

ETHNIC TENSIONS BETWEEN THE HAN AND THE HUI: THE
NEO-SUFI JAHRIYYA MOVEMENT OF MA HUA LONG OF THE
LATE QING PERIOD (1862–1871)

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Abstract

The historical study into the tensions of the late Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) between the Han and the Hui serves as a way to understand ethnic conflict in modern-day China. An interdisciplinary approach is used to tackle the key issues of rebellions and religious movements and situate them within the context of ethnic conflicts. With an emphasis on the ideological and cultural differences between Islam and Confucianism, this paper will attempt to place the Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah movement of Ma Hua Long (d. 1871) into the historical framework of a deteriorating Qing Dynasty. Studies in this area have been challenging due to the paucity of resources on the subject and the tendency of mainstream academics during the time of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in China to favour the application of Marxist theory to the historiography of Qing Dynasty China. The rebellions are best understood in the social context of the legacy that Ma Hua Long left behind in the contemporary Hui community's veneration of Sufi saints and mystics represented by his tomb. A more in-depth analysis is therefore required before one can start to uncover a more complete picture of the ethnic, religious, and political aspects of the rebellions.

*I. Introduction*¹

The study of the Muslim rebellions during the Qing Dynasty China is an important topic concerning the identity of the Hui (Muslim) Chinese community within a dominant ethnic Han China. There were two geographically different Muslim revolts that happened in the Northern Province, Gansu, and the Southern Province, Yunnan, both of which began around the 1850s until they were suppressed in the 1870s. Many problems arise in such a study due to language differences, ethnic attitudes, and cultural gaps between the Han and the Hui. The term Han should be used carefully as it is hard to identify (even in contemporary periods) what constitutes a Han person. In this study, the term Han will refer to a person migrating from the centres of power in China (from the eastern provinces) to the borderlands and places where there are sizable minorities and cultures distinct from that of the Han.

The problems of writing about the Hui rebel leader Ma Hua Long (d. 1871) are due not only to the scarcity of primary sources relating to his particular Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah Islamic movement known as the “New Teachings,” or *Xinjiao*, but also to the fact that the Qing Hui rebellions have been the subject of biased or class-based research funded primarily by the Han government. Neo-Confucianist scholars in the period of the rebellion would have been inherently hostile to the “New Teachings” or Islamic movements, and any texts written by the Hui themselves would have been destroyed by the Qing government or later by ideological zealots in the Cultural Revolution. The only source that was found to be useful in this study of the Ma Hua Long period is the compilation *Hui Min Qiyi*, by communist Bai Shouyi (who was a Chinese Muslim)². Bai Shouyi’s emphasis on the importance of historical data and material lies in stark contrast to Marxist theorists in China who wanted to place the sources of historical study into the framework of a class-based struggle.³ It is

1 Although there are other Muslim ethnicities in China, Hui and the term “Chinese Muslim” will be used interchangeably due to the focus on Ma Hua Long’s *Xinjiao* Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah movement. I will also be mentioning, in contrast with the Hui, the parallel experiences of the Uighurs, an ethnically Turkish group in Xinjiang.

2 Bai Shou-yi, *Hui Min Qi Yi*, Volume I (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1997).

3 Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “On Shi and Lun: Toward a Typology of

Bai's compilation that remains the most valuable source of historical data relevant to Ma Hua Long. However, there still needs to be more primary source material in order to develop a more critical assessment of the Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah movement.

This paper will attempt to address the Hui rebellions with the issues outlined above in mind. By focusing on the Jahriyyah movement of one particular rebel, Ma Hua Long, I will show how this individual attracted the attention of Qing generals and officials and how Sufism in general prevented the Hui Muslims from becoming integrated and assimilated into the Han Chinese culture and its brand of cultural syncretism. The paper will utilize an interdisciplinary approach involving discussion of Chinese Muslim population patterns, ideological differences and cultural incompatibility, the historical basis of the religious movement of the Jahriyyah sect of Ma Hua Long, and finally, the role of a deteriorating Qing Dynasty in the Muslim rebellions of 1862.

II. Historical Context—The Origins of the Hui

The term Hui should not be applied to the earlier pioneer Arab settlers in China as the term only arose later during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). The Hui designation was created to label the new Muslim communities from the influx of settlers that the Mongols introduced into China as civil administrators from Western and Central Asia. These Hui came from Persian and Turkish cultural origins as was apparent in their language and customs. It is interesting to note that these new Muslim arrivals became heavily “sinified” in dress, customs, language, and even physical appearance.⁴ The Hui became deeply assimilated into Chinese culture, but kept their identity distinct from the Han by maintaining their own religious practices such as the tradition of the “Hajj,” or pilgrimage to Mecca, and the translation of important Arabic texts into Chinese. The Hui were perceived by popular and elite Han opinion as primitive and nomadic pastoralists. Their strict intermarriage practices were viewed as immoral and they were to considered lacking in the moral and civil

Historiography in the PRC,” *History and Theory* 35, 4 (1996): 79.

4 L. J. Newby, “‘The Pure and True Religion’ in China,” *Third World Quarterly* 10, 2 (1988): 926.

value that Confucian society held.⁵ During the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongol rulers recognized the Hui as having a higher standing in the Emperor's court than the Han, and Islam was officially labelled by the Yuan as the Qingzhen, the "Pure and True Religion," due to Mongol preference.⁶ As a result, it can be said that the most important Muslim communities in China formed under the Mongolian conquests, and the migration of the Persian-Turkic peoples eastwards designated the Hui.

In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the Muslims flourished under a tolerant Han government. Muslims held trusted and key positions in the Ming government, and the Hui peoples were resettled in the frontiers of China as "buffer communities" in the Gansu and Yunnan provinces of Northwest and Southwest China respectively. The gains of Chinese Muslims in the Ming Dynasty were such that many Hui Muslims of later periods referred to it as the "Golden Age" of Islam in China.⁷

In tracing the history of Islam in China, one can see that the melding of local customs to Islamic law enabled Islam to survive in China. Thus, one can see a type of pragmatism in Chinese Muslims in their daily practices and in their relationship to the notion of living "inside" (*Dar al-Islam*) or "outside" (*Dar al-Harb*) of the territory, or realm, of Islam. The definitions of these terms are problematic when applied to the case of Muslim communities in China. In the case of living in Qing Dynasty China, Muslims reside in the *Dar al-Harb* on the conditions that they obey foreign laws that are not Islamic in accordance with the prevalent Hanafi school of law in China.⁸ It is better to label the protection or toleration of Islam in China as *Dar al-Sulh*, the "territory of truce," that maintains peace between the Muslims and other cultures under a non-Muslim ruler.⁹ However,

5 Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell, eds, *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counter-Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 78.

6 Newby, 927.

7 Raphael Israeli, "The Muslims under the Manchu Reign in China," *Studia Islamica* 49 (1979): 161.

8 Raphael Israeli, "Muslims in China: The Incompatibility between Islam and Chinese Order," *Ybung Pao* 63, 4/5 (1977): 313–14.

9 Manoucher Parvin and Maurie Sommer, "Dar-al-Islam: The Evolution of Muslim Territoriality and Its Implications for Conflict Resolution in the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, 1 (1980): 4.

this peace was becoming increasingly strained due to the evolving changes within the Chinese Islamic networks. This growing pressure and intolerance that exploded into the Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah movement required the Muslim communities living in *Dar al-Harb* to either rebel (in the context of jihad) or migrate. Therefore, if favourable conditions exist that do not require a choice between these two options associated with *Dar al-Harb*, then it might be acceptable to theoretically label the territory as a Muslim territory. This is what Chinese Muslims did in the expansion of Islam during the turmoil of late Qing Dynasty China.¹⁰

III. The Orders of Islam in China and the Establishment of the Jahriyyah Suborder of Nashqbandi Sufism

Chinese Islam could be divided into three different groups known as the *Laojiao* (the Old Teachings), the *Xinjiao* (New Teachings), and the *XinXinjiao* (New New Teachings). The older traditions of Chinese Islam follow the Hanafi school of law and this is known as the *gedimu*, a Chinese transliteration of the Arabic *al-qadim* (old). The *gedimu* is the oldest Islamic tradition within China and forms the basis of Islamic thought. The majority of Chinese Muslims are orthodox Sunnis—Shi'a groups are rarer in China although they do exist in the Central Asia region. Shi'a Muslims are very much in the minority and do not have much influence on the Islamic makeup of China.¹¹ Although there are many different definitions in Chinese sources for the *Laojiao*, the *Xinjiao*, and the *XinXinjiao*, it is primarily in the conflict between the *Laojiao* and the *Xinjiao* that the first Muslim Rebellion of the Qing Dynasty in the 1780s occurred. The *Laojiao* could be seen as encompassing the oldest Islamic traditions and thought in China whereas the *Xinjiao* originated from the revivalist Sufi movements of Ma Mingxin in the 1780s after he had returned from his travels in West Asia. These movements were recognized to be the “second tide” of Islam’s introduction into China in the late seventeenth century.¹²

10 Raphael Israeli, *Muslims in China: A Study in Cultural Confrontation* (Copenhagen: Curzon Press Ltd., 1980), 61.

11 Michael Dillon, *China's Muslims* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996), 20.

12 Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*

Ma Mingxin (1719–1781) brought a revivalist and a “fundamentalist” Sufi movement to China that rejected compromise and assimilation into Chinese society.¹³ He argued that Hui identity was in danger of becoming further assimilated into Chinese society and that there needed to be an adherence or reinforcement of traditional practices that reaffirmed Hui identity. Ma Mingxin’s Sufi movement in the 1780s could be seen as a symptom or reaction to the encroaching influence of Chinese religious beliefs and spirit worshipping.¹⁴ Ma Mingxin created deep networks from his Sufi Naqshbandi Jahriyyah sect (the *Xinjiao*) in the Gansu province in the 1760s. Ma Mingxin’s sect of Sufism was defined as the “sect of loud chanting,” a transliteration of the term Jahriyyah in Arabic. The sect emphasized the loud chanting of *dhikr* (meaning the “remembrance” of God through repetitive vocal chanting) and contained practices such as repetitive motion along with the chanting.¹⁵ Ma Mingxin’s sect met with resistance from the established Islamic community in China due to the way his Sufi order was structured. In contrast to the older Islamic community within China, Ma Mingxin’s Sufi Jahriyyah sect emphasized the importance of a local leader, or *shaykh*, who led the community and chose successors. Due to the institution of hereditary succession, the families of local *shaykhs* gradually accumulated much power and the local Sufi networks strengthened the self-identity of the Hui in the Gansu region. However, the reinforcement of self-identity amongst the Muslims in Gansu was met with complications in that local Sufi *shaykhs* competed with each other for loyalty among the Muslims in Gansu.¹⁶

The Sufi orders and brotherhoods thus constructed powerful lineages known as the *menhuan*, and these *menhuan* helped to create

(Boston: Harvard University Press, 1996), 41.

13 “Fundamentalist” in this context meaning specifically the return to the ‘fundaments’ of the sacred texts of the Quran as a basis for religious teachings. It is acknowledged that there is a problem with using this modern word to describe the context of Islamic movements in eighteenth-century China.

14 Donald D. Leslie, “The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: The Case of Chinese Muslims,” *The Fifty-Ninth George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology* 1998. (Canberra: Contemporary China Centre, April 1998) 19.

15 Mi Shoujiang, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao/Zhongguo Zongjiao Jibun Qingkuang Cong Shu* (Beijing: Wu Zhou Chuan Bo Chubanshe, 2004), 74.

16 Lipman, “Violence in China,” 75.

large networks through the association of the Hui Sufi brotherhoods from the tombs of earlier shaykhs. The menhuan became centres of political influence within the Sufi communities due to the charisma and local popularity of the shaykhs.¹⁷

The establishment of the Jahriyyah sect marked the creation of tight Hui Sufi networks that resulted in conflict and tension with other sects of Sufi Islam such as the Khufiyyah. These tensions would eventually erupt into full-blown hostilities that required intervention from the Qing government to instill order. In the next sections, more discussion will take place about the Xinjiao Revolts of 1781–1783 led by Ma Mingxin and the first stirrings of revolt led by his Jahriyyah sect.

IV. Islam and Confucianism: Ideological Enemies?

Studying religion in China is problematic due to the very definition of religion used by the Chinese themselves. The concept and meaning of religion in China is different from the Abrahamic model of religion as a popular belief in or worship of a God or spiritual entity.¹⁸ In China, the terms relating to religion in the pre-modern era (before the 1911 revolution) were constructed by the “Dao” or the “Way.” These terms related to the *sanjiao* (the “Three Teachings”), three commonly accepted Han institutions that made up China’s schools of thought known as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The most important point to be made regarding the *sanjiao* is that they represent the foundations of Chinese philosophical thought. Confucianism will be used primarily as a comparison with Islam in China due to its association with the legitimacy of the political sphere of Imperial China. It must be noted that Confucianism was viewed first and foremost as an ethical system rather than a religious one in the context of state religion or state sponsored theology.¹⁹ The construction of Chinese government and political ideology was formed from Neo-Confucian interpretations of the scholars and intellectuals of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279). The scholars of this period established Confucianism as the sole basis for legitimacy in government, and as a result, all other

¹⁷ Ibid., 76.

¹⁸ Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Religious Dimensions of Confucianism: Cosmology and Cultivation,” *Philosophy East and West* 48, 1 (1998): 5.

¹⁹ Tucker, 5.

competing schools of thought and religions, including Islam, were construed as a threat to Han society and culture.²⁰ This translates in social and political terms to mean that if Muslims behaved in a rebellious manner towards any official representative of the Chinese state, punishment would be dealt harshly so as to suppress it. This was especially important given the emphasis placed on a harmonious state and stability projected within Neo-Confucianism.

V. The Question of Cultural and Ethnic Incompatibility

The argument that Islam was viewed as inherently hostile to Chinese philosophy does not hold if one takes into account the relative stability of Han and Hui societies during the Yuan and the Ming Dynasties. However, when one looks into the rise of Sufi Islam in China from the seventeenth century onward, one finds an increased antagonism between the Han and the Hui in the Gansu region in the 1780s. Why was there a discrepancy between the stability of the earlier dynasties compared with the Qing Dynasty? What was in these *Xinjiao*, or “New Teachings,” that caused relations to deteriorate between the Hui and the Han? Israeli identifies three issues that likely contributed to the rise in antagonism between the Hui and the Qing government in the 1780s. First is the ethnicity of the Qing ruling class, which was Manchu and not really Han; therefore, arguments could be made that the Muslims were rebelling against the Manchus who ruled over both the Han and the Muslims. This would mean that their rebellion was not inherently hostile to the Han, but to the Manchus. The second factor was the rise in the number of Sufi orders that spread from India or Central Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the third was the general decline of the Qing Dynasty in the nineteenth century brought on by the Opium Wars of 1839–1843.²¹

Ethnically, the Hui were likened to Chinese who had converted to Islam. This faulty interpretation came from the fact that the Hui assimilated more readily than other Muslims into Chinese culture and society (such as the Turkic Uighurs of Xinjiang). For example, the Hui adopted sinicized names like Ma, for its phonetic resemblance to Mohammad, adopted Chinese as their language, and “functioned

20 Peter K. Bol, *This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in Tang and Sung* (London: Stanford University Press, 1994), 174.

21 Israeli, “The Muslims under the Manchu Reign in China,” 161.

at the heart of ... Han society for several generations.”²² They served in official government posts and seemed to be fully co-opted into Chinese culture if not for their religious affiliations and practices such as marriage. Hui marriage practices were the means through which they could survive amongst the Han and maintain their identity. The strategy they adopted was to refuse to permit Hui woman to marry men from other cultures, while being willing to accept Han women as their own.²³ Dietary practices were another way for Muslims to emphasize their identity. Due to the widespread prevalence and preference of pork in Chinese cuisine, the Hui and other Chinese Muslims only eat at special restaurants referred to as *Qingzhen* (literally meaning “pure and true” in Chinese).²⁴ In addition, the Hui were seen as distinct for their economic practices of keeping farm animals and their association with the horse. Finally, economic practices were an avenue for prosperity and material advancement by the Hui due to the negative connotations associated with the merchant class in China by Confucian scholars. Merchants were considered to be the lowest rung of the Chinese social ladder due to notions of parasitism. Therefore, Chinese Muslims found their separate identity from the Han offered an opportunity for gain.²⁵

VI. *The Ma Mingxin Rebellions, 1781–1783 — “Bad Muslims” and “Good Muslims”*

The crucial factor related to the Muslim rebellions is the spread of Sufism in the nineteenth century. As mentioned previously, the spread of Sufism in China was likened to a “second coming of Islam” to Chinese Muslims. The “newcomers” and believers of the new Sufi orders of Islam upset the political balance of the *Laojiao* that had comprised established Chinese Muslims who relied on their connections with the Qing authorities. The new Sufi orders derived their power from local loyalties towards the charismatic leadership of their *shaykhs*. This meant that Sufi orders such as Ma Mingxin’s Jahriyyah sect found followers from the “poor and dissatisfied” and

22 Newby, 931.

23 Gladney, “Muslim Chinese,” 256.

24 The Muslims were also able to dominate the mutton and beef trade due to their dietary preferences. See Leslie, 17.

25 Israeli “Muslims in China,” 139.

that they quarreled with the established Muslims of the *Laojiao*.²⁶ The two different schools of Islam (*Laojiao* and *Xinjiao*) fought over interpretations and redefined their relationship with the Qing authorities in 1781, leading to the arrest and execution of Ma Mingxin after some three thousand of his followers rose up in revolt against the local government of Gansu to protest the unfair treatment of their community by the Han.

The infighting between Muslims of the *gedimu* (the old school) in the *Laojiao* and the Sufi *Xinjiao* represented the first conflict over interpretation of how Chinese Muslims should view their relationship with the Han and Chinese authorities. The significance of Ma Mingxin's Sufism is that his *Jahriyyah* sect called for political activism and religious participation in politics, in contrast to the *Laojiao* Muslims. Additionally, Ma Mingxin called for a purification or stricter adherence to Islam than that practised in the *Laojiao*. He believed that Chinese Muslims were becoming too lax in their interpretations of Islam, and accused them of being too "accommodating" towards Confucian values and Chinese society.²⁷ In addition to creating friction with the older branches of Islam in China, Ma Mingxin's *Jahriyyah* sect clashed with another Sufi suborder of the *Naqshbandi*, the *Khufiyyah* sect.²⁸

The early movement of Ma Mingxin was quelled by the Qing Dynasty with the help of his rivals in the *Khufiyyah* Muslims. As a result, members of the *Jahriyyah* sect were labelled as traitors and singled out by the Imperial government as "Bad New Teachings Muslims," and "weed people."²⁹ The difference between the Imperial Centre and the local Han officials in their approach to the issue of the Hui should be noted. The Imperial central government wished to create stability in the region by dividing the "Bad New Teachings Muslims" from the "Good Old Teachings Muslims." It must be noted nevertheless that official court documents regarding the definitions of "bad" and "good" Muslims were flawed due to their grouping of the *Khufiyyah* sect into the "Good Old Teachings Muslims." If the Qing definition of "Bad New Teachings Muslims" was based on notions

26 Lipman, "Violence in China," 76.

27 Leslie, 18–19.

28 The *Khufiyyah* sect was called the "Sect of Low Chanting" as opposed to the *Jahriyyah* "Sect of Loud Chanting." See Mi Shoujiang, 74.

29 Lipman, "Violence in China," 79.

of Sufism, than the Khufiyyah sect was inaccurately grouped with the Laojiao.³⁰ It should be understood that after the rebellions were suppressed, Han and Hui ethnic tensions arose around whether or not one was a Muslim on the side of the Qing or a “New Teachings Muslim.” This was due to the fact that zealous Han officials drew upon local tensions that began to identify of all Muslims as a “terrifying other.”³¹

VII. *The Decline of the Qing in the Nineteenth Century*

Tianming, or the “Cyclical Theory of Peace and Disorder,” was a Confucian concept that carried with it notions of the legitimacy of government and of the ruler based on the will of heaven, or *Tian*. When *Tian* became displeased with the ruler of Chinese society, it would send natural disasters in the form of famine or other signs that the ruler must be replaced. The loss of the Opium Wars of 1839–1843 brought with it signs that the Qing government was failing the people. Subsequently, numerous other rebellions arose during same time period—the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864), the Nian Rebellions (1851–1868), and the Muslim Rebellions of Yunnan (1855–1873) and Gansu (1862–1878). All of these movements, with the notable exception of the Nian, were based on religious ideology and solidarity within religion.³² Therefore, it is in the context of the general decline and deterioration of society and local traditional values that the and Islam, along with the Confucianist idea of *Tianming*, took shape in these movements and rebellions in China.

It is arguable that the ideas of popular Islam during this period were also influenced by the parallel Christian movement that resulted in the Taiping Rebellion in 1851–1864. The Taiping Rebellion was based on its leader Hong Xiuquan’s claim that he was the brother of Jesus and the son of God. The rebellion carried with it messianic messages that may have appealed to popular Islamic notions of the Mahdi and the restoration of religious order in chaotic and disruptive times brought about by the decline of the Qing.³³ The Taiping Rebellion was

30 Lipman, “Violence in China,” 79–80.

31 Israeli “The Muslims under the Manchu Reign in China,” 168–69.

32 Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990) 183, 187–89.

33 Israeli, “Studies in Islamic History,” 294.

a major factor in causing the Muslim rebellions due to its disruption of local communities in the Yunnan and Gansu provinces.

*VIII. The Growth of Mistrust between Hui and Han in the Gansu Region*³⁴

As was stated earlier, the hereditary position of the Sufi leaders guaranteed social prestige and wealth. This was evident in the domination of the opium trade by the Hui *menhuan* (the constructed lineages of the Sufi Brotherhoods) leaders of the Gansu province. The importance of trade in opium with the rest of China ensured that the Hui leaders of Gansu enjoyed more influence and the control of production was used as a bargaining chip with the imperial Qing government.³⁵ Han scholar Zhao Qing associates the negative identification of the Hui with opium in this primary account of how Muslims were depicted: "Some of the Muslim people do not want to work hard to earn money. They gamble and smoke opium. After they engage in these practices, they have no money and start to despoil other people."³⁶

The problem of the Hui was that in contrast to the outwardly foreign Uighurs of Turkic origins in Xinjiang, their "betrayal" was seen as being more personal to the Qing government given their similarity to the Han. The negative depictions and tensions towards Muslims were exacerbated by the entry of Taiping rebels into the region. Their arrival forced local Han communities to form militia groups to defend themselves, given the stresses placed on the Qing government from dealing with the rebellion in other areas. It was believed that the Taiping rebels actively encouraged the Hui of neighboring Shaanxi province to revolt, and violence erupted within the Gansu province when the Han militias attacked their Hui neighbours. Looting, rioting, and harassment of the Hui by Han militias created a

34 In this section and the next I refer to primary texts compiled by Muslim communist historian Bai Shou-yi in his *Hui Min Qi Yi*. My colleague Li Wenjian and I made the translations that appear in the following pages from the original traditional Chinese in Bai Shou-yi's book. I bear sole responsibility for any inaccuracies and misreading of the text if there are any.

35 Jonathan N. Lipman, "Ethnicity and Politics in Republican China: The Ma Family Warlords of Gansu," *Modern China* 10, 3 (1984) 303.

36 Bai Shou-yi, *Hui Min Qi Yi*, Volume 1 (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 1997), 45.

dangerous situation.³⁷ Many Muslims began to appeal to the provincial government to stop these violent acts, but the government was seen as doing nothing in a volatile situation. As attested to in an account by a Hui living at the time, “All that the provincial government did was to use money to calm the situation down. They did nothing to pressure the Han militias that were rioting and destroying Muslim property.”³⁸ Misunderstandings gave way to violence as organized Muslim and Han militias intended to protect their communities from the Taiping rebels attacked each other instead. The Qing response to this was to focus on suppressing the Taiping rebellion first and then concentrate on the other rebellions that were occurring later.³⁹ However, rumours were circulated among the Hui that the Qing government wanted to kill all the Muslims.⁴⁰ The hysteria and fear that swept across the Hui populations of Gansu drew them closer together, and they found solidarity within the *menhuan* and Sufi leaders such as Ma Hua Long.

IX. The Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah Movement of Ma Hua Long (1862–1871)

The Neo-Sufi movement that was led by Ma Hua Long in 1862 represented a spiritual succession of the earlier movement by Ma Mingxin in the 1780s. Ma Hua Long was considered to be the fifth-generation descendant of Ma Mingxin, and continued on the “vocal practices” of chanting and repetitive motion for which Jahriyyah Sufism is known.⁴¹ Ma Hua Long rose to power due to his leadership as shaykh of the Jahriyyah sect of Islam in the Gansu province. The primary texts outlining the life Ma Hua Long and his contributions in his home city of Jin Ji Bao list his qualities as a leader of the local Muslims:

Ma Hua Long came from a wealthy background in a town called Jin Ji Bao, and his family lived there for many generations. He was considered to have been very talented and was an avid military strategist. In his early life, he paid

³⁷ Spence, 189.

³⁸ Bai, *HMQY*, Vol. 1, 45.

³⁹ Wen-Djang Chu, *The Moslem Rebellion in Northwest China 1862–1878: A Study of Government Minority Policy* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), 28.

⁴⁰ Bai, *HMQY*, Vol. 1, 45.

⁴¹ Dru C. Gladney, “Muslim Tombs and Ethnic Folklore: Charters for Hui Identity,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 504.

money to the Qing government to appoint him as a ‘wu guan,’ or military official of his town. He wielded the wealth and power given to him from the Qing to protect Muslims from the local Han provincial authorities. In one case, he was reported to have used his wealth to bribe court officials from condemning a local Muslim man to death.⁴²

Ma Hua Long participated in the open riots in the Gansu province region on September 11, 1862. But why did the Qing authorities single out Ma Hua Long as being particularly dangerous? One answer for this is found in the writings of military strategist Zuo Zongtang, who was sent to suppress the rebellions in 1866. Zuo Zongtang was adamant in identifying Ma Hua Long as the biggest threat due to his skills in warfare and military strategy, his wealth, his stronghold being surrounded by water, and “his high prestige and influence among the Gansu Muslims.”⁴³ The last point would have been in relation to his standing as the *menhuan* of his region. The importance of Ma Hua Long’s leadership within his Neo-Sufi sect was his ability to provide protection to local Muslims from Han violence. When Liu Jin Tang attacked his hometown in 1871, Ma Hua Long preferred to surrender in order to extract from the Qing the promise of safe conduct for his people.⁴⁴ After Ma Hua Long’s execution, the Han considered his New Teachings of to be responsible for the religious fanaticism of his followers, who believed in his divine nature. When the rebellions were finally suppressed in 1878, the Muslim populations in the region were dispersed throughout China into military camps from where the government could keep close watch on them. Han people were not allowed to mingle with them, and Muslim leaders were chosen who could ensure the obedience of the Hui.⁴⁵

X. Ma Hua Long’s Hui Rebellions—Dealing with a Legacy of Repression with Theory and Information

It can be argued that Ma Hua Long’s religious ties bought him influence and leadership of the Hui in his region. However, the extent and importance of his religious message, as a crucial part of the rebellion,

42 Bai, *HMQY* Vol. 3, 112.

43 Chu, 135.

44 Bai, *HMQY* Vol. 4, 305–08.

45 Chu, 92.

is not evident by a review of the primary texts alone. Reviewing these texts, it is hard to find evidence that his Neo-Sufi Jahriyyah sect was an important factor in the uprisings other than through its historical links with the 1781 Xinjiao uprisings of his spiritual predecessor Ma Mingxin. Therefore, the main issue of the 1862 Hui Rebellions in Gansu that was found in this paper from reading the primary texts and secondary resources is the ethnic tension that arose from the religious fervor of the Sufi sects of Ma Mingxin.

It is important to remember that historical compilers in communist China such as Bai Shouyi met with criticism from Marxist theorists during a period of strife and social upheaval in communist China. Bai's *Hui Min Qiyi* is a valuable compilation of primary sources for the Hui. However, the attitudes of Bai's contemporary colleagues would have been at odds with his insistence on maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the sources he compiled. The mainstream attitude of academia during the time of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and beyond in China would have been one which favoured the application of Marxist theory to the historiography of Qing Dynasty China. Numerous scholars were denounced as counter-revolutionaries if they expounded the virtues of material-oriented historiography.⁴⁶

The tumultuous way that material-based historiography and a tradition of scientific study was handled in China during the Chinese Communist Party's repression left scars that are still healing today.⁴⁷ It is this legacy of repression and theory-based historiography in China that hinders more research into the movement and its religious messages. Based on these assumptions and materials available on the movement, this paper is forced to conclude that the Neo-Sufi movement of Ma Hua Long is better understood in the social context (rather than a religious movement) of the legacy that he left behind in the contemporary Hui community veneration of Sufi saints and mystics represented by his tomb in Lingwu County in Gansu.

46 Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, 74-76, and D.A. Kelly, "At Last, An Area: Current Policies in Chinese Social Sciences," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 2, 1 (1979): 128.

47 The Department of Philosophy and Social Science (known as *Xue Bu*) in China was suspended and its members were sent to labour camps in Henan by the Gang of Four and Lin Biao during the Cultural Revolution. See Kelly, 123-36.

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