Ethnic Composition and Livelihoods of Lhasa Muslims in Tibet

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The composition of the Chinese Hui people and the sources they own are very complex. Their identity is in a dynamic state. They are composed of people of different ethnic groups believing in Islam or being converted to Islam in the past. Currently, the Muslim community of Lhasa in Tibet is composed of various Muslim groups, namely Tibetanized Muslims or Tibetan-speaking Muslims and Chinese-speaking Muslims, commonly called Chinese Muslims (khui rigs), who are mainly from Gansu and Qinghai Provinces in northwestern China. They mostly have no household registration records in Lhasa and are regarded as a floating population. In the past 40 years of China's reform and opening up, Lhasa has undergone dramatic changes in the residence, livelihoods and religious behavior of the residents. Therefore, it is necessary to review the situation of Lhasa Muslims to get a comprehensive understanding of their composition, livelihoods and current status.

Keywords: Tibet, Lhasa, Tibetan Muslim, Chinese Muslim, Khaches

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim community of Lhasa in Tibet is composed of two groups. First one is the group of Tibetan Muslims, namely Tibetanized Muslims or Tibetan-speaking Muslims, who live mainly near Barkor Street in the old urban area of Lhasa. Some of them have moved to Lhasa from Kashmir, Ladakh and Nepal in the 14th and 15th centuries, and others were Muslims who garrisoned Lhasa as soldiers in the Qing dynasty and later settled here. Their native places are Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Yunnan in China, and they live mainly in Wapaling in Lhasa. After the Hui-Han war during the reign of Qing Emperor Tongzhi, some Muslims in northwestern China fled to Lhasa, and became part of Tibetan Muslims.[1]

The other group is the Chinese-speaking Muslims, commonly called Chinese Muslims (khui rigs), who are mainly from Gansu and Qinghai Provinces in northwestern China, and mostly have no household registration records in Lhasa, and they are regarded as a floating population. Other than Chinese Muslims, there are also some Salar people from Xunhua County, Qinghai Province, who constitute the major proportion of Chinese-speaking Muslims of Lhasa.

[1] Buryat Mongolian Tsybikov from Russia who entered Tibet in Year 26 of Qing Emperor Guangxu's reign (1900) recorded Han and Hui people in Lhasa then after visiting Lhasa: "There are nearly 10,000 residents in Lhasa, and most of them are of course Tibetans. …The Han people rank second in population, and are mostly from Sichuan Province. Chinese Muslins fleeing to Tibet during the Hui insurgency are also counted as Han people. After coming to Lhasa, these Muslims joined the Kashmirian group religiously and the Han group administratively." (Tsybikoff 1993[1919], 108-109)

Historically, the distinction between Tibetan and Chinese Muslims was not inflexible and the evolution of former Chinese Muslims into today's Tibetan Muslims is a historical trend. Tibetan Muslims before 1961 were Muslims whose ancestors were from Kashmir, India and Nepal. Since they live around Barkor Street in the old urban area of Lhasa, they are called "Barkor Khaches" by local Tibetans. In contrast to them are Chinese Muslims whose ancestors were from Shaanxi, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan, etc. in Mainland China, and they live at Wapaling in the northeast of the old urban area of Lhasa close to the Lhasa River, And they are called "Wapaling Khaches". After 1961, most Barkor Khaches have moved to Kalimpong and various other places in India, and only a few have stayed in Lhasa. Since Wapaling Khaches have been in contact with local Tibetans for a long time, they have accepted the Tibetan lifecycle, they speak the Lhasa dialect of Tibetan language, and they intermarry with Tibetans. They have replaced former Barkor Khaches gradually and become the main proportion of today's Tibetan Muslims. Since the beginning of China's reform and opening up in 1978, free population flow has been allowed gradually. A large number of Chinese Muslims, Salar people, etc. from Gansu, Qinghai and other regions have come to Tibet looking for business opportunities. Since they speak Chinese, and their customs differ from those of local Tibetans, they have become Chinese Muslims of today. Nevertheless, based on our survey, these Chinese Muslims have been differentiated in various groups. A small number of them have household registration records in Tibet, and they have settled down gradually or intermarried with local Tibetans or Tibetan Muslims, thus becoming Tibetan Muslims after one or two generations.

Currently, limited research findings regarding Lhasa Muslims are available in the academic community excluding the literature by Chinese scholars that is based on historical literatures and fieldwork.[2] The published English book *Islamic Shangri-La–Inter-Asian Relations and Lhasa's Muslim Communities* (Atwill 2018) represents the latest research finding of the Western academic community, and its value lies in the compilation and unearthing of information on Tibetan Muslims in India, Nepal, etc. (including literatures and fieldwork data). Additionally, the available fieldwork information on Lhasa Muslims is mostly secondhand and outdated, and little information has resulted from authentic fieldwork. In the past 40 years of China's reform and opening up, Lhasa has undergone dramatic changes, along with Lhasa' residence, livelihoods and religious behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to review the situation of Lhasa Muslims in a comprehensive manner.

This article summarizes and analyzes the composition, livelihoods and current status of Lhasa Muslims that is based on literatures and fieldwork in order to get a holistic understanding of the Muslim groups living in Lhasa – the Tibetan Buddhist center.

TIBETAN MUSLIMS IN LHASA

Tibetan Muslims is the general term for Chinese Muslims in Lhasa, and it refers to Lhasa residents who accept some of the Tibetan customs, intermarry with Tibetans, wear Tibetan clothes, and speak Tibetan language, but they believe in Islam. They are called "Khaches" in Tibetan, initially meaning Kashmirians and later generally referring to all Muslims believing in Islam.

Muslims settled in the Kathmandu Valley, trading between Kashmir and Tibet were called Khaches by Nepalese in the 15th century, and this appellation was later borrowed by Tibetans to refer to all people believing in Islam, namely Muslims (Dastider 2007, 90). Khaches can also be further divided into two types based on their origin, namely Bod Khaches and Rgya Khaches. In 1930, Liu Manqing, special envoy of the Nationalist Government, saw their mutual differences, "Muslims in Tibet are divided into two types – Han people settling here and those head wrapped" (Liu 1987, 82).

Bod Khaches came to Lhasa earlier, and they were mainly Muslims from India, Nepal and Kashmir. There are a few Bod Khaches in Lhasa, only about 10 households, and some of them are Nepalese nationals.

[2] Representative works: Fang Jianchang (1986). *Origin and Life of Tibetan Muslims*; Fang Jianchang (1987). *Historical Activities of Muslims in Tibet.* Chen Bo (2000). *A Survey on Lhasa Muslims*; Zhou Chuanbin and Chen Bo (2000). *A Survey on the Introduction of Islam into Tibet;* Tseden (2015). *A Study on Tibetan Muslims*.

Therefore, they can be regarded as foreigners living in Lhasa. Since they are head-wrapped, Han people visiting Tibet during the Qing dynasty and the Republican China period named them "turban", and Lhasa local Tibetans also named them "mgo dkar" (head wrapping with white cloth), indicating that they had explicit external features in that period. *Tibetan Records* written in the mid 18th century describe them in detail, "They are head-wrapped Kashmirian or Tibetan Muslims, from tribes in southwestern Gurkha, visiting Tibet for trading, and also settling there. They are head-wrapped and had big top felt clothes, and they refrain from pork."(Editorial Board of Tibetan Studies 1982,509) David MacDonald who entered Tibet with the British Expeditionary Force in 1904 described them in his memoir as follows: "There are some Muslims living in Lhasa. Their ancestors were merchants from Ladakh and Kashmir. Others know that they were from Ladakh. Their ancestors did business in Tibet hundreds of years ago. They have been settled in Lhasa for two centuries. They are all wealthy people, and the Tibet government is kind to them. They have no extraterritorial jurisdiction, and they fully abide by the Tibetan jurisdiction."(MacDonald 1939, 220)

Rgya Khaches are soldiers, merchants, etc. from Qinghai, Gansu, Shaanxi, Sichuan, etc. in China in the Qing dynasty, who later stayed in Lhasa and married local Tibetan women for various reasons. Today, the Rgya Khaches in Lhasa whose ancestors came in the Qing dynasty differ greatly from Chinese Muslims and Salar people coming from other Tibetan areas or other parts of China in language, customs, and clothing. Their lifestyle is almost the same as that of local Tibetans except that they believe in Islam. In their daily life, they speak Tibetan language, wear Tibetan clothes (mostly women), eat tsampa, drink butter tea, and they intermarry with local Tibetans, indicating that they have fitted well into the local Tibetan society. They have changed from Rgya Khaches before 1960s to today's Bod Khaches, namely Tibetan Muslims.

Origin and Destination of Early-Stage Tibetan Muslims (Bod Khaches)

According to Chinese literatures and Arabic historical records, Muslim contacts with Tibet could be dated back to the 7th century. In the 2nd year of period of Tang Emperor Yonghui (651), when the Arab Empire and the Tang dynasty started official contacts, Muslim caravans from Arab and Central Asia started frequent activities in western and northwestern Tibet. With the gradual Islamization of such places like Kashmir, Baltistan and Ladakh, Islam had penetrated to the fringe of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau by the 13th century, mainly because Muslim merchants from Kashmir, Ladakh, Nepal and Central Asia did business in Tibet. Later, some of these foreign Muslims settled down their gradually, speaking Tibetan language, eating tsampa, drinking butter tea, accepting Tibetan culture, and living in harmony with Tibetans. Scattered information shows that in the 17th century, they were already treated as Tibetans by locals. As an intermediary of cross-Himalaya regional trade, they played a crucial role in trade and cultural exchanges between Tibet, and India, Nepal, Sikkim and other countries in South Asia. In 1846, Évariste Régis Huc (1813-1860), a missionary of Congregation of Priests of the Mission, stayed in Lhasa for two months. He observed Muslims from Kashmir who lived here:

> People would meet Kashmirians or Muslims originating from Kashmir in Lhasa. Their turbans, beards, solemn acts, majestic looks, neat and gorgeous clothes, everything about them is in sharp contrast to Tibetans around them… Kashmirians are the richest merchants in Lhasa. Shops of garments, all luxuries and cosmetics are run by them. In addition, they are also money changers…Kashmirians have a mosque in Lhasa, and observe the Islamic law strictly. The first Kashmirians who arrived in Lhasa married Tibetan wives, who were compelled to renounce their own religion and get converted to Islam. But now, they just get married internally, so they have formed a unique small group in the heart of Lhasa, and differ entirely from locals in terms of clothing, customs, language and religion. (Huc 1851, 157-158)

Relevant literature indicates that in 1953 there were 141 Bod Khache households with over 600 persons in Lhasa, in which Kashmirians accounted for 75%, Indian Muslims accounted for 19%, and 8 households with 37 persons were from Ladakh (Lhasa City Survey Team 1995, 84). They dealt with commerce and handicrafts mainly. Later, with the change of the market demand of Lhasa, some people began to cultivate

vegetables, some dealt with butchery and sewing, some ran restaurants, and some started trade with Nepal, India, etc. They were the main proportion of Lhasa Muslims community, who kept contacting with India, and preserved some Indian ways of life. Some rich merchants even sent their children to Indian schools for studies (Naik 1995, 33). However, they were always treated as local Tibetans by the Kashag government (Tibet government). After 1956, with the deterioration of the China-India relationship, instigated by the Indian Consulate-general in Lhasa, some Bod Khaches suddenly requested to regain Indian nationality. When their request was denied by the Foreign Affairs Office of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, hundreds of them made a sit-in at the office (Yang 1990, 208). In September 1960, the Chinese government approved Bod Khaches of India to choose a nationality freely, they identified them, and the Indian Consulate-general in Lhasa then issued passports to the Bod Khaches who made requests. From late September to early October, about 500 Bod Khaches arrived at the Nathu-La Pass on the China-Sikkim border by a military truck offered by the Chinese government, and then went to India by a truck offered by the Indian government. These people were resettled by the Indian government in the Bod Khache community in Kalimpong, Himalaya, which was formed in the 1930s. In March 1961, the last group of them left Tibet for India. By then, over 270 Bod Khache households with over 1,000 persons had returned to India (Atwill 2009, 20). Those choosing to return were mostly from rich families doing business, and only 18 households stayed, who were mostly poor. Most of foreign Muslims who live in Lhasa today have changed into Chinese nationality, and only few have retained foreign nationalities. They live mainly in Rabgsal, Barkor and Gyatso Community Committees, only few are scattered in other community committees and Glingka in the west suburb, and most of them are self-employed. The latest information reveals that the number of Tibetan Muslim households in Lhasa has risen from 18 in 1961 to 114 today, and they belong to the Small Mosque system.[33] The shops of apparels, fabrics, perfumes, etc. run by them can still be seen around the Jokhang Temple, but they no longer wear white turbans, and their external features are the same as those of local Tibetans.

After returning to India, Bod Khaches also faced confusion in their identity. The Indian government and media were confused about whether they were Indians or Kashmirians, and they were called “Indian nationals”, “Indian traders”, Indian Muslims from Kashmir, Kashmiri Muslims, etc. The nationality or identity of Bod Khaches became a problem as the Nehru administration at that time neglected the fact that Bod Khaches were already Tibetan Muslims, and provoked a plot against China (Atwill 2018, 102).

Conversion of Chinese Muslims in Wapaling into Tibetan Muslims

The Scholars have different views on when Rgya Khaches entered Lhasa. However, based on five existing tablets at the Great Mosque, there were Muslims in the army stationed in Tibet in Qing Emperor Qianlong’s reign, who participated in mosque construction:

1) Year 31 of Qing Emperor Qianlong’s reign (1766), erected by Garrison Commander Ha Guoxiang, Captain Shan Yingju, etc.;
2) Year 46 of Qing Emperor Qianlong’s reign (1781), erected by Battalion Commander Ma Daxiong, Captain Hu Wenlin, etc.;
3) Qing Emperor Qianlong’s reign (unspecified), erected by Hui merchants Ma Rulong and He Wencai, etc.;
4) Year 15 of Qing Emperor Daoguang’s reign (1835), erected by barrack builders Mi Wenxiu and Sai Changqing, etc.;
5) Year 2 of Qing Emperor Xianfeng’s reign (1852), erected by Ma Tengyun from Jianchang, and Cui Wenhui from Tibiao.

Based on the names of the tombstone erectors at the Great Mosque, Ha Guoxiang, Shan Yingju, Ma Daxiong, Hu Wenlin, Ma Rulong and Ma Tengyun had Hui surnames, and they must be Hui military officers in the Qing army. In the summer vacation of 2019, I visited the Muslim graveyard at the Duodi Mosque in the north suburb of Lhasa with several local officials, and recorded some tombstone inscriptions:

[3] The figure of 114 households is from the interview of an imam in Lhasa by a government official in Lhasa in 2016.

1) Tuo Zhongwu's tomb, from Langzhong, Baoning, Sichuan, erected by son Tuo Cong on February 28, Year 4 of Qing Emperor Jiaqing's reign (1799);
2) Ma Cheng's tomb, Year 11 of Qing Emperor Jiaqing's reign (1806), from Chang'an, Xi'an;
3) Ma Chenglin's tomb, originating from Guyuan, Shaanxi, settled in Chengdu, Sichuan, dispatched to Tibet on a military mission, May 7, Year 12 of Qing Emperor Jiaqing's reign (1807);
4) Ma Yunlin's tomb, erected by sons Ma Liangchen and Ma Liangdong at Year 12 of Qing Emperor Jiaqing's reign (1807), originating from Qinzhou, Shaanxi, settled in Chengdu, Sichuan;
5) Ms He Zila's tomb, born on October 26, 1943 and died on November 1, 2008, erected by husband Dantsen Nuhal and daughter Hua Bide on November 14, 2008;
6) Tomb of Wang Peisheng, Deputy Mayor of Lhasa City, 1972

Based on the tombstones, the Muslims buried here were from Sichuan, Shaanxi, Qinghai and Gansu, and from Qing Emperor Jiaqing's reign to today. They had both Han surnames (Ma, Tuo, Wang, etc.), and mixed Tibetan-Muslim names, such as Dantsen Nuhal. The owner of the seventh tombstone was Wang Peisheng who was former Deputy Mayor of Lhasa City, who died in 1972. He was a member of The Lhasa Cultural Association of Young Patriots led by the Communist Party of China, which was founded on January 31, 1953, and headed by the 14th Dalai Lama's third elder brother Lobsang Samden (Wu 2011). He served as a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1959, and became a deputy mayor of Lhasa in 1960. Among the local Chinese Muslim, he was the one holding the highest official title in the government at that time.

The Tibetan Muslims (Rgya Khaches) living around Wapaling in the southeast of the old urban area of Lhasa had their ancestors who were mostly soldiers entering Tibet in the Qing dynasty. After they stayed in Tibet, they gradually turned form soldiers into civilians, dealing with vegetable cultivation, butchery, catering, etc. (Liu 1987, 82). These settling Hui people have their mosques and graveyards, and their wives are Tibetan women converted to Islam. During the Republican China period, the Hui people in Wapaling would generally intermarry with local Tibetans, and were close to the Tibetans in customs and language. Except old people who still spoke their native Han dialects, young people could speak Tibetan fluently, and were accustomed to drinking butter tea and eating tsampa, and had the same interior arrangement as that of the Tibetans. Nevertheless, they still differed greatly from the local Tibetans in appearance. For example, men would still wear Han-style robes, but would tie a cloth belt in the waist, and still speak both Chinese and Tibetan (Ma 1947). As recorded by Ke Yucao during the Republican China period, "(Lhasa) Chinese Muslim Duosi lives together with Han people, and had no difference in language, residence, clothing and customs except chanting, worship, diet and marriage. In addition to doing business, Chinese Muslims around Qianzang and Gyantse also deal in with farming, industry, stockbreeding and education, and are more knowledgeable and sensible. Therefore, they advocate modern programs, and are united, law-abiding and hardworking."(Ke 1935) It can be seen that Rgya Khaches kept some features of their hometowns in Mainland China while accepting the Tibetan customs partially.

An insurgency broke out in Lhasa in March 1959. On March 20, the insurgents attacked the Chinese Muslim community in Wapaling in the southeastern urban area of Lhasa; they robbed shops and residents' properties, and burned down over ten residences and the Great Mosque (Xinhua News Agency 1959, 1). The insurgents launched the attack because these Wapaling Khaches were inclined to the Han people, and would not participate in the insurgency. Some young Hui people in Wapaling also joined the counter-insurgency force, and served as interpreters for the People's Liberation Army by taking advantage of their fluent Chinese and Tibetan language (Khétsun and Akester 2008, 150).

Around the democratic reform in 1959, after most Bod Khaches returned to India and Nepal, Chinese Muslims staying in Lhasa – Rgya Khaches – were gradually integrated into the Tibetan society. As they settled down in Lhasa, they had gradually accepted the Tibetan customs and lifestyle, married with Tibetans, spoken the Lhasa dialect of Tibetan, and begun to be regarded by the local Tibetans as new Bod Khaches in place of foreign ones. After the beginning of reform and opening up in the 1980s, many Chinese Muslims and Salar people from Qinghai and Gansu came to Lhasa for business and employment. In order to

differentiate them from these Hui people, Tibetan speaking and Chinese-speaking Muslims are called Bod Khaches and Rgya Khaches respectively.

In the summer of 2015, Imam Ma of the Great Mosque said while speaking of the ethnic origin and the relationship with the local Tibetans, "In the Qing dynasty, we (Rgya Khaches) were mostly from Shanxi, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Sichuan, etc. We are mostly descendants of Qing soldiers and merchants. We deal with butchery and run restaurants and teahouses in Lhasa, Shigatse and Tsedang mainly, and deal with vegetable cultivation and tailoring. Except Tibetan language, we also speak and write Chinese, and serve as an intermediary between the Han people and the Tibetans. Before the democratic reform, Chinese-Tibetan interpreters of the Kashag government were mostly Rgya Khaches."

The Muslims residents in Lhasa can hardly be counted accurately, because the official statistics are missing, and some descendants of Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa have become Tibetans other than Chinese Muslims. As a result, some Tibetan Muslim families in Lhasa are composed of different ethnic groups. Why some children have become Tibetans other than Chinese Muslims? A middle-aged mother working at a public institution in Tibet told us that changing to Tibetan ethnicity entitles the child to preferential state policies for Tibetans such as extra points for school enrollment. She thinks that this will not affect a child's future life, because Tibetan Muslims identify themselves as Tibetans believing in Islam.

I found in my fieldwork that though some Rgya Khaches changed their ethnic status to Hui (Chinese Muslims) due to religion, they mostly identify themselves as Tibetans. When I interviewed a Rgya Khache merchant aged over 50 years at a Tibetan sweet teahouse on Barkor Street, Lhasa in the summer of 2016, he told me, "We are Chinese Muslims on the household registration record, but we identify ourselves as Tibetans. I am from Tibet, my son and daughter are college graduates and they have married with Tibetans. We are Tibetans believing in Islam. We are different from Chinese Muslims from Mainland China, and have limited contacts with them." Another Rgya Khache, a public official working at the Broadcast and Television Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region, said, "I have grown up in Tibetan culture, and have many Tibetan friends. I never think that I am different from Tibetans, and we just have different faiths. I always identify myself as a Tibetan." The statements on ethnic identity of the above two Rgya Khaches are representative of Rgya Khaches in Lhasa. The local Tibetans in Lhasa do not regard Rgya Khaches as "members of another ethnic group". Rgya Khaches in Lhasa identify themselves as Tibetans because they think they differ from Chinese Muslims from Mainland of China in that they have lived in Lhasa for generations and have the same customs as the Tibetans, except that they have a different faith. Non-local Chinese-speaking Chinese Muslims are regarded by the local Tibetans as outsiders. Therefore, the identity of Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa is beyond religion, and is based mainly on geography and culture.

CHINESE MUSLIMS IN LHASA AS A FLOATING POPULATION

Chinese Muslims in Lhasa, namely Chinese-speaking Muslims (called "Rgya Khaches" or "Chinese Muslims" (khui rigs) by Tibetans in Lhasa), are mainly from Gansu and Qinghai Provinces, and had come here for employment after the government allowed free flow in the early 1980s. When I visited Lhasa for the first time in early 1993, I often saw Chinese Muslims speaking a Qinghai or Gansu dialect, and wearing a military hat and a gray or blue Chinese tunic suit near the post office in downtown Lhasa. In the 1990s, when I lived in Lhasa, I often saw these Hui people differing from the local Tibetans and Han people pushing a cart through streets and alleys selling small articles. There were some beef and mutton shops run by Chinese Muslims around Barkor Street, and halal restaurants and guesthouses run by Chinese Muslims, all very distinctive. In addition, Chinese Muslims wearing straw hats and Chinese tunic suits would gather in the square in front of the Great Mosque every day. They were traders selling and purchasing Cordyceps sinensis. This was my initial impression of Chinese Muslims in Lhasa. Later, as I am increasingly familiar with Lhasa, my understanding of Chinese Muslims keeps on deepening.

The ancestors of these Chinese-speaking northwestern Chinese Muslims came to Lhasa to do business in the Qing dynasty, and served as a Han-Tibetan trading intermediary. Mr. Fei Xiaotong noticed the important role played by Chinese Muslims in Tibetan trade a long time ago. In the 1990s, he organized researchers at Peking University to carry out relevant research. He thought that Chinese Muslims are good

at trading, who transport commodities from Mainland China to Tibet for sale, and exchange them for local specialties, such as wool and medicinal materials.

As we can see, towns on key traffic routes in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau were usually political or material distributing centers in history, such as Kangding, Songpan, Dali and Lijiang. In these towns, we can see economic activities of Chinese, Salar, Dongxiang and other Muslims. Muslims run restaurants or do business in Tibet using their traditional advantages. They sell commodities from Mainland China to towns and rural areas in the plateau. The purchase and slaughtering of cattle and sheep, and the transport and marketing of tea, furs, medicinal materials, religious supplies, accessories, etc. in Tibet are mostly done by Muslims traveling to or settling in Tibet. Today, Chinese Muslims still largely monopolize butchery and Cordyceps sinensis trade in Lhasa. Blacksmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, shoemakers, etc. of the Bao'an ethnic group have become main producers of daily necessities for Tibetan herdsmen and temples. Thus Muslims and Tibetans are interdependent. Mr. Fei Xiaotong summarized this precisely: "Han people would settle on key traffic routes and trading points in minority areas. Thus, Han people have gone deep into minority areas in large numbers, forming a network that is dense in the east and thin in the west, which is just the framework of the diverse and integrated pattern."(Fei 1989, 29) Chinese Muslims, Salar people, Bao'an people, and other Muslims from Qinghai and Gansu is the most important intermediary in this framework.

Chinese Muslims, Salar people and other Chinese-speaking Muslims in Lhasa are mostly floating population coming to Lhasa for trading and employment from Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, etc. since the beginning of reform and opening up. Statistics of the Lhasa Municipal Ethnic and Religious Commission shows that in 2004, Tibet had over 40,000 Chinese Muslims, and most of them were in Lhasa City.[4] In Lhasa, there are a limited number of Chinese Muslims with local household registration records. According to statistics, during the period of 1994-2002, there were 2,434 in 1994; 1,590 in 1997; 1,741 in 2000; and 1,677 Chinese Muslims with local household registration records in 2002 in Lhasa (Geler, et al 2008, 188). According to the survey and analysis by Zhou Chuanbin in Lhasa in 1997, the floating population of Chinese Muslims was at least 6,000 (Zhou and Li 1998). It can be seen that Lhasa's Chinese Muslim population live mostly around Barkor Street, and there are over 60 Chinese Muslim trading households with over 200 persons from Xidaotang, Lintan, Gansu. They are Chinese Muslims who came to Lhasa in the past, dealing with jewelry and handicraft marketing, and general merchandise wholesale and retail. Others deal with fur and medicinal material purchase, mining, and restaurant, or run beef or mutton shops. Below is the experience of a 41-year-old Han-surnamed Salar migrant worker who was interviewed by me in 2009. It can help us in understanding their living conditions clearly:

> Mr. Han is from Xunhua County in eastern Qinghai Province, and has received primary school education. Mr. Han stayed at home farming after graduation. Xunhua has a small-cultivated area and barren land, and farming income is very low, so there is a local tradition of doing business or working outside, such as running noodle restaurants or groceries nationwide, and deal with cross-regional trade, etc. In 2001, Mr. Han ran a grocery with an investment of over 10,000 yuan in the urban area of Yushu, Qinghai alone, but got humble profits. He went to Lhasa in 2007 to work at Yilton Hotel run by a fellow villager; he was responsible for reception and cleaning there and had a salary of 800-yuan a month. His boss provided him accommodation and meals. When I first met Mr. Han, I regarded him as a Chinese Muslim. As the interview went on, he told me that he was a Salar person. He strictly observed Islam, and went to the Great Mosque for religious activities every day. He had frequent contacts with Salar relatives and fellow villagers, and had no Tibetan friend.

[4] Information provided by the Lhasa Municipal Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau when the author joined the task force of the follow-up socioeconomic survey on 100 Chinese counties and cities led by Doctor Gelek from the China Tibetology Research Center in Lhasa in the summer of 2005.

> He thought that Islam and Buddhism were independent of each other, and their distinction was as clear as black and white.

Chinese Muslims and Salar people around Barkor Street live in houses rented from local Tibetans, but have limited contacts with surrounding Tibetans except the business relation. A Chinese Muslim from Guanghe County running a shop near the Great Mosque on Barkor Street said when talking about their relationship with local Chinese Muslims, "We deal mainly with people of our own ethnic group, and have limited contacts with Tibetans. Tibetan Muslims are actually Tibetans, and just have the same faith as us. We do not understand Tibetan language spoken by these Tibetan Muslims. They eat tsampa and drink butter tea, but we are not used to of such a diet. We do not marry with them, because Tibetan women cannot cook the northwestern cuisine." A Tibetan Muslim commented on Chinese Muslims from Gansu and Qinghai, "Although we are also Muslims like Chinese Muslims, our customs are different. They (Chinese Muslims) are from poor areas, and of low educational levels and unskilled in general." It can be seen that although Tibetan and Chinese Muslims are all Muslims, they rarely know and marry with each other due to language and custom differences.

LARGE AND SMALL MOSQUES IN LHASA

There are two major mosques in Lhasa, namely the Great Mosque and the Small Mosque. Small Mosque was completed earlier for Bod Khaches, and the Great Mosque was completed late for Rgya Khaches. Muslims of the Great Mosque system are descendants of Chinese Muslim soldiers and merchants entering Tibet from other parts of China in the Qing dynasty. The history of the Great Mosque can be traced back to Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (1736-1795). In 1720, after the Qing army expelled Jungar out of Tibet, a troop of 3,000 soldiers was garrisoned. After 1733, Trashi City was built and garrisoned by 500 soldiers, who were replaced every three years until the end of the Qing dynasty. There were many Chinese Muslims among them. Based on historical records, the Great Mosque was first built in Year 55 of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1716), and it was expanded and repaired after Gurkha was suppressed in Year 58 of Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (1793). There was a "mosque" tablet of Year 31 of Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (1766) on the gate of the Great Mosque, which was the earliest reliable historical record on the Great Mosque. The Great Mosque was burned down during the insurgency in Lhasa in March 1959, and it was rebuilt with an investment of 4,000 yuan from the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1960. In 2001, the Tibet Autonomous Region Government and the Lhasa Municipal Government sanctioned 1 million yuan (excluding donations from local Muslims) to rebuild and expand the Great Mosque. The expanded mosque has an area of 1,160 square meters, and can accommodate about 1,200 Muslims concurrently (Norbu, et al 2012).

The graveyard of the Great Mosque is located in the Dogbde Valley in the north suburb of Lhasa, which is also called as the north suburb Chinese Muslim graveyard by locals, with an area of 100 mu. There is a worship hall of about 500 square meters in the graveyard with a mixed Tibetan and Islamic building style. This graveyard is an important place for Muslim activities in the Great Mosque system. In each August, Muslims in Lhasa gather here for the grand three-day Pilaf Festival, which is a festival unique to Muslims in Lhasa. Families set up tents around the graveyard, and enjoy self-brought butter tea, sweet tea, tsampa, dried meat, stewed beef, etc.(Yang and Ma 2010). In addition, after each Lesser Bairam, Muslims come here to commemorate dead relatives, but only men can enter the graveyard after cleaning themselves first (Yang 2016). Lhasa Muslims have enhanced mutual contacts and attachments through these festivals and gatherings.

The Small Mosque system consists of two parts. Khache Glingka built a mosque as early as in the mid-17th century, which is called the North Suburb Mosque, with a floor area of nearly 100 mu. It has two worship halls, a graveyard, and a tablet in Tibetan written in Chinese and English that describes its history: "In 1650 during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama, arrows were shot in all directions from this point, and the land within the boundary of the falling arrows was allocated to the Muslim residents on Bakor Street in the name of noble Peer Ya Kuob". *Tibetan Records* written by Chen Guanxun at the end of the Qing dynasty

describes Khache Glingka then: “The Khache Garden is in a willow forest 5km west of the Potala Palace, and it is a worship place for Muslims. There is a fishpond, a sutra hall and a worship platform here. It is full of lush flowers and grasses.”(Editorial Board of Tibetan Studies 1982, 16) The past willow lake cannot be seen at today’s Khache Glingka, which is surrounded by tall buildings.

The second mosque in the Small Mosque system is located in Rabgsal Alley, Barkor Street in the urban center, about 1km away from the Great Mosque. This mosque was built in the 1920s for worship by Islamic followers from Kashmir, Ladakh, Bhutan, Nepal, etc. who were doing business, staying temporarily or living in Lhasa.

According to my survey in Lhasa in the summer of 2019, there are 10 imams in the Great Mosque system, among whom two graduated from Zhong School in Ningxia. The Small Mosque system has 6 imams, who have mostly received religious education at religious schools in Pakistan or India, and can speak Tibetan, Arabic and Urdu. The patriarch is from Kalimpong, India, and a descendant of a Lhasa Tibetan Muslim who settled down in Kalimpong in 1961, and gained Chinese nationality in the 1970s. His father was an imam of the Small Mosque, and he has got his religious knowledge from his father. He is both the patriarch and the director of the temple administration committee.

According to an official of the Lhasa Municipal Government to whom I am familiar, with the Great Mosque has over 5,000 followers, while the Small Mosque has only 50-100 followers. When I was conducting a survey with an official in Lhasa in August 2019, I learned the approximate numbers of worshiping Muslims at different mosques on Jumah (August 16). There were over 3,100 at the Great Mosque on Barkor Street, 286 at the Small Mosque on Barkor Street, over 600 at North Suburb Mosque belonging to the Great Mosque system, and 1,400 at the West Suburb Mosque belonging to the Small Mosque system, including over 500 and over 100 Tibetan Muslims attending the Jumah worship at the Great and Small Mosques respectively. All imams at the Great Mosque speak Chinese fluently, and can preach in both Tibetan and Chinese. Among the eight imams at the Small Mosque, only two can preach in Chinese. Therefore, some Chinese Muslims do not go to a mosque for worship due to language issues. There is also a water room and a worship place for women at the Small Mosque.

The absence of sects and official families is an important feature of Lhasa Muslims. Official families originating from the Sufi school of Islam is a form of religious organization unique to Chinese Muslims in northwestern China. There are four major official families (al-Khufiyyah, al-Jahriyyah, al-Qqdiriyyah and al-Kubrawiyyah), and nearly 40 branches of varying sizes. These official families, and sects like Qadim and al-Iknwan together constitute the organizational system of faith of Chinese Muslims. However, we learned in the survey that Chinese Muslims in Lhasa composed are mostly of those from northwestern China and had no sect or official family, They do not have disputes due to different sects and official families like those in their northwestern hometowns have. This may be attributed to their complex origins, mixed residence and worship at the same mosques.

The Muslim community in Lhasa maintains some contacts with the outside world. In 2012, a large-scale renovation was performed on the West Suburb Mosque belonging to the Small Mosque system, with a gross investment of 3.5 million yuan. 1.8 million yuan was from Saudi Arabia and the rest came from the donations of Muslims in Lhasa (Tseden 2015, 77).

LIVELIHOODS AND CURRENT SITUATION OF LHASA MUSLIMS

Livelihoods of Tibetan Muslims

Historically, Muslims in Lhasa live mainly around the Great Mosque, Small Mosque, North Suburb Mosque and West Suburb Mosque on Barkor Street. At the end of Qing Emperor Qianlong’s reign, there were 197 Kashmirian merchants in Lhasa (Editorial Board of Tibetan Studies 1982, 330). Statistics of 1953 indicates that 141 Muslim households with over 600 persons belonged to the Small Mosque system. Around 1961, over 120 households with 1,000 persons moved to Kalimpong, India, etc. Today’s Small Mosque system has about 50 households with over 250 persons, in which 15 households still hold Nepalese passports (Chen and Zhou 1999).

Butchery was an important job of Tibetan Muslims in history. It was abandoned by the public because it was deemed to violate the Buddhist doctrine saying butchers were sinful. In Lhasa in old Tibet, butchery was often done by non-Tibetan Muslims. Japanese monk Kawaguchi Ekai saw a slaughterhouse when he visited Lhasa on March 21, 1900. He described it as follows: "Below the Drepung Monastery where we pass, there is a place for slaughtering yaks, sheep and goats. Meats for Dharmarajas came from here, including seven heads of sheep per day. The Tibetans respect sheep strongly, and would take wool, etc. home. Dharmarajas eat mutton and other meats, all from here. Perhaps some people think it unnecessary to supply meats from such a distance, and that butchery can be done in town, but it would be too close to do this in town, because only clean meats are allowed in Buddhism." At that time, butchers in Lhasa were mostly Muslims (Ekai 2001, 203-248). There were slaughterhouses in the Muslim settlement nearly the Jokhang Temple and Wapaling south of the city. The largest slaughterhouse in Lhasa is in the Wapaling Muslim community is called "Chumigsgang", which is located at a special meat market "Shakhrom'og" on Tsuonab Alley near the Jokhang Temple. In addition, there is also a small Muslim slaughterhouse at the northwest of the Ramoche Temple, where meats are often sold on the alley outside Barkor North Street and this alley is called "Shagsarzur" (meaning "fresh meat street" in Tibetan) (CHERLL MPPCC 2004, 12-14). Kawaguchi Ekai was amazed by the size of this slaughterhouse. Its roadside wall was made from horns of slaughtered yaks, and he estimated that there were over 1 million horns. According to the 1961 files of the Lhasa Municipal Record Office, there were 50 Chinese Muslim (Wapaling Khache) butchers in Wapaling around 1958, who did not have to pay taxes to the Kashag government, but had to use cowhides, oxtails, sheep, sheep feet, etc. for deduction (Li 1999, 87-89).

Locals refrain from activities violating the killing commandment, leave this to muslims thereby keeping themselves clean, and establishing an ethnic and social boundary between the "inside" and the "outside". However, Tibetan Muslims no longer deal with butchery, which is done by Chinese Muslims from Gansu and Qinghai mainly.

Before 1959, except butchery, doing business was an important operating activity of Tibetan Muslims, and they played an important role in Lhasa's urban life. They sold Tibetan specialties to Nepal, India and other parts of China, and carried fabrics; brocades, etc. back from inland China, India and Nepal to Lhasa (Editorial Board of Tibetan Studies 1982, 32). In the late 1930s, as recorded by Zhu Shaoyi, who came to Tibet in 1939 together with Wu Zhongxin, Chairman of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, "There are 200-300 Muslim merchants (in Lhasa), mostly dealing with general merchandise, and also including some working at the Tibetan government, such as translators Ma Baoxuan and Ma Hetang. Due to the religion, they are very united, but most of them are not exempted from service." (Zhu 1991, 125) In 1949, Phuntso Wangye married Tibetan Muslim girl Tsilila in Lhasa. Tsilila was a student from a Tibetan Muslim family. Her family (whose name was Chumik Khangsar) sold animals, flour, and was making a good living in Lhasa (Goldstein, et al 2011, 115). Now, most Bod Khaches in Lhasa still deal with tertiary industries, and run restaurants or shops around Barkor Street in the old urban area of Lhasa. They often go to India and Nepal, carrying goods back to Lhasa for sale.

In addition, running a teahouse or restaurant is an important means of living for Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa. Tibetan sweet tea is an imported item. In the 1920s, a tea drinking way similar to that of the British became popular among Tibetan military officers, and was later extended gradually to all Tibetan classes in Lhasa. My Tibetan professor Twang is a researcher at the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences. He once studied at the monastic officer school of the Potala Palace, and taught the Lhasa dialect of Tibetan to Han people and some rural Tibetans at home after retirement. He told me how he ran a sweet teahouse in his early years:

> Before 1951, teahouses in Lhasa were run by Chinese Muslims from Kashmir mainly. Since they were in the urban center, these Khaches spoke genuine Lhasa Tibetan language. Of course, some teahouse operators were locals. At that time, we could play carom at the teahouse very often , and the loser would pay the bill. There were only two or three teahouses with carom in Lhasa. The teahouses were mostly around Wapaling in the east. The main products sold by sweet teahouses were sweet tea and Tibetan noodles. A sweet

teahouse was usually named after its operator, such as Pasang Teahouse run by Pasang. Sweet teahouses were inexpensive, and women were not allowed to enter.

Sweet teahouses run by Chinese Muslims have a clear sign. The tablet of each sweet teahouse is marked "Chinese Muslim" (khui rigs) in Tibetan and "halal" in Chinese. There are five teahouses (or restaurants) of this type around the gate of the Great Mosque, which are Halal Teahouse, Eira Restaurant, two Ibbre bun shops (teahouses), and Halal Restaurant. There are two time-honored teahouses on Linkuo Road towards east of the mosque archway – Yidi Teahouse and Baile Teahouse (the tablet of which indicates "Old Brand"). Since house demolition is imminent, the two teahouses, though still operating normally, are preparing for relocation. A branch of Baile Teahouse has been opened in the new building opposite to it.

Lhasa's old brand "Revolution Teahouse" is a sweet teahouse run by Tibetan Muslims, and its owners (five siblings) are Lhasa natives. Sweet teahouses run by Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa are mostly around Barkor Street centering on the Great Mosque. Sweet teahouses run by Chinese Muslims have their characteristics features. In addition to offering sweet tea, they also attract customers for meals. For example, ox bone soup Tibetan noodles of Revolution Sweet Tea House attract numerous customers. Except sweet tea and Tibetan noodles, sweet teahouses run by Chinese Muslims also offer beef and mutton buns and pasties, etc.

Leasing houses to Chinese Muslims is also an important source of income for of Tibetan Muslims. Since Chinese Muslims from Gansu and Qinghai are mostly floating population, and have not bought a house in Lhasa, they mostly rent houses of Tibetan Muslims around the Great Mosque for business and residence.

Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa pay attention to the education of the next generation. Many of them have been enrolled by universities through the college entrance examination. College graduates mostly work at government agencies, state-owned enterprises and public institutions, and enjoy high political status.

Livelihoods of Chinese Muslims in Lhasa

In the 1940s, Xidaoying, a Hui sect in northwestern China, ran a firm in Lhasa, and their armed caravan often visited Lhasa. Livelihoods of Chinese Muslims in Lhasa included trading, vegetable cultivation, bean curd making, haircutting, running an opium shop, running a sweet tea house, etc. A witness recalled, "Merchants from Sichuan were the highest in number, and were said to be subordinates of Zhao Erfeng and Zhong Ying at the end of the Qing dynasty. Most of them lived around Wapaling and Lubu, usually dealing with vegetable cultivation, bean curd making, haircutting, running an opium shop and running a sweet tea house." (Han 1984, 96-97) This was confirmed by historical records in the 1950s, "Han people living near Lhasa have mostly opened nursery gardens to cultivate vegetables, including cabbage, pepper, leaf mustard, scallion, garlic, radish, etc., especially radish, which is lush and tasty" (Fang 1954, 48).

Chinese Muslims in Lhasa are engaged in certain industries. According to my surveys in 2009 and 2019, floating Muslims in Lhasa deal mainly with running restaurant, butchery and meat sale, small commodity wholesale and retail, metal and timber processing, etc. In recent years, with the progress of large-scale urban infrastructure construction in Lhasa, the development of tourism and services, and the open state strategy for economic development and employment in Tibet, many Han people and Chinese Muslims have been dealing in with commerce, catering services and tourism, in which floating population has benefited most. A 50-year-old Chinese Muslim from Lintan, Gansu running a yogurt shop on Jiangsu Road was one of the earliest beneficiaries of the reform and opening up. When I chatted with him at the yogurt shop in 2018, he told me his experience in Lhasa. He came from Lintan to Lhasa to do business in 1993 and started trading backlogged military supplies. He purchased military coats and shoes from the troops garrisoned in Lhasa at low prices, and then sold them to Shandong, Hebei and Hennan, with a profit margin of up to 300%. After 2008, since the army strengthened the control over military supplies, he returned to his hometown. Since it was difficult to do business there, he returned to Lhasa in 2017 again, and opened this shop.

In Lhasa, halal restaurants run by Chinese Muslims can be seen everywhere, especially around the Great and Small Mosques where Muslims gather, and on Duodi Road in the north suburb. Dishes offered

by restaurants are mostly northwestern ones, such as meats, braised chicken, spiced chicken, hand-pulled noodles, stir-fried noodles, soup noodles and bean jellies. In 2019, I performed a survey in Doilungdeqen District, Lhasa with an official in Lhasa, and saw about 70 halal restaurants run by Chinese Muslims around the industrial park. Most shops selling souvenirs and handicrafts around Barkor Street are run by Chinese Muslims from Gansu and Qinghai. In addition, except a few Kham Tibetans, butchery and meat sale in Lhasa is mostly monopolized by Chinese Muslims. There are 50-60 meat shops on Linkuo South Road close to the Great Mosque.

Buying and selling medicinal materials and local specialties is also a major industry for Chinese Muslims in Lhasa. Their shops are mostly around Barkor Street, Yuthog Road, Linkuo Road, Jiangsu Road and Duodi Road in the urban center, selling medicinal materials like Cordyceps sinensis, saffron, Gastrodia elata and Ganoderma lucidum, and specialties of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau like wolfberry, morel, agaric, matsutake and ginseng fruit.

Cordyceps sinensis has been increasingly expensive in recent years, and its circulation is monopolized by Chinese Muslims, with a large number of workers. About 10 years ago, the small square in front of the Great Mosque was full of Chinese Muslims wearing a straw hat. According to Masha Lugy, a Salar person from Xunhua County running a shop here, Chinese Muslim Cordyceps sinensis traders wear a straw hat for the convenience of purchasing medicinal materials, because buyers and sellers can be identified easily. Cordyceps sinensis sellers deal with those wearing a straw hat only. He did not wear a straw hat in the past, so almost no one dealt with him. With the enhancement of city appearance renovation in Lhasa, traders purchasing Cordyceps sinensis at the gate of the Great Mosque in the past are now doing business at shops. In 2019, I saw numerous Cordyceps sinensis shops run by Chinese Muslims around the Great Mosque and on Yuthog Road. It is said that the annual sales of Cordyceps sinensis of Chinese Muslims can reach 100 billion yuan. Meikang International Hotel run by a Chinese Muslim from Gansu on Duodi Road offers catering, accommodation and trading services. The specialized Cordyceps sinensis market is located on the second floor. Except Cordyceps sinensis, these shops also sell saffron, musk, pilose antler and other medicinal materials from Tibet and Kashmir.

Chinese Muslims in Lhasa are also very active in processing industries. I learned in my survey of 2019 that in the industrial park in Yabmda Xiang which is 6 km west of Doilungdeqen District, there were over 700 metal working sites, in which 460 were run by Chinese Muslims from Kangle County in Gansu, accounting for 65%. These sites deal mainly with iron-gate, stainless steel guardrail, flagpole, glass house, prefabricated house and steel structure processing. In addition, Chinese Muslims dealing with woodworking and old furniture renovation take up a market share of over 40% in Lhasa.

Some Muslims in Lhasa are engaged in cross-border small commodity trade. I interviewed a 45-year-old Chinese Muslim peddler Ma Yongfu from Guanghe County, Gansu in July 2019. His experiences were worth quoting. Ma Yongfu came to Lhasa in 2006, and rented a shop of 50 square meters at the gate of the Great Mosque to do small business. The rent was 4,500 yuan per month in 2019. 10 years ago, the shop sold scarves, copperware and handicrafts made in inland China. 5 years ago, he imported handicrafts from Nepal and India for sale. He went to Nepal for import during July 10-20. He took a taxi to Gyirong Port in Shigatse at the gate of the Nepalese Consulate in Lhasa, and then went to Kathmandu via Nepal by bus. The fare of the round trip was 1,200 yuan. He stayed around the mosque in Thamel, Kathmandu, and a customer prepared goods for him. The goods purchased by him included Indian drugs (eye drops, hypotensors, antipodagrics, antiphlogistics, etc.), perfumes, cosmetics, toothpastes, toilet soaps, etc. He said that his shop was not licensed to sell drugs; he took the risk of taking drugs home because of high profits. He said that goods could be mailed directly from Nepal, because some Chinese set up express mail outlets in Kathmandu, but postages were high. In addition to his shop, he also uses WeChat to expand sales. He would send goods information to the WeChat group with over 400 persons for ordering. Although he has been in Lhasa for nearly 20 years, he has no plan to change his household registration to Lhasa, and has not bought a house in Lhasa. He will return to his hometown one day.

Except Chinese Muslims, there are a large number of Salar people in Lhasa. According to a local Salar official dealing with ethnic and religious work, there were over 2,000 Salar people in Lhasa in 2013, dealing mainly with catering, accommodation, gas station, wholesale, retail, vehicle repair and transport, etc.

CONCLUSION

Chinese Muslims of Lhasa are of complex origins and a dynamic composition. They are composed of people of different ethnic groups believing in Islam or being converted to Islam. As described by American scholar Dru C. Gladney, due to the diversity and complexity of Chinese Muslims, the term "Chinese Muslim" cannot be defined simply.[5]

Based on Chinese ethnic identification, Chinese Muslims have multiple meanings: although they had different origins and multiple identities in the past, the common faith of Islam makes them a single ethnic group. After the state gives them an ethnic identity, namely Chinese Muslim, their identity has changed, and they have accepted this identity with a political attribute gradually. This can be seen among Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa, Tibetan Muslims in Kaligang, Qinghai, Mongolian Muslims in Inner Mongolia, and Dai Muslims in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan. The formal Tibetans, Mongolians and Dai people become Muslims after a change in faith and their ethnic identity changes accordingly to Chinese Muslims. In the context of the special Chinese ethnic policy, their identity as Chinese Muslims is formed by the state, faith and themselves.

The common faith of Islam is the foundation of the ethnic identity of Chinese Muslims, which is also an official, civilian and academic common understanding. In Year 4 of Qing Emperor Guangxu's reign (1878), Zuo Zongtang, Governor of Shaanxi and Gansu Provinces wrote a tablet inscription for Huaping Hui Academy in Huaping, Gansu (today's Jingyuan County, Ningxia), and renamed it Guiru Academy. After the failure of the Hui uprising during Qing Emperor Tongzhi's reign, the Qing government resettled over 9,000 Shaanxi Hui people in Huaping, Gansu. He thought that the main difference between the Hui and Han people was religion other than ethnicity or culture, which was representative of the official understanding of Chinese Muslims in northwestern China. He further thought that if the Hui people learned Confucian classics, they could become civilized (Zhang 1992, 158).

After Tibetan Muslims originating from South Asia returned to India before 1961, they became part of history. However, the existence of Tibetan Muslims shows that Tibet was not an inflexible, enclosed and remote geographic space as imagined by people in history. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has always maintained close economic and cultural contacts with different Asian countries. If Tibetan Muslims are simply classified as a certain ethnic group, we cannot accurately understand the complexity, diversity and liquidity of their identity, and their important role in historical, political, economic and cultural contacts and interactions between China and South Asian countries. David G. Atwill, a historian at the Pennsylvania State University, pointed out that studies on Tibetan Muslims should be conducted across regions and countries to find out the facts that have been neglected by nationalists and researchers viewing Tibetan Muslims simply religiously, and hidden in real Tibetan history (Atwill 2018, 5).

For hundreds of years, resident Muslims in Lhasa have been integrated into and become part of the Tibetan society. Being good at doing business, adapting to the environment, and speaking both Tibetan and Chinese, languages are their advantages for survival. Tibetan Muslims from India, Nepal, Kashmir, etc. have played an important role in cross-Himalaya trade, while Tibetan and Chinese Muslims from Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Yunnan, etc. have played an important role in connecting Tibet with inland China.

After Muslims came to Tibet, they have dealt with commerce and trade mainly, and complemented economically with Tibetans, Han people and other ethnic groups living in Tibet. On the one hand, they have played a crucial role in connecting Tibet with inland China, and economic and trade exchanges in South Asia using their language advantage, and close connections with their ancestral places. On the other hand, they do jobs that Tibetans are unwilling or difficult to do for religious and customary reasons, such as butchery, vegetable cultivation (early years), metalworking, etc. In particular, the diversity of origins of Muslims has formed their inclusion, and enabled them to adapt to, and be integrated into and accepted by

[5] In June 2019, the author consulted with Prof. Du Lei about this at a conference at the University of Geneva. He thinks that due to the complexity and diversity of Chinese Muslims, he did not name them as Chinese Muslims but Muslim Chinese in his monograph.

the local society, which further facilitates their identity as the intermediary. The existence of Muslims as an immigrant group, showing that the traditional Tibetan society was not a mono-religious, enclosed and stagnant society as usually regarded by people, but had frequent economic, trade and cultural contacts with Mainland China and South Asia.

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