

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A flexible choice of comrades: the dynamic identity of the Muslim Hui of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

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Abstract

This paper investigates how Hui scholars imagined the membership of their community during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as sharing communal religious duties, such as Islamic education and funeral rites, which were correctively imposed by an Islamic doctrine on all Muslims. The analysis is mainly based on two texts. One is an inscriptive text drafted in Arabic and Persian by Ma Minglong in A.H. 1079 (1668–1669) and inscribed by his son in 1673 in Wuchang, Hubei province. The other is Tianfang dianli (Commentary on Rites of Islam), written in Chinese by Liu Zhi (d. after 1724) based on Arabic and Persian Islamic books. The analysis shows that these Hui scholars have flexibly demarcated their communities from those whom they regarded as “other” Muslims, depending on various situations. Additionally, this paper illuminates how Hui scholars’ various and flexible delineations of “us” facilitated their negotiations for advantageous positions toward Muslim rivals, as well as non-Muslims who suspected their orthodoxy. This relativizes the argument that Hui scholars understood themselves as being simultaneously Chinese and Muslim when they situated themselves vis-à-vis Chinese literati—an argument that has been often repeated in the study of Hui Muslims.

Keywords: Chinese Islamic literature; Chinese-speaking Muslims; filial duty; Hui identity; Islamic law (funeral rites); Islamic law (religious education); Persian in China

Introduction

Huis (Chinese-speaking Muslims) during the pre-modern period negotiated their Islamic beliefs and practices with the non-Muslim Han people, who often regarded Islam as heretical and its believers as dangerous. For example, Hui scholars have written Chinese works about Islamic teachings since the seventeenth century that reinterpret and express Islam as being harmonious with Confucianism, the dominant Chinese philosophy.

Zvi Ben-Dor Benite’s pioneering study on Hui scholars’ identities examined their Chinese works, including those on Islamic teachings, and argued that they “understood themselves as simultaneously Chinese and Muslim” (Ben-Dor Benite 2005, pp. 7–8, 12–13, 110, 232, *et passim*). He explained that they recognized themselves as a group with a “Chinese Muslim body of knowledge” that is “one important branch of Chinese learning” or the “Dao of Muhammad” and identified themselves as among the Chinese literati in a broader sense (*ibid.*, pp. 34–35, 78, 120, 141, *et passim*). In other words, they located themselves in “the overlapping space between an imagined and reified ‘Islam’ and ‘China’ (*ibid.*, pp. 15, 213, 233) where they understood themselves as being “both as Chinese

men of letters and as members of a specifically Muslim branch of Chinese knowledge” (ibid., p. 3) simultaneously. Following this argument, other researchers discussed how Hui Muslim scholars’ ideas and discourses involved the simultaneity of Chineseness and Muslimness to legitimize their existence in China against objections from the non-Muslim Han people (Cieciora 2016, p. 135; Frankel 2011, pp. 15–17, 87, 121–22, 147–52, *et passim*; Lipman 2016; Tontini 2016, pp. 198, 205, 211).

However, as Ben-Dor Benite (2005, pp. 8, 18–19, 104, 106, 111–12) also noted, such identity and group consciousness emerged among Hui scholars only when they situated themselves vis-à-vis Chinese intellectuals.¹ We should go further than statically viewing the Chinese–Muslim simultaneity as the predominant Hui identity. It is unclear how they saw themselves in relation to “other” Muslims. This paper investigates how Hui scholars, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, imagined the membership of their community as sharing communal religious duties, including Islamic education and funeral rites, which was correctively imposed by an Islamic doctrine on “all Muslims (*al-jamī*).”² This paper will elucidate that Hui scholars have flexibly demarcated their communities from ones whom they regarded as “other” Muslims depending on various situations. Thus, this paper illustrates the Huis’ multilayered and dynamic identities by scrutinizing how they contextually either articulated or obscured their fellow feeling for a group of Islamic believers vis-à-vis Muslim “outsiders.”³ This paper will illuminate how Hui scholars’ various and flexible delineations of “us” facilitated their negotiations for advantageous positions with Muslim rivals as well as non-Muslims who suspected their orthodoxy.

First, an inscription written in Arabic and Persian by Ma Minglong 馬明龍 (d. 1679) – a Hui scholar who lived in Wuchang 武昌, Hubei 湖北 – is analyzed.⁴ In the inscription, he voices a sense of comradeship with “Muslim inhabitants in China,” celebrating a joint project involving many Hui Muslims from different backgrounds because of their common religio-intellectual ancestor, Hu Dengzhou 胡登洲 (d. 1597), known as the founder of mosque education in China.⁵ Ma Minglong conceives the frame of “Muslim inhabitants in China” as an entity charged with maintaining Islamic knowledge via education, whereas Islamic jurists usually identify “all Muslims” as the same entity. This related to his strategy to establish his superiority to other Hui Muslim scholars.

Second, the way that Liu Zhi 劉智 (d. after 1724) – a Hui Muslim scholar who lived in Nanjing – managed the notion of the collectivity of “all Muslims” in his Chinese work, *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮, is examined.⁶ In this work, he persuades his co-religionist readers to band together with their own families, rather than the larger Muslim communities like the “Muslim inhabitants in China” and “all Muslims”, to collectively perform the funeral prayer. Liu Zhi reframes the unit for Islamic collective obligations such as “Muslim inhabitants in China” and “all Muslims” as comprising each family, considering filial duty, which non-Muslim Chinese people have valued as one of the most important ethics in pre-modern China.

¹Lipman (1997, pp. 124, 133, 137, 152–54, 215, *et passim*) also demonstrated that the Hui flexibly redrew various boundaries between “us” and “them,” depending on situations, thus concluding that “being a Muslim did not determine anyone’s behavior, though it probably influenced everyone’s.”

²As for the expression “all Muslims,” see notes 13 and 17.

³I have discussed how Hui intellectuals, during the modern period, situated themselves (sometimes within and at other times outside) *dār al-Islām* and altered their relationship with the Umma in response to historical backgrounds (Nakanishi 2018, pp.121–44).

⁴For this inscription and its author, see Ma and Wang (2017). As for Ma Minglong, also see Ben-Dor Benite (2005, pp. 46, 100–6, *et passim*).

⁵For information on Mosque education in China and Hu Dengzhou, see Ben-Dor Benite (2005, pp. 35–43). Note that Hu Dengzhou’s foundation of mosque education in China is simply a discourse of his followers, and a similar system existed before him (Nakanishi 2013, p. 22, n.7).

⁶For Liu Zhi and his *Tianfang dianli*, see Frankel (2011).

Self-awareness of “Muslim inhabitants in China”

The inscription commemorating the relocation of Hu Dengzhou's tomb

An English translation of the Arabic and Persian inscription written by Ma Minglong will now be examined ([1–46] represents the line numbers. The basmala is written before these 46 lines. The Persian translation is in bold. Regarding the Arabic and Persian transcription, see [Appendix A](#)).⁷

[Part one]

[1] All praise be to God! He created the human being from the soil, then from a drop of sperm. He made them pairs and predestined hidden wisdoms and potential powers to appear among them [2] so as to raise them into a multitude of people organized into groups. He returns them to the soil with his firm hold on their destinations, brings them out [of the soil] while recreating [their bodies] after their death and questions them regarding inexcusable matters. [3] He is the Most Kind and the Best, who created death and life to test them [i.e., people] to know whether they commit evil. He is the Self-Sufficient and the Most Great. Oh, the Most Kind! May the forgiveness be from You, our Lord. We entrust You with our end. [4] Verily, You are the Merciful and the All-Forgiving.

We give a benediction to Muḥammad, His Prophet, who was created from his soil as a great creation; to his family members and companions, all of whom are heirs to his view; [5] and to other Prophets and Saints before him and the Caliphs and Imams after him. May God's blessings be upon all of them for as long as the tongue praising them continues to exist.

As [6] **the last station [of one's journey through life] in this world is a level ground where the funeral is performed, the first station in the afterlife is also the flat soil of the tomb.** The best one to visit [7] is this tomb among these tombs, because it is the tomb of the best of the forefathers and even the master of scholars in China; that is, His Holiness Hū Tāybābā Shams al-Dīn [i.e., Hu Dengzhou] <May God's Mercy be upon him [8] until the Day of Judgement>. He is like the one who brought the teaching to China. Our Prophet, who makes [the truth] clear in his brilliant remark as follows: “Seek knowledge even in China.” However, all people of China were about [9] to profess themselves irreligious due to deviation and misguidance. Most of them [understood Islam] ambiguously, and [the truth] unclearly. He (i.e., Hu) straightened the situations so that the column of this teaching rose. [10] All of their (i.e., people of China) problems, larger and smaller, were resolved by his instruction in these days. He is compared to the owner of the mineral veins of secrets of knowledge, who reveals them to the ones deserving of them, with lights that nullify [11] the value of pearls and make them cheap. All the powerful ones [i.e., those who have received the secrets of knowledge] are like treasuries with precious knowledge accumulated in terms of his education, rather like trees bearing fruits in the aspect of their student-hood. All of them [i.e., the powerful ones], in return [for his education], pay a part of their earnings [12] as alms. The diffusion of the fragrance, from pure flowers [of the trees], reaches the smell of humankind, and the fruits help him. May peace always be upon those who obtain [knowledge] from the excellent ones [13] and on all of those after him, among whom there will always be Islam. They are [Hu's] successors, like Caliphs of the Prophet, each of whom teaches various kinds of knowledge to people annually. He is a man to whom their intention [of adherence] is turned, [14] day and night. He is like a sun that spreads benefits through its profitable brilliance, doing a favor for [all things] from the summit of heaven to beneath the seventh heaven. By his grace, the current

⁷The text has been transcribed and translated based on photos of the inscription, taken in 2009, by Takashi Aoki 青木隆 (Professor at Nihon University), and retaken in 2010 by a joint fieldwork team led by Takashi Kuroiwa 黒岩高 (Professor at Musashi University), with the participation by Takashi Aoki, Minoru Satō 佐藤実 (Professor at Otsuma Women's University), Yōichi Yajima 矢島洋一 (Professor at Nara Women's University), and the author. Unfortunately, the photos, which are fragmented pictures of the inscription, cannot be published because many are so unclear that one cannot decipher characters on them without image enlargement. The author extends his appreciation to Yōichi Yajima, who modified certain parts of the transcription and translation. When I translated the inscriptional text into English, I partly consulted its Chinese translation by Ma and Wang (2017). However, the authors often give up translating word for word because many inscription characters are ambiguous. Thus, their Chinese translation fails to capture some important information from the original text.

situation of learning in China is so great that the ramified parts [15] are never humiliated by [their unfavorable comparison with] the root from which all have originated. His heirs are scholars from his age to ours. All of them were heirs to his benefits. Now, when time has passed and their age has come, [16] it is obligatory for many teachers to thank the man who laid the foundation of the learning. Let those who seek knowledge in this age sincerely pray for [the person] who taught Muslims [17] knowledge. Verily, God characterized scholars with the highest rank in his following remark: “[He elevates] those who were taught knowledge to degrees of rank.” [Qur’ān, 58: 11] The gratitude [to Hu Dengzhou] obliged us to perform a litany, reciting [18] a petition [for a divine mercy] on him, after a prayer during the day and night, and to serve to him [i.e., Hu] by tears for him in addition to the *witr* prayer at breakfast before going to the predawn prayer. Oh God, we request You - Oh Lord, [19] You are the All-Forgiving and the Merciful - to show mercy to Your slave by Your great forgiveness; and to make the rotation of moons, the shining and moistening of day and night, the appointed time of the appearance of stars, [20] their constellation after their appearance, the glorification of angels from the heaven to the earth, the thunderclap pealing all over the earth, the laudation of beasts in the earth’s hidden places, [21] the withering of plants growing from the ground, the blowing of wind with rains, and their sounds with [those of] leaves of trees, all of them, as longings for Your eternal mercy toward him [22] and as desires for your everlasting kindness toward him. I [i.e., Ma Minglong] wrote this to establish it for pilgrims. You are the most Merciful among owners of mercy.

[Part two]

That man [i.e., Hu Dengzhou], who is perfect as an educator of excellent persons and complete as [23] a teacher of scholars <May God put him down in a site of his Garden and make him resident and peaceful in the Garden>, left this place of ephemerality in accordance with the mandate of “Everything on the earth will perish” [Qur’ān, 55: 26]. [24] Since he turned his face toward the world of perpetuity, one hundred years have already passed. However, the people of the religion do not forget the traces of him, using their mouths to narrate his legacy. As for his great achievement, the inhabitants [25] of China do not neglect it, reflecting on it in their minds. **Suddenly, a group of merchants reached the city [i.e., Wuchang, Hubei], where an inconsiderable and worthless abject one [i.e., Ma Minglong], who is more trivial than the pellicle of a date, lived. They were distinguished members of [the school of] the Old Practice and sincere members [26] of [the school of] the New Practice.⁸ After [my] meeting with them, they explained the following situation [to me]: Our cities in Shanxi 陝西 province (Kinjānfū)⁹ are usually covered with pebbles. However, this year, the following unusual situation occurred. Due to the power of God the Most High, it incessantly rained [27] for more than forty days and nights, and [God] made the ground suffer the trouble of a flood. Every lowland changed into a river. Every highland [28] absorbed water and broke at every spot. Wherever divine judgment and predestination reached remained in such a state for a long time. Because of this heavenly trial, most graves [29] were devastated. All the buried bones were exposed. The aforementioned man [i.e., Hu Dengzhou] also grieved¹⁰ for this, as the same fate was about to happen [to him]. Thus, scholars and other pious people [30] in the city burned their hearts with compassion for him. Distinguished persons, whom they call “the best one of all the present-day leaders, [or] the beautiful essence of the present day [people],” and our scholars, more in number [than the distinguished persons], gathered. [31] They bought a burial site that they had agreed to buy. They then dug up the ephemeral body of the**

⁸For the Old Practice 古行 and New Practice 新行, see Nakanishi, Morimoto, and Kuroiwa (2012) and Nakanishi (2013, pp. 143–80).

⁹Kinjānfū is a transliteration of Jingzhaofu 京兆府, the old name of Xi’an 西安, which is the capital of the Shanxi 陝西 province. In Persian sources, the Shanxi province was often called Kinjānfū. See Honda (1991, p. 464).

¹⁰The original Persian expression “*jaḡar lište* (licked the liver)” might be a mistake of the Persian expression “*jaḡar khwurde* (ate the liver; i.e., grieved)” under the influence of the Chinese expression “*changdan* 嘗胆 (lick the gallbladder; i.e., endure pain to attain a purpose).”

scholar, who pertained to the Lord, together with [bodies of] his highborn family members and sons, from the nearly devastated tomb, and buried all of them in the newly bought graveyard. [32] Then, their minds were humbled by these bodies, and their eyes became cautious [regarding them]. Their hearts led them to be preoccupied with rendering what was in their hearts into a text. Therefore, toward these visitors, [33] they stressed [the plan]. However, no text had yet been sent. Thus, this feeble one composed an elegy. I dedicate it to the leader of the prayer.

At that time, they were building a place to pray for His Holiness. [34] They were promulgating meritorious deeds of that estimable nonpareil and furthermore narrating his episodes. Their good deeds will also be known at every place. When I heard of this story, [35] I regarded it as an example to follow. If I had not passed on the tale about them in writing, nobody would have heard of it. Thus, I wrote that [i.e., the aforementioned elegy] in Arabic, combined it with this Persian text [about their good deeds], dedicated the former to his mausoleum [36] as an elegy, and showed the latter for pilgrims to the tomb as a pathetic song. Thus, I publicized his prominent scholarship for the predecessors and expounded the prominence of his meritorious deeds to the successors.

All praise be to God! He put knowledge as a means by which people approach [37] the rank of the Prophets and favored our praised one [i.e., Hu Dengzhou] with the name of “introducer [of Islam]” before other scholars. Oh God, please forgive our praised one with noble ancestors [38] and descendants by perfect grace and all-embracing forgiveness. I sincerely narrate his meritorious deeds for him and recite something good as a closing supplication for his comfort in the afterworld so that the people of the religion continue to tell his story [39] beyond centuries, until the Settlement Day, by the grace of God, who is the Unique, the Subduer the Transcendent, and the Creator, as with Muḥammad, the elite monotheist, his family, and other honorable ones.

[Part three]

[40] **As for the content of this elegy, it was written [by] the poor one.** He was a miserable summoner, Muḥammad al-Mahdī b. Imām al-‘Aṭā’ Allāh [i.e., Ma Minglong] <May God’s Mercy be on both>, who is a trivial one [41] among humankind and a base one, trodden under legs. [It was written] **in 1079 [1668-1669] of the hijra calendar of the selected person, Muḥammad** <May God bless him and show mercy to him>.

[42] The copy of this written satisfied elegy and ode was finished by the hand of a feeble slave. He was a son and scribe of the author. [43] He was Aḥmad al-Nūrī. He was taught studies and manners by the author. As for his relationship with the praised one, the author is a disciple of his [i.e., Hu’s] disciple, whom he complementally called Hūnlaw Santay Bābā [44] from al-Kinjānfūyī, a blessed region, and Ṭālib b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, which is one of the fortunate auspicious names.

May God forgive him [i.e., Hūnlaw Santay Bābā] [45] with all predecessors and successors by perfect pardon and all-embracing forgiveness, as He forgave the praised one in reward for his merits that nobody but scholars among the predecessors knows. A couplet:

[46] Oh God, please forgive all of us [i.e., Ma Minglong and his son] and the two teachers [i.e., Hu Dengzhou and Hūnlaw Santay Bābā] among our predecessors, if they transmit useful knowledge to us and our posterity, as they [i.e., their predecessors] did.

“Muslim inhabitants in China” as a unit for the communal mission of education

This Arabic and Persian text is inscribed on a stone, located on a wall of Ma Minglong’s tomb at Wuchang. The same stone has a Chinese text written by Ma Minglong and inscribed by the author’s son, Ma Fanglong 馬房龍, in 1673, below the Arabic and Persian text. The Chinese inscription records that the “virtuous gentlemen (*junzi* 君子)” of the Shanxi 陝西 province donated the relocation of Hu Dengzhou’s tomb to avoid a flood from the Wei river; this sincere generosity allowed them to finish

the tomb relocation operation before the original graveyard became part of the Wei river 渭水.¹¹ The Arabic and Persian text was written by Ma Minglong in 1668–1669, and inscribed by Ma Fanglong, likely along with the Chinese inscription in 1673.

The Arabic and Persian text comprises three sections. The first praises Hū Tāybābā Shams al-Dīn while urging Muslim scholars in China to thank him for his transmission of Islamic knowledge to them. We can identify Hū Tāybābā (i.e., Hu taibaba 胡太爸爸) with Hu Dengzhou, by consulting the second section and the Chinese text, both of which mention the removal of his tomb. This section is written predominantly in Arabic and partly in Persian.

The second section narrates why and how the tomb of Hu Dengzhou was relocated and the inscription text produced. This section is written predominantly in Persian and partly in Arabic. According to it, the author composed the first section in Arabic when the people who were concerned with the tomb's reconstruction came from Shanxi 陝西 province and revealed their plan to put their inmost admiration and gratitude to Hu Dengzhou into words. Afterward, the author wrote the inscription's second section in Persian and annexed it to the first section. He intended to offer the two sections as an epitaph of the new tomb to let visiting pilgrims know the achievements of the buried as well as his followers' activities extolling him.

The third section is a kind of postscript informing the reader that Muḥammad al-Mahdī b. al-Imām 'Aṭā'ullāh drafted the first and second sections in A.H. 1079 (1668–1669) and that his son, Aḥmad al-Nūrī, inscribed the text onto the stone. In the third section as well, both Muḥammad al-Mahdī b. al-Imām 'Aṭā'ullāh and Aḥmad al-Nūrī likely played the same role. When consulting the Chinese text of the inscription, Muḥammad al-Mahdī is identified with Ma Minglong and Aḥmad al-Nūrī with Ma Fanglong. According to the Chinese text, Ma Fanglong wrote the entire Arabic and Persian text onto the stone in 1673. At the end of the third section, Ma Minglong prayed for God to forgive him, his son, and his teachers, such as Ṭālib b. 'Abdurrahmān, alias Hūnlaw Santai Bābā from al-Kinjānfūyī (Feng Laosantai baba 馮老三太爸爸 from Jingzhaofu 京兆府 or Shanxi 陝西 province; i.e., Feng Bo'an 馮伯菴),¹² and Hu Dengzhou as well as the future Muslims who received intellectual benefits from these scholars.

The inscription's Arabic and Persian text conveys that Ma Minglong was conscious of his affiliation with “Muslim scholars of China” at times and with the “Muslim inhabitants in China” in general at other times. For example, in the first section (ll.17–18), Ma Minglong says, “The gratitude [to Hu Dengzhou] obliged us to perform a litany reciting a petition [for a divine mercy] on him after a prayer day and night...” In this sentence, “us” signifies the “Muslim scholars of China (*'ulamā' al-Ṣīn*)” (l.7) who inherited knowledge through their master-disciple lineage from Hu Dengzhou to become his “successors (*khulafā'*)” (l.13). The inscription compares them to “ramified parts (*ajzā'*) who are never humiliated by [their unfavorable comparison with] the root from which all originated (*laisa mukhzā min nujār al-kull min aṣl-hi*)” (ll.14–15). In this sentence, the author remembers Hu Dengzhou as “our” religio-intellectual ancestor and the “Muslim scholars of China” as “we” who equally belong to the same genealogical tree of education stemming from him.

In the second section (l.37), Ma Minglong called Hu Dengzhou “our praised one (*mamdūḥ-nā*).” This “our” refers to the “people of the religion (*ahl al-dīn*)” who are “inhabitants in China (*abnā' al-Ṣīn*)” (ll.24–25) including scholars and other pious people (*'ālimān wa dīndārān*)” (l.29). In other words, the “us” indicates Muslim inhabitants in China in general who more or less received religious knowledge to “approach the rank of the Prophets” from Hu Dengzhou (ll.36–37) through his “successors,” “each of whom teaches various kinds of knowledge to people” (l.13).

The self-awareness of belonging to “Muslim inhabitants in China” was likely prompted in Ma Minglong's mind when he heard of people who worked hard to preserve Hu Dengzhou's tomb (ll.26–34). The cognizance of such people led Ma Minglong reconfirm the existence of Islamic believers who shared the same origin of knowledge that the entombed master embodied.

¹¹The Chinese text is recorded in Da (2007, p. 68).

¹²For more on Feng Bo'an, see Ben-Dor Benite (2005, pp. 45–46).

Additionally, a more concrete image of the religio-intellectual community might have occurred to Ma Minglong when he met Shanxi merchants from schools of the Old and New Practices who visited Wuchang to consult on the contribution of an elegy for Hu Dengzhou (ll.25–26). The fact that the two rivaling factions for the Islamic orthopraxis in China cooperated to publicly honor their common founding father may have impressed Ma Minglong regarding the unity of “Muslim inhabitants in China.”

Furthermore, Ma Minglong seems to have intensively envisaged the Muslim community in China while boasting his fulfillment of the liability toward it for transmitting the Islamic knowledge inherited from Hu Dengzhou to future generations.

Islamic jurists have often counted learning and teaching Islamic sciences among the communal duties called “*furūd kifāya* (collective obligations),”¹³ the singular form of which is “*farḍ kifāya* (collective obligation).”¹⁴ God imposed this type of obligation upon all Muslims collectively rather than on individual believers. If a Muslim fulfills this type of obligation, the others are exempt from it; however, if nobody fulfills it, all Muslims are deemed sinful. In certain cases, even if Muslims in a region fulfill a communal obligation, those in other regions are not exempt from it.¹⁵

Ma Minglong might have had the latter viewpoint in mind for the collective obligation of education. He apparently thought that Muslims in China are never exempted from that obligation, even though co-religionists in other countries maintain Islamic knowledge. In other words, he seemingly categorized the “Muslim inhabitants in China” as a unit that was collectively obliged to transmit Islamic knowledge and shared the same soteriological destiny, independently from other similar units outside China.

This is why the inscription extols Hu Dengzhou and his scholarly successors’ efforts to improve the learning situation for “all people of China (*ahl al-Ṣīn kullu-hum*)” (ll.8-15) and additionally implores God to forgive not only Hu Dengzhou and Feng Bo’an but also the latter’s “predecessors” (*al-aslāf*) and “successors” (*al-akhlāf*) (ll. 44–46). “Predecessors” refers to scholars in the generations preceding that of Feng Bo’an, those who transmitted knowledge to him and enabled him to do similar work. “Successors” refers to those who received knowledge from him and will continue his pedagogical effort. The imploration implies that Hu Dengzhou, Feng Bo’an, and their successors, including Ma

¹³It is highly possible that Ma Minglong recognized this legal interpretation. For example, Bayḍāwī (1998, vol. 3, p. 102) comments on a part of the Qur’ānic verse 9: 122 “It is not possible for the believers to go forth all together. Why, then, does not a party from every section of them go forth that they [i.e., the rest] may become well versed in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them? as follows: “In this verse, there is proof that learning the Islamic jurisprudence and reminding people of it (*al-tafaqquh wa al-tadhkir*) are counted among communal obligations (*furūd al-kifāya*).” According to *Jingxue xichuanpu* 經學繫傳譜, Ma Minglong gave special importance to this exegesis (*Gesui* 略遂 i.e., *Tafsīr al-Qāḍī*) (Zhao 2005, p. 43).

Moreover, *Kanz al-ibād* (*Faṣl fi al-masā’il al-mutafarriqa*), which Ma Minglong likely consulted, cites the following opinion from *al-Kubrā*: “Teaching the whole Qur’ān is a communal obligation (*farḍ kifāya*), and learning indispensable knowledge of the Islamic jurisprudence is an individual obligation (*farḍ ‘ayn*)” (Ghūrī 1908, p. 455). *Kanz al-ibād* is enumerated in Arabic inscriptions at Zhuxianzhen and Kaifeng (Henan province), erected by followers of Ma Minglong (Nakanishi, Morimoto, and Kuroiwa 2012, pp. 96, 101–2).

Ma Minglong likely recognized what the collective obligation meant. Bayḍāwī (1998, vol. 2, pp. 31–32) interpreted the Qur’ānic verse 3: 104 “Let there be among you (*min-kum*) a group of people who call [others] to goodness, command right, and forbid wrong. They are successful” as follows: “Among (*min*)’ signifies dividing [‘you,’ i.e., Muslims] into parts (*tab‘īd*), because commanding right and forbidding wrong is counted among the collective obligations (*furūd al-kifāya*), and not everyone is qualified for it... It is imposed on everyone in the sense that all of them become sinful (*athimū jamī’an*) as soon as they abdicate it, but they become exempted from it if someone from among them performs it.”

¹⁴The collective obligation is juxtaposed with the individual obligation (*farḍ ‘ayn*) that is imposed on each Muslim. Islamic legal duties are classified as either of these two types.

¹⁵For example, *Badā’i al-ṣanā’i* (*Kitāb al-sayr*) states, “When [the *jihād*] is a collective obligation (*farḍ ‘alā kifāya*), the caliph (*imām*) must not empty any border from a group of conquerors (*ghuzāt*) who have a wealth and ability to fight enemies; when they engage in it, others are exempted from it” (Kāsānī al-Ḥanafī 2003, vol. 9, p. 381). In other words, as *al-Nahr al-fā’iq* (*Kitāb al-jihād*) interpreted, “It is not proper to imagine that people of India are exempted from [the *jihād*] when people of Anatolia engage in it” (Ibn Najīm al-Ḥanafī 2002, vol. 4, p. 199).

Minglong, deserve God's tolerance because they transmitted knowledge to posterity, thereby saving the "Muslim inhabitants in China" from being sinful regarding the collective duty of education, and enabled Ma Minglong's disciples to accomplish the same task. In addition, the couplet at the end of the inscription (l.46) humbly assumes Ma Minglong's success in handing down knowledge from his predecessors to successors. Thus, it in fact boasts that this success has already come true and exonerated not only himself but also his two teachers, Feng Bo'ab and Hu Dengzhou, from the sin against the divine order of the intellectual transmission among each Muslim community.

Through the imploration and couplet, the author authorizes himself as a genuine heir to Hu Dengzhou, the first savior of "all people of China" in the Islamic educational mission, and as a retrospective corroborator of the precursor's accomplishing of the mission in question. In the context of this self-legitimization, Ma Minglong envisioned the community of "Muslim inhabitants in China" as people whom he saved as a successor to Hu Dengzhou.

Additionally, Ma Minglong needed the category of the "Muslim scholars of China," including himself, to demonstrate Hu Dengzhou's achievement in the same mission and thereby enhance the authority of succeeding him. Indeed, the inscription stresses that Hu Dengzhou's educational activity yielded so great a result that his "successors" could never be unfavorably compared to their founder (ll.14-15). Here, Ma Minglong appears to have qualified the "Muslim scholars of China" equally as Hu Dengzhou's successors despite their division into Old and New Practice branches. However, Ma Minglong's actual purpose in the categorization of the "Muslim scholars of China" was not to make his position inconspicuous among them.

Ma Minglong likely needed this categorization to highly valorize the successorship to Hu Dengzhou itself before he eventually implied that he is more authentic than other scholars in terms of that successorship. Certainly, the author had some rivals among Hu Dengzhou's "successors." Ma Minglong may have been concerned with the Old Practice, and his authority appears to have been challenged by other contemporary religio-intellectual descendants of Hu Dengzhou, such as Chang Zhimei 常志美 and She Qiling 舍起靈, who were founders of the New Practice (Nakanishi et al. 2012, pp. 101-2; Nakanishi 2013, pp. 121-24). Ma Minglong also competed with Chang Zhimei and She Qiling in interpreting Sufism (Nakanishi 2007, pp.63-64). Ma Minglong's imagination of the "Muslim inhabitants in China" as ones whom he saved as a proper successor to Hu Dengzhou likely aimed to claim his superiority to such rivals among the "Muslim scholars of China."

In short, in the context of this self-authorization, Ma Minglong in his inscription delineated the "Muslim inhabitants in China" as in contrast with co-religionists outside the country and associated himself with the "Muslim scholars of China" among the former. As mentioned in the Introduction, according to Ben-Dor Benite, the Hui Muslim scholars, including Ma Minglong (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 100-6), identified themselves as a special group among non-Muslim Chinese literati to prevent the latter from despising the former. However, this identity changed depending on the context. Ma Minglong at least imagined his affiliation not with a part of non-Muslim Chinese literati but rather with that of the "Muslims inhabitants in China," or a unit among "all Muslims," to compete with other Hui scholars.

Banding together with family¹⁶

The collective funeral obligation

As noted above, Ma Minglong likely applied all Muslims' communal liability for knowledge transmission to "Muslim inhabitants in China." However, how did the other Huis express the collectivity of all Muslims or joint liability for Islamic legal obligations?

Pre-modern Hui scholars doubtlessly recognized the care of co-religionist dead bodies as a collective obligation imposed on all Muslims from the Ḥanafī school's Islamic jurist

¹⁶This chapter is a developed version of part of my previous study (Nakanishi 2017).

books, which Hui Muslims followed exclusively.¹⁷ Ma Boliang 馬伯良, in *Jiaokuan jieyao* 教款捷要 (finished in 1678), gave a relatively precise explanation of the collective funeral obligation, as follows:

A classic work says as follows: Washing and shrouding a dead body, the funeral prayer (*dian janāza* 奠柩) and inhumation are the second heavenly mandate (*futian*[*ming*] 副天[命]).¹⁸ If anyone performs it, everybody will be relieved from the binding [of the mandate]. If nobody performs it, all believers in the region (or district) [where the mandate has not been carried out] (*benfang jiaozhongren* 本方教中人) cannot be free from it (Ma Boliang 2005, p. 243/f. 93b).

Notably, Ma Boliang did not regard all Muslims as those in charge of the funeral rites but rather Muslims in a specific region or district. This suggests that he was strongly conscious of the unity of either the “Muslim inhabitants in China,” like Ma Minglong, or that of a Hui community around a mosque.

Liu Zhi seems to have described the communal funeral duties differently. He neither closely reproduced the cooperative aspect of all Muslims that his Ḥanafite references’ interpretation of this collective obligation implies nor conceived of the unity of the “Muslim inhabitants in China” who were collectively liable for their funerals; this is unlike Ma Minglong, who suggested the same unity constituted sharing liability for knowledge transmission among that community. This can be seen in an explication of this Islamic funeral rule in Liu Zhi’s *Tianfang dianli*.

Liu Zhi wrote this Chinese work based on Arabic and Persian Islamic books, which he enumerates in the reference list. Books of jurisprudence, among the references, consist of exclusively those from the Ḥanafī school, including *al-Hidāya*, *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya*, *Targhib al-ṣalāt*, *Majmū‘-i Khānī*, *Ṣalāt-i Mas‘ūdī* (Leslie and Wassel 1982).

In *Tianfang dianli*, the author’s explanation of the inhumation faithfully follows *Targhib al-ṣalāt* and *Majmū‘-i Khānī*. *Targhib al-ṣalāt* (*Faṣl 49 aḥkām-i janāza-hā*) states, “According to *Fatwā-yi sirājī*, it is permissible that a body of a deceased person be kept in a house [of his family] for [their] mourning for three days, but it is better that it is not kept even for three days [but buried quickly]” (Zāhidī (1556), f. 119a). *Majmū‘-i Khānī* (*Bāb 32 dar bayān-i namāz-i janāza*) states, “It is prohibited to open a grave [of a Muslim] after his death,” unless water overwhelms his grave (Nāgawrī 1896–1897, vol. 1, p. 119). Based on these descriptions, *Tianfang dianli* (Liu 2005, p. 180/vol. 20, *Sangzangpian*, f. 8a) wrote, “Bury [the body of a person] within three days [after his death],” commenting as follows:

The body becomes peaceful just when it is buried. The utmost term for keeping it in a house is three days. If he died on his trip, and [his body] is carried to his home town [to be buried there], the time limit is not applied. However, it is proper to choose a place in a region where he died on his trip and bury his body there.

Moreover, Liu Zhi, in his gloss of this passage, admonished that the dead traveler’s relatives should not bring the deceased’s body to his own hometown, either to bury or rebury it there (*ibid.*).

These comments mean that, if a Muslim traveler dies in a place that none of his family members can reach within three days after his death, he must be buried there by someone who is co-religionist but unrelated to him. In short, the author of *Tianfang dianli* suggests that every Muslim is liable for the inhumation of a deceased co-religionist, even if the latter is a stranger to the former. This discourse

¹⁷As for the funeral rite, which is categorized not as an individual obligation (*farḍ ‘ayn*) but a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāya*), for example, *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya* (*Bāb al-janāz*) states the following: “The [funeral] prayer is a collective obligation. If someone performs it, it is omitted from everybody else. However, if nobody performs it, everybody (*al-jamī‘*) becomes sinful (*ya’tḥamu*)” (Sharī‘a 2009, vol. 1, pp. 252–53). *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya* was circulated among the Hui during the late Chinese imperial era (Nakanishi, Morimoto, and Kuroiwa 2012, pp. 86, 95).

¹⁸The original text of Ma Boliang 2005 is missing the character *ming*. I added this character based on another version of *Jiaokuan jieyao* (Ma Boliang 1919, pp.41–42).

was compatible with the Chinese custom of mutual aid for the inhumation of a person who died in a land distant from his homeland. He was often buried where he died or brought back to his homeland and re-buried by benevolent individuals.¹⁹

Regarding the collective obligation for the inhumation of co-religionists, Liu Zhi agreed that it is imposed on all Muslims, as *Tarḡhib al-ṣalāt* and *Majmū‘-i Khānī* do. However, this is not the case for the funeral prayer.

Between the communal obligation and the filial duty

Tianfang dianli’s explanation regarding the funeral prayer leader²⁰ was undoubtedly based on – but subtly different from – an account from an authoritative Arabic book of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya* (*Bāb al-janā‘iz*), which explained as follows:

The following are qualified for leadership of the funeral prayer (*imāma*): the ruler (*ṣultān*), then the judge (*qāḍī*), then the religious head of the community (*imām al-ḥayy*), and then a guardian of the deceased (*walī*), who is chosen from among the paternal male relatives of the deceased based on the legal order (*‘alā tartīb al-‘aṣabāt*). There is no problem with his [the guardian’s] entrusting the leadership of the funeral prayer to others. When any person other than them performs the funeral prayer, the guardian can reconduct it if he wants to do so. Subsequently, any person other than him cannot perform the prayer [again] (Sharī‘a 2009, vol. 1, p. 254).

According to the Ḥanafī school, the term *walī* (guardian) primarily refers to the deceased person’s father or sons in the context of the funeral prayers.²¹ *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya* privileges the *walī* in that he can conduct the funeral prayer for his ward once again after others have already conducted it. Still, the Arabic book permits any Muslim throughout the world to lead and perform a funeral prayer for a deceased co-religionist, regardless of prior approval from the *walī*. This is in line with the Islamic legal principle collectively obliging all Muslims to conduct the funeral of a deceased co-religionist.

However, Liu Zhi seems to object to this Islamic doctrine regarding the collective obligation in funerals and thus, by extension, the concept of the collectivity of all Muslims. In *Tianfang dianli*, he translates the Arabic explanation cited above into Chinese as follows:

The funeral prayer leader is sure to be the governor of the city [where the funeral prayer is performed]. If the governor does not attend the funeral prayer, it is sure to be [passed on to] the religious head of the community [where the funeral prayer is performed]. If the religious head of the community does not attend the funeral prayer, it is sure to be [passed on to] the chief of the family in mourning (*zhuren* 主人). The chief has a liability to take charge of the funeral

¹⁹However, this type of mutual aid was expected of people from the same homeland or kinship group, but it was not imposed on the deceased person’s “co-religionists” in Confucian, Buddhist, or Taoist communities (Fuma 1997, pp. 651, 654–56, 709–39; Chen 2009).

²⁰As for the Islamic legal discourses and historical tensions around who should lead the funeral prayer, see Halevi (2007, pp. 168–79).

²¹According to *al-Hidāya*, guardians (*awliyā‘*) have precedence for the funeral leadership “in the order mentioned for marriage (*nikāḥ*)” (Marghinānī 1996–1997, vol. 2, p. 144; 2006, p. 232). “The order in the case of *‘aṣabāt* with respect to *nikāḥ* is the same as that of residuaries in inheritance, with the more distant being excluded by the nearer” (Marghinānī 1996–1997, vol. 3, p. 41; 2006, p. 496). As for the guardianship of marriage of an insane woman, Muḥammad al-Shaybānī gave precedence to her father, while Abū Ḥanīfa and Abū Yūsuf gave it to her son because of his precedence among residuaries (Marghinānī 1996–1997, vol. 3, p. 50; 2006, p. 500). *Ṣalāt-i Mas‘ūdī* (*Bāb 45 dar bayan-i namāz-i janāza*) states, “If a person died and his father and son are alive, it is desirable that the father perform the funeral prayer” (Samarqandī 1897–1898, vol. 2, p. 189). *Majmū‘-i Khānī* (*Bāb 32 dar bayān-i namāz-i janāza*) states, “If the religious head of the community (*imām-i ḥayy*) is not attendant, a guardian of the deceased (*walī-yi mayyit*) such as the father, son, brother, and uncle leads the funeral prayer” (Nāgawrī 1896–1897, vol. 1, p. 110).

prayer by himself (*you duren binli zhi ze* 有独任殯礼之責). If any other person leads the funeral prayer without the chief's agreement, either the latter can perform it again, or the sons of the deceased [other than the eldest son] can choose to reperform the funeral prayer. (Liu 2005, p. 181/vol. 20, *Sangzangpian*, f. 10b)

Zhuren means “the chief of the family in mourning.” According to Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 understanding, which was influential in Chinese society during the Qing period, the eldest son or the son’s eldest son (if the eldest son is not present) takes charge of the chiefship when the parent is being mourned.²² When anyone in a family dies, if the father is alive, he takes charge of the chiefship. When the mother dies, the chief for the mourning is her husband if he is alive and the eldest son if her husband has already died.²³

Zhuren almost corresponds to *walī*. *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya*, the Arabic sourcebook that Liu Zhi consulted, requires any Muslim to perform a funeral prayer for his co-religionists in the first stage and privileges the eldest son to redo his parents’ funeral prayer as the *walī*, if the deceased’s father is not alive.²⁴ However, Liu Zhi remarked that the eldest son alone is liable for organizing his father’s (or mother’s) funeral as the *zhuren*, if the deceased’s father is (or the deceased’s father-in-law and husband) not alive, thus requiring the eldest son to direct the funeral prayer. This requires him, rather than grants him a privilege, to redo the rites after others have done it without his permission. Additionally, Liu Zhi suggested that the other sons can also start their parent’s funeral afresh in certain cases. Liu Zhi accepted other Muslims’ leading of the funeral prayer, but this is acceptable only under the supervision or approval of the eldest son. It is obvious here that Liu Zhi – circumventing the

²²Zhu Xi in *Jiali* 家禮 (vol. 4, *Zangli*) states the following (the main texts are in bold):

To establish the chief in mourning (*sangzhu* 喪主). [Note:] The chief (*zhuren* 主人) denotes the eldest son of the deceased person. If the eldest son has died, his eldest son will take charge of the important duty and present offerings [to the deceased]... **[To establish] the female chief in mourning** (*zhufu* 主婦). [Note:] That denotes the wife of the deceased or the wife of the chief if the former has already died. (Zhu 2010a, p. 902)

²³*Hui’an xiansheng Zhu Wengong wenji* 晦庵先生朱文公文集 (vol. 43) records Zhu Xi’s following remark:

According to the mourning rite (*sangli* 喪禮) [i.e., “Rules on Hurrying to the Mourning Rites (*bensang* 奔喪),” a chapter in the Book of Rites (*Liji* 禮記)], “In all mourning [in a family], if the father is alive, he becomes the chief, and if the father is alive, his son is never in charge of it.” [That chapter] also says as follows: “If the father has already died, and his sons live together (*xiongdi tongju* 兄弟同居), each of them takes charge of the chiefship in mourning.” [Zheng Xuan’s 鄭玄] commentary on it says as follows: Each of them takes charge of the chiefship in the mourning for his wife and children. According to this, in all mourning of the wife, her husband becomes the chief. Currently, making the son the chief in the mourning [of the mother when her husband is alive] seems insufficient. (Zhu 2010b, vol. 22, p. 1947)

Zhu Xi in *Jiali* (vol. 4, *Zangli*) writes about the rite of the second day of mourning (*xiaolian* 小斂), as follows:

The chief and the female chief in mourning incline forward and embrace the body [with the breast of the former attached to the heart of the latter], while crying and beating their breasts. [Note:] ...In all cases, [the behavior] of the son for the father or mother is embracing the body; either [that of] the father and mother for the son, or the husband for the wife, is shaking the shroud [around the heart]; [that of] the daughter-in-law for the father-in-law and the mother-in-law is holding up the shroud [around the heart]; [that of] the father-in-law for the daughter-in-law is pushing [the heart]; [that of anyone] for the brothers is shaking the shroud [around the heart].... (Zhu 2010a, p. 907; cf. Hu et al. 1988, p.580/ vol. 21, f. 27b)

This passage suggests that when the mother died after her husband, the son embraces the body as the chief, and his wife holds up the shroud as the female chief.

²⁴*al-Hidāya* explains that the guardians (*awliyā*) have a right (*ḥaqq*) to redo their ward’s funeral (Marghīnānī 1996–1997, vol. 2, p. 144; 2006, p. 233).

Islamic law – introduced the Confucian supreme principle of filial duty and attempted to present Islam in an understandable way for non-Muslim Chinese readers.

Chinese people have traditionally believed that when a person dies, his/her spirit must be provided with ritual offerings in funerals,²⁵ and then eternally through regular rites, by his/her descendants. In these rites, ancestral spirits cannot enjoy offerings from any person other than their descendants (Shiga 1967, pp. 34-37). Additionally, only the descendants can call their ancestors' spiritual energies back for the rites, as these spiritual energies usually disperse.²⁶

Thus, the family unit is collectively liable for ensuring an adequate funeral for its ancestral member. The eldest son, or his descendants, is liable for his father's (or mother's) funeral if the deceased's father is (or the deceased's father-in-law and husband) not alive. Other sons must perform it on behalf of the eldest son if he and his descendants have died.²⁷ This "collective obligation" imposed on the family unit constitutes an important part of the Confucian filial duty.

If the funeral is entrusted to someone other than family members, offerings and calls to the deceased's spirit are ineffective. This indicates an abandonment of the collective filial duty; such abandonment is meant to starve the parent's spirit, thus constituting his/her sons' sin of being unfilial toward him/her (Shiga 1967, pp. 112–13). Moreover, in pre-modern China, the consequences of neglecting filial duties were perceived not only as ethically lacking, and hence antisocial, but also as politically rebellious to the Chinese Emperor.²⁸ Therefore, every family unit was a community that shared a common destiny, in that the whole becomes sinful if nobody performs the ancestral funeral.

Thus, in the preceding passage, Liu Zhi suggests that if the funeral prayer of a dead Muslim is performed not by his eldest son but someone else, then the former must redo his father's funeral prayer. Thus, the author states that the eldest son "can perform it again," a remark that is consistent with his Arabic and Persian reference books, which state that the redo is his privilege. However, Liu Zhi implicitly invalidates certain unqualified Muslims' first performances and regards the eldest son's redoing as the definitive fulfillment of the funeral duty. In other words, unlike his Arabic and Persian reference books, he virtually eliminates the value and necessity of the mutual aid of unrelated Muslims as regards the funeral prayer when sons of the deceased are not involved. Liu Zhi thus released his Muslim readers from the obligation of the mutual aid offered at funeral prayers by all Muslims. Instead, the Hui author transferred the "collective obligation" for the funeral prayer, which is accorded to all Muslims in the original source text, to the deceased individual's entire family. Regarding the companions for whom his Muslim readers should perform the collective funeral obligation, Liu Zhi guided them to opt for their families rather than any other community of Muslims.

²⁵The chief in mourning (eldest son or grandson) must provide offerings for his parent's spirit during the mourning period (three years), through various methods. For example, *Liji* 禮記 (*Tanggong shang*) states, "The offering of the morning is at sunrise, and that of the evening is before sunset 朝奠日出, 夕奠逮日." *Qingding Liji yishu* 欽定禮記義疏 introduces the following comment of Fang Que 方慤: "The offering of the morning symbolizes the breakfast, and that of the evening the dinner. The dutiful son serves his dead parent as he serves a live one" (Qinding Liji Yishu 1988, p. 345/vol. 11, f. 42b).

²⁶*Zhuizi yulei* 朱子語類 (vol. 3, *Guishen*) records the following statements of Zhu Xi:

Descendants are composed of their ancestor's vital energy. Even after his vital energy disperses, his root is there. If [his descendants] fully show their sincerity and veneration toward him, they can invite and condense his vital energy there. (Li 1994, vol. 1, p. 47)

²⁷Wan Sida 萬斯大, a Confucian scholar of the Qing period, states the following in his *Xueli zhiyi* 學禮質疑:

The second son can only become the chief in mourning for his parent when there is no other choice because the [deceased] eldest son has no son and the [deceased] eldest grandson or the [deceased] eldest great-grandson has no son. (Wan 1988, p. 468/vol. 2, *Disun chengzhong yi*, f. 43a)

²⁸See Kuwabara (1977, pp. 19-30, 56-65). *Daqing lüli* 大清律例, the code of the Qing dynasty, stipulates various punishments for unfilial behaviors of the sons mourning their parent.

In this regard, he invalidated their membership in any community beyond the family. He denied the joint liability of “Muslim inhabitants in China” for the funeral prayer, unlike Ma Minglong, who conceived of the same community’s collective liability for education of its members. In other words, Liu Zhi dissolved the imaginal framework of “Muslim inhabitants in China.”

Conclusion

According to Ben-Dor-Benite, the Hui scholars, including Ma Minglong, presented themselves as a group differentiated from the Chinese literati in a narrow sense while identifying with them in a broad sense through the “Dao of Muhammad.” Thus, they tried to reconcile themselves with non-Muslim Han people while being Muslim. Meanwhile, in the abovementioned Arabic and Persian inscription, Ma Minglong expressed a sense of belonging to the “Muslim inhabitants in China” including non-scholars, who were described as a unit for the collective obligation of Islamic education, which he contrasted with the other co-religionists outside China. Additionally, he situated himself as a prominent member of the “Muslim scholars of China,” who were leading members, or saviors, of the former unit that shared the same soteriological destiny. Thus, he tried to demonstrate his competence to Muslim rivals to survive.

In contrast, Liu Zhi weakened the sense of unity of his Hui readers with Muslim groups beyond that of the family, such as “all Muslims” or “Muslim inhabitants in China,” by suspending the former’s involvement with mutual aid within the latter regarding funeral prayers. In *Tianfang dianli*, he suggested the communal duty of the inhumation of co-religionists in harmony with the Chinese custom of mutual aid for the tentative burial of travelers, thus urging his readers to stand together with “all Muslims.” However, he encouraged his co-religionist readers to neglect the collectivity of the funeral prayer liability that his Hanafite references prescribed as another communal duty of all Muslims. He intended to loosen, if not sever, his Muslim readers’ bond with unrelated co-religionists to follow the Confucian prerequisite of filial duty. He categorized each Muslim family as a unit that shares funeral obligations, from which he excluded “other” Muslims without kinship to avoid the Chinese literati’s contempt and hostility toward Islam and its adherents. Liu Zhi, in his discussion of filial duty, prioritized his Muslim readers’ affiliation with families over larger groups, such as “all Muslims,” the “Muslim inhabitants in China,” and the “Muslim scholars of China.”

These cases show that the Hui scholars assumed dynamic identities to distinguish themselves from Muslim “others” and shifted these identities depending on with whom they negotiated their legitimacy. The following two points are particularly remarkable in comparison with the paradigmatic argument of Ben-Dor Benite (2005) on Hui identity.

First, the Hui scholars’ self-identification as being Muslim was not always coexistent (or compatible) with their understanding of themselves as being simultaneously among Chinese literati and Muslims. The Arabic and Persian inscription that Ma Minglong wrote, while they express his sense of belonging to the “Muslim inhabitants in China,” hardly manifest an interest in presenting the author as one with cultural Chinese-ness or being part of the Chinese literati (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 100–6). Liu Zhi’s Chinese work also sacrificed the solidarity of the “Muslim inhabitants in China” for securing “the overlapping space of Islam and China.”²⁹

Second, Hui scholars flexibly changed the contours of “us” when situating themselves vis-à-vis “other” Muslims through their negotiations with Muslim rivals and non-Muslims in China. Ma Minglong pretended to be part of the Muslim faction of the Chinese literati in front of non-Muslim Han people and behaved as a leading member of the Chinese unit of Muslims against rival co-religionists. Liu Zhi expanded the idea of “we” who share collective obligations to contain “all Muslims” in one case and restricted it to “Muslim family” in other cases through negotiation with the non-Muslim Han people.

²⁹We need to reconsider Frankel’s (2005, p. 152) argument based on Liu Zhi’s statement of marriage and funerary rites that “Chinese Muslims who adopted certain Chinese customs and shared many Chinese mores, while maintaining the core praxis of Islam, have effected their special Chinese-Islamic simultaneity.” The concept of “maintaining the core praxis of Islam” is problematic. Liu Zhi at least thought that abandoning the normative Muslim unity for the collective obligation of funerals is not contradictory with keeping the Chinese–Islamic simultaneity.

Further studies on the flexibility of the Hui's identities will provide deeper insights into their strategies for competition and reconciliation with "others."

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Appendix A

(1)–(46) represents the line numbers. [] means a conjectural restoration of a worn-out part of the inscription. Proper nouns are underlined>.

- الحمد لله الذى خلق الانسان من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم جعلهم ازواجا و قدر بينهم خفايا الحكمة و خبايا القدره ينبرهم (1)
 جمهرة افواجا ثم اعادهم فى التراب بقبضة [قضائهم] احراجا و اخرجهم [من] التراب بعد الموت احداثا فسأل من اشيا الخلق ما لا علة (2)
 لها و هو اللطيف الخبير الذى خلق الموت و الحوية ليلبؤهم انهم لا حسن عملا و هو الغنى الكبير يا لطيفا كن غفرا لك ربنا و اليك المصير (3)
 انك انت الرحيم الغفور و نصلى على نبيه محمد خلق فى خلق عظيم من ترابه و على آله و صحبه كلهم متوارثون فى رايه و على (4)
 الانبياء و الاولياء قبله و الخلفاء و ائمة بعده صلوات الله عليه و عليهم جمعا ما دامت لهم لسان الثنا همجناكته (5)
 اخر منزل از منازل دنيا هم [غالى همه] مجنز است كه نيز اول منزل از منازل آخره هموار خاكى گور است ويد فخير القبور زيارة (6)
 هي هذه التربة فى هذه [الترايات] لانها تربة من هو خير الآباء بل استاذ علماء الصين اعنى حضرة حو تي بابا شمس الذين رحمة الله عليه (7)
 الى يوم الدين كانه موصل الدين فى الصين ما قال نبينا المبين فى قوله المنير اطلب العلم و لو بالصين و لقد كاد اهل الصين كلهم ان يكونوا (8)
 ضالين و مضلين و بالادين متدينين و كان اكثرهم [مغموضين] و فى الحق غير محصصين و باقامته بتلك الاحوال قام عماد هذا الدين و (9)
 بارشاده فى ذلك الزمان صلح منهم امور الاولين و الآخرين فمثلته كمثل ذى المعادن فى اسرار العلوم يظهر على المستحقين بانوار عفا (10)
 النفيسة من الجواهر رخصا و الشديدون كلهم كمعدن ذخرا فى افادته النوادر بل كاشجار الفاكية فى الاستفادة [ينفق ضدا] من المنفعة (11)
 لذكوة فوصل الى مشام الانام نشر الفوجات [من] و ردها الصافية الى ان ثمرها بصره السلام كل زمان على المحصلين من الفضلاء (12)
 و كل بعده فى بينهم الاسلام كل اوان كاخلاف النبى من الخلفاء و كان يعلم الناس بانواع العلم فى جميع الاعوام و هو مرادهم (13)
 [من] المساء و الصباح كانه شمس فضل تشرق باشراقها المفيدة من اوج السماء تحت السماء السابع فعلم الآن فى الصين له كاجزاء (14)
 ليس مخزى من تجار الكل من اصله من اورثه العلماء من زمانه الى الزماننا هذا كل من الوارثين من فضله فلما تاخر الى مرورهم فى هذا (15)
 الزمان على [دهم المعلم] ان يشكروا من كان يأسس المباني فى العلم و ليخلص المتعمدون عند الاروان على العلم [لأن] يدعوا لمن كان يعلم [المسلمون] له (16)
 بالعلم فان الله تعالى وصف العلماء فى قوله باعلى التراج و الذين اوتوا العلم درجات فوجب الشكر علينا ان نسير ورد قراءة (17)
 التصريح اليه آناه الليل و اطراف النهار تستخدمه بالدموع عليه خدمة الانوتر عند تسحر لابكار نسالك اللهم [يا رب] (18)
 انت الغفور الرحيم ان ترحم عبدك بفراغك العظيم [وان] تجعل دوران القمرين و الاشرار و الترتب فى الملونين و موقت الكواكب فى الظهور (19)
 و افولها بعد الظهور و تسييح الملائكة من السماء الى الارض و اصوات الرعد [على] ملاء الارض و تحميد الدابة فى المواضع الخفيات من الارض (20)
 و موت النباتات التى نشأت من الارض و ارسال الرياح مع الامطار و دويها مع اوراق الاشجار كلها شيئا له الى رحمتك الباقية (21)
 و مطمعا له الى لطفك الدائمة ثم اخطها ثابتة للزبارين و انت ارحم الراحمين. اما ان كاملى از مرى الفضلاء و ان مكملى از (22)
 معلم العلماء انزل الله منزل رضوانه و اوطنه يطمان جناحه بر فضيه كل من عليها فان ازين جاي فاني ارتحال كرده است و (23)
 [از] روى اوردن بدان دار باقى صد و افزونى سال گذشته است ولكن آثاره فى افواه اهل الدين لا ينسونها ذكرها و آثاره فى قلوب ابناء (24)
 الصين لا يغفلونها فكرها ناگاه گروهى از تجار بشهر اين كمينه حقير نغير كمتز از قطمير رسيند كه ايشان از خصان قدسي و خلصان (25)
 حديثى مى [بوده] اند بعد از ملاقات آن قصه شأن را باز گفتند كه شهرها ما از كنجافوى هر سال از [محصبه] بوندن خاصه اسمال بقدره خدای تع (26)
 چهل و افزونى شباروز بران ديمه بباريد و آزار سيلش را در زمينها بخوارانيد هر آنجا كه پست بود رود شده است و هر آن جاي كه بلند بود ازان (27)
 آب خوارانيدن از هر جا بشكافته است هر جاي كه قضا و قدر حق تعالى بدو برسد بهمان حالش ديرينه بماند و بيشتز مزار از آن آزمائش سماوى (28)
 ويران گشته اند و اسخوانها مدفون همه پيدا شده اند تا آن كامل مذکور هم برين جگر لشته و نزديكست كه همو واقع شده پس عالمان و دينداران (29)
 كه دران شهر باشد دل سوزان شوند و آن عزيزان كه ايشان غرة وجوه اليوم و [زبده] وجيه اليوم خوانند جمع شوند و عالمانه بيشتز گرد كردند و گورستان از آن (30)
 جاي كه موافقت بود خريندت تا جسم فاني آن عالم رباني با اهل و اولاد او كه از اشرافند از آن گورها نزد ويرانى بجاوند همه را بدان گورستان نو خريدى (31)
 دفن كردند و [بعد] ذلك فالقولوب بها خاشعة و الابصار لها [حاضرة] ثم اهمتهم قلوبهم بان ينصوا ما فى صدورهم لا جرم مرين ايندهگان را (32)
 تاكيد گفتند ولكن رقعاه نمى فرستند تا اين ضعيف مرثيه را تصنيف كردم و به [پيش نماز] عرضه كنم آنگاه به مشرقيه آن حضرت بر پاى مى كردند (33)
 مناقبهاه آن عزيز يگانه اعلام ميكردند و قصههاه او را على لحده حكايبت مى كنند و افعال خير ايشان نيز بهر جاي بدانند چون اين قصه را (34)
 شنيدم امتثال لازم شمردم و لو لم [ارويهم] كتابا لا سمع لهم خطابا فكتبتا عربية و وصلتها اليها عجمية و عرضتها على قبل قيته (35)
 مرثيه و بينتها زيارة قبره دعوية نشرأ فضل علمه لاسلاف و فسراً لفضل مناقبه عند الاخلاف و الحمد لله الذى جعل العلم قرية (36)
 لاهله الى درجة الانبياء و خصص المولى عليه [باسم] الموصل من كل العلماء فاغفر اللهم لمعدوننا بالفضل التام و المغفرة العام مع اسلافه (37)
 الكرام و اخلاقه الكرام و اجعل له لسان صدق فى [النافية] و اختتم له بخير فى حسن العاقبة حتى واطب ذكره بالسان اهل الدين من قرن (38)
 الى قرن الى يوم [للعد] بفضل الله الواحد القهار المتنزّه و الخالق نحو محمد الموحد المختار و آله و غيره الامجاد (39)
 اين عبارات مرثيه كه فقير الحقير نوشته شده است و هو الداعي [النكدي] محمد المهدي الامام عطاء الله عليهما رحمة الله صغير (40)
 بين الانام حقير تحت الاقدام در تاريخ هجرى از محمد مصطفى صلى الله عليه و سلم هزار و هفتاد و نه سال بود سنه ١٠٠٠ ٩٧٠ (41)
 وقع الفراغ من كتابة هذه المرثيات و المدحات المسطورات المرضيات على يد العبد الضعيف الذى هو ابن مصنفها و [ناسخ رقيم] مصنفها (42)
 احمد النورى المتعلم بتعليماته و المتأدب بأداب تأديباته اما المصنف فهو فى حق الممدوح من تلميذ تلميذه الذى يثني عليه هونلو سننى بيا (43)
 من الكنجافوى الميمونة و سمي بطالب بن عبد الرحيم- من بين اسامى المرغوسة و الهمايونة غفر - الله له [غفرانا] تامة و مغفرة عامة مع جميع (44)
 الاسلاف و الاخلاف [كما] غفر للممدوح على مؤثباته فى الاثابة حيث لا يعلم الا المعلمين من الاسلاف فى البيت. (45)
 اغفر اللهم لكنا و لاسنادينا من سابقينا / كما كانوا ان يورثوا العلم النافع فينا و فى آخرينا (46)