

CONNECTIONS

outside it—that the Jahriya Sufis of Gansu were Naqshabandis, that their Sino-Muslim founder had studied in Yemen, and that they were intimately connected to Sufi revivalism all over the Muslim world. Research done in China has since deepened that connection, and an Arabic document from within the Jahriya has largely confirmed it.⁶²

Ma Mingxin and the Jahriya: The Arabian Connection

All over the Muslim world, the great wave of Sufism changed its character during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Renewal (*tajdid*) movements grew from West Africa to China, advocating purification of Islam from local cultural accretions and from the abuses (social and economic, as well as theological) possible within Sufi orders. In many parts of Asia, the Naqshabandi order stood at the forefront of this new movement, epitomized by the career of Ahmad Sirhindī, the Mujaddid i-Alf i-Sānī (Renewer of the Second Muslim Millennium), in India in the early seventeenth century.⁶³ This Sufi revivalism reached northwest China most dramatically in the person of ‘Azīz Ma Mingxin (1719?–81), a Gansu Naqshabandi who, like Ma Laichi, had studied for many years in Mecca and Yemen.⁶⁴ His teachers there came from the school of Ibrāhīm ibn Hasan al-Kūrānī, one of the best-known Sufi revivalists of the Arabian peninsula. Among several generations of disciples, al-

62. Ma Xuezhī, *Zhehelinye daotong shi*, a translation of about one-third of the Arabic original, existed only in an “informal” version in 1984. I was thus able to read it, but not to copy or retain it. The text includes stories of the Chinese *shaykhs* of the Jahriya, the miracles they worked, and their victories over their Muslim and non-Muslim enemies. The section on Ma Mingxin makes it clear that he studied in Yemen; Ma Tong, *Zhongguo Yisilan . . . shilue*, 364–65, concurs, identifying Ma Mingxin’s teacher as Muhammad “Bulu Seni,” probably a mistransliteration of Muhammad ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. az-Zayn, the father of the az-Zayn discussed below. Ma Tong’s *sisila* also includes ‘Abd al-Khāliq, though in a different position in the list, an inconsistency possibly due to his oral sources, as compared to Fletcher’s written Arabic documents. Ma Xuezhī’s abridged Chinese version has now been supplanted by a complete translation of the text, called *Rashuh* after its first Arabic word. Done by two Jahriya *ahongs* and the famous Sino-Muslim novelist Zhang Chengzhi, the published translation is an important addition to our primary sources on Sufism in China. The reference to Ma Mingxin’s sojourn in Yemen may be found in Guanli Ye, *Reshihaer*, 10.

63. For a review of Sirhindī’s career, politics, theology, and disciples, see Khan, *The Naqshbandis*, esp. 40–98; and Friedman, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī*.

64. Ma Mingxin had several names, both Arabic and Chinese, and scholars disagree as to which one(s) might be most authentic. According to Ma Tong, he came to be called ‘Azīz only after his return from Arabia; his Islamic given name was Ibrāhīm. He also had a Sufi name (Ch. *daobao*), Wīqāyat Allāh (*Zhongguo Yisilan . . . shilue*, 363).

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Kūrānī’s intellectual and spiritual descendants included the leaders of socioreligious movements in Sumatra, Java, north India, Arabia, China, and west Africa, evidence of the remarkably open communication among international Sufi elites during this century.

Joseph Fletcher has demonstrated how two Naqshabandi Sufis from China, Ma Laichi and Ma Mingxin, obtained quite different versions of their order’s tradition, though they both may have studied within the same schools in the Middle East.⁶⁵ As we have seen, Ma Laichi had returned to China as a practitioner of the silent *dhikr* characteristic of the Naqshabandi order. Ma Mingxin, a decade or two later, studied with the next generation of Yemeni teachers, who taught that the *dhikr* of God could be chanted aloud as well. His teacher, ‘Abd al-Khāliq b. az-Zayn al-Mizjāji, participated in a scholarly world much more receptive to new forms of remembrance, and he himself is reported to have taught both the silent and the vocal *dhikr* to his disciples.⁶⁶

The *dhikr* was certainly not the only contentious issue among the Naqshabandis of Yemen in the early eighteenth century; *tajdid*—commitment to political, social, and religious renewal of Islam—divided them even more profoundly. Among the students of al-Kūrānī, especially in the second generation, were fundamentalists who shook the Islamic world with their negative evaluations of contemporary practice. Muhammad Hayāt as-Sindī, for example, who was one of ‘Abd al-Khāliq’s teachers, also included among his disciples Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. The latter became the most famous anti-Sufi, anti-accretion polemicist of his generation in Arabia and founded a movement that still reigns supreme in the Arabian peninsula. Indeed, “Wahhabi” became synonymous for European scholars with the most intolerant, most reactionary revivalism of the modern period. Activist revivalists such as Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi, Muhammad as-Samman, and ‘Abd ar-Ra’ūf as-Sinkilī of Sumatra all partook of the same atmosphere as Ma Mingxin. For them, as for Ahmad Sirhindī, politics and social reform constituted a crucial focus for Naqshabandis.⁶⁷

65. Fletcher, “Naqshbandiyya,” 27–33.

66. *Ibid.*, 30, esp. n48.

67. It may seem contradictory that Muslim leaders educated within Sufi orders would have become anti-Sufi activists, but by this point in Muslim history virtually every major teacher belonged to one or more orders, so that “Sufi” could encompass the entire, vast variety of Muslim intellectual and political life, including anti-Sufism. In China the range was narrower, but “Sufi” could still include both the well-organized, military-minded Gansu *menhuan* and solitary Sino-Muslim intellectuals, such as Liu Zhi, in Nanjing or Suzhou.

influential than other Sufi orders in China due to its rejection of “worldly” political involvement, it set the stage for many Sufi orders to follow.

The Naqshbandiyya. The Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa* became most rooted in Chinese soil through the establishment of 2 *menhuan*, the Khufiyya and Jahriyya, which were to exercise tremendous influence on the history of Islam in China and the northwest. As Joseph Fletcher argued, “the history of the Naqshbandiyya is the history of Islam” from eighteenth- to nineteenth-century China. Fletcher went on to explain that the reform movement emphasized the following:

... a shar’ist orthopraxy, political activism, propagation of the religion, and a strong Sunni orientation [which] came to mark the Naqshbandiyya in a way that proved definitive in the mystical path’s subsequent history. ... Two other general characteristics of popular mysticism, namely the veneration of saints (misleadingly called “saint worship” by non-Muslim writers) and the seeking of inspiration by visiting and meditating at the saints’ tombs (misleadingly referred to as “tomb worship”), were also prominent features of the Altishahr Naqshbandiyya.¹²⁸

Founded by Baha’ ad-Din Naqshband (d. 1389), who lived in Mawarannahr (a Central Asian region west of the Pamirs); the Naqshbandiyya order gradually spread east across the trade routes and, by the middle of the fifteenth century, gained ascendancy over other Central Asian Sufi orders in the oasis cities of Altishahr, surrounding the Tarim River Basin in what is now southern Xinjiang. The Naqshbandi order that gained the most prominence in the Tarim Basin and played an important role in later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century politics in Xinjiang was the Makhdumzada, established by Makhdum-i A’zam (also known as Ahmad Kasani, 1461–1542). It was his great grandson, Khoja Afaq (d. 1694), known in the Chinese sources as Hidayat Allah, who was the saint most responsible for establishing the Naqshbandiyya among the Hui in Northwest China.¹²⁹ Khoja Afaq (Khwaja-yi Afaq, “the Master of the Horizons”) founded the Afaqiyya in Xinjiang, and, from 1671–1672, visited Gansu, where his father, Muhammad Yusuf, had previously visited and preached, reportedly converting a few Hui and a substantial number of the Salars to Naqshbandi Sufism. During this influential tour, Khoja Afaq visited the northwest cities of Xining,

Lintao, and Hezhou (now Linxia, China’s “little Mecca”), preaching to Hui, Salar, and northeastern Tibetan Muslims. Two of these early Hui Gansu Muslims became his disciples and went to Central Asia and the pilgrimage cities to become further trained in the order. When they returned to China, they established the two most important Naqshbandi brotherhoods among the Hui in the northwest, the Khufiyya and the Jahriyya.

Throughout its history, the Naqshbandiyya has stressed an active participation in worldly affairs.¹³⁰ Their *shaykhs* worked wonders, chanted the powerful Mathanawi texts of the Turkish mystic Rumi al-Balkhi, Maulana Jalluddin (d. 1273), and advocated scriptural reforms. They emphasized both self-cultivation and formal ritual, withdrawal from and involvement in society. Unlike the Qadiriyya, their leaders enjoyed families and the material wealth accrued from the donations of their followers. They also became committed to political involvement and social change based on the principles of Islam. Some of the Naqshbandiyya orders in China advocated, I argue, more of a “transformationist” perspective, in which they sought to change the social order in accord with their own visions of propriety and morality. This inevitably led to conflicts with Chinese rule and local governments, causing some orders of the Naqshbandiyya, especially the Jahriyya, to be singled out for suppression and persecution. “Due to the arduous way it has traversed,” Yang Huaizhong writes, “the branch [Jahriyya] has always advocated the militant spirit of the Muslims, organizing uprisings to resist the oppression of the Qing and GMD Governments against the ethnic Hui minority and their religious belief.”¹³¹ By contrast, the Khufiyya tended to seek more conformist solutions to local conflicts, stressing personal internal reform over political change. The different stance that the Naqshbandiyya orders took in China with regard to the state and Chinese culture reflects their dialectical interaction with local interpretations of identity and changing sociopolitical realities in the northwest.

The Naqshbandi Khufiyya. During his 1672 visit to Hezhou, Khoja Afaq played an important role in the life of a certain Ma Laichi (d. 1766), a Hezhou Hui of incredible talent who went on to found one of the earliest and most influential Naqshbandiyya orders in China, the Khufiyya *menhuan*. According to Sufi tradition, Ma Laichi was born to