

not to suppress religion, but rather to "gather" the masses around the Party.

GOOD FOREIGN RELATIONS AT ALL COST

It was during the mid-50's that travel abroad for Chinese Muslims and entertainment of foreign Muslims in China became such an effective instrument for building good foreign relations. Delegations of pilgrims to Mecca were sent from China from 1952 through 1966, but it was not until 1955 that the delegation was actually able to enter Mecca. In the summer of that year, nineteen Chinese Muslims made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in the process toured various parts of Asia and North Africa telling anyone who would listen that there was no religious persecution in China. The 1956 delegation was the largest, reputed to include about one hundred pilgrims.⁶²

Thirty-nine Muslim pilgrims, both men and women, who went to Mecca from Lhasa in 1957 received great publicity, and on their return were welcomed at a forum which included Buddhist leaders. It was pointed out that the government supplies passports and foreign exchange, that the Chinese Consulate in Bombay rendered aid. The pilgrims gave banners, prayer rugs, and photographs to the Religious Affairs Commission in Lhasa upon their return, and were said to have extolled the new China and its freedom of religion wherever they went.⁶³

By the early 60's, the number of pilgrims going to Mecca and visiting countries in the Middle East had dwindled to less than ten as coolness in Chinese diplomatic relations with such countries became apparent. At this juncture, contacts with Pakistan and Indonesia were stressed with the result that it is very clear how Islamic leaders in China were used to promote better relations between Communist China and predominately Muslim countries. Ma Yu-huai of the Chinese Islamic Association, for example, led a

⁶² *JMJP*, May 6, 1955, and other newspaper reports, summarized in *CNA*, January 20, 1956, p. 5. We have heard there were "several hundred pilgrims" from China in 1948.

⁶³ *Tibet Jih-pao*, December 27, 1957; *CURBAC*, May 6, 1958, pp. 6-9.

delegation of Muslims to Indonesia in late December, 1962, at which time they greeted several Indonesian officials.⁶⁴

In the spring of 1964, several Chinese Muslims visited Syria and "reiterated China's stand in supporting the Arab people in their struggle against imperialism and the Palestinian Arab people in their struggle to return to their homeland." The group visited a refugee camp of Palestinian Arabs on the outskirts of Damascus.⁶⁵ The same group of pilgrims later visited Karachi in West Pakistan and Dacca in East Pakistan but, according to reports, limited themselves to the usual expressions of hope for continued friendship and solidarity between Chinese and Pakistanis who would unite with other people to "support, encourage, and learn from each other in safeguarding national independence, building their countries, and preserving peace."⁶⁶

Chinese Muslim leaders also entertained a stream of visitors from Muslim countries. Sheik El-Hadj Ibrahim Niass of Senegal was feted at a banquet during which Burhan Shahidi said:

We hope that by our continued efforts we shall consolidate and develop the friendship and cooperation between the Muslims of the two countries and the friendship and solidarity between the peoples of China and Senegal and the rest of Africa.⁶⁷

The visitor responded by saying that the imperialists' lie that there was no freedom of religious belief in China had been proved wrong:

We have personally seen that Chinese Muslims enjoy full freedom of religious belief and that they are working with the rest of the Chinese people to safeguard and build up their motherland."⁶⁸

There are similar accounts of religious leaders from Pakistan and the Sudan, and undoubtedly there were many others about which there are no reports available. Many times the Chinese

⁶⁴ *NCNA*, Djakarta, January 7, 1963; *SCMP*, January 11, 1963, p. 30.

⁶⁵ *NCNA*, Damascus, May 5, 1964; *SCMP*, May 11, 1964, 25.

⁶⁶ *NCNA*, Karachi, May 17 and May 20, 1964; *SCMP*, May 22, 1964 pp. 35-36, and May 26, 1964, p. 35.

⁶⁷ *NCNA*, Peking, October 29, 1963; *SCMP*, November 1, 1963, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Islamic Association and the various friendship associations, such as the China-Pakistan Friendship Association, would co-sponsor such visits. On some occasions the visitors were hailed as a "friendship delegation," such as the Syrian friendship delegation which was entertained at a dinner by Vice-Premier Ch'en Yi. In his speech Ch'en said, "At the bidding of U. S. imperialism, Israel every once in a while creates provocations against you and the entire Arab people, posing a constant threat to your security." He referred to the discovery of "a spy ring of the U. S. Embassy" in Damascus and to "expelled U. S. espionage diplomats."⁶⁹

Special attention was devoted to Indonesia in 1965. When Indonesia withdrew from the United Nations, the Chinese Islamic Association sent a message of support for that action and for "the Indonesian people in their just struggle against the colonialist created 'Malaysia.'" ⁷⁰ When an Asian-African Islamic Conference opened in Indonesia in March, Chou En-lai sent a message of greeting which included the following sentence:

I sincerely hope that the Asian-African Islamic Conference will promote the Bandung spirit, strengthen the unity of Muslims, and make positive contributions to the cause of opposing imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism, supporting national independence movements and defending world peace.⁷¹

The Chinese delegation to the conference was headed by Yusuf Ma Yu-huai, who echoed Chou En-lai's words in a speech. Ma went on to speak specifically of U. S. imperialism and of the way in which it controlled the United Nations, then linked the Indonesian withdrawal from the UN, the Indonesian struggle against Malaysia, the struggles by the Vietnamese and Congolese peoples, and the struggle of Palestinian Muslims against Zionism as part of one anti-imperialist effort.⁷² A few days before the Asian-African Islamic Conference, there was a meeting of the Indonesian Muslim Trade Union (Sarbumusi), to which the All-China Federation of Trade

⁶⁹ NCNA, Peking, March 15, 1965; SCMP, March 18, 1965, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁰ NCNA, Peking, January 11, 1965; SCMP, January 15, 1965, p. 25.

⁷¹ NCNA, Peking, March 5, 1965; SCMP, March 10, 1965, p. 30.

⁷² NCNA, Djakarta, March 8, 1965; SCMP, March 15, 1965, pp. 29-30.

Unions sent a delegation, some of which presumably were Muslim.⁷³

On the surface at least, the normal patterns of Muslim life continued after the antirightist campaigns had stripped several Muslim leaders of power. Each year there have been reports from Peking and minority centers in the northwest of the celebration of Bairam, marking the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Muslims received a day off, and were reported to be wandering about in a gay and happy mood. Special services were held in the mosques, attracting diplomatic personnel and students from Muslim nations.⁷⁴

— The Corban festival, two months or so later, which marks the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca and is celebrated by Muslims throughout the world, has also been observed in Communist China. News reports mention religious services only in passing, but usually play up a reception held in the capital attended by Muslim leaders from China and diplomatic envoys from Muslim countries. Officers of the Chinese Islamic Association, such as President Burhan Shahidi, in 1963 and 1964, and Vice-President Hadji Muhammed Ali Chang Chieh, in 1965, made speeches extolling friendship between China and Muslims throughout the world, attacking U. S. imperialism, and praising the life of Muslims in People's China.⁷⁵

There were occasional news releases in the early 60's intended to indicate what a pleasant life Muslims were leading in China.⁷⁶ There were further accounts of the marvelous changes in the Muslim community living in and around Ox Street in Peking, following the same general outline of a previous article in *People's China* which has already been referred to.

Ma Yu-huai, who represented Chinese Muslims abroad on several occasions, wrote an article about progress in the Ninghsia Hui Autonomous Region of which he was vice-president.⁷⁷ He pointed par-

⁷³ NCNA, Djakarta, February 26, 1965; SCMP, March 3, 1965, p. 27.

⁷⁴ Miscellaneous NCNA reports in SCMP, March 1, 1963, p. 17; February 19, 1964, p. 22; February 9, 1965, p. 23.

⁷⁵ NCNA reports in SCMP, May 9, 1963, pp. 6-7; April 28, 1964, pp. 15-17; April 15, 1965, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁶ NCNA, Peking, March 16, 1964; SCMP, April 2, 1964, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁷ NCNA, Peking, March 16, 1964; SCMP, March 6, 1964, pp. 18-19.

ticularly to the number of officials from the Hui people in government and the number of delegates to the regional People's Congress, and put great stress on the economic growth of the region. He also spoke of the "emancipation of Hui women," which was the point behind a special feature story concerning a twenty-nine-year-old woman who had been sold as a child bride in the old China, but in 1964 was a deputy magistrate at the People's Congress of Haiyuan county in the Ninghsia Hui Autonomous Region.⁷⁸ The listing of numerous benefits to women under the new government—special schools, opportunities for work and service outside the home, special benefits, such as eight-week maternity leave with full pay and free medical care—was undoubtedly a major point in the Party's ideological struggle with Muslims who were sensitive to the criticism that the status of women had been negligible in traditional Islam.

The official view of the state of Islam in Communist China may be seen in the report to the Third National Conference of the Chinese Islamic Association by its president, Burhan Shahidi. Burhan referred with pride to participation of Muslims in socialist construction and in political, economic, and cultural activities in the regions where they lived, and to Muslim aid to the government in carrying out the policy of freedom of religious belief. He spoke of Islamic theological study, exchange of visits with Muslims of other countries, of government aid at times of festivals and in repair of mosques. Burhan did not give figures, according to the New China News Agency report, but said that the Islamic Theological Institute in Peking "had trained many imams and Islamic scholars" of various nationalities since 1955. There were the usual pledges of support to the government within and to people involved in various anti-imperialist struggles without.⁷⁹ One of the "tasks" to be undertaken in the future was "to make a determined effort to strike blows at counterrevolutionary and bad elements operating from among the Islamic circles under the cloak of religion," which points to the same problem that the two writers, Liu and Wang, were nervous about.

⁷⁸ NCNA, Yinch'uan, March 3, 1964; SCMP, March 6, 1964, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁹ NCNA, Peking, November 8, 1963; SCMP, November 14, 1963, pp. 13-16.

Writing in 1966, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, Haji Yusuf Chang said that mosques had been maintained in good condition and that Muslims had a disproportionately high representation in the First National People's Congress. He noted that these statements were based on a publication by the China Islamic Association. Chang goes on to say, however, that

available information suggests that the situation of Islam in Communist China is not uniformly bright. Since 1949, many mosques in rural areas have been used for other purposes, such as slaughterhouses; the use of old textbooks on Islam has not been allowed in all Muslim schools; all the ahungs now have to participate in the Agrarian Reform Work Corps, assisting Muslim peasants in their struggle against the landlord class, or otherwise be replaced by Communist-trained Muslim cadres. All the ahungs also have been forced to interpret the Koran from the Marxist-Leninist point of view, and numerous Muslim youths working in producing centres have been compelled to take the same meals as non-Muslims.⁸⁰

This statement is probably a rather conclusive summary of the situation which prevailed before the Cultural Revolution which, as Chang says, provided a greater degree of tolerance in the cities than in the rural places.

In the spring of 1966, the Corban celebrations went off as usual, with the affirmations of "complete freedom of religious belief" and condemnations of the United States in Vietnam and of U. S. and British imperialism in the Middle East. There is a brief human-interest story of a farmhand who set out a feast in Urumchi and said, "I lived in abject poverty and was head over ears in debt in those days [before Liberation]. It is the Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung that have led me on the road to happiness."⁸¹

A few days later a Chinese Islamic Friendship delegation left on a visit to Iraq, Kuwait, Sudan, and Pakistan. There were notes on their arrival at several of these places where they received a warm

⁸⁰ Chang, "Islam in Modern China," *The Voice of Islam* (Karachi), XIV (September, 1966), 693.

⁸¹ NCNA, Urumchi, April 1 and 2, 1966; SCMP, April 6, 1966, pp. 16-17.

welcome and exchanged pledges of friendship. At Muzaffarabad, the chairman of the delegation, Hadji Muhammed Ali Chang Chieh, attributed all of Azad Kashmir's troubles to U. S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism.⁸²

One of the first Muslim victims of Red Guard terror was Ya Dze-chou, an elderly imam in Peking, who was beaten, forced to confess extortion, arrested, and led away.⁸³ The Red Guards formed a new organization called "The Revolutionary Struggle Group for the Abolition of Islam," and put up wall posters calling for mosques to be closed and for the abolishment of Koran study, marriage within the Islamic faith, and circumcision.⁸⁴ Two Moroccan newspapers published the text of one such Red Guard poster attacking Islam:

From now on you will no longer be permitted to hide behind your religious mask—we shall destroy you. You will not be allowed to waste your time in prayers, because all you mutter there in Arabic is anti-Chinese. You will be forbidden to read your so-called Koran."⁸⁵

Other posters called for abolition of all Islamic organizations and Muslim feasts and holidays, and demanded that all imams must go to work in work camps and that traditional burial practices be replaced by cremations.⁸⁶

The Chinese Embassy in Morocco, a few days later, called this report in the Moroccan press "entirely a tissue of lies and calumnies." Ch'en Yi, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister of China, took a different tack and fell back on the reasons given years earlier for the expulsion of Christian missionaries. He said to a Muslim reporter from Pakistan that the action of Red Guards against Catholic priests, Buddhists, and imams "was necessary because under the cloak of religion these religious leaders had been

⁸² *NCNA*, Peking, April 12, 1966; *SCMP*, April 12, 1966, p. 28. For speech see *NCNA*, Muzaffarabad, June 25, 1966; *SCMP*, June 30, 1966, pp. 42-43.

⁸³ Japanese news agency report in *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 27, 1966.

⁸⁴ *Ceylon Daily News*, November 12, 1966; recorded in publication called *China Notes* (not to be confused with the NCCUSA publication), January 5, 1967.

⁸⁵ *Rabat L'Opinion*, December 17, 1966 and *Le Petit Marocain*, December 16, 1966; both stories from Morocco reported in above mentioned *China Notes*.

⁸⁶ *China Notes* (NCCUSA) V (April, 1967), 4-5.

spying for the imperialists, but that not a single Muslim had been attacked because of his religion."⁸⁷

Out in Sinkiang, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Tartars were told by Urumchi Radio on March 19, 1967, that Corban had been canceled because the Cultural Revolution had entered a "new stage," and spring plowing had reached a crucial period. A former officer in the Sinkiang Liberation Army said only 3 out of a former 150 mosques were open in the Kuldja district of that province. Red Guards had attacked mosques while Friday noon prayers were being said, and bloody clashes followed.⁸⁸ Russians joined the chorus of those who called attention to persecution of Muslims in those areas bordering Russia and China, particularly the Uighur and Kirghiz peoples. TASS International in an English broadcast from Moscow on January 24, 1967, announced that Red Guards "tore down ancient mosques and splashed the Muslim clergymen with paint and paraded them through the streets."⁸⁹ *The Communist*, a Moscow publication, said that in addition to tearing down mosques, Uighurs and Kazakhs had been forced to eat pork and cremate their dead, thus going against both dietary laws and traditional funeral rites.⁹⁰

There were disturbances in a Muslim middle school in Shanghai (Hui Min Chung-hsueh) and an anti-Mao organization started. Pro-Mao teachers had a difficult time until the school studied "three great disciplines" and "eight points to attend to," then everything was all right. The organization, called Pao Tsu Hao, was said to have been a resurrected secret society.⁹¹

On two counts Muslims managed to weather the Cultural Revolution better than members of other religious groups: a few festivals continued and a few places of worship remained open. Bairam was celebrated at the Tung Szu Mosque in Peking on January 2, 1967, but the report says "diplomats, experts, and students from Pakistan, Guinea, the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Yemen, and Nepal" attended. There is no reference to Chinese par-

⁸⁷ *Pakistan Times* (Lahore), October 2, 1966; *China Notes* V (April, 1967).

⁸⁸ *Communism and Religion*, March-April, 1967.

⁸⁹ *RCDA*, February 28, 1967, p. 34.

⁹⁰ *RCDA*, September 15 and 30, 1967, p. 149.

⁹¹ Reported from Shanghai press in *CNA*, May 19, 1967, p. 6.

icipating.⁹² The Corban festival was celebrated in the same mosque on March 22 (but not in Sinkiang), and only foreigners (embassy officials) are indicated as being present.⁹³ On December 26, 1968, Bairam was celebrated in Peking, and there is specific mention of Chinese as well as foreigners being present for the Corban celebrations on February 28, 1969, in Peking.⁹⁴

The other difference is that whereas there was no word of any Christian church or Buddhist temple being open for any kind of public worship at the beginning of 1968, there were two Muslim mosques open, one in Peking and the other in Shanghai. The evidence is that of visitors to China who saw the two mosques open and reported this fact in Hong Kong. And a year later there were reports that Muslims in the Hui areas carried out their religious practices openly, and that a school operated by mullahs for training clergy was still in operation.⁹⁵

The fact that accounts of festival celebrations specifically mention foreigners, and the fact that mosques were open in two cities which have had a high percentage of foreigners, would seem to indicate that the importance of good relations with governments of Muslim nations overrides the driving passion to eradicate the Muslim version of old culture, old thinking, old habits, old customs. Buddhism, as we shall see, has also been used to improve China's foreign relations, but by the time of the Cultural Revolution there was little hope for better relations with Ceylon or Burma. Hope had also died for Indonesia in the Communist mind, but Pakistan and certain states in Africa and the Middle East could not be written off. To allow Muslims a limited range of activity—their chief festivals, some open mosques, and a training school—was a small price to pay for the few friends that remained.

⁹² *Eastern Horizon* VII (January-February, 1968), 69.

⁹³ *Ibid.* VI (May, 1967), 72.

⁹⁴ *Ta Kung Pao*, December 26, 1968; *SCMP*, December 30, 1968. *NCNA*, Peking, February 28, 1969; *SCMP*, March 6, 1969.

⁹⁵ *China Notes* VII (Summer, 1969), 37.

IX

Buddhism: Altered, Utilized, and Buried

MONKS AND NUNS DISPERSED—AN ASSOCIATION
LAUNCHED

Although a number of outstanding Chinese Buddhist leaders made considerable progress in their efforts to reform Buddhist life, thought, and organization in the first part of this century, Buddhism was in very poor condition as the advent of communism drew near. Many temples and monasteries were in need of major repair; some had been confiscated or had reverted to local ownership. Twentieth-century intellectuals regarded the common practices of Buddhism with disdain, even though they might enjoy a stimulating discussion of Buddhist philosophy. It was common talk that the monks were poorly trained, without discipline, and interested only in performing Masses for the dead and other rites so as to get enough money to keep body and soul together. Such was the generally accepted picture, despite remarkable exceptions.¹ Each monastery and temple was autonomous; there was no central organization around which resistance might be focused.

In view of this generally uninspiring background one cannot but be impressed by the character of Buddhist activity in 1949. The Buddhist Youth Association of Shanghai held its third annual convention on February 20 of that year; the proceedings were broadcast by a local radio station. The theme was "the greater good of the neighbor," which led to consideration of "works beneficial to so-

¹ Hu Chang-tu, *China: Its People*, p. 121.