

Inquiry into Coexistence Based on the Idea of ‘Asian Islam’

Final Report of the Program

**“The Idea of Coexistence and its Practices in Asian Islam based on Sufism”
(Asian History Research Project conducted by the JFE 21st Century Foundation)**

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Inquiry into Coexistence Based on the Idea of ‘Asian Islam’

Editor’s Note

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We started our project titled “The Idea of Coexistence and its Practices in Asian Islam based on Sufism” under the auspices of the Asian History Research Project conducted by the JFE 21st Century Foundation in January 2019. This project aims to promote a new notion of “Asian Islam,” whose main basis is found in Sufism, and contribute toward changing the general image of Islam, which has been perceived as being violent and aggressive. This negative image mainly originates from the fact that mass media only concentrates on and overemphasizes the acts of terrorism, wars, and civil wars destroying the Islamic world, overlooking the peaceful daily life of Muslims. This project tentatively names this negative image as that of “Arab Islam,” which is primarily based on strict observance of the commandment of Islamic law. The project juxtaposes the image of love, peace, and coexistence with the image of enmity, violence, and hostility.

Sufism has often been translated as “Islamic mysticism.” However, most of the contemporary specialists of Sufi studies have raised questions concerning the validity of this translation¹. I have proposed a “three-axis framework of Sufism,” which is made up of ethical, mystical, and popular axes². It is well known that Sufism was a part of mainstream thought, at least during the pre-modern Islamic era. Even in the modern and contemporary period, Sufism still occupies a central role in the so-called “marginal” Islamic world, which can be nearly equated with the non-Arabic world. I believe that it is important to utilize this heritage of cultural coexistence in the contemporary world. In this project, we concentrated on Asia, the continent to which Japan belongs. This is the reason we named our topic “Asian Islam.” Here “Asian Islam” refers to a type of Islam that (1) is primarily based on Sufism (often side by side with Islamic Jurisprudence); (2) has spread in the Asian Islamic world, except the Middle East, which is sometimes referred to as “West Asia”; and (3) has a basic idea of cultural coexistence, which is found among the believers of various religions and sects. Sufism, right from its origin, has emphasized inner spirituality,

¹ For example, see [Ernst 1997: xvii; Chittick 2000: 1-2].

² See [Tonaga 2006].

rather than outer commandments. This is why it is often said that Sufism played an important role in spreading Islam in the “marginal” world, including Southeast Asia and South Asia, where traditional spirituality spread without Islamic commandments. It is logical to assume that it was Sufism’s emphasis on inner spirituality that enabled the local people to accept Islam. We can also assume that Sufism created a new religious attitude, which we have come to call “Asian Islam” in this project. This new religious attitude bore the wisdom of cultural coexistence with other religious traditions, for the local people had their own religious traditions before the arrival of Islam.

We selected the following countries to verify the validity of our notion of “Asian Islam”: (1) Indonesia, which is the largest country in the world with a predominantly Muslim population; (2) Turkey and the Balkans, which were at the center of the Ottoman Empire; and (3) China, which has a Muslim population of over 20 million. In these countries, the idea of cultural coexistence, based on Sufism, and the movements of cultural coexistence, based on saint veneration, have flourished greatly.

The project was conducted by four specialists. They are: TONAGA Yasushi of Kyoto University, a researcher of Islamic studies (particularly Sufi studies), who led the project; ARAI Kazuhiro of Keio University, a historian of Southeast Asia (in particular Indonesian Islam); Thierry ZARCONE of Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, an anthropologist and historian of Turkic (Turkish and Central Asian) Islam; and NAKANISHI Tatsuya of Kyoto University, a historian of Chinese Islam.

This special feature titled “Inquiry into Coexistence Based on the Idea of ‘Asian Islam’” is an outcome of this joint project. The study has a total of four articles. The first article, titled “Islam of Mercy and Compassion,” is written by TONAGA Yasushi. The article begins with a general survey of cultural coexistence in the Islamic creed and history, and then goes on to discuss Sufi theory and practices. This is followed by a depiction of the case study of Indonesia. The second article, titled “Interreligious Coexistence and the State: The Problem of the Use of the Word *Kāfir* in Indonesia” is written by ARAI Kazuhiro. As opposed to the first article, this article starts with a concrete case description of Indonesia, dealing with the subject of how to name non-Muslims. The article then continues with a general analysis. The third article, titled “Understanding the Relations between Christians and Bektashis: Interconfessionalism and Supraconfessionalism,” is written by Thierry ZARCONE. In this article, he discusses the relationship that exists between Bektashis and

Christians in Turkey and the Balkans, and analyzes the two facets of this relationship, namely “interconfessionalism” and “supraconfessionalism.” The fourth article, titled “After Criticism of Ma Dexin against Veneration of Saints: Rethinking Chinese Elaboration of Islam,” is written by NAKANISHI Tatsuya. The article deals with the trial of a Chinese Muslim thinker that took place in the 19th century. The article brings out the positive and negative aspects of this trial, which was an attempt to harmonize Muslims and non-Muslims during the Qing Dynasty.

The project proposes a new idea of “Asian Islam” based on Sufism, which can pioneer a new type of Islamic coexistence. All four articles in this special feature discuss this possibility. At the same time, it is important that we do not optimistically overemphasize its possibility. The articles by TONAGA and ARAI, which deal with Indonesian cases, are diligent in pointing out the limitation of their propositions, which are applied only to the respective country, without generalizing them to the entire Islamic world. ARAI’s article also brings out the insufficiency of the role of Sufism in the movement. While what the third article by ZARCONE elucidates is striking and interesting, we cannot easily generalize this harmonious coexistence to the whole of Islamic society, because the case of Bektashi-Christian coexistence could be a marginal case found only in Turkey and the Balkans. The fourth article by NAKANISHI clearly brings out the negative aspects of the so-called “coexistent” movement among religions, which has been responsible for fragmentation in Chinese Muslim society.

It will be our great pleasure if our humble first step in this special feature paves the way for a new research field on cultural coexistence in the Islamic world.

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Islam of Mercy and Compassion

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Abstract

This paper looks at coexistence in Islam and Sufism, and takes Indonesia as a case study. It is divided in three parts. The first part explains the basic idea of cultural coexistence in the Islamic creed and history — the former includes an explanation on the two faces of Allah, anger and love, and the teachings of the Quran on coexistence with non-Muslims; the latter explains the “Protection (*Dhimma*) system” and “*Millet* system” as concrete examples of coexistence. The second part is dedicated to inquiry into coexistence in Sufism — it elucidates the theories of “oneness of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*)” and “oneness of religions (*waḥda al-adyān*),” and the practice of saint veneration as examples. The third part is on inquiry into coexistence in contemporary Indonesia. It introduces the policy for religious equality based on *Pancasila*, the notion of “religious moderation (*Moderasi Beragama*),” that of “Indonesian Islam (*Islam Nusantara*),” and the “Convey Indonesia Program” conducted by Syarif Hidayatullah State University Jakarta; it concludes with the active role of Sufism in this inquiry.

Introduction

Islam has a general image of violence and exclusiveness. That is why we easily imagine that we do not have anything to learn from Islam about coexistence. Islamic society, however, has undergone majority-minority problems and intersect contradiction, and therefore has learned many lessons from its history.

This paper is divided into three sections. In the first section, we provide a rough overview of the Islamic creed and look at the wisdom of coexistence in Islamic history. The second section deals with the wisdom of coexistence in Sufism. In the third section, we will discuss the trial of coexistence based on Islam and Sufism in contemporary Indonesia. I believe the case of Indonesia will give us a good example of the quest for coexistence through “Asian Islam,” which is mainly based on the Indonesian tradition of Sufism and saint veneration.

1. The Bases of Coexistence in Islam

1-1. Two Faces of God in the Islamic Creed

While the God of Judaism is often depicted as the god of anger and jealousy, that of Christianity is ideated as the god of love. The God of Islam, Allah, is often said to have both sides of god, i.e. anger and love. First, we will look at the face of anger. In the notion of Allah, justice (*‘adl*) is considered as important as unity (*tawhīd*). Allah is himself just and commands mankind to be just. When humankind is against this justice, Allah shows his anger (*ghaḍab*), with which mankind is destined to go to hell. Muslims are requested to pay attention to this fact and to live a just life every day. Common Muslims can be said to follow the commandment neither to meet this anger nor to enter hell. The guideline for this justice is a commandment and forms the so-called “six creeds and five pillars.” This commandment is gathered and compiled as Islamic jurisprudence (*sharī‘a*).

There were people who meditated on the anger of Allah. They were ascetics (*zāhid*, pl. *zuhhād*), who appeared in the 8th century. They were fearful of Allah. Fear is called *taqwā*. They fear Allah to contemplate the existence of themselves rather than to avoid punishment in hell in the hereafter. Here, we find the notion of sin, which can be considered to be near to the idea of original sin in Christianity.

Allah has another face of love and salvation. His attribute of *rahma* (mercy or compassion) symbolizes this face of Allah. All the chapters except one of the Quran begin with the passage of “In the name of Allah, the Merciful and the Compassionate (*bism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*).” Ascetics and the first generation of Sufis meditated the *rahma* more deeply. They believe that the existence of Allah Himself is full of mercy and compassion, and they are happy if they are given mercy and compassion. Here appears the notion of thankfulness (*shukr*). Its antonym is infidelity (*kufīr*), whose original meaning is ungratefulness.

A couple of notions of loftiness (*jalāl*) and beauty (*jamāl*) fully shows these two faces of Allah. The two attributes are contrary to each other but are combined in Allah. That is why Allah has both names of the Lofty (*al-Jalīl*) and the Beautiful (*al-Jamīl*). If we adopt the notions of the love of anger and that of love, the Lofty represents the former and the Beautiful represents the latter. While Allah has both sides, the face of love and beauty has been emphasized more. The expression of *ḥadīth*: “Allah said ‘My mercy precedes My anger’” is a good example. This notion of mercy is the basis of the ideal of coexistence among various people in the Islamic world.

1-2. The Teachings of the Quran

Although the word *ta'āyush*, which is often used as an equivalent Arabic word with “coexistence” these days, does not appear in the Quran, we can find some phrases from which we can draw some ideas about the coexistence with the believers of the other religions.

As for those who have not fought against you for your religion, nor expelled you from your homes, God does not prohibit you from dealing with them kindly and equitably. God loves the equitable. (Q60: 8)

shows that the Quran recommends peace if people are not in the fighting situation.

Had your Lord willed, everyone on earth would have believed. Will you compel people to become believers? (Q10: 99)

And say, “The truth is from your Lord. Whoever wills—let him believe. And whoever wills—let him disbelieve”. (Q18: 29)

shows that Islam does not compel the heathen to convert.

Do not insult those they call upon besides God, lest they insult God out of hostility and ignorance. We made attractive to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them of what they used to do. (Q6: 108)

shows the prohibition to the Muslims to insult the heathens.

Today, all good things are made lawful for you. And the food of those given the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. So are chaste believing women, and chaste women from the people who were given the Scripture before you, provided you give them their dowries, and take them in marriage, not in adultery, nor as mistresses. (Q5:5)

shows the legality of food that the people of Scriptures cook and that of marriage with them.

1-3. Wisdom of Coexistence in Islamic History

Based on the basic Islamic creed mentioned in the last section, we will look at how

Muslims have lived together with other religious groups in Islamic history. The Islamic world has a history of coexistence with other groups, albeit perhaps not the ideal equality-based coexistence of today. “Protection (*Dhimma*) system” is a good example. This system guarantees the life, property, and belief of non-Muslims with the conditions that they do not inhibit Islamic beliefs and that they pay tribute to Islamic dynasties. We can estimate that this system was very tolerant at the beginning of the Islamic regime (7th-9th century), especially when we compare it with the Christian treatment of the Jews in the same period. Each religious community was admitted with autonomy because it is believed to have its own jurisprudence based on a received prophecy from God. Therefore, the Islamic administration does not interpose its autonomy.

We can find another example of coexistence in the “*Millet* system” in the Ottoman Empire. *Millet* (Turkish loan word from the Arabic word *milla*) means a religious community. This system worked very well as a principle of coexistence among religious communities when the power of the Ottoman Empire was predominant. Only after its decline (caused by the imperial invasion of the European countries that claimed the protection of the Catholics and Protestants) did the system become incompetent. The notion *millet*, which originally meant a religious community, came to have a connotation of nationalism. This change led to the independence of Greece and Balkan countries from the Ottoman Empire.

2. Coexistence in Sufism

As I mentioned in the first chapter, it is Islamic jurisprudence (*sharī'a*) that is administrated based on Allah’s face of anger and loftiness. Here, Allah is considered to divide between good and evil and to give the rules and order to Muslims. On the contrary, Sufism is based on Allah’s face of love and mercy. Although Sufism is generally translated as “Islamic mysticism,” it also includes an ethical element. Sufism shares this characteristic with *sharī'a*, as both are based on the division between good and evil.

Sufism, however, has a different characteristic from *sharī'a*. This is a mystical element that tends to overcome the dichotomy between good and evil. In the case of Sufism, this mystical element is based on the notion of love, which is called *maḥabba*, *ḥubb*, or *īshq* in Arabic, which is on the same line as Allah’s face of mercy and affection. Mankind loves Allah, and at the same time, is loved by Allah. Here, mankind departs from his own ego and is enfolded by Allah’s love. The experience of annihilation of ego and union with God is called *fanā'*. When they reach

this experience, the seekers of Sufism overcome the dualism and conflict in the world. This is because Sufism has an affinity with the notion of coexistence.

The theory of “oneness of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*)” is the theoretical systematization of this experience. This theory has had a strong influence on the history of Islamic thought throughout the Islamic world. For example, most of the ‘*ulamā*’ were adherents of this theory in the Ottoman Empire. According to this theory, the world should go back to the sole reality, which is called “existence (*wujūd*).” The term “existence” derives from Islamic philosophy, which in turn derives from Greek philosophy. The theory of “oneness of being” claims that only “existence” exists in the world in the real sense of the word and that the phenomenal world appears from the self-segmentalization of this one “existence” with the addition of essence (*māhīya*). We ordinarily imagine that the world is full of conflict between things which are independent from one another. However, if we follow this theory, we can realize that such a conflict is meaningless because there is no independent existence other than “existence” per se.

The theory of “oneness of religions (*waḥda al-adyān*)” has been developed from the theory of “oneness of being.” Although different religions and beliefs exist, the differences among them rely only on superficial rituals and doctrines. The truth behind them, according to the theory of “oneness of religions,” is single. If so, conflict among the communities is meaningless. For example, Dārā Shukūh (d. 1659), a prince of the Mughal Empire, believed that Hinduism and Islam accorded with each other. Because he was among the dignitaries of the empire, which included many Hindus under its control, this theory was not abstract but a realistic idea. He, however, was defeated by his brother, Aurangzeb (d. 1707), and could not become enthroned. That is why he could not conduct the theory as a policy of the empire to the heathens. Aurangzeb, the sixth emperor, and Dārā Shukūh’s brother, exhilarated in the absolute veracity of Islam; disagreeing with the idea of the fundamental accordance of Islam with Hinduism. This is one of the many cases in which the ideal of monistic coexistence, which has continued through history, was not achieved.

Now, we can turn to the topic of saint veneration, which was developed with a deep relationship with Sufism from the middle ages. The difference of religion is often surmounted in the saint veneration. For example, Hindus and Christians often visit the mausolea and tombs of Muslim saints. In addition, we can observe Muslims who visit Hindu or Christian saints. Such phenomena are often observed in countries that include the believers of multi-religions. In Mamluk Egypt (1250-1517), for example, manuscripts show that Muslims often visited the mausolea of Christian

saints. The Egyptian people in those days even venerated the families of ancient Pharaohs as saints.

3. Coexistence in Indonesia

Two billion Muslims live in Indonesia, which is counted as the largest Muslim population in a single country. I would like to focus on Indonesia to investigate the struggle for coexistence in the contemporary Islamic world. Contrary to the case of Pakistan, which is counted as the second largest Muslim population (and determines Islam as the state religion), Indonesia admits six religions' equality in the country's principles called *Pancasila*. The six religions are Islam (the population of its believers occupies 87% of the total population of Indonesia), Protestant (7%), Catholic (3%), Hindu (1.7%), Buddhism (0.7%), and Confucianism (0.05%). The Jokowi government, as of 2020, promotes equal policy among them.

Here, I would like to report my own experience during my stay in Jakarta between November 2019 and February 2020. Television channels continually broadcast mottos such as "Dear Christian friends in Indonesia, Congratulations for Christmas" and "Let us live as friends with all mankind" to promote the celebration of Christmas by Indonesian citizens. They also featured a video of a visit to a Christian church in Bethlehem by Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the State of Palestine and Palestinian National Authority as well as the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). I understood this to be a way to emphasize the harmonious situation between Muslims and Christians.

I also experienced the Day of Imlek, which is the New Year's Day according to the Chinese calendar and at the same time understood as the birthday of Confucius. Television programs streamed the celebration of Imlek as a chance to promote the compatibility between Islam and Confucianism as Christmas between Islam and Christianity.

However, we must pay attention to the fact that the relationships between religions have not always been coexistent. Ex-president Suharto (reign 1968-1998) repeatedly oppressed the Chinese religions. The situation only changed as recently as the turn of the millennium, when the fourth president Abdurrahman Wahid (reign 1999-2001) tried to preserve the religious rights of minorities. Wahid struggled to preserve an open system for Chinese culture in Indonesia. This religious policy was inherited by the present government.

I would also like to report the negative campaign against the celebration of Christmas. Some Indonesian citizens complain of the excessive costs of celebrating

Christmas, a minority religion. We can analyze the present religious situation in contemporary Indonesia as follows: on the one hand, the country has the ideal of religious equality and coexistence; on the other hand, many Indonesian citizens are against this policy. These two tides are competing with each other.

4. Role of Sufism in Contemporary Indonesia

The activities of so-called “Islamic fundamentalists” are increasing and have become a major problem in contemporary Indonesia. A growing number of youngsters are attracted by fundamentalistic organizations such as the Islamic State. The government tries to propose the idea of “moderate Islam (*Islam Moderat*)” to repress the activities of fundamentalists. It is the notion of “religious moderation (*Moderasi Beragama*)” that is closely related to that of “moderate Islam.” This notion is promoted by the Ministry of Religion. A Ministry cleric wrote an article entitled “Importance of Religious Moderation.” The following are excerpts from this article:

Extremism, radicalism, hate speech, and the cracked relationship within the religious societies is the problem which Indonesian people face at the moment. Therefore, the mainstream program of this ‘religious moderation’ is evaluated to be important and will find a chance (to solve the problem)¹.

According to LHS (Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the minister of religion as of September 2019 when this article was written), (religious) moderation obliges us not to fight against the extremists, but to hug, preserve and become a friend with them².

Nahdlatul Ulama, the biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia, proposed a new idea of “*Islam Nusantara* (Indonesian Islam)” in 2015. This is the argument that Indonesia has its own Islam based on the Indonesian cultural tradition as opposed to the *sharīʿa*-oriented (Islamic law-oriented) or *fiqh*-oriented (Islamic jurisprudence-oriented) Islam bruited by Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, although this idea admits the universality of Islamic law itself. When the modern era came, Sufism and saint veneration were harshly attacked mainly in the Middle Eastern, especially

¹ Tarmizi Tohor, “Pentingnya Moderasi Beragama (Importance of Religious Moderation),” <<https://kastara.id/13/09/2019/pentingnya-moderasi-beragama/>> (browsed on 25 October, 2020.)

² *Ibid.*

the Arab world. The main critics are like “Sufism is against Islamic law,” “Sufism is a heretical deviation from the original Islam,” and “Sufism is a kind of vernacular superstitions.” However, in Indonesia, especially in Jawa Island, people have continued to venerate “*wali songo* (nine saints),” and such saint veneration (as well as Sufism) has been the basis of Indonesian Islam. The idea of “*Islam Nusantara*,” which claims a unique and independent understanding of Islam, is harmonious with the notion of “*Moderasi Beragama*.”

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly supports the policy of “*Moderasi Beragama*.” A good example is that it promoted the “Convey Indonesia Program” through cooperation with Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. The main aim of this program is also the promotion of moderate Islam in order to oppose the escalation of “*Islam Radikal* (radical Islam).” “*Islam Radikal*” is equal with the aforementioned “*Islam Ekstreme* (Extreme Islam)” and these terms are used to point to so-called Islamic fundamentalism. The main characteristic of this project is to promote moderate Islam through the education program to the youngsters, who are apt to join the movement of Islamic fundamentalism, and their teachers in the schools. Sufism is one of the principal columns of this program.

Let us move on to the topic of Sufism itself in contemporary Indonesia. We can find many lectures, talks, essays, and articles on Sufism on the internet. The following are some examples:

Terrorism begins from the anger... This is inner illness which we must avoid. Sufism is an oasis to the modern mankind who are trapped in hedonism, consumerism, materialism, and radicalism³.

The illness of terrorism begins from *fiqh*-oriented understanding of Islam. Such an understanding of those with ‘only *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence)’ easily makes it radical because *fiqh* is [only] in black-and-white. Therefore, a way to remove somebody from the origin of extremism is the well-balanced understanding of Islamic jurisprudence with Sufism and ‘*tarekat* (Sufi orders).’ If one based himself on the understanding of Sufism, he will feel the freshness and the inner (spirituality).⁴

³ KH Ali M. Abdillah, “Tasawuf, Oase Spiritualitas di Zaman Modern (Sufism, Spiritual Oases in the Modern Era),” <<https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/82776/tasawuf-oase-spiritualitas-di-zaman-modern>> (browsed on 26 October, 2020.)

⁴ *Ibid.*

From the second citation, we can easily understand that they propose the Indonesian understanding of Islam based on both Sufism (and Sufi orders) and Islamic jurisprudence, contrary to Saudi understanding of Islam based only on Islamic jurisprudence. This proposal overlaps with the aforementioned proposal of “*Islam Nusantara*.”⁵

Conclusion

I mentioned the term *rahma* which means mercy or affection at the beginning of this article. This is the key term to understand Allah. This is used as the antonym of *ghaḍab* which means anger. The former endorses Sufism and the latter Islamic jurisprudence, both of which are the two cores of Islam. Modern and contemporary Islamic society emphasized the latter, while the former seems to be disesteemed. Islamic jurisprudence is based on the strict distinction between good and evil. In the pre-modern Islamic world, the “Protection (*Dhimma*) system,” which can be understood as coexistence with discrimination, worked out. On the contrary, I believe if we have something to learn from coexistence in the modern and contemporary Islamic world, we can draw wisdom from Sufism.

Before closing this article, I would like to mention the concept of “Islam of Love (*Islam Cinta*).” Haidar Bagir (1957-), an Islamic thinker and publisher in Indonesia, proposed this concept. He is conducting the educational and publishing program called “‘Islam of Love’ Movement (*Gerakan Islam Cinta*).” His “Islam of Cinta” means the aforementioned understanding of Islam based on the notion of *rahma* (mercy). This understanding is based on Sufism. Sufism is raised as a counterpart to Islamic jurisprudence, which is related to the notion of *ghaḍab* (anger). When he explains the concept of “Islam of Love,” Bagir sometimes interchanges the expression with the expression of *kasih sayang*. *Kasih* means cherish and caress, and *sayang* means lament with those who suffer in mind and body.

In the contemporary Islamic world, we can find tendencies to make much of mercy and affection; not to beat our enemies but embrace them. I believe there will be an ideal coexistence based on Islamic wisdom in the future of such tendencies.

⁵ Here we should pay our attention to the fact that they do not seem to promote this idea to the general Islamic world but limit themselves within Indonesia. This is why we cannot conclude that this proposal has strong influence in the Islamic world at the moment.

**Interreligious Coexistence and the State:
The Problem of the Use of the Word *kāfir* in Indonesia**

ARAI Kazuhiro

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Abstract

One of the problems of a nation state is how to address religious minorities, because such addresses often imply negative images of “others.” To that end, Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, decided in the 2019 annual conference that the term *kāfir* (Arabic for “nonbeliever”) should not be used to denote non-Muslim Indonesian citizens in the public space. The subsequent debate on the matter highlights the relationship between Islam and the nation state: while nobody had questioned the equality of all citizens, the decision needed to be justified from a religious point of view. The implementation of such a decision in other Muslim-majority nation states may lead to followers of different religions coexisting together.

Introduction

If one considers the issue of coexistence among believers of different religions, one problem is how to address the believers of other religions because such terms of address often imply negative images of “others.” “Infidels” and “pagans” are among the words often used in English to mean “non-believers,” but it is not appropriate to use them in contemporary society because of their negative connotations. In Islam, the word *kāfir* (in Arabic, “non-believers”) is such a word. The use of words in daily life or in public spaces to address non-Muslims may cause a problem. In what situations can the use of such words be justified or criticized within a Muslim-majority nation-state? This article discusses the interreligious coexistence in a nation-state, focusing on the recommendation of Nahdlatul Ulama (henceforth NU), the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, not to use the word *kāfir* when addressing non-Muslims.

The Term *kāfir* and the Problems of its Use

Kāfir is an Arabic term that originally meant “obliterating,” “covering,” or

“ungrateful.” In the Qur’an, the term *kāfir* is used to mean “concealing God’s blessings” and “ungrateful to God.”¹ These days, it is used to designate “infidels,” “unbelievers,” or more generally “non-Muslims.” Since it appears many times in the Qur’an, the word is used frequently in religious sciences such as theology, Islamic jurisprudence, and others to denote “non-Muslim.” In this context, the word *kāfir* is a technical term that need not imply a sense of contempt.

However, careless use of the word in the real world can result in serious problems. For example, it was found out in early 2020 that a boy scout coach instructed the students yell “Islam yes, kafir-kafir no,” in the Timuran primary school, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A mother of a student was surprised to learn this and protested it. The matter went viral on social media and was finally covered by national media. This has become a major issue because it is related to SARA (Suku, Agama, Ras, Antargolongan, or ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup relations), a very delicate issue in Indonesia. The governor of Yogyakarta, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, expressed regret regarding the matter, saying, “There is no kafir in Indonesia.”² The word *kāfir* is not deemed a neutral word, at least in contemporary Indonesian society.

The Recommendation by NU at the National Congress 2019

It is likely that the “Yogyakarta case” was covered widely by the media because the use of *kāfir* had been under debate in the previous year. It started with the decision by NU at the National Congress 2019, held from 27 February to 1 March, 2019, at Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al Azhar, the City of Banjar, West Java, where after discussions, NU issued official recommendations, one of which was on the use of the word *kāfir*, such that in the system of the nation-state and citizenship there is no term such as *kāfir* (*tidak dikenal istilah kafir*): Every citizen has the same position and rights under the Constitution.³ Abdul Moqsih Ghazali, the chair of the Bahtsul Masail Maudluyiyah (discussion of thematic issue) session in which the matter was discussed, said that some Kiais (Muslim religious scholars) expressed the opinion

¹ “Kāfir,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2nd Edition*.

² Wijaya Kusuma, “Pembina Pramuka Ajarkan Siswa SD Yogyakarta Yel Berbau SARA, Sri Sultan: Di Indonesia Tak Ada Kafir,” Kompas.com 2020/1/14 <<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/01/14/17442791/pembina-pramuka-ajarkan-siswa-sd-yogyakarta-yel-berbau-sara-sri-sultan-di?page=all>> (accessed 22 October 2020).

³ “Ketum PBNU Serahkan Rekomendasi Hasil Munas pada JK,” nu.or.id 2019/3/1 <<https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/103198/ketum-pbnu-serahkan-rekomendasi-hasil-munas-pada-jk>> (accessed 24 August 2020).

that the use of the term *kāfir* may hurt the feeling of non-Muslim residents in Indonesia. Since the use of word may contain an element of “theological violence,” Kiais recommended that the term *kāfir* not be used, and instead the words *Muwathininun* (a loan word from Arabic meaning “citizens”) or *warga negara* (“citizens” in Indonesian) be used, indicating that their status is equal to that of Muslim citizens. This does not mean, however, that NU will erase the word *kāfir* from the Qur’an or *hadiths*; the decision applies only to non-Muslim Indonesian citizens.⁴

This kind of decision is not new to the NU. At the National Congress in 1984 in Situbondo, it was decided that there were three kinds of brotherhood in nation-states that had to be knit together: they were 1. brotherhood among believers of the same faith (*persaudaraan seiman*), 2. brotherhood among citizens (*ukhuwah wathaniyah*), and 3. brotherhood among mankind (*ukhuwah insaniyah*). The decision in this instance concerns national brotherhood.⁵ Earlier, the term *kāfir* was discussed from the perspective of theology at the NU Congress in 1930. This time, however, the discussion was from the perspective of the nation-state (Indonesia). Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU) chairman, Sulton Fathoni, said that after 89 years, the discussion of the term had become complete.⁶

Responses from Various Parties

The recommendation by NU prompted various groups to express their opinions on this matter. Reactions from other religious organizations (besides Islamic ones) are basically positive, or at least not negative. Gomar Gultom, the general secretary of the Association of Indonesian Churches (Persekutuan Gereja Indonesia), says, “we do not want to accuse the term *kāfir* in the Holy Scripture if there is such a word in it. However, in a plural society, and from the perspective of true humanity, it is appropriate that we spread understanding in order to appreciate each other more.”⁷ The Supreme Council of Indonesian Hinduism (Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia)

⁴ M Rosseno Aji. “5 Hasil Munas Alim Ulama NU: Soal Sebutan Kafir sampai Bisnis MLM” Tempo.co 2019/3/2 <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1181081/5-hasil-munas-alim-ulama-nu-soal-sebutan-kafir-sampai-bisnis-mlm>> (accessed 22 August 2020).

⁵ Jabbar Ramdhani. “Penjelasan PBNU soal Rekomendasi ‘Jangan Sebut Kafir ke Non-muslim” detiknews 2019/3/2 <<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4451174/penjelasan-pbnu-soal-rekomendasi-jangan-sebut-kafir-ke-non-muslim>> (accessed 23 August 2020).

⁶ Andri Saubani. “Hari Hargai Keputusan NU dan Hentikan Polemik Istilah Kafir,” republik.co.id 2019/3/5 <<https://republika.co.id/berita/pnvdqg409/mari-hargai-keputusan-nu-dan-hentikan-polemik-istilah-kafir>> (accessed 4 October 2020).

⁷ Ahmad Faiz Ibnu Sani. “Ragam Tanggapan Soal Usul NU Menghapus Istilah Kafir” Tempo.co 2019/3/3 <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1181282/ragam-tanggapan-soal-usul-nu-menghapus-istilah-kafir>> (accessed 22 August 2020).

also supports the recommendation of the NU because it strengthens the sense of unity of the nation.⁸ The Representative of Indonesian Buddhists (Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia) seems uninterested in the matter, saying that it had not considered the term problematic in the first place. According to Rusli Tan, the spokesman of the organization, it is not pertinent for Buddhists to demand that others respect them, for whether they are respected or not, it is karma.⁹ Ung Sendana L Linggaraja, the chairman of the High Council of Indonesian Confucianism (Majelis Tinggi Agama Konghucu Indonesia) welcomed the recommendation, saying that he feels uncomfortable when he hears the word *kāfir* even after his Muslim friends explained the meaning of *kāfir*.¹⁰ Thus, the organizations of various religions basically appreciate the NU's recommendation because it facilitates the brotherhood (*persaudaraan*) among the people.

The reactions from the Muslim side varied. The Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Islam Indonesia, henceforth MUI) does not seem to consider this matter a major issue, calling for Muslims not to be caught up strongly in polemics. According to KH Zainut Tauhid Sa'adi, the Vice General Chairman (Wakil Ketua Umum) of the MUI, the decision of the NU must be respected because it is a result of Collective Ijtihad, based on evidence and consideration for the welfare of the people. He also said that the result of the Ijtihad at this time is within the domain of the difference of particulars (*furū' iyya*) and not that of the knowledge of the basic tenets of Islam (*uṣūl al-dīn*). Difference of opinion within the Muslim community is inevitable and must be accepted as the result of the institution of Ijtihad. It (i.e., the difference) is not forbidden, but on the contrary is encouraged.¹¹ Although the idea of not using the word *kāfir* in the public space seems at first glance to be the result of liberal thinking, the MUI, an organization known for anti-liberal stances, accepts the decision of the NU as the result of the interpretation of the faith.

On the other hand, the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, henceforth FPI), usually recognized as a radical Islamist group, is critical of the recommendation. Munarman, the spokesman of FPI, says that it is not pertinent to

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Nashih Nashrullah. "Soal Istilah Kafir, Matakini: Kurang Nyaman Mendengarnya," *republika.co.id* 2019/3/4 <<https://republika.co.id/berita/pnungw320/soal-istilah-kafir-matakini-kurang-nyaman-mendengarnya>> (accessed 4 October 2020).

¹¹ Ichwan/Anam. "MUI Imbau Umat Tak Berpolemik Soal Penyebutan 'Kafir'" *mui.or.id* 2019/3/4 <<https://mui.or.id/berita/25409/mui-imbau-umat-tak-berpolemik-soal-penyebutan-kafir/>> (accessed 22 August 2020).

compare the concept of *kāfir* with that of citizenship. The concept of *kāfir*, according to him, was born more than one thousand years ago, before the independence of Indonesia. The word and the concept of *kāfir* do not constitute hate speech or discrimination, but is a technical word given by Allah, which means one who shuts his/her eyes to the righteousness of Islam brought to us by way of the Prophet.¹²

In addition, Fahri Hamza, the Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives (wakil ketua DPR), says that as the word *kāfir* is from the Qur'an, it is not a letter of the law that can be amended. It is difficult, according to him, if Muslims feel inferior about their own faith.¹³ The reaction by FPI and Fahri Hamza indicates that some critics misunderstood the intention of NU and expressed their opinion as if NU had tried to change the words in the Qur'an, *hadiths*, and theological discussions.

On this matter, Yunahar Ilyas, the leader of Muhammadiyah, one of the two major Muslim organizations in Indonesia, says that the word *kāfir* is not to be used for non-Muslims at the level of society or nation, but it is accepted in the context of theology. Nevertheless, he continued, the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board must explain its intention to society to avoid misunderstandings.¹⁴

Political figures generally welcomed the decision. For example, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) says that the attitude of the NU is in harmony with theirs: The equality among citizens is the principle of the unity of Indonesia, and the NU's recommendation is its manifestation.¹⁵ The presidential election campaign team of Jokowi, the incumbent and a candidate for re-election, states that the recommendation of the NU could decrease political tensions with the election closing in because people often called others *kāfirs*. Maman Imanulhaq, the director of his campaign team, says that there is no second-class citizen regardless of religion.¹⁶ At that time, the campaign for the presidential election was going on,

¹² Fikri Arigi. "FPI Kritik Cara Berpikir NU yang Usul Sebutan Kafir Dihapus" Tempo.co 2019/3/3 <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1181190/fpi-kritik-cara-berpikir-nu-yang-usul-sebutan-kafir-dihapus>> (accessed 22 July 2020).

¹³ Pebriansyah Ariefana / Bhayangkara, Chyntia Sami. "Pro Kontra Penghapusan Panggilan Kafir untuk Non Muslim" suara.com 2019/3/7 <<https://www.suara.com/news/2019/03/07/073000/pro-kontra-penghapusan-panggilan-kafir-untuk-non-muslim>> (accessed 17 July 2020).

¹⁴ Andi Nur Aminah. "PP Muhammadiyah: Istilah Kafir Itu Lihat Konteksnya," republik.co.id 2019/3/3 <<https://republik.co.id/berita/pnsusd384/pp-muhammadiyah-istilah-kafir-itu-lihat-konteksnya>> (accessed 4 October 2020).

¹⁵ Jay Akbar. "PDIP Klaim Punya Sikap Sejalan dengan NU" tirto.id 2019/3/2 <<https://tirto.id/pdip-klaim-punya-sikap-sejalan-dengan-nu-dgLD>> (accessed 2020 August 2020).

¹⁶ Dewi Nurita. "Tim Jokowi Sebut Usul NU Hapus Istilah Kafir Bisa Hindari Konflik."

and different parties attacked each other. Moreover, the chaos of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial campaign, in which many Muslims urged people not to vote for Ahok, an ethnic Chinese Christian candidate, saying “tolak pemimpin kafir” (*reject the kāfir leader*), was still fresh in people’s minds.¹⁷ Thus, the recommendation by the NU was expected to mitigate political chaos.

An article by Azis Anwar Fachrudin, a staff member of the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Gajah Mada University, seems to represent the opinion of Muslim intellectuals with liberal views. According to him, the decision by the NU is just a confirmation of what has been practiced by nation-states, including Indonesia. He also says that although this matter appears trivial to some Muslims, the call by the NU should be taken more seriously because of the increasing importance of Islam in public discourse.¹⁸

Explanations by the NU side

The NU side explained the intention of the recommendation in various media to justify its position. KH. Afifuddin Muhajir, a member of the team who was present at the discussion, spoke on the matter on the NU Online channel on YouTube. According to him, the discussion at the session was not whether non-Muslims in Indonesia were *kāfirs* or not, but how they should be categorized. They are not (*kāfir*) *ḥarbī*, *mu’āhad*, *musta’min*, or *dhimmi*, because such definition cannot be applied to non-Muslims in Indonesia. The question then was what to do with phrases like “you are *kāfir*” or other phrases that non-Muslims do not like. It is necessary to differentiate beliefs (*keyakinan*) from statements (*pernyataan*). If a group of people are called *kāfirs* in the Qur’an, we have to believe that they are *kāfirs*. However, if you say, “you are *kāfir*” or “he is *kāfir*,” that will create a disturbance in the middle of the plural society that our predecessors had such difficulties in building. Afifuddin Muhajir then provided a basis for his opinion in a classical text of Islam. A book of the Hanafi school of law titled “al-Qinyah” or “al-Qunyah,”¹⁹ states that if a Muslim

Tempo.co 2019/3/2 <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1181210/tim-jokowi-sebut-usul-nu-hapus-istilah-kafir-bisa-hindari-konflik>> (accessed 22 August 2020).

¹⁷ This view is shared by the media and intellectuals. An example is Wahid, Abdul. “Persepsi “Kafir” pada Muslim dan Non-Muslim: Konteks, Penggunaan, dan Komunikasi Partisipatif,” *Tuturlogi: Journal of Southeast Asian Communication*, 1 (2020), pp. 79–92.

¹⁸ Azis Anwar Fachrudin. 2019. “NU’s policy on ‘kafir’: Not new, but important.” <<https://crcs.ugm.ac.id/nus-policy-on-kafir-not-new-but-important/>> (accessed 26 November 2020). The article was originally published in the *Jakarta Post* on 15 March 2019.

¹⁹ This book is probably *Qunyat al-Munya li tatmīm al-Ghunya* by Najm al-Dīn Abū

says to a Jewish or a Zoroastrian (Majusi) “hey *kāfir*” and caused pain thereby, that Muslim committed a sin and deserves to be punished.²⁰ This explanation by one of the NU’s influential members has two aspects. On the one hand, he justified the NU’s decision from the demands of contemporary society, where the principle of the nation-state has overriding priority. On the other hand, he did not forget to quote a classical text of Islamic law, strengthening his case.²¹

Another figure explaining the NU’s position is Said Aqil Siradj, the chairman of the Executive Council of the NU. He appeared on the TV show *Catatan Najwa* (Record of Najwa) and talked about the recommendation regarding the word *kāfir* as well as other matters related to Islam. In the discussion, he refers to various examples of the use and non-use of word *kāfir*. For example, he says that the address “O *kāfir*” appears twice in the Qur’an, but both are in Meccan chapters. There is no such address in the Medinan chapters. When the Prophet addressed Jewish people, he used the term “*ahl al-kitāb*” or People of the Book. Said Aqil then refers to the words of the Ulama of al-Azhar, Egypt, that Christians and Muslims are the same mankind, brothers, and Egyptian citizens with the same rights and responsibilities. This system in Egypt came from Islam, by which the Prophet treated the residents of Medina equally.

Said Aqil then jokingly refers to the situation in Saudi Arabia. The traffic boards near the check points of Makkah and Madinah say, “Muslims Only” and “For Non-Muslims” so that non-Muslims do not enter holy cities by mistake. The boards do say “Muslims Only” but not “For Kafirs.” Also, in passport control, immigration officers enter information on religion as “Muslim” or “non-Muslim,” not “Muslim” or “Kafir.” In addition, people do not say, “Could you come here, *kāfir*?” in daily life or “Good evening, *kāfirs*” in speech.

He also says that the decision is not intended to change the terms that God used in revelation. He also warned against the current trend in which Muslims call each other *kāfir*, referring to the book by al-Ghazali, *Fayṣal al-Tafrīqa bayn al-Islām wa al-Zandaqa* (Criterion of differentiation between Islam and Zandaqa), in which

Rajā Mukhtār b. Maḥmūd al-Zāhidī al-Ghazmīnī (d. 658/1260). See Prods Oktor Skjærvø. “A New Edition of the Khwarezmian Phrases in the “Qunyāt al-Munya.” *BSOAS* 54:3, 1991, pp. 496–505. The present writer has not consulted this book yet.

²⁰ “Viral Istilah Non Muslim dan Kafir di Munas NU, Ini Penjelasan KH. Afifuddin Muhajir” NU Online YouTube channel <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWFpBgSoAGQ>> (accessed 16 August 2020).

²¹ It is interesting that he quoted from the book of the Ḥanafī school rather than the Shāfi‘ī school, the dominant school in Southeast Asia, though it is not particularly strange.

the author tells people not to lightly identify a person as *kāfir*.²²

While these explanations by the NU's leading figures are for the general public and do not get into a full-fledged discussion, it shows an important aspect: They refer to Islam rather than the cause of the nation-state.

Some Thoughts

Although various groups have expressed their opinions, there has as yet been no serious discussion of this matter; even parties that opposed the decision only expressed a feeling of discomfort. What is the reason for this?

The key to understanding the whole picture of this issue is that the recommendation by the NU applies only to Indonesian nationals. Foreign non-Muslims inside and outside Indonesia are not within the scope of the discussion, nor are the recommendations intended for Muslims in foreign countries. Thus, the discussion and final recommendations are made within the framework of the nation-state, whose key concept is NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia/Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia). In addition, the egalitarian idea among citizens regardless of religion is the reflection of the first principle, “belief in one and only God” of Pancasila, the five principles of national ideology of Indonesia, in which multiple official religions are recognized. Both are concepts that must be defended at all costs, and even “radical” Islamist groups do not dare to question them openly.

If that is the case, it would suffice to say that the recommendation was made in consideration of the cause of a nation-state in which every citizen must be treated equally. However, explanations by NU notables were also made from the perspective of religion or theology. They referred to the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical texts of jurisprudence as well as the treatment of non-Muslims in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the central lands of the Islamic world. Another point to bear in mind is that the recommendation by the NU may have been intended to protect fellow Muslims from slander. The term *kāfir* tends to be used by some Muslims as a word of abuse not only for non-Muslims but also for Muslims who have a different understanding of Islam. The primary examples of the latter are Shia and Ahmadiyya adherents (although Ahmadiyya is generally recognized as outside the tenets of Islam inside and outside Indonesia). The NU's decision was made during a heated period in an election campaign for the presidency. In these times when being religious or being

²² “Catatan Najwa bersama Said Aqil: Said Aqil Soal Kafir (Part 2)” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTiyIzt7ecA>> (accessed 17 August 2020).

Islamic plays an important role not only in elections but in every aspect of social life, the decision could be received by many as an implicit call to stop using negative words when addressing “others.” Considering that the use of word *kāfir* is on the rise in the real world, the recommendation by the NU must be viewed as timely.

Concluding Remarks

The discussion above indicates at least three aspects of the relationship between religion and state in Indonesia.

First, the structure of the state is firmer than that of Islam in Indonesia. The NU justified its recommendation with reference to the concept of the modern nation-state. There was no discussion of whether the current system of the state is valid according to Islam. In other words, nobody in the discussion questioned the validity of Pancasila and NKRI. It may appear in the eyes of some people that Islam in Indonesia is totally “tamed” by the state. However, that the NU explained its position from the viewpoint of religious principle indicates that a discussion from the viewpoint of religious principles was still needed, implying that the cause of the nation-state somehow needs to be justified or cemented by religious ideas.

Second, the Indonesian case has the potential for universal application. It is true that the scope of the discussion of the use of term *kāfir* is confined within the border of the secular state. The decision of the NU does not apply to non-Muslims living outside Indonesia or those of non-Indonesian nationality. It can thus be said that this seemingly religious matter is treated as a domestic issue. The recommendation of the NU does not seem to lead people to an interreligious harmony that transcends state borders. However, if other countries follow the Indonesian (or at the present stage the NU’s) way of treating non-Muslims, that is, not referring to the believers of other religions in a negative way within their own territories, the world as a whole will be a place where people live together peacefully. This may be one of the ways to attain the goal of peaceful coexistence among believers of various faiths in today’s world, divided by the borders of nation-states.

Finally, one should point out that Sufism does not play a major role in this discussion. This might seem puzzling because Sufism has a long history of calling for coexistence among the believers of different religions. One may think that such a call would have been the prerogative of Sufis. The explanations by major members of the NU mention the custom of the Prophet Muhammad, the opinions of scholars, and customs of Muslims in daily life, but not the ideas developed by Sufis such as Jalal al-Din al-Rumi. This may be because of recent trends not only in Indonesia but

also in other parts of the Islamic world that emphasize the Qur'an and *hadiths*, rather than religious sciences dealing with inner thought. Is the "territory" of Sufism dominated by the idea of the nation-state and/or the reformist ideas of Islam after the 18th century? It does not seem so. Speaking of the interpretation of Pancasila, some Indonesian intellectuals refer to Sufi thought to justify the first principle of dealing with different religions equally. Such discussions can be seen in academic journals published by Islamic higher educational institutions such as Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN, State Islamic University), Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN, the National Islamic Institution), and Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN, National Islamic College).²³ Such articles are often written by the faculties of the institutions or those who received higher education of Islam but were not trained as ulama. In addition, the motives of writing these articles seem relatively free from what one may call "religious politics." The analysis of the opinions of such figures has the potential to reveal the opinions of Indonesians, or at least average Indonesian intellectuals, concerning inter-religious harmony in society.

²³ An example of such discussions is Sulaiman. "Membaca Pancasila: Perspektif Kearifan Sufi Jalal al-Din Rumi (Reading Pancasila: from the perspective of Sufi Jalal al-Din Rumi)," *Ibda': Jurnal Kebudayaan Islam*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 134–148.

**Understanding the Relations between Christians and Bektashis:
Interconfessionalism and Supraconfessionalism**

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Abstract

This paper aimed to investigate the relationship between the Christian population in Turkey as well as the Balkans and the members of the Bektashi Sufi order, from the end of the 19th century until present. Many Christians and Bektashis have actually put behind all the religious divisions and moved forward together so as to share sanctuaries (mausoleums, chapels, convents), rituals, and even legends and myths today. Furthermore, the particular relation between these two faiths has encouraged Christians to be initiated into Bektashism without any obligation to renounce their religion. This phenomenon is epitomized in some cases in Istanbul at the beginning of the twentieth century and even nowadays. Finally, this paper analyzed the doctrinal dimension upon which the particular openness of the Bektashis toward the Christians is based: It is inspired by a traditional way of thinking cultivated in Anatolian mysticism, which may be defined as interconfessionalism and supraconfessionalism.

The Bektashiyya Sufi order, although belonging to the Sunni branch of Islam, occupies a particular position both in this religion and the Turkish society. One of its characteristics is that it did not launch the traditional criticism toward Christianity by the Muslims. On the contrary, Bektashism has favored, to a varying degree and up to our days a quite unusual encountering and a fraternization between Christians and Muslims. One of the main aspects of Bektashism, originally an offshoot of ultra-Shi'ism, an antinomian current of Islam, was its ability in the course of history to absorb the ideas and practices of several Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions (i.e., Zoroastrianism, Animism, Nestorian Christianity, Manicheism, Shamanism), and later of Shi'ism. These ideas and practices were hybridized with Sunni Islam, and particularly with Sufism. In the 16th century, Bektashism reached its final stage of development with a set of beliefs and rituals that have been cultivated and

practiced until today [Zarcone 2014].

The flexible relationships between Bektashis and other religions in the Ottoman Empire, especially with the Christians, is the consequence of two philosophical and theological attitudes reflected in the management and the attendance of its sanctuaries — both convents and mausoleums of saints — through devotion and intercession rituals, and in the hagiographical literature.

The first attitude, which the author of this paper calls interconfessionalism, has lead Bektashis to fraternizing with other religions and recognizing that there is no religion above the others. The second attitude — much less frequent — which is called supraconfessionalism in this paper, encourages the Bektashis to overcome both their Sunni beliefs and the beliefs of all the religions (an attitude that could resemble the contemporary Western perennialism). At that level, in the eyes of some Bektashis, all the religions are not only seen as equal, but also regarded as limited and incomplete; they are all replaced by the belief in an absolute Truth (*Hak*) that is actually above Sunni and Shi'i Islam, and even Sufism.

These two attitudes are not reflected generally in the Bektashi hagiographies (written in 16th century) under the Ottoman Sunni influence, or in the Bektashi rituals (the oldest being composed around the end of the 18th century). They can be detected, however, in the repertories of poetry, which are in fact the oldest examples of the Bektashi literature that was preserved in the oral tradition and has been systematically put down in writing recently. Poetry and singing poetry especially are essential elements of the Bektashi liturgy and are widely disseminated among the members of this Sufi order. There are some other atypical figures of Anatolian Sufism who also cultivated the interconfessionalism, the best known being Yunus Emre, a famous mystic of 13th and 14th century, contemporary of the first Bektashis.

At times, I go to the mosque and I worship
At times, I go to church and as a priest, I set about reading the Gospel
At times, just as Jesus, I raise the dead...¹

However, it is the respect shown by the Bektashi toward the Four Sacred Books (*Dört Kitaplar*) of the Abrahamic tradition, in addition to the Quran, the

¹ “*Bir dem varır mescitlere yüz sürer anda yerlere / Bir dem varur deyre girer İncil okur ruhban olur / Bir dem gelir İsa gibi, ölmüşleri diri kılır*” [Yunus Emre Divanı 1981: 130].

Tevrat (Jewish Torah), the Zebur (Psaums of David),² and the İncil (Gospel), which inspires their interconfessional feeling and in some cases their supraconfessionalism. Thus, several Bektashi poems place on these Four Books the same level, considering that they reflect the plural manifestation of a unique Truth; consequently, those who have received the revelation from these holy scriptures are *de facto* reconciled with each other. As the Bektashi poet Mir'ati (d. 1868) wrote:

The Gospel, the David's Psalms, the Torah, the four books are the Truth (*Hak*),
I found in the Quran the verse of wisdom (*Ledün*) [which comes directly from
God].³

Interconfessionalism

Shared Sanctuaries and Fraternity

The interconfessionalism advocated by the Bektashis shows that, in the course of the Ottoman history, the members of this lineage were able to fraternize with Christians, and they helped each other. What follows are some examples of this fraternisation as it appears around their sanctuaries in Anatolia and the Balkans, and in particular in the rituals performed there and the legends attached to these places. Our sources are the travelogues by European travellers, the Bektashi hagiographies, and some historical chronicles. In fact, the fraternity is shared because some rituals, symbols, and legends are shared by the two communities; it is the fact that Bektashis and Christians recognize each other through these beliefs and practices.

If we look at the major Bektashi hagiography dedicated to the legendary life of the eponym of the order, namely Hacı Bektaş Veli, written between 1481 and 1501, we learn that this holy figure was well respected by the Christians and that he gained several Christian disciples. One time, in the course of his journeys, Hacı Bektaş Veli was welcomed by the Christians of Sineson, a village in Cappadocia, today called Mustafapaşa. As a reward for their hospitality, the saint decided to make better everyday lives of the villagers:

The Holy Sovereign [Hacı Bektaş Veli], on his way to Ürgüp [in Cappadocia] went through a Christian village named Sineson. There the local used to make

² In the eyes of the Muslim, the Psalms exist as a scripture in itself with the three other Books.

³ “*İncil, Zebur, Tevrat dört kitap haktır / Ledünnü ayeti Kuran'dan aldım,*” [Nüzhet 1956: 37; 1930: 270].

rye breads. A women holding such breads on his head laid it on the ground as soon as she saw the Holy Sovereign, and told him: 'Dervish take one of my breads, and, for the love of God, eat it! Don't sue us since here wheat is not growing'. The Holy Sovereign having listen to her said: 'Let abundance come towards you! Sow rye and harvest wheap, and with few dough may you get big breads'. [Since this time], even today, in this village the people sow rye but harvest wheap. They put few dough in the oven but get big breads. And if they sow wheap they get sye; but if they sow sye, it is wheap that they mow. For this reason, the Christians of this village go on pilgrimage every year to the tomb of the Holy Sovereign. They offered him sacrifices, make ex-votos and hold feasts [Uzun Firdusi 1958: 23].

The village of Sineson was still predominantly Christian up to the beginning of the 20th century. It is situated some 100 kilometers from the place where Hacı Bektaş set up his convent (*tekké*) and where he was buried. According to the Ottoman archives, a nomad tribe living in this region that adopted Bektashi ideas was called "Bektashlu," that is, the Bektashis. This tribe had good relations with the neighbouring Christian villages [Beldiceanu-Steinherr 1991: 21–79]. Further, it has been a documented fact that the tomb of Hacı Bektaş had been visited by Christian pilgrims until the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, these pilgrims identified Hacı Bektaş with the Christian Saint Charalambos. According to the French traveller Vital Cuinet who visited the sanctuary in 1891:

The *tekké* (convent) in the village of Hadji-Bektach is surrounded by wide gardens well watered. [...] The buildings of the *tekké* are not spacious though they are clean and well decorated. There are rooms around one of the courtyard which are dedicated to the numerous Muslim and Christian visitors who come every day to venerate the tomb of Hadji-Bektach-Véli, considered by the local Christians as similar to saint Haralambos. According to their beliefs, when entering the *turbé* [mausoleum], the Christian pilgrims make the sign of the cross while the Muslims go to the neighboring mosque to perform their *namas* [prayer]. Both are also well welcomed and fed; they are offered the *tchorba* [soup], the *pilaf* [plate of rice] and other national dishes, all free of charge [Cuinet 1891: 341].

A structure for the reception was set for both Muslims and Christians, and

the sacred areas of the sanctuary, as we can see, welcome various rituals. This is a very unusual phenomenon, although not unique. The sharing capability of the sanctuary of Hacı Bektaş is confirmed in another text written by a Greek named Georg Tosunoğlu and published in an Ottoman yearbook (*salname*) for 1914 written in *karamanlı* (Turkish using the Greek scripture). In this text intended for Greek Christian readers, we read a description of the sanctuary with details about the welcoming of visitors. Regardless of religion, the visitor was given a small room and food (bread, soup, and rice) for three days.⁴

There are many other sanctuaries in Anatolia and the Balkans that are places of devotion shared by the two religions and hence opened to exchange and fraternization. One, situated at Kaliakra in Rumania, is dedicated to the Muslim saint Sarı Saltuk, known by Christians as Saint Nicholas. The most striking is the sanctuary of Akyazılı Baba at Varna, Bulgaria, the second most important sanctuary after that of Hacı Bektaş. There, Akyazılı Baba is identified with Saint Athanas (Atanas), and the place is well known for welcoming Christian pilgrims.⁵ However a shared sanctuary was not always a place of encountering and fraternization between Muslims and Christians; on the contrary, it could also be a contested ground and a source of conflicts. This was the case with the Akyazılı Baba shrine, a bone of contention between local Muslims and Christians during the Balkan Wars. When the Bulgarian army took the control of the shrine, the cross replaced the crescent at the top of the shrine's cupola. However, when the place was reconquered by Muslims, the cross was in turn replaced by the crescent. When I visited the sanctuary in 1988, in Communist Bulgaria, the place was almost totally abandoned, and few ex-votos only demonstrated that the local population was still venerating the saint. Nowadays, after the end of the Communist era, the place is again a shared religious sanctuary visited by Muslim and Christian visitors performing common rituals, especially against illness.⁶ According to the anthropologist Yelis Erolova who investigates the place in 2011, "The change of the cult from mono- into bi-ritual during the second half of the 19th century should not be interpreted as 'renaming', but as development which unites two saints." [Erolova 2017: 78]

Another shrine in the village of Gökçe (formerly Mamasun) in Cappadocia is worth of interest. The shrine, which was discovered at the beginning of 19th century, is originally a paleochristian church half-cave dwelling completed by a

⁴ This text is edited by [Kılıçarslan 2015].

⁵ On this shrine see [Hasluck 1973: vol. 1, 90–93; Eyice 1967: 576].

⁶ <<http://dobrudzha.com/en/90.html>> (accessed in May 2015).

grotto. The visitation to the site was shared very soon since dervishes were living there around 1860. The shrine has probably been turned at this time as a Bektashi convent and was known under the name of Erenler Tekkesi. The saint buried in the shrine is a martyr named Saint Mamas. From 19th century sources, it is known that he had the ability to raise the dead and cure mental illness. Muslims and Christians who were sick used to practice the incubation, that is to sleep in the grotto nearby the tomb of the saint. The days for the healing ceremonial were Friday for the Muslims and Sunday for the Christians. Nine icons were displayed in the shrine among which two were those of the Virgin, and Constantin and Helena. After 1925, following the expulsion of the Greek community from the village and of all the region, Saint Mamas became Muslim under the name of Sammas Baba or Pir Sambaz. According to the hagiography, this Muslim saint was a hermit who lived during the 8th century and assisted the famous Battal Ghazi when the later fought the Byzantines. Sammas Baba was depicted as teaching the Christian doctrine by day, and the Muslim doctrine by night — and there is no better example of interconfessionalism [Hasluck 1973: vol. 1, 43–44; de Tapia 2016: 584–596]. Then, during the last 15 years, due to Greek tourists, partly descendants of the Greek population who have lived once in this village, the veneration of the Christian saint was reactivated, as well as the practice of healing. Saint Mamas and Sammas Baba are henceforth both venerated, and the place is shared by the two religions.⁷

Shared Rituals

In addition to the Christian shrine of Saint Mamas, there are other Christian sanctuaries that have welcomed Muslims, especially Bektashis or Alevis. For example, in Konitsa, in the Epira district of Greece, local Muslims used to visit the Christian churches for the offering of candles and oil, and even of candelabrum. It is the fact that Christian and Bektashis shared common interest for the veneration of light and the use of candles during liturgy and rituals [Mavrommatis 2005: 526–527]. Without doubt, this particularity has contributed to bring the two communities closer. In fact, candles as other lights are far to be only sacred objects that are placed near the grave of a saint. First and foremost, they are the central elements of complex rituals in both Christian and Bektashi liturgy; let us mention the Christian liturgy of Light (*Lucernarium*) for Easter and the ritual called “awakening the candles” (*çerağ uyandırma*) in Bektashism–Alevism [Vincent 2004: 31, 37; Harman 2018].

⁷ Author’s field work in 2015. See also [Peker 2015: 97–99, 208–209].

Because of this ritual, since 16th century, the Bektashis were depicted by their opponents as “worshipper of light,” *ışıkçı*, or *ışık taifesi*, that is, Movement of the Light [Refik 1932].

In addition, in some shrines, the rituals of devotion and intercession of Muslims and Christians are performed side-by-side (the sign of cross for example), although they are also shared. Such is the case of the offering of candles for instance, common to the two religions although it is interpreted in different ways. Nowadays, in the Bektashi sanctuary of Akyazılı Baba at Varna, we can distinguish three kinds of shared rituals: (1) the prayers recited at the tomb for the intercession of the saint; (2) the washing of the grave with water; (3) the fixation of pieces of cloth (*ex-votos*) on the trees around.⁸

In the shrines shared by both communities, some rituals cannot be shared and are performed side-by-side. This situation is observable nowadays in the Bektashi tekke of Durbali in Thessalia, Northern Greece, one of the major places of this order in the region before its decline during the 1980s. This tekke is a place well-known for welcoming Christians and also for charitable actions toward the poor local population regardless of their religion. Today, although there are few Muslims in the region, the place is a neutral, shared sanctuary, housing sacred objects belonging to both religions (icons, lantern, mural writings in Arabic, etc.) [Mavrommatis 2005: 529].

In addition, some Christians who became Bektashis (without abandoning Christianity) drew the attention to other doctrinal and ritual analogies to explain how Christianity and Bektashism could be brought closer. One of them, in 1892–1893, pinpoints to the Bektashi veneration for the trilogy “Allah–Muhammad–Ali,” which according to him corresponds to the Christian Trinity. He mentions also the three knots of the sacred belt, used during the Bektashi reception of a new dervish. The staff hold by the Bektashi shaykh has three knots also interpreted as the symbols of the Trinity; it is said that outwardly (*zahirde*), the knots symbolise respectively Allah, Muhammad, and Ali, but inwardly (*batınde*), they symbolize the Father, the Son, and the Soul (i.e., the Holy Spirit). Another analogy concerns the 12 Shi’ imams venerated in Bektashism who are identified with the 12 apostles, and the martyr of Husayn, son of Ali, identified with Jesus Christ [“Bir Bektaşî babasının hâtıratı” 1926: 12–13; Salcı 1939d].

Finally, we might wonder whether Bektashism and Christianity, through

⁸ <<http://dobrudzha.com/en/90.html>> (accessed in May 2015).

their rituals shared or performed side by side, considering the analogies existing between them, have developed a “compromise on sacramental issues” (*compromis en matière sacramentaire*), to quote the expression of Michel Tardieu, a specialist of syncretism in Antiquity [Tardieu 1991: 14].

Shared Legends

There are several legends commonly held among Bektashis that reflect their relations with Christians; some of these were sometimes adopted by the Christians themselves and then shared by the two religions. One of them regards the origin of the major symbolic and sacred object in Bektashism, that is, the *teslim taşı* (stone of the surrender). This little and flat stone made usually from onyx or carnelian/agate has 12 sides, in reference to the 12 imams. Its color is yellow, white, or beige, with red or brown-veins and stains. This stone is usually worn by Bektashi shaykh and used as a decorative symbol everywhere in their convent.⁹

According to one legend, of which there are several versions, Hacı Bektaş was poisoned by a man who has given him hospitality; but the saint spat blood immediately, which hardened into a stone — the *teslim taşı* [“Bektaşilik” n.d.: 37]. Another version of this legend tells that the man who poisoned Hacı Bektaş was a Turk, that is, a Muslim, and it was from a Christian that the saint obtained an emetic that caused him to spit blood: “his spittle mixed with his blood hardened into the red-veined variety of the local agate,” a stone found near the village of Hacıbektaş where the centre of the Bektashi order was established [Hasluck 1973: vol. 1, 288; Noyan 1995: 244]. The third version says that Hacı Bektaş visited a village named Ermeni, where he was given the hospitality by peasants, probably Christian Armenians, who offered him a meal of curdled milk and honey. The saint then spat out a mouthful of the food, which at once hardened into stone, and he told the peasants that the descendants of their descendants will never suffer from hunger [Degrand 1901: 230]. These legends show that the Anatolian Christians were very respectful of the eponym of Bektashism and that in turn, the saint blessed them and made wonders. This legend that was without any doubt originally Bektashi appears interchangeable, and this aspect favors the concept of interconfessionalism.

There is another interchangeable legend, not only between Muslims and Christians, but also between Muslim and Jews, and even between Muslim and Hindus in India. This legend, possibly Tibetan in origin, is widespread in the whole

⁹ About this stone see [Zarcone 2017].

of Muslim Asia. It is also found in the Hagiography of Hacı Bektaş (*Vilâyetnâme*) and of other Bektashi saints. In the *Vilâyetnâme*, Hacı Bektaş was riding a rock he has animated and fought another saint, actually a rival, who was riding a lion (or a tiger) with a venomous serpent in his hand used as a whip [Uzun Firdusi 1958: 49–50]. What makes the superiority of Hacı Bektaş comes from the fact that riding an inanimate thing (rock or wall) and making it moving is considered more prestigious than taming a lion and a venomous snake. However, in many cases, some hagiographies do not mention the saint riding a wall but riding the lion with the serpent in his hand [Van Bruinessen 1991; Dank 2004].

This legend is well known by Christians as shown in the Ottoman yearbook (1914) mentioned above. The writer of this text, Georg Tosunoğlu, said that after visiting the sanctuary of Hacı Bektaş, he reached a neighbouring pilgrimage place supposed to be the place where Hacı Bektaş welcomed another saint riding a lion with a snake in his hands. In this version, probably oral, the other saint is Mevlâna Celâlüddin Rûmî, the eponym of the order of whirling dervishes (in the *Vilâyetnâme* it is Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani)! [Kılıçarslan 2015: 21] At the same period, this legend was told by Cappadocian Greeks to the Byzantinist R. M. Dawkins in a quite different way. The difference is that saint Charalambos was opposed to Muhammad. It is clear that the legend is led astray to the advantage of the Christians over Muslims.¹⁰

The legend was not adopted by Anatolian Christians only, but also by Jews in Algeria. The famous saint Rabbi Ephraïm al-Naqava who came from Spain to Tlemcen in the 14th century riding a lion with a snake in his hand, was buried in this city, and his sanctuary had welcomed both Christians and Jews pilgrims up to the middle of the 20th century [Van Gennep 1914: 44–45, 52; Slyomovics 1993]. The legend is interchangeable also in India to the benefit of the Hindus: A Hindu magician was sitting on a wall, while the Muslim was riding a tiger with the snake in his hands [Digby 1994: 127–128].

Sharing this legend among Bektashis and Christians brought them closer in spite of some rivalries. Its adoption by Christians demonstrates how intimate they were with the written and oral culture of this Sufi order.

Supraconfessionalism

As mentioned before, supraconfessionalism is a philosophical attitude that

¹⁰ R.M. Dawkins, “A modern Greek festival,” Emmanuel College Magazine (Cambridge), 18 (1908): 18 sq., quoted by [Hasluck 1973: vol. 1, 84 and vol. II, 289].

encourages transcending of religions in order to reach their core, but without abandoning one's own particular faith. This unusual attitude might provide a key for the understanding of the double religious affiliation of Christians who became Bektashis in the early 20th century. This double affiliation, however, does not imply a conversion to Islam, as we will see further in text. Additionally, such a choice is quite different from interconfessionnalism since the religious confessions, far to be brought side-by-side, are left behind.

Some Armenian and Greek Christians in Istanbul in the last years of the Ottoman Empire embodied this double affiliation. Some were regular visitors of one of the most prestigious Bektashi tekke of the Ottoman capital in the Çamlica district. At this time, this tekke, directed by Şeyh Ali Nutki Efendi (d. 1936), a great figure of the order, was a high place of culture, art, literature, and Sufi music, and it attracted the brightest of the city. Some among these Greek and Armenian Bektashis were also the authors of poems written in the literary style followed by Bektashis (*nefes*). These poems indicate their interest for this Sufi order and indirectly why, as Christians, they were initiated into Bektashism. The folklorist Vahid Lütfi Salcı (1883–1950), himself a Bektashi, knew personally some of the poets he depicted as “Turkified Christian Bektashis,” meaning that they perfectly mastered the Turkish language and were impregnated with Ottoman and especially Bektashi culture.

The question of the double affiliation of Christian-Bektashism and of the welcoming of Christian in this Sufi order was a divisive issue in the Bektashi milieu in early 20th century Istanbul. In general, Ali Nutki Baba refused to initiate Christians to Bektashism if they did not want to convert to Islam. However, he told Salcı that some Bektashi shaykhs in Istanbul used to do it, as for instance Tekirdağlı Cemali Baba (d. 1940 in Albania).

Salcı witnessed unusual things in a meeting at the tekke of Ali Nutki Baba at Çamlica. Once, he noticed an Armenian priest wearing his religious robe among the visitors entering the tekke. But, when in the ceremonial hall, he was unable to see the priest. Looking carefully at the people who were attending the initiation ceremony (*ayin-i cem*), he finally recognized the priest and was stunned to discovered the man dressed in the Bektashi style, wearing the 12-segment hat of the order (*hüseyni tac*), the *teslim taş* around his neck, the *kanberiye* belt on his loins with the little bag (*cilbent*) holding the calligraphy “O Ali,” and the symbol of the two-pointed sword (*zülfikar*) [Salcı 1939a]. Indeed, although a priest, this man was also a Bektashi baba.

In 1909, in the same Çamlica tekke, Salcı met another Christian Bektashi.

Named Papa Yero Raif, he was a Greek priest based in the Yeni Mahalle district et Üsküdar. The Greek priest was also dressed as a Bektashi baba, wearing the hat and holding the *teslim taş* and the *cilbent*. Salcı asked him whether it was not incompatible to be both a Christian priest and a Bektashi baba. In reply, Papa Yero Raif quoted a well-known phrase of the famous Sarı Saltuk, a luminary of Sufism in 13th century: “The illustrious Bektashi Sarı Saltuk wasn’t in the same time a blind priest called Saint Nicolas? Name is a pearl, my son! Look at the heart, the heart.”¹¹

It is indeed true that in the 13th century, in the Balkans and in Anatolia, Sarı Saltuk was a dual figure, venerated both as a Muslim saint and Saint Nicolas by the Christians. Moreover, there are seven shrines named after him. However, the *şeyhülislâm* Ebussuud Efendi, who was the first authority of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, gave a *fetva* in 1538 answering a question about the sanctity of Sarı Saltuk; he answered that the later was a “Christian monk down to skin and bones because of his ascetic discipline (*riyazat ile kadid olmuş bir keşişdir*).” [Okiç 1952; Zarcone 1992: 2–3] However, according to the Turkish epic literature, Sarı Saltuk was a hero of the Islamization of the north-western Thrace. Today, this saint is still well-known in Anatolia and in the Balkans, and one of his tombs is the centre of one of the most important pilgrimage places in Albania [Kołczyńska 2013].¹²

This paper suggests that supraconfessionnalism might explain why several Christian were initiated into Bektashism, although they were still considering themselves Christians. Although Bektashism clearly got a Muslim identity, this is the gnostic and antinomian aspect of this Sufi Order that has attracted these non-Muslims. As shown above by the Bektashi poet Mirati, the science of *ladun* (*ilm al-ladûnî*) mastered by the Sufis comes directly from God, as it was experienced by the prophet Khidr (Quran 18:65). As the source of all the revelations, such a pure knowledge of God is considered superior to the four books of the Abrahamic religions. Then, whereas interconfessionnalism constitutes a bridge between the revealed religions regarded as similar and parallel paths to God and the Truth, supraconfessionnalism sees the religions to be of negligible importance, especially for the Sufi who possesses the pure knowledge of God (*ladun*). Such an approach is clearly reflected in two verses of Yunus Emre who argues that the four Abrahamic revelations are comprehended in the Being that is God and his manifestation:

¹¹ “*Sarı Saltuk diye tanıdığımız Bektâşi ulularından olan zat, Nikola isminde bir köz Papaz değil miydi? İsim bir boncuktur, oğlum. Gönüle bak, gönüle,*” [Salcı 1939b].

¹² On Sarı Saltuk see [Ocak 2002].

The Thorah, the Gospel, the Psalms of David and the Quran,
What is revealed in these books, we found it in the Being (*vücut*).¹³

A similar attitude is present in some poems written by Christian Bektashis in the early 20th century. For example, the Greek Yorgi Saliki or Zafiridis writes:

Pious! Don't deprive me of the Beauty
We are happy whatever the place where we see it,
You, read the Gospel within four walls,
While we'll learn the Gospel of the Heart.¹⁴

Yorgi Saliki who is opposing here the "Gospel of the Heart" to the "Gospel read within four walls," that is, read inside a church, confirms that the Book of his mystical faith is an inner knowledge. Then, he declares that he became Bektashi although he never renounced Christianity [Salcı 1939d]. In such a position, he is *de facto* closer to the Bektashis.

Another Greek, Manol Hitabi, also a member of the Bektashi order, wrote poetry that reflected supraconfessionnalism perfectly. He realized that the sacred books of the Abrahamic tradition did not help him in his spiritual path, and if he joined Bektashism, which is a Muslim movement, this is not to join Islam, but to follow a way that leads far above this religion and the others. We understand, and this is also the opinion of Vahit Lütfi Salcı, that Manol Hitabi never converted to Islam, although he was no more firmly a Christian. In one poem, he writes the following as a response to a priest who tried to make him more respectful to the Orthodox Church:

I read what you call Thorah
I read what you call Gospel
I read what you call Quran:
But all three are empty books.¹⁵

¹³ "*Tevrât ile İncil'i Furkan ile Zebur'u
Bunlardaki beyanı cümle vücutta bulduk*" [Yunus Emre Divanı 1981: 194].

¹⁴ "*Güzellikten bizi menetme soft
Biz güzeli nerde görsek severiz
Dört duvar içinde sen İncil oku
Gönül incilini biz ezberleriz,*" quoted by [Salcı 1939c].

¹⁵ "*Tevrat dedin okudum*

In this extreme case, we can use a metaphor used by the Sufis and the Bektashis that Manol Hitabi has gone beyond the external dimension of the religion and broke the shell of the walnut, reaching the walnut and further the oil of this fruit, which is like the essence of all spiritualities.

Conclusion

The sharing of sacred places, rituals, and legends by Christians and Muslims, especially Bektashis, can be explained, first, as seen above, by the identification of their respective holy figures (e.g., Hacı Bektaş/Saint Charalambos, Akyazili Baba/Saint Athanas, Sammas Baba/Saint Mamas) and, second, by the analogies existing between some elements of their faith and rituals. This interconfessionnal behavior brought Bektashis and Christians closer and favored exchanges and fraternization. Bektashis shrines had welcomed Christians who feel comfortable when visiting these places, and in northern Greece for example, some Bektashis shrines even today have separate parts dedicated to each religion. Thus, Christians and Bektashis express their religious beliefs side-by-side, and all find common features in the other. Supraconfessionnalism also brings closer some Christians and Bektashis, but in a quite different way. Both were not interested in the external dimension of their religion, but by its inner centre only. This behavior is well known among the Bektashis who emphasize the inward (*batin*) upon the outward (*zahir*).

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**After Criticism of Ma Dexin against Veneration of Saints:
Rethinking Chinese Elaboration of Islam**

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Abstract

Hui Muslim scholars' efforts to refine their beliefs and practices in consonance with the Chinese cultural and social milieu have played an important role in building amicable relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in China. However, these scholars' activities sometimes promoted division among Hui Muslims. It is important to shed light on the dark side of Hui Muslims' pro-Chinese elaborations of Islam to learn about multicultural symbiosis from their historical experiences.

This paper focuses on how sectarian rivalry among Chinese-speaking Muslims was enlarged by reinterpretations of Ma Dexin (d. 1874), a prominent Hui scholar in Yunnan province, on critical discourses against the veneration of saints from West Asia; these reinterpretations were aimed at resolving feuds between followers of Islam and Chinese polytheists. First, this paper establishes how Ma Dexin or his disciples and adherents of the *Jahrīya* Sufi order disagreed with and fought each other. Second, it discusses the measures taken to repair this fissure. Finally, it examines how the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims worked as a backdrop to the discord and compromise among Hui Muslims.

Chinese-speaking Muslims or Hui were the descendants of Muslim immigrants from various areas of Asia—descendants who were physically and culturally Sinicized at various levels as a result of their various contacts with indigenous peoples in China. They constructed their own communities around mosques all over China in the sixteenth century. Since then, their learned men have struggled to refine their beliefs and practices in consonance with the Chinese cultural and social milieu to secure the survival of their communities and avoid frictions with their non-Muslim neighbors, or Han people, who have been apt to despise Islam as heterodox and its believers as dangerous. For example, during the pre-modern period, Hui Muslim scholars

deliberately highlighted affinities between the metaphysics of Sufism and Confucianism by identifying the key terms or concepts of the former with those of the latter.

Previous studies attempted to elucidate the conceptual manipulations in such scholarly struggles, regarding them as attempts to realize an intercultural coexistence, from which we can extract wisdom for our global society in the future.¹ Moreover, some students might take an interest in Hui Muslims' attentive negotiations with non-Muslims of their beliefs as Asian modes of Islam that are different from Middle-Eastern Islam and the potential for rectifying Islamophobic prejudices that some of the latter have fostered. Certainly, Hui scholars' pro-Chinese elaborations of Islam have played an important role in building amicable relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in China. However, these scholars' activities did not always create a harmonious society. For example, some activities even promoted division among Hui Muslims. It is important to shed light on the dark side of Hui Muslims' efforts to bridge Islamic and non-Islamic cultures and societies to learn about multicultural symbiosis from their historical experiences. Previous studies lack this perspective. In other words, they paid less attention to historical or social features than the philosophical features of such efforts of Hui scholars.

This paper focuses on how sectarian rivalry among Chinese-speaking Muslims was enlarged by reinterpretations of Ma Dexin 馬德新 (d. 1874), a prominent Hui scholar in Yunnan province, southwestern China, on critical discourses against the veneration of saints from West Asia; These reinterpretations were aimed at resolving feuds between Islamic believers and Chinese polytheists. First, this paper establishes how Ma Dexin or his disciples and adherents of the Jahriya Sufi order disagreed with and fought each other. Second, it discusses the measures taken to repair this fissure. Finally, it examines how the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims worked as a backdrop to the discord and compromise among Hui Muslims.

¹ For details of this research trend, see [Nakanishi 2016b; 2018a]. Recently, Gao and Min [2019: 190] concluded that the historically continued adaptation of their religious tenets by Hui Muslims for Chinese society guaranteed “the sound development of Islam in China along the direction to Sinicization” and that such a reinterpretation of Islam is “a treasure of teaching for uniting and guiding a broad range of Muslim mass, a sharp weapon for fighting against forces conspiring to split [Chinese] Nation and religious extremists, and a creative attempt to lead the religion to conform with the society of socialism.”

1. Inheritance of Ma Dexin's View on the Veneration of Saints

1.1. Ma Dexin and Ma Lainyuan's Criticism against the Jahriya

Nakanishi [2019] detailed how Ma Dexin tried to make peace between Muslims and non-Muslims by radicalizing a negative opinion on the veneration of saints from West Asia. Here, let us briefly confirm this. Ma Dexin found a crisis for securing the survival of coreligionists in the Yunnan Muslim rebellion (1856–74) against the Qing dynasty, which broke out because of escalating hostilities between the Huis and Hans and because of the Qing officers' partiality for the latter. As the Huis were overwhelmed in population by the Hans, he supposed that Hui communities would be destroyed by their continuing strife with the Qing government, for which most of their non-Muslim Chinese neighbors took sides. He, who had been tasked as a leader for a portion of the Yunnan Muslim rebels since 1857, eventually surrendered to the Qing dynasty in 1862, together with his adjutant general, Ma Rulong 馬如龍. Then, Ma Dexin, to an extent, cooperated with the dynasty's suppression of the Yunnan Muslim rebellion,² while maintaining a certain power and influence among the Qing Yunnan government based on his renown among the Hui people. Meanwhile, he tackled the sophistication of Islam with the goals of improving the relations between the Huis and Hans and ending the Yunnan Muslim rebellion.

As a part of such adjustment of Islam, in his Arabic work with the Chinese title “*Lixue zhezong* 理學折衷 (*Selection of Sufi Teachings*),” Ma Dexin aggressively stretched the meaning of an admonition on the veneration of saints that he received in his travels around West Asia (1841–49). An Ismā‘īl in Mecca had advised the Yunnan Hui scholar to concentrate on his observance of Islamic law instead of any adherence to a Sufi master by which not every person can attain religious perfection [Ma Dexin 1988: 83]. Exaggerating this advice based on skillful consultation of Ibn ‘Arabī's thoughts, the author of *Lixue zhezong* essentially denied the efficacy of the mentorship of Sufi masters, which few questioned in the contemporary Middle East.

² For example, when Pan Duo 潘鐸, the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, was unexpectedly killed in 1863 by the soldiers of Ma Rong 馬榮, who was one of ex-leaders of the Yunnan Muslim rebellion who surrendered to the Qing army, Ma Dexin vicariously executed the function of the same post to remedy the situation. In addition, in 1864, Ma Dexin visited the city of Dali 大理, where Du Wenxiu 杜文秀, the most powerful leader of the Yunnan Muslim rebellion, had organized a government independent from the Qing dynasty to persuade him to surrender to the Qing dynasty. This mission did not succeed [Wang Shuhuai 1968: 122–127; Jing 1991: 133–134, 136–137] .

In the Arabic work, the Hui author insists that whether a person can become a friend of God (*walī*) depends on his innate capacity (*isti' dād*) but not on the guidance of a Sufi master [Ma Dexin 2016: 19b–20b]. This insistence is probably based on Ibn 'Arabī's theory that the innate capacity of each person is determined by his immutable entity (*'ayn thābita*) or by divine predestination (*qaḍā'*). In accordance with this theory, as detailed later, the same work also suggests that qualifying Sufi masters to raise their disciples as friends of God amounts to blasphemously attributing divinity to created things or recognizing gods other than Allāh.

From this reinterpretation, the author of *Lixue zhezhong* seems to have aimed at undermining the Jahriya order, which, unlike him, found a path for survival for Hui Muslims in a continuation of their resistance against the Qing dynasty in adherence to their Sufi master [Nakanishi 2019].

We can infer that Ma Dexin's theoretical challenge to the *raison d'être* of the Sufi master targeted the Jahriya, although *Lixue zhezhong* does not declare this. One piece of evidence is Ma Lianyuan 馬聯元 (d. 1903)'s preface for his own Arabic work with the Chinese title “*Da zaxue* 大雜學 (*Great Miscellany*).” Ma Lianyan, who was a disciple of Ma Dexin, wrote:

From my compassion toward them [people who cannot attend Madrasa schools because of their poverty and business], I edited a digest about knowledge in detailed books, which was suitable for their disposition and hence the meaning of which they could understand easily. Hereafter, the digest will save them from something hindering their learning, and, for a man who starts to study detailed books, facilitate him to understand them. [I did so], especially because this age is near the end of the world as follows: Many heretics have appeared in cities in China. They exhibited strange heretical innovations, any counterargument against which is not found in books. For example, reciting “Oh, Shaykh” at the slaughter of animals, doing the same when slaughtered animals are wriggling, having one's queue hanging down his back at prayers,³ performing the morning prayer with magic, and so on. I have refuted them in some of my works. Therefore, they raged at me and our Sayyid, al-Ḥājj Yūsuf Rūḥ al-Dīn [that is, Ma Dexin], who was the first person to refute them, and whom I followed. It [their rage] is as you find in their

³ Ma Anyi 馬安義, the second son of Ma Lianyuan, affirmatively mention that Hui Muslims concealed their queues in their turbans at prayers in accordance with the Sunna. See [Nakanishi 2016a: 18; 2018b: 140 (n.22)].

book⁴ that was sent to us. If they had had any power, they would have killed me. [Ma Yunliang 2011: 17]⁵

According to this, Ma Dexin blamed some people for heretical innovations such as reciting “Oh, Shaykh” at the slaughter of animals, which is recognized as a practice of the Jahriya adherents in a part of Yunnan today.⁶ It is highly possible that the “heretics” whom he refuted were followers of the Sufi order. Also, Ma Lianyuan seems to have come into collision with the Sufis, inheriting his teacher’s oppositional attitude against the Jahriya.

1.2. Ma Lianyuan’s Quarrel with the Jahriya

There is an article titled “Huihui xinjiao 回回新教” (Islamic New Teaching) in the first and only issue of *Xinghuipian* 醒回篇 (*Writings for Awakening Muslims*),⁷ published in 1908 by Liudong Qingzhen Jiaoyuhui 留東清真教育會 (Association for Islamic Education in Japan). It conveys that Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan’s opponents were adherents of the Jahriya. It narrates:

A certain *Hazhi* 哈咄 [*hājj*, meaning one who experienced a pilgrimage to Mecca] espousing the Old Teaching (*gujiao* 古教) was well versed in Islamic learnings and wrote a treatise refuting the New Teaching (*xinjiao* 新教). Followers of the New Teaching resented this and tried to send an assassin after him, which was exposed. [People of the *Hazhi*] captured the assassin and handed him over to the court, but the officer dismissed the suit because of insufficient evidence. The *Hazhi* eventually felt unsafe and left [Yunnan] on the pretext of a pilgrimage to Mecca. After that, he was said to have died in Burma. [Huiyuan 1992: 82 (the original page: 72)]

⁴ This might be *Qingzhen piyulun*. See below for more information.

⁵ My deepest thanks to Ms. Leila Chérif-Chebbi for providing this source. The original Arabic text is as follows:

فانا لشفتهم اختصرت في كل علم من الكتب المبسوطة مختصرة مناسبة لطبائعهم يسهل معناها عليهم حتى اذا اصابهم مانع بعده
فهي تكفيهم واما من شرع في المبسوطات بعده فهي تيسره على فهمها خصوصا بان هذا الزمان آخر الزمان، قد حدث في بلاد
الصين كثير من المبتدعين واطهروا فيها بدعات غريبة لم يوجد في الكتب ردهم كذكرهم يا شيخ عند الذبح وكذا عند النزح وكالقائم
ضفيرة شعرهم على الظهر في الصلاة وكأدائهم الفجر بالاسحار ونحوها فرددتهم في بعض مختصراتي ولهذا غضبوني وسيدنا
الحاج يوسف روح الدين فانه اول من ردهم واتبعته في ذلك كما ترى في كتابهم المرسل الينا حتى لو قدروا لقتلوني

⁶ Yao and Xiao [2001: 256]. However, members of the Jahriya in the present day deny that this practice exists in their circles.

⁷ For more on Liudong Qingzhen Jiaoyuhui and *Xinghuipian*, see Ō [2006: 127–137; Cieciora 2016: 111].

“A certain *Hazhi*” is none but Ma Lianyuan. From H. 1286 to the end of H. 1289 (1869 or 1870 to 1873), he stayed in Mecca and India, making a pilgrimage to the Ka‘ba shrine. This passage explains why he traveled from Yunnan to Burma. Eventually, he left Burma for India and died in Kanpur [Ma Zhiben 1985: 594; Bai 2000, II: 1572, 1574; Lin 1990: 112].

Undoubtedly, “the New Teaching” that drove him away from Yunnan is identified with the Jahriya. Prior to the above-quoted passage, the same article states that the “*Laorenjia* 老人家 (respected old man)” of the New Teaching was from a Ma 馬 family whose legal domicile was located at Talang 他郎, that he disappeared suddenly from a besieged fort at the point of its falling, and that he came to Shanxi and Gansu provinces, whereby the Jahriya rose in those regions. This traces the career of Ma Yuanzhang 馬元章, the seventh grand master of the Jahriya, and “*Laorenjia*” denotes a Sufi master. Ma Yuanzhang was a grandson of Ma Shunqing 馬順清, a son of Ma Mingxin 馬明心, the founder of the Jahriya. Ma Shunqing died at Talang [Chou 1993: 178], a place that seems to have been recognized as the legal domicile of his grandson. “Huihui xinjiao” asserts that the New Teaching originated in Yunnan and then developed in Shanxi and Gansu. This is not precise as a description of the history of the Jahriya; however, it is reasonable because it traces Ma Yuanzhang’s process of the restoration of the Jahriya in Northwest China.

Ma Mingxin was executed by Qing officers in 1781, when the Jahriya rebels besieged Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu [Chou 1993: 51–63; Lipman 1997: 103–111]. After the pacification of this Jahriya rebellion, Ma Shunqing was exiled to Talang, and his banishment gave the Jahriya an opportunity to expand their teachings among Yunnan Hui Muslims [Chou 1993: 85–87, 178, 216; Lipman 1997: 179]. Ma Shenglin 馬聖麟 (Ma Chenglin 馬成林), a son of Ma Shunqing, led the Jahriya adherents to participate in the Yunnan Muslim rebellion and died in battle in 1781 at Dadongou 大東溝, where most of his people were also martyred [Chou 1993: 175–181; Lipman 1997: 179]. However, Ma Yuanzhang, a son of Ma Shenglin, escaped from Dadongou to Northwest China before the fall [Chou 1993: 215–220; Lipman 1997: 179]. Around the same time, the Jahriya adherents in this region also participated in the Northwest Muslim rebellion (1862–78) and continued to resist attacks from the Qing army, barricading themselves in Jinjipu 金積堡, Ningxia, under the direction of the fifth grandmaster, Ma Hualong 馬化龍. However, the master eventually surrendered to and was executed by the Qing army in 1870. Then,

the Northwest Jahriya suffered a devastating blow [Chou 1993: 184–211; Lipman 1997: 125–126]. However, this Sufi order soon revived at Xuanhuagang 宣化崗 in Gansu through the efforts of Ma Yuanzhang [Chou 1993: 221–259; Lipman 1997: 180], who became the acting leader of the brotherhood in 1882 [Chou 1993: 230]. During this period, Ma Lianyuan was involved in serious conflict with the Jahriya.⁸

2. Development of Ma Dexin's View on the Veneration of Saints

2.1. Ma Anli's Opinion of Sufi Masters

Ma Dexin's denunciation of saint veneration was followed by his disciple Ma Anli 馬安禮 (d. 1899), who helped Ma Dexin translate al-Būṣīrī (1296)'s *Qaṣīda al-burda* (*Ode of the Mantle*) into Chinese and wrote a Chinese commentary on it titled *Tianfang Shijing* 天方詩經 (*The Classic of Poetry in Arab*) with the support of Ma Xuehai 馬學海. This was published in 1890 [Zhou 2005: 53–54]. The commentary work has the following passage:

When the self as the source of lust goes astray without any guide, there is only the Real Lord (*Zhenzhu* 真主) [as one who can lead it to return to the right path]. The Sufi master (*Daozhang* 道長) can lead people to the Path because he enlightens them on behalf of the Lord. However, the Sufi master is not easily found. [The Sufi master] must be secretly helped and specially chosen [as a spiritual guide] by the Lord. Now, [the situation of] this Path was degraded. People [who travel in the Path] always rush to become Sufi masters and instruct their way of litany (*niangong* 念功) [i.e. *dhikr*], then intend to raise their fame and gather their disciples from various regions. They eventually changed the greatest thing into a child's play or Satan's joke, so that they are transmitting [their position of master] to their sons by hereditary succession. When a Sufi master dies, his disciples immediately bring his son to his position. They install [the previous master's son] to the rank of master, making him inherit something symbolic of his succession from his father, regardless of whether he is old or young, and wise or fool. This harmful custom is spread and established almost universally. I fear that the true traces of those who traveled in the Path will disappear. [Ma Anli 2016: 6414–6415 (the original folios: 14b–15a)]

⁸ This is in spite of the fact that Ma Yuanzhang himself is said to have made efforts to build amicable relations with non-Jahriya Muslims and non-Muslims [Ma Chen 1981: 302–306; Lipman 1997: 181].

This passage insists that the Sufi master can guide people not by his own ability, but rather by the divine aid given to a special person God chose. Moreover, the passage laments the present situation in which the position of the Sufi master is often transmitted by hereditary succession, human choice, and not on the divine, regardless of the successor's quality.

This opinion follows Ma Dexin, who, in *Lixue zhezhong*, states:

We read articles mentioning miracles (*karāma*) of some Sufi masters, which describe as follows: They exterminated human characteristics from themselves, and linked the divine power to themselves; they perform anything as they want without conformity with God's permission; the divine attraction (*jadhba*) is caused by their hands; and entering paradise or the fire depends on their desire. These descriptions in the books are seemingly not sincere words. Rather, it is necessary for us to oppose them in accordance with the standard measure of the *sharī'a*. [Ma Dexin 2016: 25b–26a]

Prior to this passage, Ma Dexin writes that a human being cannot become a friend of God except by divine attraction to the rank close to God (*jadhba*) [Ma Dexin 2016: 19b]. As mentioned above, the same author also says about the same idea that whether every person becomes connected to God is determined by their innate capacity that God predestined. Therefore, he condemns the attribution of divine attraction to the Sufi masters as the linkage of the divine power to the human Sufis. In other words, the Yunnan Hui scholar admonishes his readers that affirming the Sufi masters' ability to lead his disciples to a kind of human perfection is equal to confusing created things with God [Nakanishi 2019: 393–395].

2.2. Ma Anli's Criticism of the Veneration of Saints from a Confucian Perspective

Ma Anli tried to bridge Ma Dexin's teaching and Confucianism, the orthodox thought in pre-modern Chinese society, beyond the mere repetition of his teacher's sermon. He was so well versed in Chinese classics that he passed a civil service examination at the provincial level (*Xiangshi* 鄉試) [Zhou 2005: 54], and often helped Ma Dexin translate his Arabic works into Classical Chinese. Ma Dexin was good at writing in Arabic but not at writing in literary Chinese. Thus, *Sidian yaohui* 四典要會 (*Essences of the Four Canons*), which is generally recognized as Ma Dexin's work, is probably elaborated for the most part by Ma Anli who contributes a preface to it [Bai

2000, II: 1562]. Most of the sentences embellished by terms and citations from the Confucian classics in *Sidian yaohui* are owing to Ma Anli's composition. The following passage in *Sidian yaohui*, Volume 4, Chapter 4, which compares Ma Dexin's critical theory against the veneration of a saint with Confucianism, is comprised of such sentences.

As for one who regards the Sufi master as a manifestation (*xiang* 象) of the Real Lord, his view is inferior to that of fire worshippers (*maizhusi* 買朱斯) [i.e.. *majūsī*] [who say as follows]: The Sun, the light of which all beings look up at in every region and time, is eternal and immutable with no equal; Who among the sages and wisemen (*shengxian* 聖賢) in various eras exceeded it? Such a view of the fire worshiper is biased. However, it seems to have a reason in its way, although it does not have any reason in its true meaning. In Confucianism, there are those who regard the blue sky as a manifestation of the Lord. Therefore, they call [the Lord] “the heaven,” saying, “the heaven with its form and color is a manifestation [of the Lord, or the principle], while the shapeless heaven is the principle (*li* 理).” However, Confucians do not thoroughly discuss the relationship between a substance (*ti* 體) and its functions (*yong* 用). Thus, they do not have this kind of erroneous and nonsensical discussion [that evaluates the Sufi master as a manifestation of the Real Lord]. Not since the ancient time has [Anyone] heard of their remarks that heaven and human beings are identical, that the sage is a manifestation of heaven, or that a man who subjugated and extinguished his self and returned to the principle of the heaven can be called “heaven.” Whoever says that a human being is a manifestation of the Lord is inferior to one who converts to Confucianism to be saved from the sin of injudicial speech. [Ma Dexin 1988: 81]

A similar argument is found in Ma Dexin's *Lixue zhezhong* [Nakanishi 2019: 386-389]. The Arabic work reproaches some Sufis for misunderstanding Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240)'s doctrine of Oneness of Being (*waḥda al-wujūd*), a theoretical system that clearly distinguishes God from created things, as follows: Mistaken Sufis wrongly say, “God is incarnated in the most excellent man of each era, who is a representation (*nāʾib*) of God, and a manifestation (*ṣūra*) of Him.” [Ma Dexin 2016: 7b] The above citation appears to compare this reproach to the discourses of Confucians and fire-

worshippers.⁹ The part comparing it with Confucianism implies that even Confucians never worship the human being as a manifestation of God, while some are to be censured for their identification of heaven with a manifestation of the Lord. This part is probably owed to an elaboration of Ma Anli that aimed to demonstrate Ma Dexin's critical theory against the veneration of saints as compatible with Confucianism.

This conjecture is supported to an extent by a preface by Ma Anli, dated 1878, in *Zhutian dazan jijie* 祝天大贊集解 (*Collection of Commentaries on the Great Hymn for Praying to the Heaven*). *Zhutian dazan jijie* is composed of a Chinese text titled *Zhutian dazan*, written by Ma Dexin,¹⁰ and commentaries on it that Arifu 阿日孚 (i.e., 'Ārif) added in 1877, after the Ma Dexin's death. Ma Anli writes:

In Yunnan province, calamities and upheavals continued for 18 years. The beginning of conflicts is, indeed, that Islam and Confucianism formed different factions without compromising with each other and intentionally stood against each other to generate calamities so that they gradually showed a symptom of upheavals. My master, Mr. Fuchu [the Chinese courtesy name of Ma Dexin], who thoroughly grasped both arguments and deeply understood worldly customs lamented as follows: Deteriorated Confucians and pseudo-intellectuals with superficial knowledge stick to the form in discussions on the heaven, and neglect the Lord in discussions on the principle that is under the control of Him. Thus, they deem Islam as heterodox and reject it as something trivial. Muslims also often miss the ultimate principle, talk about the Real Lord under the name of "the Heaven," and are ignorant of the following fact: the [so-called] heaven is the Real Lord, and the Real Lord is identical to the *Shangdi* 上帝 [i.e. the Supreme Being in Confucianism]. The heaven includes all beings from the aspect of controlling the principle (*li* 理), the vital energy (*qi* 氣), the cosmic law and fate (*xiangshu* 象數). From the aspect of transcending them, heaven has no name because it involves no differentiation. This is called the Real Lord, probably because It [in an aspect] functions as the Lord over every being. It never signifies the original Suchness. From his

⁹ Although *Sidian yaohui* was published prior to *Lixue zhezong*, the objection against the equation of created things with God itself was probably held by Ma Dexin when he wrote the former work with the aid of Ma Anli.

¹⁰ Ma Dexin wrote the preface of *Zhutian dazan* in 1863. According to this preface, the work is a translation of a text (probably written in Arabic) that he obtained in his travels around Middle East.

insight, my master, Mr. Fuchu, wrote *Zhutian dazan* and led those who went astray to return to the right way. He made people under heaven know of its existence and the veneration toward it. He led people to return to the Real Heaven without mistaking it for the physical heaven formed of the vital energy, and return to the Truth while repenting their errors. The reason for doing so is that he secretly tried to get rid of the catastrophe. In *Sidian yaohui* and *Xingming zongzhi* 性命宗旨, I have analyzed and explained this. [Arifu 2005: 548 (the original folios: 3b–4a)]

Ma Anli argues that solely discussing the physical heaven and the principle without advancing to the consideration of the Lord is a deed of “deteriorated Confucians and pseudo-intellectuals with superficial knowledge.” This implies that Confucianism originally comprehended the Real Lord beyond the physical heaven and the principle. In short, Ma Anli urges both Muslims and non-Muslims to restore the original doctrine of Islam and Confucianism, and to clearly distinguish the Real Lord from the physical heaven. He looks back on his analysis of this issue in *Sidian yaohui* and *Xingming zongzhi*.¹¹ This proves that the above-mentioned bitter review of the identification of the physical heaven with a manifestation of the Lord in *Sidian yaohui* is supplemented by Ma Anli.

As seen above, *Sidian yaohui* adds the following idea to this rigorous monotheistic review: Worshiping the Sufi master as a manifestation of the Lord is inferior to converting to Confucianism with the interpretation of the physical heaven as a manifestation of the Lord. Thus, Ma Dexin’s charge against the veneration of saints conforms to the original teaching of Confucianism, which, even in its degenerated form, never confuses the Lord with the human being; hence, the veneration of saints is heterodox for Confucianism as well as Islam. It is probable that this argument was also devised by Ma Anli. If so, we can say that Ma Dexin’s anti-campaign against the veneration of saints was developed by Ma Anli in the direction of the alliance with Confucianism. Thus, Ma Anli suggested that incorporating the veneration of saints, a potential target of Confucian contempt, results in a rupture between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In Ma Anli’s preface to *Zhutian dazan jijie*, the author ascribes the

¹¹ According to its preface written by Ma Anli, *Xingming zongzhi* was that which he compiled from Ma Dexin’s works [Ma Dexin 2008: 214]. The second chapter of *Xingming zongzhi* explains the relationship among the Real Lord, the heaven and the *shangdi* [Ma Dexin 2008: 217].

antagonism between Muslims and non-Muslims, which eventually brought about the Yunnan Muslim rebellion, to the wrong recognition of the Real Lord caused by the deterioration of Islam and Confucianism. He thought that degraded Confucians who regard the physical heaven or the principle as the Supreme Being affix a label of heterodoxy to Islam for its belief in the Real Lord, and that deviated Muslims who do not discern God from the sky cannot perceive the identity between the Real Lord and the *Shangdi*,¹² or between Islam and Confucianism. That is, Ma Anli indicates that the clarification of the difference between God and the sky is a way to reconcile Islam and Confucianism, or Muslims and Confucians. Moreover, through this indication, he might have intended to exclude the worshiping of the human saints as God because it is inferior to the equation of heaven with the Lord, which disturbs the harmony between Islam and Confucianism, or followers of each teaching.

3. Jahriya Reaction to Ma Dexin Tradition

3.1. Slander of Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan in *Qingzhen piyilun*

Ma Dexin's fight against the veneration of saints was taken over by his disciples, such as Ma Lianyuan and Ma Anli,¹³ and seems to have been upheld by a reasonable number of Hui Muslims. In particular, Ma Lianyuan had many disciples [Ma Zhihong 2017: 75–78; 2018]. Thus, the reaction of the Jahriya adherents became considerably violent. This is shown not only by the attempted assassination of Ma Lianyuan mentioned above but also by a Chinese work titled, *Qingzhen piyilun* 清真闢異論 (*Refutation of Heretics in Islam*). The work was written by Mu Zhi'an 穆之安 from Sichuan province and published in 1899. Although Mu Zhi'an was obscure, he was probably concerned with the Jahriya, because the front page of the book

¹² There were different opinions among Hui Muslims regarding whether Allah is *Shangdi*. According to [Satō 2009: 115–121; 2010: 151–160], the unification between Allah and *Shangdi* was epochally but discreetly formulated by Liu Zhi, and then more explicitly articulated by Ma Anli.

¹³ Ma Anli seems not to have specially borne the Jahriya in mind as the enemy of this fight. A sentence prior to the above cited passage in his preface to *Zhutian dazan jijie* notes that a work titled *Qingzhen zhengxue* 清真正學 “arbitrarily alleges reckless remarks, which are unfounded and unreasonable.” This “*Qingzhen zhengxue*” might be *Tianfang zhengxue* 天方正學 written by Lan Xu 藍煦, who was probably concerned with Yangmen 楊門, one of sub-orders of the Qādirīya in China [Nakanishi 2013: 207]. However, Chinese Qādirīs observed celibacy [Ma Tong 2000: 228–229, 231, 236–237, 265–266; Nakanishi 2013: 224]. The above seen lamentation of Ma Anli over the hereditary succession of Sufi masters had to intend those other than the Qādirīya. In addition, hereditary succession was chosen sometimes by the Jahriya [Ma Tong 2000: 165, 275, 300, 324–325], but was more predominant in other orders such as Huasi 華寺, Mufuti 穆夫提, and Beizhang 北莊 [Ma Tong 2000: 154, 160–210, 359, 361–363].

shows that the woodblocks for printings of the work were preserved in “Jingdu Qihuamen 京都齊化門,” that is, Qihuamen Shangpo Qingzhensi 齊化門上坡清真寺, a Jahriya mosque in Beijing [Chou 1993: 139, 194].

Qingzhen piyilun is composed of a preface and the main text titled “biographies of Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan.” The main text from beginning to end slanders the two Hui scholars, enumerating their scandalous episodes, which other historical sources do not support and hence seem unreliable.

The malicious biography, after introducing some anecdotes illustrating Ma Dexin’s wiliness during the early period of his life, discloses that he had agitated and schemed the Yunnan Muslim rebellion since before its outbreak, and plotted treachery, calling himself “the king of pacifying Yunnan (平南王 *Pingnanwang*),” against the Qing dynasty, even after surrendering to it;¹⁴ that he pretended to preach on behalf of the Sage (*Shengren* 聖人, i.e., the Prophet) while altering the contents of the classics and eventually founding “*Babajiao* 爸爸教 (the religion of *Baba*),” the name of which was derived from his honorific title, “*Baba*,” used among his followers; that he entrusted Ma Lianyuan with the restoration of the religion when the former was executed by the Qing government; and that Ma Dexin’s younger concubine had adulterous relations with his disciples including Ma Anli, and became bolder after the death of her husband [Mu 2008: 117–125 (the original folios: 1a–5a)].

As for Ma Lianyuan, *Qingzhen piyilun* describes that he had, from a young age, often spoke ill of others, thus falling out with them, and later gathered wanderers as his pupils, while employing sophistry and replacing right with wrong to increase his adherents. Then, the work exposes his attempted rape of his adopted child’s wife, his unsuccessful elopement with a widow, and his indulgence in obscene acts with little boys and a bald man while mentioning that he bribed an eyewitness and a local officer to hush-up such scandals. Besides, the author adds that Ma Lianyuan’s concubine had immoral relations with his pupils and that his daughter

¹⁴ Some historical records report that Ma Dexin called himself “*Pingnanwang*” or “*Pingdianwang* 平滇王 (the king of pacifying Yunnan)” when he vicariously executed the function of the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, taking over from Pan Duo who had been killed (See note 2 of this article). Atwill [2005: 128–129] infers that Ma Dexin thereby planned to unify Muslim rebel forces lacking their solidarity and hand over them under the direction of Du Wenxiu. However, Wang Shuhuai [1968: 123–124, 130–133 (n. 35–38)], based on numerous evidences argues that a series of actions of Ma Dexin before and after that event does not involve any ambition and plot for his uprising again against and independence from the Qing dynasty. Wang Shuhuai [1968: 109–136] argues that Ma Dexin consistently took great care to maintain peaceful relationships between the Huis and Hans, instead of using his personal advantage from the Yunnan Muslim rebellion, where he participated passively as a leader of some of the rebels.

lost her chastity despite being engaged. Lastly, this tell-all book stresses that such an infamous person as Ma Lianyuan, is not qualified to write something to judge chaste and noble persons like Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齊 [Mu 2008: 125–132 (the original folios: 5a–8b)].¹⁵

The preface of *Qingzhen piyilun*, in line with Neo-Confucianism, or the orthodox thought of the Qing dynasty, excuses the author for abusing Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan, as follows:

Now, [although we do not desire to equate ourselves with the previous wisemen,] those who believe themselves as sagacious and arbitrarily allege their own views, in spite of their illiteracy, alter the previous wisemen’s writings at will, and recklessly accuse trivial faults of others, even though they themselves are full of diseases. This terribly misleads people. The previous Confucian said: Although it is a temporal meritorious deed that Yu 禹 made the nine rivers flow smoothly, it is an eternal achievement that Mencius put human minds right, the achievement which is not inferior to that of Yu. “Suppressing heretical teachings, refusing biased practices, and refuting unreasonable discourses”¹⁶ are works in which Mencius could not stop engaging himself. Thus, he said, “I never want to have a dispute. I am forced to do so. One who can claim refusal of [heretics such as] Yang Zhu 楊朱 and Mo Di 墨翟 is a follower of the sages.”¹⁷ Because of this clear and reasonable remark, I fear that scholars who just read [heretical authors’] works without insight into their personalities will deem Yang Xiong 楊雄 as a wiseman, and Wang Anshi 王安石 as a sage, throwing out precious stones and treasuring rubble. Thus, it is necessary to investigate and expose their usual behaviors thoroughly so as to let people know that they [that is, heretical authors like Yang Xiong and Wang Anshi as well as Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan] should be killed and their works should be burned to prevent their harm from destroying morals and human minds. I hope to contribute to this. It is my earnest hope. [Mu 2008: 113–115 (the original folios: 2a–3a of the preface)]

¹⁵ The last point corresponds to the above-cited passage from Ma Lianyuan’s preface to *Da zaxue*, where he confesses that he refuted religious practices of the Jahriya in some of his works.

¹⁶ The original text is 息邪說，距陂(sic.)行，放淫辭。This expression is cited from *Mengzi*, “Tengwengong” xia.

¹⁷ The original text is 豈好辨(sic.)哉。予不得已也。能言距楊墨者聖人之徒也。This utterance is cited from *Mengzi*, “Tengwengong” xia.

Mu Zhi'an first compares himself to Mencius who stood against heresies. However, he is afraid that people find Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan's denouncement of the Jahriya to overlap with the anti-heretical activity of Mencius and so accept their claims without question. Thus, he further likens the two Yunnan Hui scholars to Yang Xiong and Wang Anshi, who Neo-Confucians have criticized. In the Neo-Confucian circles, Yang Xiong is an example of those who prostitute learning to pander to the corrupt public because he flattered Wang Mang 王莽, the founder of the Xin Dynasty and a usurper of the Han dynasty. For example, the analects of two *Chengs* 二程遺書 that Zhu Xi 朱熹 compiled records the following utterance of one of Cheng's brothers: "Although I choose Yang Xiong as a wiseman among Han Confucians, he could not be exempted from the error of entering into and retiring from the governmental service." [Cheng and Cheng 2004, I: 70]¹⁸ However, some Chinese scholars such as Sima Guang 司馬光 and Jiao Hong 焦竑 admired and vindicated Yang Xiong [Kano 1953: 278–281], as even Cheng appraised him as wise. As for Wang Anshi, the analects of Zhu Xi 朱子語類 [Li 1994, VIII: 3097] record the following anecdote: When the Shenzong 神宗 Emperor of the Song dynasty asked whether Wang Anshi is a sage, Cheng Mindao 程明道, Cheng's elder brother, denied it.¹⁹ In short, Mu Zhi'an suggests that Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan are to be impeached by means of Ad hominem plus dogmatic dispute; otherwise, some people might approve of their wild remark, as in the case of Yang Xiong and Wang Anshi. Thus, the author of *Qingzhen piyulun* justifies his abusive attack on the personal characters of the two opponents, and his disclosure of their usual evil deeds, as a vaccination against their misleading works.

3.2. An attempt to Reconcile the Followers of Ma Dexin and the Jahriya

Qingzhen piyulun displays the intense hatred that some of the people concerned with the Jahriya had for Ma Dexin and Ma Lianyuan. In contrast, other adherents of the Jahriya probably made efforts to reach an amicable settlement with their rivals espousing the religious tradition of Ma Dexin. We can catch a glimpse of this in a poem titled "Lao Talang 老他郎 (Your Grace Talang)." The poem extols Lao Talang, that is, Ma Shenglin (Ma Chenglin), who, as seen above, led the Jahriya warriors to

¹⁸ The original text is as follows: 漢儒之中，吾必以揚子為賢，然於出處之際，不能無過也。

¹⁹ The original text is as follows: 神宗嘗問明道云“王安石是聖人否”。明道曰“公孫碩膚，赤烏几几，聖人氣象如此。王安石一身尚不能治，何聖人為”。

participate in the Yunnan Muslim rebellion. This poem, said to be composed by Ma Dexin, appears in a work by Yao Guoliang [2000: 55–56].²⁰ However, Mr. Yang does not provide the source of the cited poem. Regardless, it seems plausible that this poem is not by Ma Dexin because some words are anachronistic for several reasons. The text is as follows:

Lao Talang, Lao Talang! People say that “*Talang*” is “*Ta bu lan* 他不懶 (He is not lazy).”

With a true mind and sincere intention for religion, [he] was ready to feel happy if his head were to roll around on the battlefield.

[He] defended Chengjiang and offended Kunming, eradicating 33 thousand soldiers from the Qing army.

In the Panlong River and the Yudai River, the bodies of enemies floated as if rice bran floated on water.

[He] went up to Western Yunnan and helped [his allies in] Chuxiong, fiercely chasing silly and obstinate Chu Kechang [who vicariously executed the

²⁰ I utilized this book by the grace of Ms. Leila Chérif-Chebbi, who permitted me to borrow it from her collection. I extend my deepest thanks to her. The original text of the poem is as follows:

老他郎，老他郎，人说他郎他不懒
真心实意为教门，不惜头颅滚战场
守澄江，攻昆明，横扫清兵三万三
盘龙江，玉带河，敌尸漂落像粗糠
上迤西，援楚雄，猛追狂童褚克昌
旗开得胜回滇南，夺取洋枪几百杆
马如龙，投满清，调转枪口打内战
杨先芝，马成林，要把如龙剁成浆
稻谷田中出稗子，喜鹊窝出黄鼠狼
各路英雄一齐反，几番肉搏为家邦
马成林，发号令，誓守东沟不投降
只有一根血脖子，熬（麀）战十年更坚强
东山战，广山战，歼灭八千马尾狼
猛冲锋，杀重围，你死我活拼几场
处处水井尸填满，条条道路堆人山
马成林啊，马成林，伊斯兰万丈旗杆
于癸酉年（同治十二年，1873年）元日新兴大营清真寺北房

function of the Qing Provincial Military Commander in Yunnan province.]²¹
When [he] returned to Southern Yunnan in triumph with flags fluttering, the western-style guns [he] captured were counted by the hundreds.
Ma Rulong²² surrendered to the Manchurian Qing dynasty (*Manqing* 滿清), thus turning his gun toward his former brothers and starting domestic warfare.
Yang Xianzhi²³ and Ma Chenglin hoped to hash Rulong so that he would be made into a paste.
A [stalk of] millet grew from a rice paddy, and a Manchurian weasel appeared from the nest of a magpie.
It was for the sake of the nation (*jiabang* 家邦) that heroes rose from various regions all at once, and combated hand to hand.
Ma Chenglin ordered and swore to protect Donggou without surrendering.
May [I] lastly, just become a bloody neck! [This resolution] became stronger after the ten-year fight without any compromise.
[He] fought at Dongshan and at Guangshan, and [he] annihilated eight thousand *Maweilang*.²⁴
[He] vehemently rushed [the enemies] and cut his way through close sieges.
[He] fought at numerous battlefields, surviving life or death crises.

²¹ This couplet mentions Chu Kechang's unsuccessful military operation in 1859–60 against the Yunnan Muslim rebellion. The Qing army under his command was temporarily closed in on the city of Dali, the most important headquarter of the Muslim rebels. However, his expeditionary force was defeated by a counter attack of Muslim rebels, and he died in battle [Jing 1991:125–128; Atwill 2005: 117–118].

²² His alias is Ma Xian 馬現. He was originally a powerful leader of the Yunnan Muslim rebellion. He surrendered to the Qing dynasty together with his religious teacher Ma Dexin in 1862 [Jing 1991: 132; Atwill 2005: 124]. Afterward, he earnestly cooperated with the Qing army to suppress the Yunnan Muslim rebellion, thus fighting in various battles. In 1871, he crushed Dadonggou, the last headquarter of the Yunnan Jährīya [Chou 1993: 175–180; Jing 1991: 145, 217–218].

²³ Yang Xianzhi served Ma Rulong as a commanding officer of his Muslim army, and surrendered together with his boss to the Qing dynasty. When the large army of Du Wenxiu sieged Kunming, where the Yunnan provincial government of the Qing dynasty was placed, Yang Xianzhi went over to the Muslim rebel side. However, he soon surrendered to the Qing army again. He followed Ma Rulong in his siege of Dadonggou, and died in this battle [Wang Shuhuai 1968: 264, 266, 280; Jing 1991: 217]. The poem's juxtaposition of Yang Xianzhi and Ma Chenglin as those who especially hated the betrayal of Ma Rulong against his coreligionists does not seem historically accurate.

²⁴ *Maweilang* is an unknown animal. According to Lu [1994: 36, 453], the government of Yongde 永德 prefecture in Yunnan province decided to exterminate *Maweilangs* as vermin because they had often attacked inhabitants and their domestic animals during 1962–65 as a result of excessive deforestation.

Every well was full of corpses, and dead bodies were piled on every road.
Ma Chenglin, Ma Chenglin! You are the flagpole of Islam (*Yisilan* 伊斯蘭) with
ten thousand lengths.

[This is written] on the first day in the year of Guiyou [the twelfth year of
Tongzhi emperor's reign, or 1873] in the northern room of the Daying mosque
in Xinxingzhou prefecture.

The three words underlined above do not match the date written at the end of the
poem.

First, the term *Manqing* appeared in Japan earlier,²⁵ but, in China,
probably started to be heard at the end of the Qing period, or later than Ma Dexin's
lifetime. The term was employed to mention to the Qing dynasty as a target to be
overthrown by a national revolution that regains the "Chinese" territory for the Han
nation from the alien conquest of the Manchus.²⁶ In addition, after the Republican

²⁵ For example, *Nanjing Jishi* 南京紀事, a memorandum about Taiping tianguo 太平天國 written by Luo Sen 羅森, who came to Japan as a translator for the American Commodore Matthew C. Perry, was published under the title of "*Manshin Kiji* 滿清紀事," probably in the Ansei 安政 years (1854–1859) [Masuda 1979: 293–313]. Also, Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉, in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論の概略, volume 1, Chapter 2, first published in 1875, writes that "National Essence of China (中華の国体)" was derived by *Manshin* 滿清 [Fukuzawa 1995: 42]. According to Fukuzawa [1995: 40], "the *Kokutai* of China" refers to the distinct nationality form of a race.

²⁶ For example, Sun Yetsen's "Bo baohuang baoshu 駁保皇報書," published in 1904, contends as follows:

We must first drive off the foreign emperor (Kedi 客帝) and take our dominion back, and it is not until then that we can be exempted from a cession of Shangdong by a sign of treaty today and a sale of Liangguang 兩廣 by another sign of loan agreement tomorrow. The *Manqing* government not only sold [a domain of] us by signs of treaties and loan agreements but also present it for foreigners after pacifying it. As for Xin'an 新安 prefecture and the Bey of Guangzhou where such situation has already been realized, if the *Manqing* government had not done things like helping [evil foreigners compared to] Jie 傑 to oppress the subjects, our people would have still gained facilities to perform necessary works [to stop the cession or sale of domain] and been able to stake their lives and sacrifice themselves for their homeland (*sangzi* 桑梓); thus, if those foreigners had known that they cannot gain an inch of our land without efforts because our people would not give it readily, they would have still been cautious against their last which is insatiable. Now, if the *Manqing* government become a dog and falcon for [games of territorial encroachment], those foreigners will have facilities to deprive us of our territory when they want to take it. Therefore, if we hope to save ourselves from foreigners' dividing and taking China (*guafen* 瓜分), we must overthrow the Manchurian government (滿洲政府), except for which, there is no remedy for the situation [Guangdongsheng 1981–86, I: 234].

period, the same term continued to impart the invalidity of the Qing dynasty, the legitimacy of the Xinhai Revolution, and the resistances of peoples against the Qing feudalistic rule.²⁷

For example, the article “the Hui Nation and revision of the Qing history (回族革命與改編清史),” published by Shawan Nüshi 沙婉女士 in the Chinese Muslim periodical *Yisilan Qingnian* 伊斯蘭青年 (*Islamic Youth*), vol.2 no.10, in 1936, states that numerous published histories of the Qing dynasty adopt the expression “Muslim rebellion” from “the standpoint of the emperors of *Manqing*;” instead, we should call it a “revolution.” In addition, the author of the article resents histories written during the Qing period that describe Muslims as militant and brutal and says: “It is to be hated that people in the old times were very stupid. Why do people still deliberately engender interethnic animosity between Muslims and non-Muslims, provoked by the emperors of *Manqing*?” [Sha 2015: 371–372]

Moreover, *Huihui minzu wenti* 回回民族問題 (*the Problem of Muslim Nation*), which Liu Chun 劉春 published under Chinese communist control in 1941 at Yan’an 延安, uses the title “*Manqing*: The Hui Nation in the most dark era when nations were locked in the prison (Zui hei’an de minzu laoyu shidai de Huizu 最暗黑的民族牢獄時代的回族)” for Chapter 2, Section 2. This section assesses Muslim rebellions during the Qing period as revolutions or anti-feudal struggles of the people [Liu 2005: 518–521].²⁸

Second, the wording “for the sake of the nation” also reminds us of the Chinese nationalist manner of speaking, which gained prominence in the 1890s, or the end of the Qing period [Onogawa 2009–2010, II: 261–262; Yoshizawa 2003: 14–16, 27–34, 87–90, 159–164]. By this wording, the anonymous author of the poem probably intended to implicate Ma Shenglin’s resistance against the Qing dynasty in a liberation war for the “Chinese nation,” or the subversion of the alien and

²⁷ The government of the People’s Republic of China prohibited the use of this term in 1956 with an official order by the State Council because it causes discomfort of Manchurians and destroys of the solidarity of nations [Shou 2008: 338, 343 (n. 26)].

²⁸ The developing process from Ma Mingxin’s missionary work to the rebellions of the Jahriya are noted as a struggle against feudal exploitations from landowners and existing Sufi orders in alliance with the despotic feudalism of the Qing dynasty that changed into fights against the *Manqing* rule [Liu 2005: 519 (the original page: 28)]. In addition, Liu writes that the Muslim rebellions in Yunnan and the Northwest in the second half of the nineteenth century were excellent as “revolutions” of “the anti-alien rule” because old and new sects united for their movements, but that these revolutions failed because the upper classes of the Han people worked as *Manqing*’s instrument and fueled antagonism between the Hui Muslims and the Han masses [Liu 2005: 520 (the original page: 32)].

feudalistic rule of the Qing dynasty for the purpose of constructing the Nation-state and resisting the Western imperialism. This patriotic concept was idealized not during Ma Dexin's lifetime, but after it.

Third, the Chinese transcription of *Islām* into *Yisilan* started to gain popularity after the Republican period. Thus, it does not seem to belong to the age of Ma Dexin. For example, Ma Dexin's almost contemporary Hui scholar, Lan Xu 藍煦, in Volume 3, Chapters 6 and 11, of his Chinese work *Tianfang zhengxue* 天方正學 (*Right Learning in Arab*), a preface to which he wrote in 1852, phonetically renders *Islām* into *Yisilüemu* 以斯略穆 [Lan 2007: 260, 266]. “Jiaomen lun 教門論 (Comment on Religion),” one of Arifu's commentaries on Ma Dexin's *Zhutian dazan* mentioned above, uses the Chinese spelling of *Yisili'amo* 一斯立阿模 [Arifu 2005: 557 (the original folio: 21a)]. As for Ma Dexin, for example, *Chaojin tuji* 朝覲途記 (*Travelog of Pilgrimage*), the Chinese version of his travelog of his trip around the Middle East, which was translated under his supervision by his disciple from the original Arabic text, transcribes *Islāmbūl* into *Yisilamubu* 易思喇母布 [Ma Dexin 1861: 10a] (or *Yisilamubule* 易思喇母布勒 [Ma Dexin 2007: 699 (the original folio: 9b)]) . *Islāmbūl* (full of Islam), an alias of Istanbul, is comprised of *Islām* + *būl*. In short, the travelog transcribes *Islām* into *Yisilamu*. In addition, *Zhinan yaoyan* 指南要言 (*Summarize of Compass*), which Ma Dexin edited by summarizing Ma Zhu 馬注 (d. after 1710)'s *Qingzhen zhinan* 清真指南 (*Compass of Islam*), spells *Islām* *Yisilüemu* 以思略目 [Ma Dexin 1864, II: 22b] and *Yisilamu* 以思喇目 [Ma Dexin 1864, II: 31b, 32a], following the original text [Ma Zhu 1989: 156, 170]. In this way, *Islām* was transliterated with four or five Chinese characters during the Qing period.

Meanwhile, the spelling *Yisilan* was used in the first issue of the Chinese Muslim periodical *Zhongguo huijiao xuehui yuekan* 中國回教學會月刊 (for example, [Shouyu 1926: 9]), with the English title “*the China Muslim*,” published by Zhongguo Huijiao Xuehui 中國回教學會, or the China Muslim Literary Society in 1926. This society was organized in 1925 in Shanghai by Ha Decheng 哈德成 (d. 1943) and others. It seems that *Yisilan* became popular around this time.

This trend is confirmed by Wang Jingzhai 王靜齋 (d. 1949)'s articles on the Chinese Muslim periodical *Mingde yuekan* 明德月刊 (*Belief Monthly*), which was published by Tianjin Huijiao Lianhehui 天津回教聯合會 (Federation of Associations for Muslims). He exclusively calls Islam “*Huijiao* 回教” in his articles, including an “Additional report on an unprecedented great meeting (追述天方空前之大會議)” in the fourth issue of the same periodical, published February 1, 1925 [Wang Jingzhai 1925a]. Then, he applies *Yisilam* 以斯拉目 for *Islām* in his Chinese translation of

an Arabic romance, “Young woman Teng’ao (簾媼女郎),” published in serial form in the fifth issue of the following month [Wang Jingzhai 1925b: 18]. In addition, he renders Islām into *Yisilan* 以斯蘭 in his Chinese translation of an Arabic biography of the Prophet *Zhisheng Mumode shilüe* 至聖穆默德史略 (*Brief history of the Ultimate Sage Muhammad*), in an appendix to the same issue [Wang Jingzhai 1925c: 5], and in a sequel of “*Teng’ao nūlang*” published in the eighth issue in November 1925 [Wang Jingzhai 1925d: 16]. Eventually, he transcribed *Islām* into *Yisilan* 以斯蘭 in his articles including “Muḥammad ‘Alī and recently published English translations of the *Qur’ān* (穆罕默德阿禮與近年刊行的英譯古蘭經),” carried in the eleventh issue in August 1927 [Wang Wenqing 1927: 7–8].

These out-of-place expressions imply that the poem in question was composed by someone later than Ma Dexin under his name. It is highly possible that the anonymous poet was a person involved with the Jahrīya who tried to reconcile differences between his denominational fellows and the followers of Ma Dexin by creating a past in which the authoritative and severe Hui scholar applauded a leader of the Sufi order.

Conclusion

As discussed in this study, Ma Dexin’s criticism of the veneration of saints intensified the antagonism between his followers and the Jahrīya, while aiming for the cessation of the Yunnan Muslim rebellion or the settlement of the hostility between the Huis and Hans. It is remarkable that the two sectarian rivals among Hui Muslims respectively contrived to legitimize themselves by displaying their conformity with Confucianism. Thereby, they mutually presented their enemies as hazardous to non-Muslims as well as Muslims and as a threat to the friendship between the believers of different religions. In these cases, the coreligionist competitors shared the idea that they should maintain a peaceful relationship between the Huis and Hans, an idea that justified and reinforced their attacks on each other. In other words, the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims, or the former’s inclination to mitigate it, sometimes deepened the gaps among the Hui people.

Actually, Hui Muslims have repeated the mode of confrontation where some ostentatiously took the Confucian side to oppose others. For example, Hui scholars such as Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (active during the mid-seventeenth century) and Ma Zhu²⁹ might rather have strived to drive out inner heresies among Muslims on

²⁹ According to Ma Zhu’s *Qingzhen zhinan*, volume 10, “Zuodao tongxiao 左道通曉

purpose to accommodate non-Muslims' good understanding of Islam [Horiike 2012: 122–141, 371–373; Lipman 1997: 81]. Besides, in factional quarrels between the Jahriya and another Sufi order, the Huasi 華寺, in Northwest China, both sets of adherents sued each other in the local governments of the Qing dynasty for anti-Confucian heresy, or disturbance of the Chinese social order. These suits developed into violent clashes between litigants and the rebellion of the Jahriya against the Qing dynasty, which had a negative influence on the relationship between the Huis and Hans [Lipman 1997: 91; 1999].

However, the Hui people's common mental attitude toward the avoidance of frictions with non-Muslims worked in attempts to dissolve the enmities between Muslims. The poem *Lao Talang* narrates that Ma Dexin admired Ma Shenglin from the viewpoint of their common goal of overthrowing *Manqing*, or the Manchurian Qing dynasty, and contributing to the Chinese nation. The ode is designed to facilitate a reconciliation between the followers of Ma Dexin and the Jahriya by the mistimed fiction that the former idealized a Sufi master of the latter, which is in line with ideologies such as the national revolution, anti-imperialism, and anti-feudalism. The same ode is also plotted to indicate that the Hui people are the allies of the Han people, sharing the ideologies that were valued by Chinese society after the end of the Qing period. Putting it differently, in the harmonious coexistence with the Han people, or the basic strategy for the survival of Hui Muslims, the poet found a point of agreement between the followers of Ma Dexin and the Jahriya and utilized it to mediate between the Muslim antagonists.

Thus, there have been complicated connections between the inner conflicts and compromises among Hui Muslims on the one hand, and the tensions and reconciliations between the Huis and Hans on the other hand. Indeed, the struggle of Hui Muslims to adapt Islam to Chinese society are historical experiences worth consulting to facilitate intercultural dialogues in the present age of globalization. However, the experiences warn us against blindly praising such adjustments of Islam by Muslim minorities to the host society without any understanding of the

(Being acquainted with heresy),” Muslim inhabitants at Wuding-fu 武定府 in Yunnan province, represented by him, sued Qalandars (Gelandai 格蘭岱) to the local government, and succeeded in having the latter suppressed the former. A letter that Muslims of Wuding-fu wrote to ask Ma Zhu to exterminate the Qalandars condemns this group as ones who “nullified the great ethical norms, destroyed the laws of the state, and drew the right path of Islam into an evil road.” [Ma Zhu 1989: 420]. Ma Zhu's report to the local government appeals that the suppression of the Qalandars amounts to venerate and meet the present emperor's respectful attitude to the right learning [Ma Zhu 1989: 422].

ideal approach to build a harmonious multicultural society.³⁰ In future studies on Hui Muslims, we should pay more attention to the historical contexts and social side effects of their intellectual efforts.

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³⁰ For example, in the above cited passage in Ma Anli’s preface to *Zhutian dazan jijie*, Wang Shuhuai [1968: 113–114] includes Ma Dexin’s wish to reconcile between the Huis and Hans. As discussed above, we should also note Ma Dexin and Ma Anli’s confrontation with some Muslims that they despised as heresies.

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