant change in sideline industries has absorbed much of the increased labor. While only 1.6 percent of the labor force was involved in these small enterprises in 1978, involvement increased to 16 percent by 1984, slightly less than the 1950 level of 17.6 percent.

In the 113 households studied, 60 people are engaged in sideline businesses, representing 19 percent of the labor force. In 1978, only 1 person was involved in food-related small business, and no one from the village was involved in service or transportation. By 1984, however, 85 people were in the food trade, 26 in service industry, and 24 in transport.⁸² In the food industry, 8 households opened small restaurants in Yanghe township with several others selling *yang zasui*—a traditional Hui spicy stew made from the internal organs of sheep. This surpassed the reported 4 households who operated small restaurants before 1950.⁸³

Participation in the free market and the private-responsibility system has also encouraged Hui in Na Homestead to increase their planting of vegetables and cash crops, significantly higher than 1978 levels (see Table 7). While agricultural income derived from cash crops in 1984 was only half as much as in 1957, it was more than 3 times that of 1978 before the responsibility system was instituted in Na Homestead.

TABLE 6 Change in Labor Force in Na Village since 1949

Year	Popu- lation	Labor Force		Agriculture & Husbandry		Industry & Construction		Private Enterprise		Other	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1950	2,004	985	49.0	607	61.6	55	5.6	175	17.8	148	15.0
1978	3,378	937	27.8	760	81.1	162	17.3	15	1.6	0	0
1984	3,871	1,921	49.6	1,439	74.9	175	9.1	307	16.0	0	0

Source: Adapted from Zhu Yuntao, p. 3.

TABLE 7 Grain, Vegetables, and Cash Crops in Na Homestead since 1957

Year	% Land Planted with Grains	% Agricultural Income from Grain	% Land Planted with Cash Crops	% Agricultural Income From Cash Crops
1957	61.7	33.5	38.3	66.5
1978	91.0	89.6	9.0	10.4
1984	82.2	66.8	17.8	33.2

Source: Zhu Yuntao, p. 5.

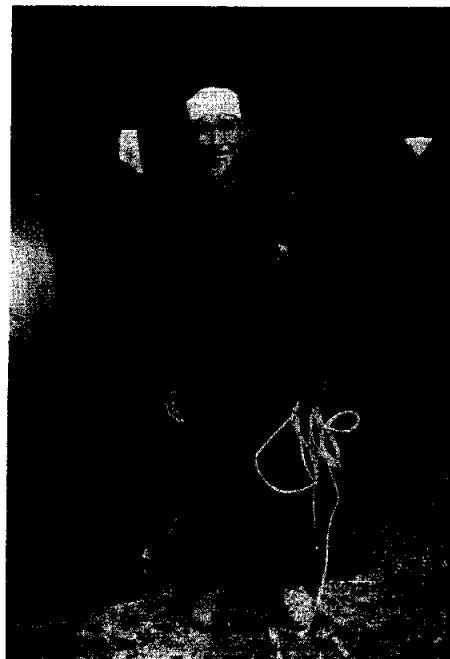
Before 1949, Hui proclivity for growing cash crops in this area was noted by Fan Changjiang. He observed that the opium produced by Han and Hui peasants in the Yanghe area was of a very high quality, but the Han could not make much of a profit from it. The Han smoked too much of it themselves and thus were too weak-willed to gain financially. The Hui, on the other hand, did not smoke opium. Furthermore, their fields produced 120 *liang* per *mu*, whereas Han fields yielded only 70 *liang* per *mu*.⁸⁴ The Hui in this area were prosperous and healthy:

Because the Hui do not smoke opium, their health is good, they are able to endure hardship and share each other's burdens. . . . The Han situation is quite the opposite in comparison, therefore they naturally are not able to compete with the Hui.⁸⁵

ECONOMIC VALUES AND NA ENTREPRENEURSHIP Some Hui complain that they have no alternative but to engage in small business, because the land they have been allotted is too little or too unproductive. Since the



Na Homestead villager, "The longest beard in the village." Northwestern Hui are proud of their Central Asian physical features, which, they believe, mark their Muslim ancestry. Photo: Gladney



Third-generation Hui camel herdsman selling camels in Wuzhong, Ningxia. These are no longer used for transport but are now raised for their pelts and meat. Photo: Gladney

nineteenth-century Hui rebellions, the Hui in Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia were often forced to live in areas with steep mountains and saline flatlands, which Han avoided. While attempts to redress many of these inequities were made during the Land-Reform Campaigns of the early 1950s, some Hui feel that they still have poorer land than Han and are thus compelled to be more interested in business. On his 1980 tour of southern Ningxia's Guyuan district (6 counties) where the Hui are most concentrated (constituting 45.7 percent of the total population in Guyuan and 49.1 percent of Ningxia region's total Hui population), Hu Yaobang remarked that this area was China's most impoverished region. In 1983, the State Council set up a special committee to encourage economic development in Guyuan district, Ningxia, Longxi, and Dingxi counties, Gansu.⁸⁶

Until its large hydraulic works were recently developed, Tongxin county (78.96 percent Hui) was unable to receive any of the water from the nearby Yellow River and remained a barren wasteland. Many of the peasants continue to live in caves built into the sides of loess hills. Though cheaper and cooler than adobe houses, one man explained to me that he would like to move out of his cave house because it was not "modern." Most villagers seek to build houses in their yards and keep the caves for livestock and storage. During a large market-day gathering in Tongxin, a peasant from a nearby all-Hui village said that, instead of doing business at the market, he had come to get his monthly allotment of grain. Because of the previous year's drought, his entire village had no harvest whatsoever. He had come to buy or borrow grain from the government at a reduced price (0.14 yuan a kgm. instead of 0.20+ yuan a kgm. on the open market). He would eventually repay the government with either money or grain, a common practice in Tongxin during drought-stricken seasons. Since he had a family of 12, and received 20 kgms. a month for each person, he picked up 240 kgm. a month. He said over 90 percent of Tongxin's peasants depended on trade and government subsidies for a living. Only 10 percent depended on farming, because the land was just not productive enough. A local doggerel poem depicts the harshness of this area where Hui are concentrated in southern Ningxia:

The wind blows, the stones roll	<i>Fengchui shitou pao</i>
Everywhere is camel grass	<i>Biandi luotou cao</i>
The housetops are so flat you can run races	<i>Fangding neng saipao</i>
There is no water, no one bathes	<i>Meishui bu xizao</i>

Several visits to local Tongxin households disclosed a large amount of sundry and decorative goods produced in Guangzhou and rarely seen in Yinchuan. The main intersection of town lies along the Yinchuan-Guyuan arterial road and is always crowded with young people selling digital watches purchased from southern China and Guangzhou. These items were still a rare commodity in Yinchuan where they were far more expensive. On one occasion, a Hui companion from Yinchuan bought 10 watches for 3 yuan (\$1.00 US) each. Similar watches might cost 30 yuan each in Yinchuan.

The Hui from Na Homestead are also playing an important role in the local free-market economy. Hui operate 70 percent of the new restaurants, food stands, and private sales stalls in the nearby Yongning county seat market area, even though they constitute only 12.6 percent of the population. The Hui from Na Homestead own most of the stands. They also participate in the central free market in Wuzhong city, 30 km. south. There, Hui merchants make up over 90 percent of those doing business in a city that is 95 percent Han. Most of the Hui come into the city to do business from outlying Hui villages, like Dongfeng township, 95 percent Hui. This active entrepreneurial participation is an important aspect of Hui ethno-religious identity. As one Han peasant from Na Homestead remarked, "The Hui are good at doing business; the Han are too honest and can't turn a profit. Han are good at planting, Hui at trade."

Only 2 percent of households in Na Homestead are *wanyuan hu*, that is, reporting an annual income of over 10,000 yuan. While not a large percentage compared to some areas in China, it is unusual in a fairly poor Hui area. The prestige and influence of these *wanyuan hu* is significant. Na Jingling, the most successful of Na Homestead's new entrepreneurs, made his fortune through setting up a popsicle (*binggun*) factory in 1982. A former mechanic for the commune, he and his brother have now moved into the transportation and construction bus-

ness. They have recently entered into a contract with two other investors to build an "Islamic" hotel in Yinchuan city at a cost of 1.4 million yuan. The hotel will feature a restaurant and shopping facilities with "Arabic" architecture. "We want a real Hui hotel," his brother said, "not like other Hui restaurants in town where you aren't sure if its *qing zhen*."

The government's encouragement of economic development and market-oriented enterprise among Hui is having an important impact on Han-Hui relations and ethno-religious identity. In several Hui villages in Northwest China, active Hui participation in trade and food businesses has led to faster economic development than their Han neighbors. In Tang Ma village, a Hui and Han village that I visited outside Xining on the road to the Kumbum Tibetan monastery (Taersi) in 1983, there are 2 all-Hui teams and 1 Han team that separated along ethnic lines in 1979. There are 3 private (*geti*) restaurants in the village, all run by Hui and patronized by local residents and tourists who stop on their way to Kumbum. Since 1979, dramatic changes have taken place in Han and Hui economic levels. In addition to running restaurants, Hui began raising cattle in the late 1970s, selling their beef in Xining. Before 1949, the Hui there raised cattle, but in 1956 they were confiscated by the commune as trappings of bourgeois capitalism. As a result of their new-found income, the Hui now have 18 tractors, while the Han only have 3. The village chairman estimates Hui household income to be twice that of the Han.

Recent economic prosperity among rural Hui as a result of favorable government policy and Hui entrepreneurial abilities has led to increased support for religious affairs. Na Jingling, for example, wants to use his profits to help the Hui in Ningxia support the mosque, and build a "really *qing zhen*" Islamic hotel. Other Hui *wanyuan hu* have told me that, because Allah is responsible for their new-found wealth under the new government policies, they should devote some of their profits to promoting Islam and mosque construction. Red posters on the walls in every mosque clearly list by name and amount who has given to the construction projects, with names of these *wanyuan hu* and their donations writ large. More wealthy Hui sometimes complained to me of the pressures brought to bear on them to contribute to the mosque.

捐 献 收 据
Contribution Receipt

同志:

色俩目问候在你上, 你举了虔诚的叶提,
献出了洁净的财帛, 人民币 佰 拾 元
角 0 分, 用在修建清真寺上, 我们祈求
真 主给你吉庆的回赐。

宁夏回族自治区 海原县贾塘公社王塘清真寺

阿訇 主任
一九八五年三月三十一日

CONTRIBUTION RECEIPT

Comrade (Tongzhi):

When this is presented in your presence, carry out your pious work (*qiancheng de yeti*) and contribute spotless money (*jiejing de caibo*), renminbi ___ hundred ___ ten ___ yuan ___ mao ___ fen, when used in building the mosque, we will pray for Allah (*Zhenzhu*) to return to you auspicious favor (*jijing de huici*).

Ningxia Hui

Haiyuan County Jiatan Commune Wangtan Mosque
Autonomous Region

Ahong _____ Director

19 ___ year ___ month ___ day

FIGURE 2 A Mosque Contribution Receipt

While I was in Tongxin on one Friday prayer day, a venerable Hui with a long white beard grabbed my arm. He strongly encouraged me to give my weekly *nietie* (alms) to the mosque. He desisted only when he was satisfied that I was a non-Muslim and a foreigner. Lacking adequate funds to restore their own mosques, Hui frequently send out itinerant travelers to request donations. These travelers give receipts with official seals and the admonition: "We will pray for Allah (*Zhenzhu*) to return auspicious favor to you" (see Figure 2). The pressure brought to bear on Hui to use their new-found wealth for higher purposes is clearly set forth in the following text painted next to the doorway of the *dadian* (main prayer hall) at a mosque just 20 km. south of Na Homestead:

"SUGGESTIONS FOR MUSLIMS"

We suggest that Muslims practice the 5 tenets regularly; do not put off today until tomorrow, tomorrow to the next day.

When natural and national disasters come, it is too late to regret. Days and months pass, and the truth is lost.

In a glance, children become adults, and adults become elderly; very many people do not consider death (*wuchang*).

Everyday you clean and order your house to establish its future but abandon prayer, neglect to give alms, and are very stingy.

You have 100, but want 1,000, you get it and desire 10,000. Your desire is uncontrollable; do not know satisfaction; the more you have the more you desire.

Today you go east, tomorrow west; mind and body are never at peace. Anxiety becomes happiness, happiness becomes anxiety, anxiety is great, happiness is limited.

You don't practice the prayers on time; they are postponed until tomorrow. Because of laziness, you waste forever (10,000 years), what a pity!

You are a created person; why not consider the results more carefully? Maintaining the prayers will not interfere with your daily life.

Because of contentedness you disregard the lessons, committing myriad errors. If you were very wealthy, but you died suddenly, your wealth would be gone forever.

Money hoarded amounts to nothing; in the end even a little bit can't be taken with you; you build many houses, but in daily life you have need of only one.

Stocking up on food, you can only eat to the full one *jin* and a half *liang*; your trunks stuffed with clothes, they amount to nothing; you can only wear one outfit.

Abounding in grace, extreme wealth looks good for a little while: You enjoy it for this life, but, in the afterlife, you certainly will owe a great deal.

MARRIAGE EXCHANGE AND ETHNORELIGIOUS IDENTITY. Marital practices are an important indicator of changing social relations and ethnic solidarity. Growing prosperity in Na Homestead has led to an increase in the bride wealth given at marriage and a decrease in intermarriage with the Han. In Na Homestead, there were many Hui-Han intermarriages during the Cultural Revolution when young Hui were strongly encouraged to marry Han as an indication that they rejected "local ethnic chauvinism" (*difang minzu zhuyi*). With the increasing conservatism in Na Homestead in recent years, however, intermarriages have been rare. The most recent intermarriage occurred in 1984; a Han woman living outside the village on the market street in the Yongning county seat married into a Hui family. This is typical of Hui-Han intermarriage in the northwest. Hui families take in Han women, but rarely permit Hui women to marry out (Chapter 5). The village chairman could remember only one marriage between a Han man and Hui woman, which took place 10 years earlier. A Han villager told me of a 37-year-old Han man who married a 35-year-old Hui woman in 1972. The man converted at marriage and is now regarded as a Hui. He maintains little contact with his Han relatives.

Marriage among the Hui within Na Homestead or with other rural Hui in the vicinity is the norm. Surname endogamous marriage between Na villagers still takes place—almost unheard of among the Han. Government regulations strictly prohibit endogamous marriage with someone who has a common ancestor within 5 generations. As more accurate government records restrict close intermarriage, the *lunzi paibie* system of marking generations by the first character of one's personal name has begun to break down only in the last 2 generations among the Na. The characters Wan, Yu, Zhang, Dian, and Hong mark

the last 5 generations in Na Homestead. Surname endogamy is justified by some Hui to Han who reject this practice as unfilial because, the Hui reason, their surnames are translations of foreign surnames (for example, Ma for Muhammad) and not indicative of familial relations. It is a different matter for Na villagers, however, who trace descent to a single ancestor.

Cross-cousin marriage, as well as marriage between matrilineal parallel cousins (*yibiao xiongmei*), is frequently practiced. The custom of "swapping relatives" (*huandui qin*), where a daughter is exchanged for a brother's son, is common in Na Homestead, as was the case in the venerable Wang Zixiao's family. He gave his daughter in marriage to his brother's son. A survey of 50 young people already married in Na Homestead showed that 4 percent were cross-cousin or matrilineal parallel cousin (*gubiao, yibiao*) marriages, with 8 percent in some kind of familial relationship with their spouses. Since dowry value was increasing throughout the rural areas in China, due to a general increase in rural income, I cannot tell if it correlated with rising surname endogamy. In general, however, Hui dowries tended to be 20-30 percent higher than Han.

Some Hui leaders believe that the preference for endogamous marriages among the Hui has led to mental illness among their offspring (*jin-qin hunbing*). The Na Homestead chairman said that, in 1982, there were 4 cases of mentally handicapped children attributed to too close intermarriage. In one case, 2 malformed children were born to a household where a maternal uncle's (*jiujiu*) daughter was married to a paternal aunt's (*gumu*) son. In another household all 3 children were malformed, with one son dying at childbirth. I often encountered these mentally handicapped children (simply called *xiazi*, "idiots") in Hui villages throughout the northwest.⁸⁷

Hui say mental retardation is a particularly serious problem in areas where certain conservative Islamic orders restrict intermarriage with Hui in other Islamic orders. Membership in various Islamic orders often significantly influences social interaction. While intermarriage between different orders of Hui is common elsewhere in China, in stronger Islamic areas of Northwest China Hui prefer to marry within their own order. This is particularly true of the Jahriyya order, and, in

Ningxia, Shagou, and Banqiao, *menhuan* branch members rarely intermarry.

In Chengdu, Sichuan, I met 3 Hui travelers from the northwest, who were easily marked by their strong Gansu accents, long beards, and distinctive dress. They were on their way to Kunming where they planned to purchase tea; as Rossabi documented, this was an important trade niche of the Hui in this area over 400 years ago.⁸⁸ Bringing the tea back to the northwest, they could sell it at a profit of 1 yuan per half kilo, averaging 300 yuan profit each trip, with 3 trips scheduled per year. Chengdu is a frequent stopping place for travelers from the northwest on their way to the southwest, since it is the most central rail and transportation hub. This accounts for the high proportion of Hui restaurants and the large mosque in the city, despite a relatively small indigenous Hui population. The 3 businessmen complained that the religious fervor (*jiaomen*) at the local mosque was inadequate; they were the only ones at prayer that day. They then discussed their Islamic differences. One was a Gedimu, another a Yihewani, and the last a member of a Jahriyya Sufi order. When I asked if they would allow their children to intermarry, they themselves were somewhat surprised to learn that the Gedimu was willing to marry his child to the Yihewani, but not to the Jahriyya. Neither the Yihewani nor the Jahriyya were willing to let his children marry someone from another order.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND NA NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Ningxia Hui autonomous region was established in 1958 with its present boundaries redrawn in 1976. Since its founding, Hui throughout China have taken an active involvement in its leadership and civic affairs. While the first Party secretary of the region has always been Han, the chairman of the People's Government (Renmin Zhengfu) has always been Hui. Four of the 5 current vice-chairmen are Hui. Concerned to involve different Hui Islamic leaders, the government is represented by influential members of several religious orders. One regional vice-chairman is the acknowledged *murshid* of the Banqiao branch of the Sufi Jahriyya order (see Appendix A). The current leader of the

Shagou Jahriyya branch is a vice-chairman of the Regional Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).⁸⁹

Hui cadre representation in the People's Government and CPPCC exceeds their one-third proportion of the population. Party membership, however, is comparatively much lower than among the Han. While published figures on total Hui participation in the Party are unavailable, Hui membership in the Yanchi county Party was published as 79 out of 4,286 (1.8 percent). Party enrollment among Hui, especially in rural areas, has been a high government priority. A *Ningxia rebao* 8 November 1984 article stressing the importance of encouraging Hui to join the Party in Tongxin county stated that, since 1979, 799 new Party members had enrolled, including 536 new Hui members (67.1 percent). The current low percentage of Hui in the Party is attributed to continuing "leftist influences" that have begun to be corrected only since the 3rd Party Plenum. In order to increase Party enrollment in Tongxin, entrance exams will be held twice a year. In Na Homestead, as noted above, no one has been introduced into the Party since 1976, and membership stands at 1.7 percent of the village.

AUTONOMOUS ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL CONCERNS. As an autonomous region, Ningxia has more jurisdiction over regional affairs than centrally controlled provinces.⁹⁰ A higher percentage of tax revenues are allowed to be used locally rather than turned over to the central government. Production quotas may be set according to local plans. Those minority-affairs policies having the most effect on the Hui relate to the following: religious expression, education, marriage and birth planning, expanded relations with Middle Eastern Muslim nations, and more liberalized economic policies.⁹¹

Greater religious freedom is evident throughout the region in the rapid rebuilding of mosques that were either closed or destroyed during the "Smash-4-Olds" Campaign of the Cultural Revolution and the 1958 Religious System Reform Campaign. The government has spent large sums of money to rebuild and restore famous mosques in Na Homestead (90,000 yuan), Tongxin (800,000 yuan), and Yinchuan's Southgate Great Mosque (over 1 million yuan). Hui are allowed to rebuild mosques

in almost every village where they existed before 1949, as well as in newer areas where Hui have become concentrated. As a result, there are now more mosques in Ningxia than before 1949—almost one in every Hui village.

The shifting religious landscape in the northwest is a direct result of recent nationality reforms that have had an important impact, not only on the Hui, but on the Han majority as well. Many of Ningxia's recently rebuilt 2,132 mosques are visible from the window of the bus as one travels the main arterial from Yinchuan to Jingyuan. On one trip in 1985, I counted well over 100 on either side of the road. While many of these mosques were being built on my first trip through central Ningxia in 1983, there were then few Han temples noticeable. As a response to the rapid rebuilding of Hui mosques, Han have since become actively engaged in rebuilding their temples; many were visible along the highway in 1985. The Han were able effectively to argue the validity of rebuilding their *mazu* and *tudigong* folk religious temples since the Hui had already rebuilt their mosques. It is arguable whether the Han would have been granted the privilege had the Hui not first been able to exploit the opportunity. One Han villager in Qingtongxia said: "The Hui get to rebuild their temples, why can't we? Their temples rise up and block our wind/water alignments (*darao fengshui*, geomantic principles of ecological-ontological order), and the gods are angry that only the Hui spirits have temples built to them."

In newly developed areas where there are mixed Islamic orders among the Hui, conflicts have arisen over obtaining permission to build separate mosques for different orders, instead of the united service in a single mosque that the government encourages. In Shizuishan, Ningxia's northernmost city, there was only one mainly Yihewani mosque before 1949, later destroyed in 1966. When the government donated 90,000 yuan to help rebuild the mosque in 1981, Gedimu, who had migrated to the area in large numbers to engage in the expanding coal industry, claimed they wanted their own mosque. The Yihewani objected and one night pulled down a prayer room the Gedimu had used and planned to convert to a mosque. After much strife and debate, the local government agreed to build a separate Gedimu mosque in October 1982. Increasing numbers of Qadariyya Sufi in the area have now

requested their own mosque. Qadariyya generally worship at the shrines and tombs of their saints, but, because there are no such places in northern Ningxia and Qadariyya numbers are growing, they want to worship in their own mosque. The city government is reluctant to approve the request because the absolute number of Qadariyya in the area is still too small.

Occasionally, participants in these disputes attempt to resolve their differences in the streets. To help settle the conflicts, the regional government often brings in respected religious leaders from the city as mediators. While local cadres say these conflicts give them many headaches in their nationality work (*minzu gongzuo*), they have as yet not led to any widescale violence. The conflicts seem to have remained at the local, intra-factional level, and I have not heard of any of them being directed toward the local government or Han neighbors.⁹² Instead, I have witnessed the concern by local government cadres and Chinese Islamic Society leaders to attempt to work out the differences without enforcing any rigid policies. To avoid sectarian struggles, they encourage the policy of "Each to his own matter, mutual unity, and mutual non-interference" (*Ge gan ge de, huxiang tuanjie, bu bu gan she*).⁹³ The existence of these conflicts and the flexibility on the part of the government to help resolve them illustrates that the state policy of freedom of religion, though not without its problems, is having a significant effect in the countryside.

EDUCATION. In addition to allowing from 2 to 4 students (*halifat*) to train privately in each mosque, the government has approved and funded 2 Islamic schools (*yixueyuan*) in Yinchuan and Tongxin. Plans were being drawn up in early 1985 to establish a large Islamic seminary and mosque complex outside the West Gate of Yinchuan near Luo village. The Number 2 Northwest Nationalities Institute was established in 1984 to raise the educational level of Hui in Ningxia. A special 1-year preparatory course for Hui students (*minzu yubei ban*) at Ningxia University was established to raise Hui students to college level. There are Hui high schools in Yinchuan, Lingwu, Tongxin, and Guyuan, as well as numerous Hui primary schools. The curriculum of these schools is the same as in Han public schools, using materials published by the Edu-

cation Bureau. The main difference is that entrance requirements for middle schools and colleges are lower for Hui, and no pork is served in the student cafeterias.

BIRTH PLANNING. The Hui minority in Ningxia follow a "1-2-3" policy: allowing 1 child in the city, 2 children in the countryside, and 3 children in mountainous or desert areas. In 1985, a law was promoted that minorities above 1 million population in urban areas would have to follow the birth-planning policies of 1 child only. In general, however, the Hui are often allowed to have at least 1 child more than their Han neighbors. This leads to not a little resentment among Han, who often feel the Hui are just the same as they and should not be given any advantages.

In rural areas where population is sparse, Hui have been known to have even more than their allotted children. One man from a village outside Guyuan told me his wife was pregnant with her 9th child. However, with the support of the ahong and use of the mosque for disseminating policy, birth planning has been judged relatively successful among most Hui. Infractions by the Hui tend to be judged more lightly than among the Han. I knew of one Hui village chairman with 3 sons and another child on the way in early 1985. A Hui villager north of Yinchuan had 3 daughters and was officially allowed to have 1 more child in order to see if he might have a son. He began spending every morning in the mosque praying for a son.

Perhaps because of this flexibility among the Hui, I heard of no female infanticide in Na Homestead or elsewhere in Ningxia. Hui villagers claimed that their Han neighbors practiced it, and said they occasionally found Han female infants in the fields. Hui youth are permitted to get married 2 years earlier than Han, Hui girls at age 18 and boys at 20. I encountered several Hui weddings, however, where the bride was from 14 to 16 years old.

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC EXCHANGE. The Ningxia government is interested in promoting closer ties with foreign Muslim countries to foster economic development. In a 14 November 1984 *China Daily* interview Hei Boli, the Hui Chairman of the Ningxia People's Government, stated:

The delegations of the World Islamic Association that came to our region are quite impressed by the sincerity of the Party's policy of guaranteeing freedom of religious belief. Our Muslims are true believers and pay meticulous attention to Muslim customs.⁹⁴

In another article, Ye Zhikun, director of the region's economic commission, stated: "Ningxia, the home of Chinese Muslims, expects loans from Arab countries to help develop foodstuffs and light industrial goods for the Muslim world."⁹⁵ The government has sponsored several economic and "Muslim Friendship" delegations to the Middle East to correspond with the Hajj, with the delegations including important religious leaders and well-known ahong fluent in Arabic. Delegations of foreign Muslim government and religious leaders have been hosted by Ningxia and escorted to visit historic mosques in Yinchuan, Na Homestead, and Tongxin. Hui "Muslim Construction Teams" formed by collectives and encouraged by the government have been sent to Third World Muslim nations on state development projects.⁹⁶ While many of the workers are Han, several leaders are Hui and some translators are Hui trained in the Islamic schools. The son of the current leader of the Jahriyya Shagou branch, trained in Arabic at Beijing's Foreign Language Institute, spent 2 years (1984-1986) in Yemen as the translator for a Chinese development project. He sought the roots of China's Naqshbandiyya Sufism in Yemen, where it is thought Ma Mingxin studied in the seventeenth century.⁹⁷

This exchange with the outside Muslim world and visits by foreign Muslims to Hui villages are having a profound impact on Hui ethno-religious self-understanding. Na villagers told me that they were deeply impressed by the religious power and prestige of Islam after the first visit of foreign Muslims to their village in May 1984. Previously, they had no idea that foreign Muslims enjoyed such high levels of prestige and education. The excitement with which these foreign Muslims are greeted was evident to the Protestant missionary George Andrew (perhaps because they did not welcome him in the same way):

Itinerant mullahs from Persia, Arabia, India, Turkey, and Egypt are found, from time to time, visiting the Hwei-hwei [Hui]. . . . These visiting mullahs are greeted with great respect by the Hwei-hwei, who purchase from them copies of the Koran, prayer-caps and turbans. They not only provide them

with the necessities of life, but also bring them free-will offerings of money. They are escorted from one Hwei-hwei community to the next with great pomp and ceremony.⁹⁸

Religious knowledge of the Islamic world outside China is very limited among Na villagers and Hui throughout the northwest. I often asked if they knew of the religious differences in the Iraq-Iran conflict or the identity of Khomeini. Few people outside the city knew. Two young *halifat* in a mosque near Na Homestead who had studied in the *madrassah* for 4 years could not tell me why they faced west to pray. Few knew the country where Muhammad's birthplace is located. Mecca was generally only known to be in Arabia, the *Ablabo* country west of China.

Now that Hui are becoming increasingly exposed to the Islamic world through visiting delegations and returned work teams or *hajji*, their awareness of the Islamic world is changing significantly. The Tongxin Mosque Halifat wear colorful silk turbans sent them by friends and relatives working in the Middle East, or given to them by visiting Muslim delegations. While the government hopes for development assistance and increased trade through improved relations with the Middle East, many delegations are interested only in supporting religious development, mosque and *madrassah* reconstruction. In the spring of 1986, an Arab visitor to the Central Mosque in Yinchuan wrote out a check for \$10,000 US to assist its restoration and expansion.

ETHNORELIGIOUS TOURISM. The government is conscious of these unexpected results of its program, but, for the sake of improved international relations and the earning of foreign-exchange currency, it continues to promote travel to Islamic holy sites in China. Prestige associated with historic Islamic sites has led to a growing interest on the part of local cadres in developing "Muslim tourist attractions" in places like Na Homestead. While the mosque leaders are still not supportive of the idea, economic interests are beginning to prevail. Construction was begun in 1986 on an "Islamic Hotel" (*Yisilanjiao bingguan*), featuring Arab and Islamic architectural motifs. Na villagers do not want their mosque to become a tourist site like the South District Mosque in Yinchuan, which sells tickets at the gate to visitors interested in seeing the

new Arab-style complex built in 1982 with government funds. The government's encouragement of tourism to foster better relations with Middle Eastern Muslim nations is an important factor influencing the ethnic identity of Na villagers, who are beginning to conceive of themselves in more international religious terms.⁹⁹ This promotion on the part of the state is clearly evident in the introductory paragraph of the glossy pictorial *The Religious Life of Chinese Muslims*, published in English, Chinese, and Arabic, by the state-sponsored Chinese Islamic Association:

It is our wish that this pictorial will contribute to strengthening the unity among the Muslim community of China and encouraging leading Islamic personages and the rest of the Muslim community to do their bit in the socialist modernization of their motherland. At the same time, we hope this pictorial will help promote understanding and friendship between Chinese Muslims and their friends elsewhere in the world.¹⁰⁰

TRUTH WITHIN PURITY: EXPRESSIONS OF NA IDENTITY

The influence of recent shifts in government policy and socioeconomic conditions illustrates the importance of Islam in the ethnoreligious identity of the Hui in Na Homestead. To be separated from Islam would be to cut them off from their ancestry. When I asked young Hui why they believed in Islam, the vast majority responded: "Because we are Hui," or "Because we respect our parents and grandparents." To state-sponsored researchers, this indicated a confusion between customs and religion and a "subjective" belief in Islam.¹⁰¹ I would argue, however, that it demonstrates the inextricable place of Islam in Na villagers' identity as Hui.

The interaction between changing government policies and Hui identity illustrates the dialectical relationship between ethnic identity and social context. The implementation of the responsibility system and more liberalized nationality policies was originally intended to stimulate economic development in backward minority areas. These policies allowed the Hui villagers more autonomy. In the context of this more liberalized setting, salient aspects of Hui ethnic identity emerged. These included not only a more active participation in the local market econ-

omy but also a return to a more conservative, revitalized Islam.

Islamic conservatism of Hui villagers is now publicized by the state in its efforts to improve socioeconomic relations with Third World Muslim nations. State-sponsored exposure to these foreign Muslims—in the interest of encouraging economic investment—has led Hui villagers to gain a more international perspective on their faith and has furthered Islamic revival. Liberalized economic and nationality policies have fostered a reexamination of the relation of Islam to Hui identity and economic action by local cadres. At the same time, this reevaluation has allowed the expression of an ethnoreligious identity rerooted in an Islamic heritage and adapted to the local context. The Hui are actively taking advantage of these favorable policies. In the process, their identity and the policies themselves are reformulated and reevaluated.

Islam is an integral part of the identity of Na villagers—not easily distinguished from their ethnic identity. While Stalinist policy may seek assimilation through economic development and modernization, attempting to strip away Shelley's "loathsome mask" to get to the "pure" individual underneath, among the Hui just the opposite has been found to be true. As Hui continue to prosper and develop, they have become even more interested in their ethnoreligious roots. This does not represent an idealized nativism. Rising Hui interest in their Islamic and Central Asian heritage has led, dialectically, to a new revitalized identity. Instrumentalist approaches, such as Leo Despres's definition of ethnicity as a "mask of confrontation"¹⁰² are helpful for understanding opposition and symbolic representation, but in this case the masks are not easily removed or affixed. Interestingly enough, while seeking to employ a Stalinist policy of ethnicity that in theory should lead to the assimilation of minorities, the state, by registering the Hui as a nationality whose basic religion is Islam, has to some degree institutionalized and objectified this ethnoreligious identity. This local village now sees itself as part of a national imagined community that the state has helped to define. Policies that make a radical distinction between ethnicity and religion will serve only to alienate northwestern Hui from participation in the broader society.

While the renewed meaningfulness of Islam to the Hui might represent for some a fundamentalist revival of fanatical proportions, I argue

that the unique ethnoreligious identity of these Hui communities reflects a return to ethnic roots—a rerooting, rather than a fanatic revival of Islam. The moral authority and purity (*qing*) of their identity as Hui is intimately tied to the truth (*zhen*) and authenticity of their religious heritage. Hui are motivated to take advantage of liberalized government economic and nationality policies in order to further express their understanding of *qing zhen* and its implication for their lives.