

**The Other Middle Kingdom**  
A Brief History of Muslims in China

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*Translated by*  
**Phylis Lan Lin**  
**Cheng Fang**

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**Phylis Lan Lin, Editor**

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The history of Muslims in China spans more than fourteen centuries and cannot be exhaustively analyzed in a single work. Notwithstanding the inevitable limitations of space, *The Other Middle Kingdom* will attempt to present this often-overlooked chapter of Chinese history, which has been revalued by scholars from various academic disciplines only in recent years. The main aim of this study is to challenge the widespread stereotype of China as a highly homogenous country. Westerners not well acquainted with Chinese cultural heritage often consider China as a monolithic nation where everyone speaks the same language, eats rice, and shares similar, if not identical, cultural practices. This perception is distorted, given the fact that China is characterized by enormous cultural and linguistic differences among even the Han Chinese nationality (minzu) (Gladney, 1998).

This study is divided into two parts. The first touches on early Muslim life in China and highlights the fact that Muslims underwent a process of cross-cultural adaptation in the host environment from the Yuan period onward. It also discusses the 1759 conquest of the central Asian region of Xinjiang, which brought a large population of Turkic Muslims under the control of the Qing Empire. The second part discusses the twentieth century and dissects the ten Muslim nationalities recognized by the People's Republic of China (PRC).

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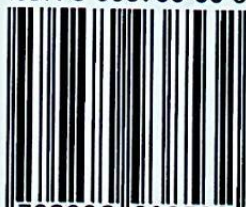
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