

## *Muslims in Nationalist China*

Peter G. Gowling\*

Other than two brief pamphlets issued in Taiwan, there is virtually no description of the Taiwan Muslims available in English. This article represents, therefore, an important contribution to knowledge about Taiwan Muslims. There are some 20,000 Muslims on Taiwan, forming an extension in exile of their more than 20 million Muslim brothers under Communist rule on the mainland. Most of the Taiwan Muslims are soldiers or government employees, shopkeepers and teachers. Practically all belong to the middle or lower class and are anti-Communist. They have their problems as a minority religion in a secular society and their future is uncertain.

Since its defeat by the Communists in 1949, the Republic of China—that is, the Nationalist Government headed by President Chiang Kai-shek—has been in exile on the island of Taiwan (Formosa), 90 miles off the southeast coast of the China mainland. Among the more than a million “mainlanders” who fled to Taiwan in 1949 were 20,000 Chinese Muslims. These, along with the few native Taiwanese who are Muslims, constitute the “household of Islam” in Nationalist China.

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The research on which this article is based was conducted in Taiwan in May of 1969 under a grant from the University Research Center of Silliman University. The present article is a somewhat differently organized and much expanded version of a piece published in the *Aramco World Magazine* (July-August, 1970). The map used in the present article is reproduced with permission from that earlier publication and was drawn by Max Abellaneda of the staff of the School of Music and Fine Arts, Silliman University.

While the Muslims today are only a tiny minority in a population of some 13 million people on Taiwan,<sup>1</sup> they are nevertheless quite visible. Some of their leaders are prominent in the councils of the Republic. Their principal mosque is one of the beautiful landmarks of the capital city, Taipei. Their two major organizations are vigorous, and maintain

Except for two brief pamphlets published by the Chinese Muslim Association in Taipei, entitled **Islam in Taiwan** and **The Chinese Muslim Association and Its Activities** (both undated, but produced in the early 1960's), there is virtually no description of the Muslims in Taiwan available in English. The **China Yearbook**, published annually in Taipei, has a short section describing Chinese Islam in general, with a few paragraphs devoted to the Muslims of Taiwan. However, the information given varies but little from year to year. Appropriate sections in D. Howard Smith's **Chinese Religions** (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968) and Richard Bush's **Religion in Communist China** (Abingdon, 1970) have provided helpful background information on Islam in China, past and present.

It is not possible to acknowledge the help of everyone who assisted the writer in gathering data on the Muslims of Taiwan. He interviewed many people there, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Among the Muslims, the following should be singled out for particular thanks: Haji Ahmad S. T. Hsieh and Haji Yacob Ming-cheng Ma of the Chinese Muslim Association; Haji Ishaque Shiao Yung-tai of the Chinese Muslim Youth League; Hu Shiao-lin, **Ahung** of the Taichung Mosque; Ma Hsing chih, **Ahung** of the Mosque in Chungli; Haji Ting Han of Keelung; Ma Sze-chang, chairman of the mosque council in Kaohsiung; and Muslim restaurateurs Sung Chin-liang (Taichung) and Tang Han-yu (Tainan).

Profs. Lin Heng-tao of Taipei and Yang Hsi-mei of the Academia Sinica were also most helpful as informants, as was Mr. Zein A. Dabbagh, Charge' d'Affaires of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Taipei. The staff of the Library at National Taiwan University and at the Government Information Bureau in Taipei gave important help.

Since the writer speaks no Chinese, he had to depend on translators. Several students in schools in Taichung and Taipei did yeoman work in this regard and a special word of gratitude should be said for the invaluable assistance of a warm friend, Prometheus Moon (Lao Meng).

A considerable amount of printed material—mainly newspapers, journals and magazines—was collected in the course of research, all in Chinese. Mr. Hung Kar-shun, a senior student at Silliman University, rendered important service in translating pertinent information from some of that material.

Finally, the writer would not have had the nerve to undertake a project of this nature had it not been for the encouragement and generous assistance of certain interested friends in Taiwan, namely Dr. and Mrs. Ching-fen Hsiao of Tainan Theological College, Prof. and Mrs. Mike Thornberry of Taiwan Theological College, and Dr. and Mrs. Mark Thelin of Tunghai University. Needless to say, none of the persons or institutions mentioned is responsible for the views expressed in this article.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates of the population indicate 10 million native Taiwanese (i.e., Chinese whose presence on Taiwan goes back several generations); 2 1/2 million mainlanders and their offspring; and half-a-million aborigines.

lively contact with the Islamic world. And, interestingly enough, more than 20 Muslim restaurants, serving beef dishes in a notoriously pork-eating land where beef is decidedly **not** favored, are found in the larger cities of Taiwan.

The small Muslim community in Nationalist China is an extension, albeit in exile, of the large body of Muslims on the China mainland. No less than their 20 million brothers under Communist rule, they are the heirs of a 1200-year-old heritage of Islam in China.

### Islam on the Mainland

The origins of Islam in China are obscure, but the year 651 A.D. is said to be the date of the first official contact between the Caliphate and the Chinese Empire. In that year an embassy from the third Caliph, Uthman, was graciously received at Ch'ang-an (modern Sianfu), the capital of the T'ang Dynasty. However, apart from a few Arab traders in the southern seaports—notably at Canton and Ch'uan-chou—there is no record of any sizable settlement in China before the middle of the eighth century. In 756, 4,000 Arab mercenaries, sent by Caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur to assist the Chinese Emperor in suppressing a Tartar rebellion, were rewarded for their service by being allowed to settle in China. After that, other Muslim groups—Arabs, Iranians and Turkic peoples—moved into the Middle Kingdom, settling principally in the northern and western regions.

During the Mongol conquest in the 13th century men of many Asian races followed the conquerors into China, including various Islamized peoples. It was probably at this time that the Muslims acquired their distinctive Chinese name: **Hui-hui** (literally "returners"). Thus **hui-hui-chiao** ("the religion of the Hui") is the name by which Islam is known in China.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars believe that the name referred originally to the **Uighurs**, an Islamized Turkic tribe which migrated to China from Central Asia shortly before the Mongol invasion.

The Mongol rulers—the Yuan Dynasty—encouraged Muslim scholars, traders and craftsmen to make their home in China. Several Muslims were promoted to high office in the Empire. Muslim science was introduced. Indeed, it is said that certain Muslim arts and sciences flourished more vigorously in China under the Mongols than in Baghdad.

<sup>2</sup> Chinese Muslims also call themselves **chiao-min** ("The religious people") and their faith **tsing-chen-chiao** ("The Sacred Religion").

Muslim systems of medicine, mathematics, astronomy and military science were very popular in China, and an Institute of Islamic Studies was founded in 1314.

Over the centuries, the Muslims spread into virtually every province of China, becoming especially strong in Yunnan, Kansu, Sinkiang, Ninghsia and Mongolia. At first the Muslims constituted a distinctly foreign element in Chinese society. In many places they lived in separate communities, sometimes called **ying** ("barracks") revealing their military origin. They had distinctive dress, eating habits and religious customs. They greeted each other with Arabic or Persian phrases; practiced circumcision; shunned usury, geomancy and stage-plays; and they observed strange (to the Chinese) funeral and marriage rites. But they took Chinese wives, and in times of famine they were notably ready to purchase children of non-Muslim parents whom they raised as Muslims. Their descendants adopted Chinese names (combining them with names from the Quran) and some Chinese customs. Gradually the Muslims of China became racially and, to a certain extent, culturally indistinguishable from the general society. They also became more or less submissive to Chinese Imperial rule.

Even so, adherence of the Chinese Muslims to their faith was sufficient to bloc their **complete** Sinicization culturally and socially. They regarded themselves as a people apart. They preferred to use the Arabic language in their religious ceremonies. (As a matter of fact, the first complete translation of the Quran into Chinese was not produced until 1934, or some twelve centuries after Islam's entrance into China!). Dietary laws, Arabic salutations, the wearing of turbans, separate Muslim graveyards, distinct nuptial and burial customs and other outward signs of allegiance to Islamic ways were tenaciously preserved. They worshipped in mosques and received the ministrations of **imams** and **ahungs** (from the Persian **akhund**, a teacher and religious functionary) whom they chose from among themselves and trained in their own seminaries. The majority of Chinese Muslims followed Sunnite Islam of the Hanafi School.

The Imperial Government respected the Chinese Muslim view of themselves as a people apart, but in order to keep them under political control, it appointed spokesmen for the Muslim community to the councils of the Empire, giving them more prestige than authority.

The Sinicization of Islam was aided for many centuries by the fact that Chinese Muslims were cut off from contact with Islamic centers in the Middle East. Added to the political unrest which closed off over-

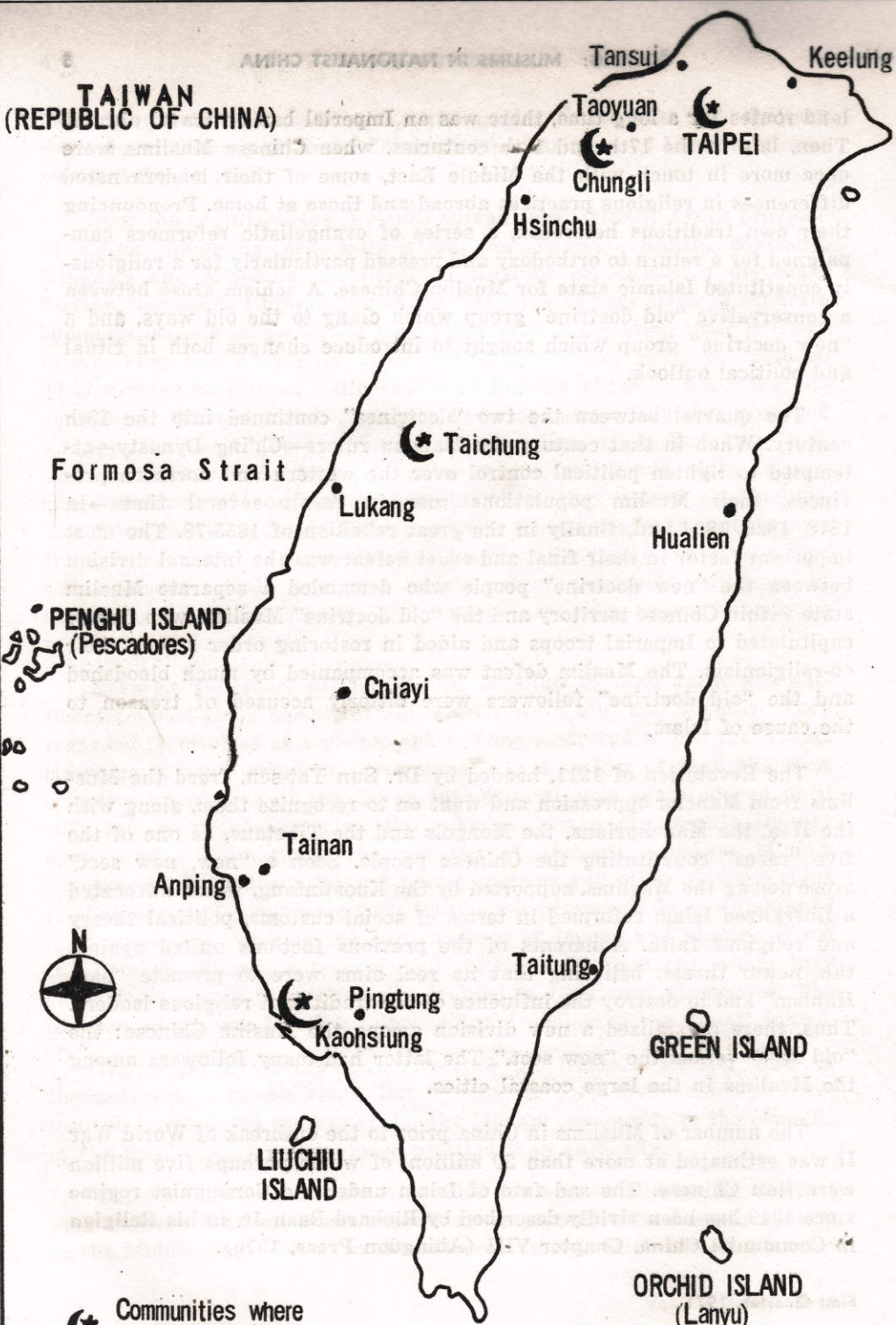
land routes for a long time, there was an Imperial ban on travel abroad. Then, late in the 17th and 18th centuries, when Chinese Muslims were once more in touch with the Middle East, some of their leaders noted differences in religious practices abroad and those at home. Pronouncing their own traditions heterodox, a series of evangelistic reformers campaigned for a return to orthodoxy and pressed particularly for a religiously constituted Islamic state for Muslim Chinese. A schism arose between a conservative "old doctrine" group which clung to the old ways, and a "new doctrine" group which sought to introduce changes both in ritual and political outlook.

The quarrel between the two "doctrines" continued into the 19th century. When in that century the Manchu rulers—Ch'ing Dynasty—attempted to tighten political control over the western and northern provinces, their Muslim populations rose in revolt several times—in 1818, 1826, 1834 and, finally in the great rebellion of 1855-78. The most important factor in their final and cruel defeat was the internal division between the "new doctrine" people who demanded a separate Muslim state within Chinese territory and the "old doctrine" Muslims who finally capitulated to Imperial troops and aided in restoring order among their co-religionists. The Muslim defeat was accompanied by much bloodshed and the "old doctrine" followers were bitterly accused of treason to the cause of Islam.

The Revolution of 1911, headed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, freed the Muslims from Manchu oppression and went on to recognize them, along with the Han, the Manchurians, the Mongols and the Tibetans, as one of the five "races" constituting the Chinese people. Soon a "new, new sect" arose among the Muslims, supported by the Kuomintang, which advocated a liberalized Islam reformed in terms of social customs, political theory and religious faith. Adherents of the previous factions united against this newer threat, believing that its real aims were to promote "pan-Hanism" and to destroy the influence of the traditional religious leaders. Thus, there crystalized a new division among the Muslim Chinese: the "old sect" versus the "new sect." The latter had many followers among the Muslims in the large coastal cities.

The number of Muslims in China prior to the outbreak of World War II was estimated at more than 20 million, of whom perhaps five million were Han Chinese. The sad fate of Islam under the Communist regime since 1949 has been vividly described by Richard Bush Jr. in his **Religion in Communist China**, Chapter VIII (Abingdon Press, 1970).

**TAIWAN  
(REPUBLIC OF CHINA)**



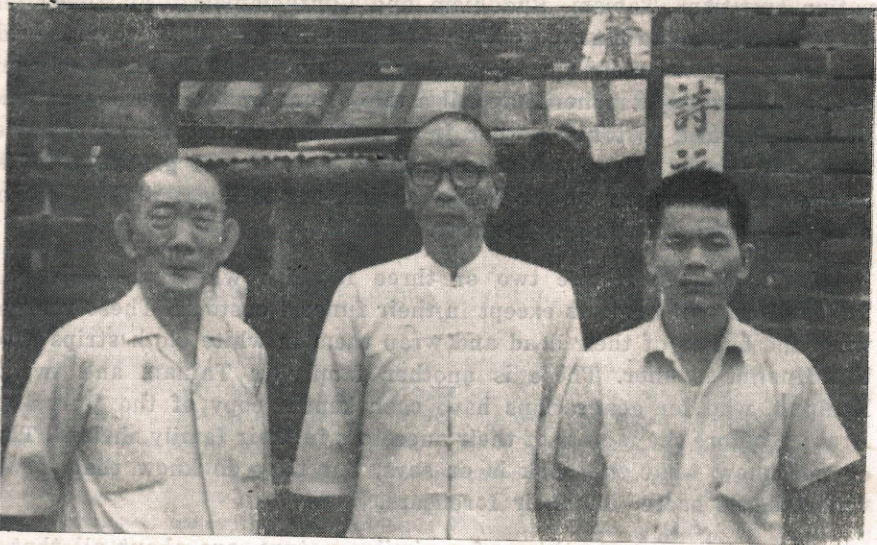
Map By Max Abellaneda

### Muslims on Taiwan Before the "Recovery"

In 1661, after the collapse of the Ming Dynasty and the rise of the Manchus, Koxinga (Cheng Cheng-kung), the war-lord hero, led 25,000 followers from southeastern China to the island of Taiwan. Koxinga drove out the Dutch from their fortified settlement at Tainan and established himself as ruler of the island. Among those who accompanied him to Taiwan were a few Muslim families from Fukien Province. They settled in port-towns along the west coast, principally at Tainan, Lukang and Tamsui.

The descendants of these Muslim followers of Koxinga did not remain Muslim. As one generation followed another, they became almost totally assimilated into Taiwanese society and forgot their Islamic faith.

There is some vague memory today of mosques having existed in Lukang and Tamsui prior to 1895 when Japan began to rule Taiwan.



Chou Tin-shen, Kuo Cheng and Kuo Wen-sai (from left to right). The two on the right are Taiwanese descendants of 17th century Muslims settlers at Lukang, Taiwan.

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on Taiwan. If there were a few Muslims on Taiwan under the Japanese, they were not native to the place and they practiced their faith as individuals and not as a community. In his *History of Taiwan* written in 1918, Prof. Lien Ya Tang said, "The spread of Islam in Taiwan is nil; believers are few, mostly from other provinces, hence there is no mosque in Taiwan as yet."

Curiously, some of the Taiwanese families today, which are descended from the Muslim settlers who followed Koxinga, preserve certain customs of Islamic origin, even though these families are not now Muslim. The Kuo family mentioned above, for example, do not include pork among the food offerings they make at the altar of their ancestors. Moreover, they insist that the dishes on which the food offerings are made be thoroughly washed lest they be contaminated by contact with pork. This family, which has about 300 households in Lukang, eats pork and participates fully in "Taiwanese religion" (an eclectic mixture of native spiritism, Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism). As fisherfolk, they are devoted to Matsu, goddess of the sea. When asked why they do not offer pork to their ancestors, they explain it not in terms of their Muslim descent but rather they tell a tale of one of their forebears who, when an infant, lost his mother in war-time and his fleeing relatives saved his life by allowing him to suckle a sow. Out of gratitude to the sow, pork is not given at the family shrine, nor is it eaten for a season after the death of a family member.

In Tainan there are two or three families which are culturally Taiwanese in all respects except in their funeral customs. These families wash the bodies of their dead and wrap them in white cloth strips after the Muslim manner. There is another family in Tainan, and two in Keelung, who for generations have each kept a copy of the Quran (in Arabic) before the tablets of their ancestors in their family shrines. They do not know what the book is or says, but they do know that it was venerated as sacred by their forebears.

These traces, and others of a similar nature, are about all that is left of the Islamic faith in Taiwan introduced by Muslims in Koxinga's time. Today not more than 200 out of the ten million native Taiwanese are Muslims, and practically all of them are recent converts, many because of marriage to Muslim mainlanders.<sup>3</sup>

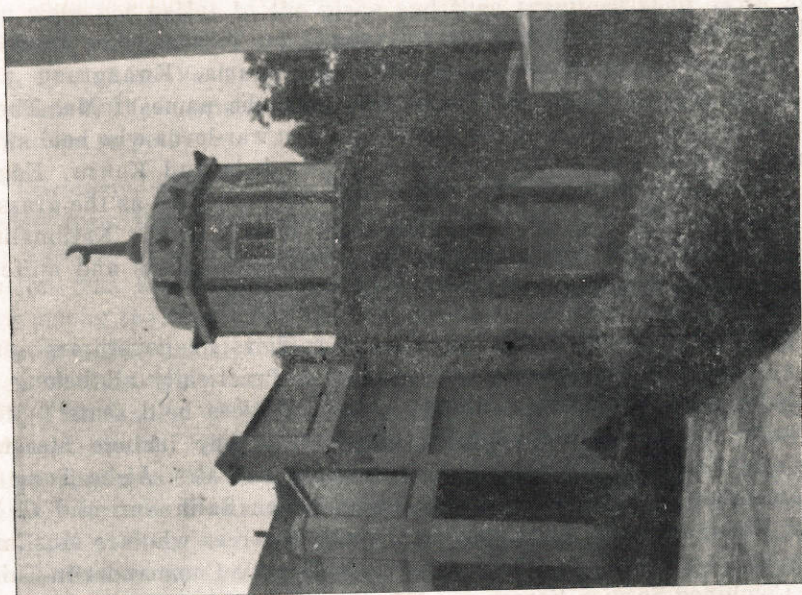
<sup>3</sup> This estimate was given to the writer by Haji Ishaque Hsiao, Chairman of the Chinese Muslim Youth League in Taipei.

### Muslims in Exile

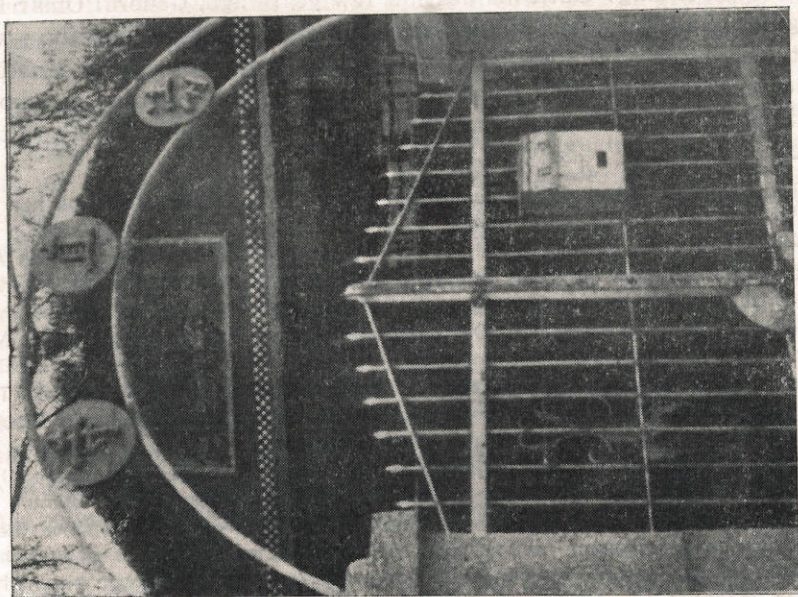
The 20,000 Muslim mainlanders presently on Taiwan come from all over China—Yunnan, Sinkiang, Peking, Manchuria, Kwangtung and many other places.<sup>4</sup> There are many who bear the name of **Ma**. These are the relatives or clients of the famous Muslim war-lords who held sway in China's northwest, in the provinces of Ninghsia and Kansu. Edgar Snow once remarked that the Ma family was "as numerous as the grasses of Ninghsia or the Smiths of the American West." In the Nationalist-Communist civil war, the Ma fought with the Nationalists and quite a number of them followed Chiang Kai-shek into exile.

Most of the Muslims on Taiwan are soldiers or government employees. Some are shopkeepers and teachers. Practically all belong to the middle or lower classes. A few of their leaders hold seats in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly. They include Messrs. Idris Kang, Suleiman Pai, Abdullah Shin Ching and Mrs. Aisha Tung in the Legislative Yuan, and National Assemblymen Salih Sun and C. T. Chang. There are ranking officers in the armed forces who are Muslims, notably Lt. Gen. Ma Ching-chiang, formerly Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Service Forces and now one of the top military advisers of President Chiang. Until his death a few years ago, General Omar Pai Chung-hsi—who for years headed the Chinese Muslim Association—was Deputy Chairman of the Military Strategic Advisory Committee. Muslims also serve in the diplomatic corps of the Republic and outstanding among them is Mr. Wang Shi-ming, who has served as Ambassador to Kuwait.

<sup>4</sup> The number of Muslims on Taiwan is not known. The **China Yearbook** has for many years asserted that the Chinese Muslim Association has a membership of 40,000—and the CMA asserts that all of the Muslims on Taiwan belong to the Association. In the **China Yearbook, 1960-61**, as in other issues before and after, it was affirmed that half of the CMA's 40,000 members were born on Taiwan and half were refugees from the mainland. On investigation, the writer found that the CMA is in the habit of estimating the number of Taiwan-born **descendants** of the Muslim followers of Koxinga at 20,000 and claiming them as members of the Association. The 4,000 member Kuo family in Lukang, mentioned above, is included in their calculations. But the fact is, the Kuo are not Muslims and apparently do not wish to be Muslims. In the absence of more reliable data, the writer has arbitrarily chosen the figure of 20,000 for the total Muslim population on Taiwan. That is the estimate of the number who came over in 1949, and while it may have increased since then, it might also have decreased—and in any case, there is no evidence at all that it is twice that number. Some knowledgeable Muslims interviewed on Taiwan agree that 20,000 to 25,000 is a good "working" number.



Mosque at Chungli



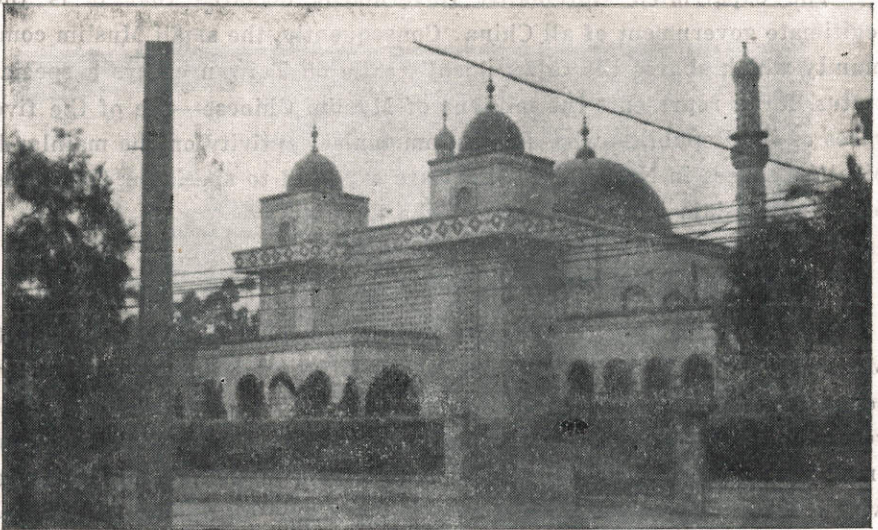
Culture Mosque

The expatriated Nationalist Government declares that it is the legitimate government of all China. Consequently, the small Muslim community which shares the Government's exile on Taiwan enjoys a special status, for it represents the millions of Muslim Chinese—one of the five races of the Republic—who live in Communist captivity on the mainland. Muslim leaders in Nationalist China are expected to speak for the whole of Chinese Islam in the councils of the Republic.

### Mosques and Religious Leadership

Only five mosques serve the religious needs of Taiwan's 20,000 Muslims. Three of the mosques reflect the financial limitations of that community—they are unpretentious structures, two of them being converted Japanese-style houses. The mosque in Chungli, built in 1966, is a small but lovely building of cement and marble in Chinese temple style with a pagoda-like tower. Under the leadership of its *ahung*, Ma Hsing-chih, the 20 or so Muslim families there gave sacrificially towards the cost and also solicited funds from wealthier friends in Taipei and from as far away as Hong Kong and Thailand.

Taipei has two mosques, which is not surprising since the greater number of Muslims on Taiwan live in or near that city. The older of the two, the Culture Mosque, is also the headquarters of the Chinese Muslim Youth League (the smaller of Taiwan's two Muslim religious organizations). The other mosque, called the Taipei Mosque, is the largest and most impressive of the five Muslim houses of worship on the island. Unlike the temple-style mosques of the China mainland, the Taipei Mosque incorporates Arabian and Persian architectural elements, including two stately minarets. The spacious, high-domed central hall can accommodate up to a thousand worshippers. The building also has an auditorium seating 400 persons, a reception hall, several offices and ample facilities for ritual ablutions. Constructed under the leadership of the Chinese Muslim Association (which has its offices in the building), the Taipei Mosque was officially opened in April of 1960 and hailed as a symbol of the religious freedom which prevails in Nationalist China.



Taipei Mosque

The mosques on Taiwan are completely autonomous and quite simple in their organization. The elders of the mosque choose a board of directors which in turn selects an **imam** or **ahung** to take general charge of religious affairs. There is little difference in function between an **imam** and an **ahung** on Taiwan, except that the former is the more prestigious title and is bestowed on one who is especially well-versed in Arabic and Islamic studies and who is qualified to preach the Friday sermons. In mainland China, **ahungs** were of different grades, performing different functions. On Taiwan they are mostly of one grade, able to read some Arabic, explain Islamic law and doctrines, adjudicate minor disputes within the mosque community, officiate at ceremonies, (such as name-giving, circumcision, weddings and funerals) and lead the public prayers. The Taipei Mosque and the mosque at Kaohsiung also employ a sort of "minor **ahung**" whose main function is to slaughter animals in the Muslim way.

Both of the mosques in Taipei have well-trained **imams** of recognized standing. The **imam** of the Taipei Mosque is assisted by three **ahungs**, while the **imam** of the Culture Mosque has no such staff. The mosques at Chungli, Taichung and Kaohsiung are in the care of **ahungs**, all of whom are older men, retired soldiers, who have had no special training for their office but who have been chosen for their piety and

above average religious learning. There are no seminaries on Taiwan for the preparation of Muslim religious leaders.

Daily prayers are held in the mosques but very few people attend them. Friday mid-day prayers, the principal service of the week and compulsory for all Muslim males, attract more worshippers, but even they are not well-attended. In Chungli, 30 is regarded as good and in the large Taipei Mosque the Friday attendance averages around 100, though occasionally it reaches 200.

Religious instruction is given to children by their parents in the home, but classes for older boys and girls are conducted by the imams and ahungs in the mosques, usually during winter and summer vacation weeks. The present imam of the Taipei Mosque, Prof. Ma Chi-shiang is a China-born Saudi Arabian citizen, educated in Mecca and Medina, who teaches Arabic and Islamic religion. Some 30 youngsters are currently (1969) enrolled in classes which meet two hours a day on Saturdays and Sundays. During the winter and summer vacations, the enrolment swells to about 100 students and Professor Ma is assisted in teaching by ahungs and senior members of the community.

One of the most serious problems facing Islam on Taiwan today is the future of religious leadership. There are two imams and about six ahungs on the island. Of the 14 Chinese Muslim students now studying at Islamic centers abroad (four in Libya, nine in Saudi Arabia and one in Lebanon) only two or three are likely to return and serve as religious leaders. Most of the present leaders do not have many more years of service left and unless the prospects for their replacement brighten soon, a crisis situation is bound to occur.

#### Muslim Organizations

All Muslim Chinese on Taiwan are regarded as members of the Chinese Muslim Association, headed by Acting President Abubakar Ming-yuen Chao. Founded on the mainland in 1937, the Association followed the Nationalist Government to Taiwan in 1949. Since that time it has been the only officially recognized organization of Muslims on the island.

The principal aims of the Association are set forth in its constitution. They include the preaching of Islamic doctrine, the development of Muslim education, the improvement of the welfare of Muslims, the cultivation of contacts and friendly relations with Muslims around the world, and the unity of all Chinese Muslims in opposition to Communism.

Working through its several local branches, departments and committees, the Association engages in many and varied activities. In 1959, after a translation board headed by the late Hadji Khalid T. C. Shih devoted seven years to the task, a complete translation of the Quran into Chinese was published. Another Chinese version of the Quran translated by Hadji Sheikh Ching-chai Wang was published in April, 1964, by the Association and the World Muslim League.

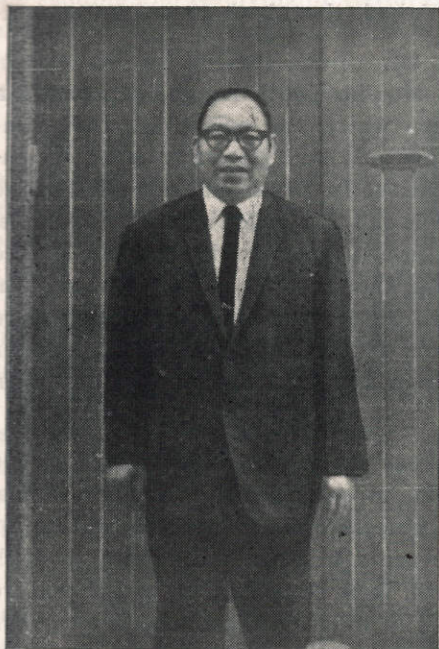
The Public Relations Section of the Association publishes a newspaper and a magazine which print news items about the Muslim world, report on local Muslim activities and also offer articles on Islamic customs and doctrine. In addition, the Association sponsors a weekly radio program which the huge transmitters of the China Broadcasting Corporation beam to Muslim and other listeners on the mainland. The Youth Department, among other activities, conducts an educational program for the young people and also supplies books and magazines for Muslim members of the armed forces.

The Overseas Affairs Commission of the Association maintains lively contact with the World Muslim League, the World Islamic Congress and other international Islamic organizations. It also receives and entertains many foreign Muslim visitors each year. The Association assists in the selection of Chinese Muslim students for scholarships to study at Islamic centers abroad; and it often helps in arrangements for foreign Muslim students studying in Taiwan. The Association organizes the **hajj** each year and participates in the selection of those few who are permitted to make the pilgrimage. From time to time, with encouragement and aid from the Government, it sends good-will missions to Muslim countries. In September of 1963, for example, the Association sent a five-man delegation to Kuala Lumpur in celebration of the formation of Malaysia.

Certainly the most dramatic achievement of the Chinese Muslim Association was the construction of the Taipei Mosque which cost approximately US \$150,000. The Association raised \$50,000 in local contributions and donations from Muslim friends overseas (including Their Majesties the Shah of Iran and the King of Jordan). The balance was acquired on loan from the Nationalist Government which was only too happy to have in the capital city a beautiful mosque to show visiting Muslim dignitaries.

Rivaling the Chinese Muslim Association in enthusiasm, though not in size and influence, is the Chinese Muslim Youth League, headed by

Hadji Ishaque Shiao Yung-tai. Hadji Ishaque is not only the president of the League but he is also Imam of the Culture Mosque in Taipei where, as already noted, the League has its offices.



**Hadji Ishaque, Imam of  
Culture Mosque**



**Hu Shiao-lin, Ahung of  
Taichung Mosque**

Hadji Ishaque was one of the founders of the League in the city of Mukden, Manchuria in the early 1930's. At that time the League was called "The Chinese Muslim Youth Cultural Improvement Association" and its purpose was to unite Muslim youth against the Japanese and their puppet regime in Manchuria. Then, during the Nationalist-Communist war of the late 1940's, Hadji Ishaque and some members of his Association moved to Kwangtung Province where, in Canton, in July of 1949 they reorganized themselves, with other interested Muslims, into "The Chinese Muslim Youth Anti-Communist and Nation-Building League." Later that year, the League moved to Taiwan. Its members, including Hadji Ishaque, were at first active in the Chinese Muslim Association, but in the early 1950's they withdrew partly in order to preserve their separate identity as a Muslim organization. The League adopted its present name in 1957.



Unlike the Chinese Muslim Association which simply considers all Muslims on Taiwan as members, the League requires the approval of a formal application for membership. There are 560 members of the League at present (May, 1969), including 55 Taiwanese converts. Most of the members live in and around Taipei, though there are some scattered throughout the island.

To a certain extent, the Chinese Muslim Youth League represents a continuation of the "new sect" faction which had existed on the mainland. It is liberal and reformist in attitude and generally more accommodating to the pressures of Sinicization. In ritual matters the League incorporates minor differences vis-a-vis the Taipei Mosque. For example, while the larger mosque offers its prayers in Arabic, prayers in the Culture Mosque are mainly in Chinese, though some Arabic verses from the Quran are also recited. In general, the League feels that it has more appeal to youth than the Association. It conducts regular classes for the young people, emphasizing Islamic law and doctrine rather than ceremonial concerns.

Neither the Association nor the League engage in evangelizing for converts, yet converts are won to Islam on Taiwan each year. Some, especially the Taiwanese converts, embrace Islam as a condition of their marriage to Muslims. The rest are attracted to the faith through contacts with ahungs or other Muslims. Both organizations put literature into the hands of inquirers and cordially welcome those who are curious about the faith. The Taipei Mosque registers about 100 inquirers annually and the Culture Mosque attracts between 40 and 50.

#### Contacts With World Islam

Nationalist China maintains cordial relations with a number of Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Turkey and Iran. Frequent exchanges of visits by government officials and civic leaders have served to promote mutual understanding between the Republic of China and these nations. Chinese students, most of them non-Muslims, have studied in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; and likewise, students from the Middle East have studied at the National Taiwan University and other educational centers in Nationalist China. Moreover, Jordanian, Turkish and Saudi Arabian teachers have taught at the National Chengchi University in Taipei, mostly in the Department of Oriental Languages. Middle Easterners have been particularly interested in Taiwan's agricultural and industrial projects and land reform achievements.

Such cordial relations have facilitated contacts between the Chinese Muslim Association and the Muslim leaders of the Middle East. These contacts take several forms, some of which have already been mentioned: the sending and receiving of visitors; the annual **hajj**; the sending abroad of Chinese Muslim students for Islamic and Arabic studies; participation in Islamic world conferences; and communication via the exchange of literature and communiqués.

Because most of Taiwan's Muslims are mainlanders forced into exile by the Communists, it is not surprising that in their association with the Muslim world they are advocates of a strong anti-communism and propagandize zealously against the present Peking regime. This is seen clearly in the activities of those selected to go on the annual **hajj**. Since 1954, the Chinese Muslim Association has been permitted to nominate five delegates per year to make the **hajj**—usually at least one of those chosen is a man from Sinkiang Province (Chinese Turkistan) and another a member of the Chinese Muslim Youth League. The travel of the hadjis is subsidized by the government and after the pilgrimage they are usually expected to travel to various Muslim countries, calling on Muslim political and religious leaders. In these meetings they are eager to exchange views on ways to protect Islam from Communism.

In May of 1962, the "hadji mission" from Nationalist China participated in the World Muslim Conference in Mecca and offered four proposals which were reportedly adopted in a unanimous resolution by the conference delegates. The proposals epitomize the anti-communist position represented in world Islam by the Muslims of Nationalist China:

1. Muslim nations are urged to proclaim Communism as illegal in their territories.
2. Communists are to be prohibited from entering Mecca.
3. Muslim nations are urged to help brother Muslims suffering behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains.
4. Pamphlets and books in Arabic, English and French are to be published condemning the Communists for their distortion of facts and their dissemination of false propaganda.

At the height of the 1966 "Cultural Revolution" in Red China, the Chinese Muslim Association sent an appeal to the World Muslim League and to other Muslim organizations all over the world charging that the Chinese Communists persecuted Muslims so ruthlessly that the Muslims of China were in revolt. The Association also charged that literally millions of Muslims on the mainland had been liquidated by the

Communists.<sup>5</sup>

The Muslims of Taiwan are much interested in cultivating friendship and cooperation with Muslims in East and Southeast Asia. On the occasion of the opening of the Taipei Mosque in 1960, leaders of the Chinese Muslim Association met several times with Muslim delegations from the Philippines, Japan and Brunei. Out of these talks came a memorandum which, among other things, called for closer relations between Muslims in the region particularly directed to the education and uplifting of the faithful; suggested the exchange of publications among the different Muslim organizations in the region; endorsed a proposal of Philippine Senator Domocao Alonto and others for a conference of Southeast Asian Muslims; and advocated the unity of Muslims against all forms of godless ideologies.

### The "Muslimness" of Muslims on Taiwan

It is wrong to measure the "Muslimness" of a people by the degree to which they adhere to the Five Pillars of Islam. From the standpoint of their **disposition** to be Muslims—the only valid criterion of "Muslimness"—the Muslims of Taiwan are as faithful to Islam as the citizens of Mecca. They confess the **Kalima**; and compared to some other Muslims in nearby Southeast Asia, they do not compromise their belief in the Oneness of Allah by worshipping other deities. Nevertheless, not many Muslims on Taiwan take the time to do the **Salat** every day, and most do not even go to the mosque on Friday. Hardly anyone gives the **Zakat**. Only five Muslims each year are permitted by the government to go on the annual **Hajj** (though more would go, and at their own expense, if it were permitted). The Ramadhan Fast, however, is well observed by those identifying themselves as Muslims.

While there is general awareness that the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence prevails in Chinese Islam, on Taiwan there is little application of the religious law outside the mosque because, of course, Nationalist China is a secular state. Within the mosque, however, offenders are judged by a council called and presided over by the **ahung**.

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<sup>5</sup> The **China Yearbook, 1967-1968** declared that under the Communists since 1949 "Islam, like all other religions, has been persecuted and the faithful liquidated. . . . The number of Chinese Muslims has been reduced from 50,000,000 to 10,000,000." (p. 77).

Islam on Taiwan, like Islam everywhere in the world, is affected by its environment. One example of this is found in the matter of divorce. Islamic law makes it relatively easy for divorce to occur, yet it happens only rarely among Chinese Muslims—because it is rare among the Chinese and Taiwanese in general.

Women have traditionally enjoyed considerable freedom in Chinese Islam. There are no harems and no **purdah**. Formerly, on the mainland, in the larger cities such as Peking and Mukden, there were mosques exclusively for women, and there were even women **ahungs** in charge of them. No such development has occurred on Taiwan. When women go to the mosque, and few do, they go with the men; but inside they are usually separated by a cloth screen. About 20 or 30 women attend the Friday services in the Taipei Mosque each week.

Abstinance from pork and alcohol are among the usual marks of a Muslim, though the Chinese Muslims on Taiwan honor the prohibition against alcohol more in the breach than the observance. Even the rule against pork is very hard to keep in pork-eating Taiwan. Until recent years, the Taiwanese did not generally eat beef because they regarded it as an unconscionable offense against cattle which otherwise give so much—milk for the children, work on the farm, transportation, etc. The fact that Muslim restaurants do not serve pork, but do serve beef, makes them something of an oddity in Taiwan. It is reported that a number of Muslim restaurateurs, in order to make their businesses pay, do serve pork dishes and do not pretend to run **hui-chiao** restaurants. Still other Muslims, when eating out in the general society, succumb to the pressure and eat whatever is put before them, even if it is pork.

### Problems and Prospects

In discussing the special problems they face in practicing their religion on Taiwan, the Muslims speak particularly of the difficulty in adhering to the Quranic ban on pork. They also mention the hardship of performing their Friday religious duties in a society which treats that day like any other. The fact that most of the Muslims are of limited financial means causes them to despair of having adequate resources for future development and progress as a religious community. In addition, as has already been mentioned, there is the problem of the crisis of leadership which looms ahead. The present leaders have carried their responsibilities for many years, and there is apparently little interest, on the part of the younger generation, to relieve them. Some converts are

won each year, but there does not seem to be substantial numerical growth annually in the Muslim community.

Nevertheless, Islam is present and alive on Taiwan. The Muslims there are loyal to the Nationalist government and feel that their future is bound up with that government. They are cut off from their co-religionists on the mainland; but despite two decades of exile, they continue to hope that the separation is only temporary.

Should Taiwan remain permanently separated politically from the mainland of China, there is no telling what would happen to Islam on the island. The Islam which accompanied Koxinga in the 17th century eventually atrophied and died, very largely because it was cut off from its mainland roots. History might repeat itself.

Then, again, it might not. Far more Muslims came to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek than with Koxinga. They are better organized and are very much in touch with the Islamic world. They are self-consciously *dar al-Islam* in Nationalist China. And if the present generation of Muslims can transmit to the next generation only half of its courage and tenacity and devotion to Islam, then the future of the faith on Taiwan is assured, come what may.