FRIENDS OF MOSLEMS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE MOSLEMS IN CHINA

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Confidential
WHAT'S IN A NAME

"You will be called on the day of the resurrection by your names and the names of your fathers. Therefore make your names good ones."

—AHMAD, ABU DA'UD.

Travelers who spent a night some years ago in the large Moslem inn at Wuyüan in Western Suiyuan and who desired their tea-pot refilled, bellowed into the open courtyard, “Jesus.” This brought the small overworked Moslem lad running with hot water.

Every Moslem in China, boy or girl, is given an Arabic name. The name Ersa (Jesus) is one of them, along with Mohammed, Abdullah, Fatimah, etc. These Arabic names are used by the Moslems among themselves. For intercourse with non-Moslems, especially where Islam is in the minority, they use Chinese names.

There is a saying, “Out of ten Moslems nine have the name of Ma.” It may be true in local communities, but after collecting some 2,500 Moslem names from their literature, past and present, current periodicals of the last fifteen years, the facts show us that only one-fourth have the surname Ma. Romanized Chinese names are confusing. To help toward a better understanding of these names and whom they represent, this QUARTERLY will begin with the January number devoting one page in each issue to the names of Chinese Moslems and will give a brief sketch of their lives.

A MOSLEM CONCEPTION OF SINFULNESS

The following diagrams are approximate reproductions of those contained in an Arabic book shown me by some Chinese ahungs in a mosque in Yunnan, S.W. China. I also give their explanation of them.

They illustrate the relative degrees of sinfulness of the four classes of persons in the four parts of their make-up.

I. PROPHETS. “Sheng Jen.” Completely clean.

II. SAINTS. “Hsien Jen.” The virtuous, pious. Those who perform all the Five Duties. They renounce the world; to whom gold is no different from stone. Sin to them is to forget God but for a moment. The world is not destroyed because of their prayers. Having attained a certain standard, God promotes them to this class.

III. THE LEARNED. “Chih-che”—the instructed; such as the ahung, muezzin, imam, etc., or any who study the Koran.

IV. THE IGNORANT. “Yu-me”—the unlearned, stupid.

RAYMOND H. JOYCE

XVIII
A MOSLEM CONCEPTION OF SINFULNESS

I. PROPHETS

II. SAINTS

III. THE LEARNED

IV. THE IGNORANT

THE FOUR PARTS of MAN'S MAKE-UP

1. Spirit "Ling"
2. Nature or "Hsing" Disposition
3. Heart "Hsin"
4. Body "T'1"
Several centuries ago, part of a Turki tribe known as the Salar pulled up stakes in their ancient home near Samarkand, trekked east and south to the borders of China Proper and settled, finally, along the great bend of the Yellow River south-west of Lanchow, Kansu. There their descendants live to this day, within the present province of Tsinghai. They preserve their ancient customs and Turki speech and are very bigoted Moslems. Modern schools have been established among them where the boys and girls are compelled to study Chinese. But as soon as they leave the doors of the schools their playful chatter is a babel of Turki. These people sometimes are met with far from their own district, so on my last trip to the mountain valleys south-east of Sining I took with me a copy of the Gospel according to St. Luke in the Turki colloquial that Salars can understand. In the midst of a surging crowd of people at a fair this copy was stolen from my bag. Later I saw it in the possession of an Arabic-reading Moslem who, when questioned, answered evasively as to his right to its possession. I was also greatly shocked to find that he was using its margins as a sales record and account book. On inquiring about his village I found he was from Running Water Valley, the place where I was to spend the night. Before leaving that village the following morning, I searched out this man and requested the return of the book, admonishing him as to the wrong of mutilating a copy of the Scripture; and as free grace on my part I gave him an Arabic St. Luke in exchange.

Three days later, on reaching the neat, compact little village of Sunnyside Slope Mountain, I went directly to the Mosque to get acquainted with the Ahung. His high sharp accent in speaking Chinese prepared me for the reply to my inquiry as to his original home. He was a Salar. One of his first questions was whether I had any book in Turki. Yes, I had, praise God. So the precious copy was soon in his hands. He opened it and with beaming face rapidly read a few lines exclaiming to me as he read. I told him the recent adventure of that little volume, apologising that I was unable to erase the mutilations. He was greatly affected and I am sure will prize it, knowing that God had preserved it for him. All these teachers have names in Arabic. This man’s name is Mr. Nooree (Light).

Nor is Islam a cultural unity. The Mohammedanism of Malaysia is a gloss over Malayan Anamism, and Islam in China is an Arabanized Confucianism, while in lands of more advanced civilization Islam has adopted itself to and expressed itself in the culture of the peoples whom it conquered.

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*From China’s Millions, July-August 1944, p. 29.
MOHAMMEDANS OF CHINESE FAR WEST*

There are three Moslem sects active in the western provinces, those of the “Original Ancient Doctrine,” the “New Doctrine” and the “Reformed New Doctrine,” also called the “Doctrine of the Present Time.” The “New Doctrine” which is more than a century old, aims to restore the primitive, genuine teaching of the Prophet which has been denatured by accretions. The sect of the “Present Time” was founded about sixty years ago. Some say that its founder affirmed that he was Mohammed the Prophet who had returned to the earth to repreach his doctrine, which had become corrupted, and to save the world, but others deny that he ever boasted of being the Prophet.

Above the ahung there are “masters of the religion,” called kiao chu each of whom has several districts under his spiritual jurisdiction. Each ahung, imam or man-las must go to see his kiao chu at least once a year.

Since the Sino-Japanese war a good deal of interest has been shown by the Chinese government in the Mohammedans of the Northwest. This does not proceed just from a peculiar love for them, but is dedicated by a wise policy. The number and strength of the Mohammedans in the Northwest has not failed to attract attention of the Japanese. They have incited young Mohammedans to go and study in Japan. Some of these students have published a book entitled “Arise Mohammedans!” which exhorts the Mohammedans to oppose the national Chinese government.

After the occupation of Manchuria in 1931 the Japanese granted to Manchurians newly converted to Islam the amount of money needed to pay their way to Mecca. They, of course, relied on the gratitude of these pilgrims to praise the benevolence of Japan on their return to Manchuria. Some of them were sent to Tsinghai and Sinkiang to do propaganda work. Others went to Peking. One of them became the head of the “General Federation of Chinese Mohammedans” which sent a delegation to the annual Haj at Mecca in 1939, where it confronted the delegation sent by the “Chinese Islamic National Salvation Federation” which is sponsored by the Chinese government.

Government measures for the benefit of Chinese Moslems include support of projects for the development of industry and agriculture, grants of scholarships to deserving young men and the establishment of chairs of Islamic culture in leading Chinese universities, with the Chinese Mohammedan graduates of the celebrated Al-Azhar University in Cairo as professors. The most intelligent Mohammedans will certainly rejoice at such a prospect, but it is to be feared that the bulk of the Moslem populace may distrust the good intentions of the government. Most of them cling to uneducated ahungs who have little or no comprehension of the texts which they read and of the rites which they perform.

ALEXANDER DAVID-NEEL

*Extracts from an article appearing in Asia and the Americas for December 1943, pp. 677-9.

XVIII
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

NINGSHA, NINGSHA

Now I am spending a few days in the Wuchungpao-Kinki area. I visited here and the Weichow, Tungsincheng, and Haiyuan districts with Mr. L. C. Wood in the Fall of 1942 and then returned to Tsinghai. We had thought of opening work among the Moslems in Chuankow (Minho). It was a great wrench to leave Sining last Autumn, but with the presence of the Hui in Ningsia we had no adequate reason for refusal. I try to maintain the balance between the church work and the Moslems; it is not always easy. I had to go to Lanchow this Spring for Mission Council Meetings and Church Provincial Conference and was away five weeks. The former was mostly routine, but the latter saw the formation of a Church Federation of Kansu, Tsinghai and Ningsia Churches embracing about sixty-five churches in fellowship with three Missions and holding the promise of greater things. I had the opportunity of addressing the delegates and brought the Moslem question before them as did one or two Christian and Missionary Alliance men, including Pastor Kou, urging consistent witness and faithful prayer. I am hoping to combine Bible conferences in various parts of Ningsia with visits to the Moslem districts to cover the field over this Summer and early Autumn. We have a very small group of Chinese believers in Wuchungpao and Kinki. Dr. Liu, the church leader in Wuchungpao is a converted Moslem from Hopei. He is studying some Arabic as an aid to reaching his former co-religionists.

Our Mission is seeking to re-emphasize the Moslem need and is appealing for missionaries for this work. Do pray that we really may be faithful in the carrying out of the task in areas which are our responsibility. We are simply up against it for missionaries these days, and there is no immediate solution.

May 23, 1944.

LEONARD STREET

HEO-TSI-HO, TSINGHAI

We have been in Heo-tsi-ho three successive years for tent missions. This village seems to be a very difficult place for the people are so hard. However this year we had a very good mission as far as numbers. We held two services daily, which were well attended by Chinese, Moslems, and a number of schoolboys.

I want to ask prayer for a Moslem family. The name is Ie (pronounced Year). Mr. Ie came to all the meetings day by day. In fact he brought his whole family along and the Lord seemed to be working in their hearts. The eldest boy, Jesus by name, is a very bright lad. He learned to sing some of the choruses quite well. Let us pray for this family that the Lord will really bring them right out on His side. For a Moslem to become a Christian is surely no light thing. Persecution would be sure to follow, but the Lord can give grace for this.

July 1, 1944.

F. DOGGETT LEARNER
WHERE ARE THE CHINESE MOSLEMS*

ANHWEI

Among so many new impressions the young missionary might not have noticed the difference between Han and Hui had not her first home in the province of Anhwei been just across the road from the home of the Ahung.

No—there were no ex-Moslems in the Church. Had anyone ever heard of such a possibility?

No—neither Han-ren nor foreigners could visit his house, though so near were the front doors that Moslem and Christian could talk without raising their voices.

No—anything suggested by Christian missionaries was impossible.

But “impossible” is not a Christian word.

Special tracts had been prepared for Moslems, and the Christian gatekeeper here was willing to do his share towards distributing them. Many a tract must still be put away in Moslem houses; like seed watered by prayer they will bear fruit. One pamphlet, the testimony of a converted Moslem, stirred the rage of the old Ahung, who declared his intention of going to investigate the scandal. Among Hui-hui one learns to prefer anger to indifference!

Then, when the master of the house is away, his daughter begins to make friends with the Christian women. After a time they will even step across the road. As they chat, the indispensable tea-pot is brought in, and tea-cups appear from the Moslem girl’s sleeves; they could not contaminate their lips with Christian cups, but they drank the tea. Have they taken in the doctrine, too, though they will not accept the forms of Christianity? We may never know. Sometimes the joy of harvest surprises the worker in a Moslem field, but as a rule we must, with joyful hope, accept the hardness which will make the final fruit so much the sweeter.

The last picture we see shows the Christian in the Moslem’s house. When the Mission House was destroyed by floods, their lives were saved by their neighbors, but after this a new house was built further off, and intercourse was interrupted.

Years later the one who as a new missionary had talked with the Moslem girls in “the house opposite” was accosted by a middle aged woman. “Do you remember me?” It was the Ahung’s daughter, who had not forgotten, and now sought out by the friend of her girlhood. Her brother, too, welcomed the missionary to his shop. No doubt the foreigner was a useful attraction to customers, but since he had remembered her name he cannot, surely, have forgotten the other Name which was always on the lips of the Christians.

So we hope—but surely more could be done if someone had time to follow up these contacts which are made in Moslem homes!

Olive Botham

*Seventh of a series of booklets on Moslems in several provinces.
MULTUM IN PARVO

BILIKHTISAR

A Military Mission may be sent from China to Turkey, which has broken off diplomatic and commercial relations with Nazi Germany. The head of the mission will be chosen from Mohammedan officers in the Chinese army, according to Chungking advice.

—Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury, August 19, 1944.

Following President Roosevelt's prayer for the victory of Allied forces in the invasion of France, the Chinese Muslim League has notified its branches throughout Free China to hold prayer meetings for Chinese and Allied soldiers on July 7th, the seventh anniversary of China's War of Resistance. One the same day similar prayer meetings were to be held by Chinese Christians in various parts of the country.—Ibid., July 7, 1944.

If your copy of this Quarterly does not reach your correct address please send your corrected one to us for more accurate delivery.

In Tsinghai alone there are about one hundred Mohammedan schools, in Sinkiang about a thousand—these in addition to the government schools, to which the Moslem children are of course admitted.

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FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us give thanks for the successful itineraries in Tsinghai and Ningsia and pray that the seed sown may be nourished and ripen to good fruition.

Let us pray for the Ie family, that it may be convinced and converted to be bold for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray for the Moslems in the province of Anhwei—that territory which now is partly occupied China and partly Free China.

Let us pray for the Christian leaders—converts from Islam—that they be steadfast in their witness.

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NEW MEMBERS

Rev. Harold H. Martinson
Mrs. W. K. Williams

Minneapolis, Minn.
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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The membership fee of the Society in China is $3.00 or $25.00 for Life Membership. Outside of China it is U. S. $1.00 (4 shillings) a year or U. S. $10.00 (£2) for Life Membership. Remittances should be sent to the Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr., 567 Manor Lane, Pelham Manor, 65, N. Y. In England send to Miss Olive Botham, 29 Woodberry Crescent, London, N. 10. In Canada send to Mr. Raymond Joyce, c/o China Inland Mission, 150 St. George St., Toronto, 5.

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