

IN THE NAME OF ALLAYH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT OF CHINA TOUR 1987

BY

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1, GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

This is the report on my trip to Mainland China during the period from August 4 to September 2, 1987. It is to be kept confidential. This report is based on what I heard and saw during the visit. Some of the information presented is not meant to be published.

I met with Muslims, both officials and ordinary people. There is a significant difference between the two groups. Among the muslim officials, some dare to speak out more than the others, but only as far as putting all the blame on the "Gang of Four" and keeping silent on the deeds of the Communist Party since 1949. Some of the imams in the mosques not only defent the Communist Party but even praise them for 'their contributions' to the Muslims. It is true that after the fall of the "Gang of Four" and the beginning of the open-door policy, Muslims and other religious groups have been granted more freedom in religious practice. More food stamps and more holidays than the majority Hans (Chinese proper). But



the fear of another sort of revolution or movement still exists within the people's mind. Through my observations, it is not likely that the communist government clamps down on present permissiveness, due to the fact that the people are sick and tired of the "movements" and the government has tasted the advantages of the open-door policy. Also, many people, especially if they belong to the Communist Party and especially if they hold important positions, fear that they may be persecuted if they practise their religion openly. Believing in God is contrary to Communism and means immediate expulsion from the party.

The ordinary people, however, are more open and free. They told me many past incidents of Muslim persecutions. How the imams were insulted and humiliated. Those ordinary Muslims prefer to talk to me alone, and would change their tone and content whenever any outsider, especially if not a relative, would step in. (This is already a great improvement. Before the open-door policy, even family members were not to be trusted).

In my opinion, it is not necessary to discuss the past. All that happened was very discouraging and serves no purpose at the moment. What I find very encouraging is that most of the ordinary Muslims that I met expressed a very strong urge to learn more about Islam. They were very sincere and enthusiastic about Islam although they literally know nothing about it. For instance, in Nanjing, one day I took with me two young Muslims to the Juma'a prayer at the mosque. One of



them was 30 years old and the other 28. To my surprise, none of the two knew either how to pray or to perform their ablutions. They acknowledged that that was their first time ever to attend a prayer. Even so, I was happy to see that they all possess the right attitude towards Islam. Unfortunately, time did not allow me to stay longer and share my knowledge with them. I do hope in the future, that someone may be given more chance to visit China to help and encourage the Muslim Ummah.

Muslims in general were more knowledgeable in the mid-western provinces, such as Shan=hsi (陝西) Ning=hsia (宁夏) and Kansu (甘肅). In many mosques, I found young boys of 10 to 12 years of age attending the congregational prayers. Though their knowledge of Islam is better, a big setback is the multitude of religious groups or sects, as listed in the chart attached. Each sect claims their authenticity and denounces the others, at this point, fortunately only verbally.

In general, the Muslims in China are scattered all over the mainland, with pockets of Muslim populations in almost every province (省), county (县) as well as every city (市). Most Muslims still strongly cling to their faith by name, that is, they acknowledge their Muslim descent. But they literally know nothing about the teaching of Islam, except for not eating pork. Most of them drink alcohol, and do not know how to pray.



Although there are usually more than one mosque in each city, the Muslims do not attend the prayers in the mosque regularly, and most of them not even Juma'a prayer. As I observed, this is due to several reasons:

1. The Muslims do not have a break at noon time for Juma'a prayer.
2. Since most Muslims do not know how to pray, they shy away from the mosque.
3. Lack of understanding of Islamic fundamental knowledge. Most of them cannot even list the five pillars of Islam.
4. The Khutbah is not given in Chinese (except in Guang-Zhou (广州)). Muslims find attending the prayer on Friday meaningless. Besides, many imams cannot even pronounce Arabic clearly.

The Government is sponsoring repairs or rebuilding of all major mosques in each city. But very often, the funds given are insufficient to cover up all expenses. In many places, almost all the mosques that had been confiscated or destroyed by the Communists (between 1949 and 1976) are now being returned to the Muslims. Funds are provided, but again are insufficient. The local Muslims usually take care of the rest, and hope very much for foreign donations.

Though there are sufficient copies of the Qur'an in most mosques, these are all printed in Beijing (Peking).



The Muslim people however rarely even own one copy of the Qur'an at home. They hope very much to own a copy of the Qur'an that contains both the Arabic text and the Chinese translation. One particular instance is worth mentioning: I went to attend a Juma'a prayer in Chengdu (成都), Szechuan (四川) province. While entering the prayer hall, I saw and heard people in groups talking. Minding my own business, I took a copy of the Qur'an and sat down to read it silently. Upon seeing do this, the people lowered their voice and one of them went and took a pile of Qur'ans, came to me, took away the copy in my hand and handed me another. Then he distributed the Qur'ans to the rest of the congregation. Then the imam started reading aloud and the rest followed, chanting in the manner of the monks reading Buddhist scriptures.

In brief:

1. The Muslims in China desperately need copies of the Qur'an in Chinese, as well as books about Islam in Chinese.
2. Da'wah to the younger generation is of the utmost importance.
3. Muslim kindergartens or schools have been requested by many.
4. Many youths would like to go abroad to learn Arabic and Qur'an. This is very important since even many of the imams are not very competent. However, they usually do not have the necessary funds.



5. Unification of the Chinese Muslims, for they are too disunited due to too many sects (see attached chart). We need to breach this barrier urgently before it is worsened.
6. I personally request th MWL to request the Chinese government to allow Muslims to attend Friday prayer. That is, to allow a special break from say 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The official number of Muslims in China cannot be taken for granted due to the different policies then and now.

1. The Hui (Muslims) are considered as a racial minority (not a religious minority).
2. The Muslims in Sinkiang (新疆) and other minority races having Islam as their religion are counted separately.
3. Many Muslims, due to past persecutions, are hesitant to openly acknowledge their beliefs.
4. The Chinese government considers the children of a family Muslims only if the mother is a Muslim. But no so if the father is a Muslim and the mother a non-Muslim.
5. The figures provided in this report are official figures.



2. DETAILED REPORT PER CITY:

A. GUANG ZHOU (广州)

The Muslims in Guang Zhou number 6000 only (official figure), but they own one of the oldest mosques in the world, the Mosque of Light Tower. Many of the people attending prayers are foreigners, besides the local Muslims. Women and children also take part in the prayer.

The people I met are:

- a. Haji Noor Mohammad F.D. Ma (Chairman of the Muslim association).
- b. (Imam) Musa H. G. Yang.
- c. (Imam) Ibrahim D.C. Yang
- d. Haji Mohammed Rasheed D. Yang
- e. Mohammed Ali Y. C. Yang

They are Imams and government officials. There is a Qur'anic school for Muslims of all ages, but they stated that they need more copies of the Qur'an, especially versions containing both Chinese and Arabic texts.

The renovation of the mosque requires ¥ 460,000 (US.\$ 75,000) of which the government has provided ¥ 130,000 (US.\$ 23,000). They still hope to raise the remaining amount through private and/or foreign donations. The cost of maintenance is provided by the rent on a few buildings owned by the mosque. There is also a Muslim cemetery in which the grave of "Waqgas" is situated.



Note: The rate of exchange differs according to whether one is foreigner or Chinese, when donating money or travelling in China. When a foreigner exchanges money, he is given for every US \$. ¥ 3.62. Whereas the money used by the Chinese people is worth ¥ 6.00 for every US \$.

B. CHENG DU (成都)

Cheng Du is the capital of the province of Szechuan (四川). The Muslims in Cheng Du number 10,000, but the total Muslim population in Szechuan is of 100,000 (official figures).

Cheng Du had originally eleven mosques, but now only one remains. Again, the mosque possesses a quite sizeable piece of land, but due to city renewal ordinance, the mosque is to be shifted to a site next to it. The government has promised to pay all the cost, provided they reconstruct the mosque exactly as it was originally. If any new facilities or extensions are to be added, the mosque has to raise its own funds. Maintenance costs also come from rent.

The imams here are:

- a. Abdul S. M. Chang
- b. Haji Yunus W.C. Ma
- c. Lee Ming-Chung

There was a Muslim restaurant in Cheng Du, and it is



still there, but shut down. It is hoped that someone would sponsor it, so it can be re-opened.

There is also a Muslim bakery (most Chinese pasteries are usually made with lard) which is combined with an 8-room hotel for Muslims. However, it is not very well known to Muslims or visitors. Such a factory needs sponsoring too, to improve its facilities for both local Muslims and visiting Muslims.

Of all the people I encountered in Cheng Du, I particularly found one to be trustworthy and sincere in the work of Islam: Hassan Tien Fong. I hope to keep in contact with him to help the Da'wah movement in China.

There are also a Muslim cemetery and a slaughter house.

C. KUAN HSIEN (灌县)

Kuan Hsien is located 80 km north-west of Cheng Du. It is a small town, and the mosque there is in very poor condition. It definitely requires repair and improvements. The imams there were unfortunately very uncooperative. The only one I met was quite reluctant to talk.

Muslim butchers, restaurants and shops are found all along the street where the mosque is located. An interesting incident happened while I was dining at a Muslim



restaurant. Some non-Muslims came into the restaurant carrying some non-Islamic food, and the owner ordered them out.

D. XI AN (西安)

Xi-an has a total of 16 mosques. There were 16 mosques before the Communist takeover. Only one (the Great Mosque) was left as tourist attraction until after the open-door policy and the fall of the "Gang of Four", the Xi-an people regained the 16 mosques. Of these there are two for women only.

There are 100,000 Muslims in the province of Shan-hsi, of which 50,000 live in Xi-an. The larger mosques are fully sponsored by the government for renovation, but the smaller ones are only sponsored partly by the government and the rest sponsored by the local people.

The Xi-an Muslims are economically stronger, when compared to other places. The Xi-an Muslims own privately 700 taxis in Xi-an.

I was told by the ordinary Muslims that the Imam in the Great Mosque, Haji Noor Mohammad L.C. Ma betrayed the Muslims and caused persecution of many of them, during the period 1949-76. However, I have no proof nor the right to accuse him. Although I met him and talked to him for about 30 minutes, my stay was too short to find out anything.



Imam Yusuf Chang-Fu Ma, the imam of another mosque at Liang-Hu district (蓮湖區) has been highly praised by the people.

I met a young man named Mohammad Mas'ud S. P Yang who spoke quite good Arabic. He seemed quite honest and enthusiastic about Islam. He and another, Saleh H.D. Ma both wished very much to have the chance to come to Saudi Arabia to learn Arabic and Qur'an. I met two other young men, Mahmoud C.G Gu and Yahya G.Y. Ho, who showed a strong wish to learn more about Islam.

Xi-an's biggest problem is the abundance of religious sects. Each one denounces the others and claims itself to be authentic.

E. LAN ZHOU (蘭州)

I travelled from Xi-an to Lan Zhou (735 km) in a taxi owned by a Muslim, due to the difficulty in obtaining either a train or a plane ticket. It should have originally taken 10 hours to drive, but due to heavy rainfall which washed away part of the road, it took us 35 hours to get to Lan Zhou. I originally planned to return to Xi-an, but fortunately, I was able to get a ticket from Lan Zhou to Shanghai upon arrival.

All along the way, there was plenty of Muslim villages and Muslim restaurants and hotels. The living conditions



were fairly poor, but this was not limited to the Muslims. All tribes and races in the region were in the same condition.

Lan Zhou has 60,000 Muslims, and the province of Kansu totals 1,250,000 Muslims and 2743 mosques.

A huge Islamic center is under construction there, and is headed by a Muslim, Muhammad Musa H.L. Wang. The government has provided the money needed to replace the old mosque destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1968). This particular architect took the opportunity to design an Islamic center which caused the construction to cost much more than the sum provided. However, he requested me personally to ask for donation from Saudi Arabia for the completion of the job (see photographs and blue print).

I was told that a representative from a Muslim Organization in Saudi Arabia had visited this place and promised to get them US\$.2,000,000 but it has been over a year already, and they have received no reply as yet.

This Islamic Center will include prayer halls, male and female, a library and a conference room. The wing structures will include, retail shops, offices and guest rooms/hotel for Muslim visitors. They offer W.A.M.Y or M.W.L. a branch office in one of the sections. I do wish the authorities here will consider it.



F. LIN XIA (临夏)

LinXia is situated 160 km south west of Lanzhou (兰州). I took a car to visit this autonomous county in the state of Kansu. The place definitely has an Islamic atmosphere, with many minarets dotting the low silhouette of the city. Muslims here are generally poorer, but one can see more small private businesses going on in the market place. Muslims here are very friendly and women practice the wearing of hijab (حجاب). There is even a local unwritten rule for the head cover: white for ladies above 50, black for married women, and green for post-puberty yet unmarried women. Here one can hear the (adhan) call for prayer everywhere and youths as young as 10 or 15 years are seen performing ablution and joining the congregational prayers. However religious groups, once again, form the most fundamental problem here. There are mosques almost opposite each other but belonging to different religious groups. I saw a mosque that did not belong to any particular sect, and therefore was very shabby and poor.

Muslims in this area enjoy the benefit of having two children instead of one. I met one particular Muslim family who boasted 5 young children, without any particular notice from the government.



G. SHANGHAI (上海)

Muslims in Shanghai are very much scattered all over the city. Being isolated, the Muslims are very much influenced by the Han (漢) customs. There are 46,000 Muslims in Shanghai and six mosques. The good thing about Muslims in Shanghai is that there is no religious sect. All six mosques are run by a central committee.

The mosques provide religious classes, Arabic classes and children classes. There is also a Muslim cemetery. The publications usually contain only descriptions of activities or meetings or conferences that took place in Shanghai.

The mosques at Hsiao Tao Yuan (小桃园) requires some renovation that costs ¥ 300,000 of which the government has provided ¥ 200,000. They still need another ¥ 100,000 (US \$.16,700).

Another mosque at Song Jiang Hsien (松江县) requires ¥ 1,000,000 of which the government paid ¥ 500,000. They still need another US \$.84,000.

There is a plan to create an Islamic center in Shanghai which will include a library, Arabic classes at primary and secondary levels for Muslim children, restaurants and activity center. The land measures 1500 m<sup>2</sup>. A high-rise structure is definitely the only solution.



H. NAHJING (南京)

The Muslim population is estimated at 55,000 officially and the number of mosques is 8 in Nanjing. They are financially sponsored by the government and own properties. There are no Islamic publications.

The mosque of Jing Jueh (淨覺寺) has been fully reclaimed recently. It was used as a factory during the past decades. It also owns a sizeable piece of property which includes the main prayer hall, the offices, the guest rooms or hotel, and a guest hall, a clean and large wash room where Muslims living in the vicinity can come and take a bath and ablution before attending prayers.

Here also, there are no sects, and there is no concentration of Muslims in any particular section of the city. Muslim restaurants and shops are few.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR DA'WAH IN CHINA

A. UNIFICATION OF THE RELIGIOUS SECTS:

There is a very urgent need for the input of Islam knowledge. The very basic problem of the Muslims' sectarianism is because of the lack of fundamental Islamic knowledge. This can be done by sending in Qur'an copies in both Arabic text and Chinese translation, as well as other islamic books in Chinese: and by sending scholars there to



share the proper Islamic knowledge.

B. SENDING YOUTHS TO STUDY ABROAD:

There are many muslims who would like to come and study Arabic and Qur'an. The only problem they face is financial support.

C. STOPPING SEPARATISM:

Some Bukhari Muslims have already been black-listed by the Communists for intending to create a separate Sinkiang State (nation). Through some Muslims, I obtained the names of the above-mentioned. These people should stop this type of activity. Because trying to separate 8 to 10% of the Chinese Muslim population can only spell disaster for the remaining 90 or 92% who are spread all over China. Personally, I am very much against this idea because they are not working for Islam but rather for the Turkish race in China. It is a fact that the ordinary Muslims I met find that the Sinkiang Muslims (of Turkish race) are not friendly to other Muslims from other parts of China. If we are real Muslims, then all Muslims should be one.

D. REGULAR COMMUNICATION: SET UP OFFICE & PERIODICAL VISITS

I hope to set up an office here as a center for communication and interaction with all Chinese Muslims in the



world. As far as we know, there are many Chinese Muslims in:

Mainland China

Taiwan (Republic of China)

Burma

Malaysia

Singapore

Hongkong

This office will be responsible for collecting and sharing all the publications and da'wah methods in all Chinese Muslim centers. Activities such as Islamic centers conferences and other friendly visits among these groups could be achieved later.

E. SUGGESTED CHINESE TRANSLATIONS:

Since there is an urgent need for copies of the Qur'an in Chinese and Arabic, may I recommend to the responsible authority the translation of the Holy Qur'an into Chinese by my father Shams T.C. Tung (see attached copy). It is right now (September 1987) being published by PERKIM, Malaysia, but due to the limited funds, they are only publishing 2,000 copies this time. The advantages of this translation over the existing ones are that it is in modern Chinese (more understandable for the layman), that it presents both the Arabic text and the Chinese translation, and that it claims to be more accurate. I hope MWL could publish more copies in order to send into China as soon as possible.



While passing through Hong Kong for this trip, I met a distant cousin for the first time. He is now in the printing business. If books are to be printed in Chinese and sent to China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, etc. then Hong Kong would be the ideal place, if we take freight into consideration. If the concerned authority is interested, I am willing to introduce them to my cousin.

My father-in-law Haji Muti'allah Mai has completed the translation of some Islamic books into Chinese:

1. Faith and Trial, by Akhlaq Hussain
2. The Fundamentals of Islam, by Abu Ala Maududi
3. In the Shade of the Qur'an (vol.30), by Syed Qutb (still in the process of translation).

May I recommend these to be printed and used for da'wah in China.

Due to my close relationship to them, I may speak on their behalf, and say that they are not expecting any material profit from these books but Allah's pleasure. If the concerned authority is interested, then copies of each could be obtained, reproduced and sent out directly by W.A.M.Y. Or the M.W.L.

F. DONATIONS:

For the larger mosques, the following could be donated:



- television set
  
- VCR
  
- Video cassettes on Islam, preferably translated into Chinese .
  
- Money : to modify or restore the conditions of the mosques and their vicinity to construct some retail stores along the wall of the mosque facing the streets to do business and from them, enough income could be generated to maintain the activities of the mosques.



EXPENDITURE

I was given the sum of Sr. 10,000 which is equivalent to US.\$,2666.66. However, the actual sum spent is a poor reflection of how much may be needed for future similar trips. The main reason is because about two thirds of the time I stayed in relatives, houses and took my meals with them. Staying at hotels and eating out would obviously cost much more.

The major expenses on the trip are therefore the plane tickets and the hotel fees, and other travel expenses. Following is the list of expenses. Please find attached herewith the corresponding receipts.

Note: US.\$ 1.00 = Chinese Yuan ¥ 3.62

US.\$ 1.00 = HK\$. 7.70.

A. TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES:

1. New York - Hong Kong - New York (Air)	US.\$ 1162.50
2. Hong Kong - Cuang Zhou (rail)	US.\$ 16.20
3. Guang Zhou - Cheng Du (air)	US.\$ 97.80
4. Cheng Du - Kuan Xien - Cheng Du (car)	US.\$ 40.00
5. Cheng Du - Xian (air)	US.\$ 38.70
6. Xian - Lan Zhou (car)	US.\$ 160.00
7. Lan Zhou - Ling Hsia - Lan Zhou (car)	US.\$ 75.00
8. Lan Zhou - Shanghai (air)	US.\$ 106.40
9. Shanghai - Nanjing - Shanghai (rail)	US.\$ 80.00