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Globalization and The Chinese Muslim Community in Southwest China

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ABSTRACT

Is globalization a good thing when it comes to religion and religious practice generally in China? What contributions might globalization have on the practice of religion, or more broadly, on social transformation, in China? Focusing more specifically on Islam in China, is it also subject to forces of globalization? If so, will that encounter result in more or less social and political power to Muslims in China? Is Islam antithetical to or a part of modernization? These are just some of the questions that are raised in thinking about the role of Islam in China today as related to the theme of this special issue, "religion and globalization in Asia." This paper uses two case studies, recent mosque construction projects and the development of a new Institute of Arabic Studies in Yunnan Province, China, to understand if and how global trends have affected the Islamic community and practice of Islam in one region of China.

Southwest China presents a unique context for the role of Islam in Chinese society because this area is largely free of the hot ethno-religious issues that plague other parts of China. Yunnan is also home to twenty-six official minority groups, but of these the Chinese Muslims have been largely ignored by scholars. It is clear, however, that Chinese Muslims are becoming important economic and political actors in Yunnan, judged by the kinds of mosques and educational activities they are sponsoring. They present an excellent opportunity to probe the impact of globalization on local forms of Islam, to understand how Islam might become a strategic social and political resource for the Yunnan Chinese Muslim community, how identity politics serves this group's interests, and to demonstrate the importance of regional particularities in understanding "Islam in China."

INTRODUCTION

When people discuss the impacts of globalization in and on China, they usually point to such phenomena as the ubiquitous Starbucks and Kentucky Fried Chicken stores and their local knockoffs that are springing up in every town. The implication of these observations is that this is essentially a "clash" between universal (read "western") and national or local cultures, and one can only end up destroying the national or local culture. This same discourse has been applied unevenly to writing about the state of religion in contemporary China, focusing, for example, on the spread of Protestant Christianity and the so-called house church movement, and equating all Muslims in China with world terrorism. This paper focuses on the state of Islam in China today. It is a compelling case study through which to problematize the impact of globalization on China, and it is perhaps one of the least understood aspects of religion in China by the rest of the world.

While it is a commonplace to treat Islam as a monolithic entity in China, in fact, there are ten separate groups of Muslims in China. This paper focuses on a group of Muslims who are spread across all parts of China and are not identified with any one piece of territory or specific ethnic group. This ubiquitous group

is usually known by its state-assigned name, the “Chinese or Han Muslims” (C. Huizu, 回族). In an effort to avoid the usual trap of treating all of China as the same, we limit our discussion to the Chinese Muslims who live in the far southwestern province of Yunnan. This paper argues that globalization has affected the Hui of Yunnan in some specific ways, but that that has not been at the expense of local initiatives and identity. In fact, global and local trends reinforce each other, creating positive sites of engagement by and for these people in their local social and political worlds.

DEFINING GLOBALIZATION

The topic of globalization has been the focus of an enormous body of scholarship, and several definitions have emerged. Much of that scholarship assumes that it is a totalizing experience that changes the local environment without question and largely without the assent or cooperation of locals. Some of this scholarship even seems to be a revived orientalism, substituting the national for local. Some recent studies, however, argue instead that particularized versions or aspects of globalization and habitus meet in unique mediation points that result either in a refined reaction to (accommodation) or outright rejection of the globalizing force by locals, depending on whether the globalizing force allows the local community to choose and realize their desires.¹ One recent study on the effects of globalization on Chinese cities captures the renewed emphasis on the active agency of the local context especially well, arguing for a “bottom-up and trans-local process embedded in national territories” to understand globalization.² Essentially, this is a call for a more nuanced understanding of the interaction of global and local forces, hinting that neither is all-powerful or monolithic.

Another helpful way to conceptualize how globalization works in order to keep the local in perspective is to use the metaphor of friction to describe the encounter between the global and local, where this friction creates tension that can be positive and productive as well as negative.³ There are a variety of value spheres (religion, economy, politics, etc.) and each of these needs to be analyzed in coming to terms with globalization. In other words, we are seeking to build a model of globalization as a contextualized experience where different aspects of globalizations interact with a number of locales. Each and every “global-local interaction is particular vis-à-vis (1) the elements of globalization and subjectivity, (2) the elective affinity or alienation [by the local community] of those elements, and (3) the community’s reevaluation of the criteria of subjectivity given new possibilities... the greater the association between globalization and the absence of local political, economic, or cultural self-determination, the more militant and anti-humanist the response.”⁴ Enacting this kind of multi-faceted approach to studying globalizing forces and local agency, even limited to the Yunnan Hui community, is a task too large for this paper. I have thus chosen two specific sites where this global-local interaction is most evident, the architecture of new mosques and a new school for Islamic studies, as case studies to begin with.

DEFINITIONS: CHINESE MUSLIMS

One of the tasks of this paper is to question the typical monolithic readings of “China” and the “Chinese Muslims.” Muslims have been a part of China ever since

the seventh century, but definitions of that community have been fairly vague until quite recently in Chinese history. This question became critical after the demise of the imperial system when various people were casting about for a replacement. Well before the People's Republic was established in 1949, Communist Party officials were thinking about which constituents were to be included in that new national project, and they included Muslims.⁵ One of the first campaigns rolled out by the new nation's leaders to bring everyone into the project was the 1950 Nationalities Identification Project that eventually resulted in the identification of ten separate Muslim groups in China, and restricting the Hui minority group to Chinese-speaking non-Turkic peoples across China. The Hui thus became the only official national minority group who were identified solely on the basis of their practice of religion, and not on overt ethnic or racial criteria.

According to the 2000 national census, there are at least 20 million Muslims in the People's Republic of China, and 48% of these, or 9.8 million, are Hui (the actual numbers may be far higher, possibly as many as 60 million total).⁶ While the Hui across China share many similarities and, in some respects, constitute a national group, they are also residents of specific regions and provinces, and these local contexts certainly shape their identity. For example, Yunnan is home to 26 separate official minority groups, and several of these, such as the Bai and Yi, also include their own Muslims (Bai Hui and Yi Hui). Yunnan has had a unique history and role within greater "China." Nowhere is that local history and culture better seen than in the Muslims of the province. They played key political and economic roles for much of Yunnan's imperial past, and have revived that position in the post-Mao era.

YUNNAN

The area now known as Yunnan Province was for centuries controlled by local states that spanned current national borders and peoples, a true "frontier zone" from the Chinese perspective that was only brought under the direct control of the Chinese court when the Mongols invaded the area in the 1250s and designated it one of eleven Branch Secretariats that included present-day Yunnan and eastern Sichuan. These administrative entities were only loosely controlled by the central court, and it was not really until the succeeding Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) that Yunnan became a true province, administered by Beijing.⁷ Even then, Yunnan's orientation remained as much tied to that large highlands region that has been called zomia, and which was beyond the control of the various states whose main population bases were in lowland areas (China, northern Vietnam, Laos, and northern Myanmar).⁸ This regional orientation towards its near neighbors in Southeast Asia has reemerged recently when it designated three cities in Yunnan as "state-level open cities" to promote border trade and investment between Myanmar and Yunnan.⁹

Yunnan's unique history among the Chinese provinces also stems from the rather unique role that Islam has played there. While Central Asian Muslims played important roles in many parts of Mongol-controlled China, perhaps nowhere did they exercise as much direct authority over the area and people as in Yunnan. The first Muslim presence in Yunnan in any significant way came with the Mongol conquests and pacification of the region. Qubilai appointed a trusted Mus-

lim from Central Asia named Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din governor of the region in 1274, and his rule proved beneficial for the consolidation of the various tribes under Mongol authority. Sayyid Ajall's sons and grandsons continued to rule the area as long as the Mongols controlled China.¹⁰ In fact, Yunnan was the site of late Mongol loyalist resistance to the consolidation of control of China by Zhu Yuanzhang, who did not bring Yunnan into line until the 1380s.

In spite of the fact that Muslims had dominated Yunnan politics during the Mongol period (or perhaps because of that), the new emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Zhu Yuanzhang, also placed Muslims there as regional governors. It is not usually recognized as such by non-specialists, but the Ming Dynasty was really a turning point for Chinese Muslims, the first time when they shifted in their identity from "Muslims in China" to "Chinese Muslims."¹¹ It was during this period that Yunnan became associated with a center of Islamic learning in China; several notable Muslim writers and thinkers from Yunnan made specific attempts to reconcile Islam and Confucianism during this era, the Qu'ran was translated into Chinese, and Islam really for the first time became a part of the Chinese religious scene. Many of the leaders of this movement came from Yunnan.

Coming to the present, it cannot be denied that the Muslims of Yunnan share a great deal in common with their Hui brethren across China. This is due not least to the fact that all Muslims in China are subject to the same state-enforced educational curriculum and policies, and that prominent Muslim clerics and leaders travel frequently between the various regions of China in order to teach and preach to congregations across the country. But regional differences in China cannot be ignored, especially since regional differences in social and economic issues have long dominated local life, and have shaped all aspects of that life. For example, the Hui in Gansu and Ningxia (in northwest China) have far different social, environmental, economic and political issues to confront than do the Hui in Yunnan. Their specific context also undoubtedly has played a role in how and to what extent each community has accommodated to or rejected globalizing trends in Islam. We now turn to the two sites of interaction that demonstrate some of the prospects and patterns of globalization in the Yunnan Hui community, new mosque architecture and a new Institute of Arabic Studies.¹²

"GLOBAL" AND "LOCAL" IN ARCHITECTURE: GLOBAL FORMS

This paper does not engage the debate on global forms of Islamic architecture. I define "global" as those architectural and artistic styles that appear to be ubiquitous across the Islamic world and that reflect apparent Arab or Middle Eastern origins.¹³ I begin by assuming that there are certain core architectural features of the mosque that appear to be common across the entire Islamic world, including the dome over the *qibla* wall, the free-standing minaret, and pointed or rounded archways (discussed in more detail below). Beyond these, some stylistic elements, such as the use of geometrical patterning so that the interior of the mosque represents the vault of the heavens, absence of representational images, and abundance of highly-stylized calligraphy, may also be found in mosques across the Islamic world.

The chief aim of Islamic sacred space is to create a building that is a metaphor of Islamic cosmogony, which should elevate the mind of the worshipper or viewer

above the mundane world of corruption to an ideal realm where order and harmony reign.¹⁴ As Luo has pointed out, these elements can be found in older mosques in various parts of China.

Imperial architectural styles had a heavy influence on religious architecture across China, and this extended to mosques, which shared similar architectural features with Buddhist and Confucian temples.¹⁵ In modern architecture, however, it is problematic to argue that there are no distinctive regional styles. For example, we know that mosques in the arid northwest are quite distinct architecturally from mosques in other parts of China owing to the lack of timber building supplies and the large Turkic and Central Asian cultural heritage there. Yunnan is another area where regional differences show up easily in material culture and the built environment, not least because of its climate, abundance of wood, and the heavy influence of southeast Asian styles, as well as the fact it is home to 26 different ethnic groups (the most diverse province in China). Most people have undoubtedly seen photos of the traditional dwellings of the peoples in southern Yunnan, closer to Thai than Chinese culture. Muslims are also a part of this social landscape. As with all Muslims in China, there is no national or central religious authority that directs the Yunnanese Chinese Muslim affairs and appoints religious personnel. Rather, these decisions are all made at the local level (provincial, county, and even city or local area), and each Hui community reflects its own particular social and ecological landscape.¹⁶ We shall see some of these characteristics evident in mosques in Kunming (昆明), Dali (大理), Nagu (納古), and Yao'an (姚安) cities.

ISLAMIC OR CHINESE ARCHITECTURE?

The few mosques that we will examine here raise immediately the issues of defining exactly what is critically "Islamic," "Chinese," and "local" about these mosques.¹⁷ Since architecture must be understood as a text that reflects the values of the community in which a building is situated, then "reading" that "text" should then reveal those values to anyone who sees it. The mosque, in particular, may also be understood as a site of negotiation or articulation between Islam (as a world religion) and local or national culture and society. This is probably especially true in China, where monotheistic world religions stand in stark contrast to Chinese religions and social values. Examining these mosques should thus reveal the ways in which Islam interacts with Chinese and Yunnan values.

How should we read the architecture of these mosques? It seems clear that we must examine the building itself in its social, political, economic, and ecological context. Messages that buildings are meant to convey to the public can only be read correctly if we understand and take into account this context. Ismail Serageldin suggests that we examine buildings within a matrix that looks at both building types and architectural approaches.¹⁸ Serageldin identifies several major building types, three of which apply to the mosques we shall see in this paper; the mosque as a major landmark structure, the mosque as a community center complex, and the small local mosque. He also identifies five architectural approaches that should be considered in this kind of analysis, (1) a popular, vernacular approach that stresses traditional indigenous architectural language, and usually built by local craftsmen from the community rather than an architect, (2) a traditional approach, taken by an architect using vernacular or historically relevant forms, (3) a populist

approach, similar to the vernacular approach but using a wider spectrum of imagery, (4) an adaptive modern approach, assimilating traditional vocabulary into a modern approach, and finally (5) a modernist approach that emphasizes originality and modern forms and themes.

Mapping mosques within this matrix will then allow us to understand them at several different levels and to read the meaning inherent in them, the meaning that their planners, funders and builders surely intended to convey to worshippers and the general public: the mosque as a building, the mosque in its physical context, the mosque in its cultural context, the mosque in its local or regional intellectual milieu, and finally, the mosque in its international context. This brief paper cannot propose to do more than introduce some of these themes and methods of analysis to these few examples of mosques in Yunnan Province. But it is hoped that this will prove stimulating to further analysis of this kind on Islamic architecture in other provinces and regions of China.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE MOSQUE

We must first remind ourselves of the defining elements of any mosque around the world. These elements transcend regional or national distinctions, and can rightly be said to constitute a global Islamic architecture. The most important elements in any mosque are the *mihrab* (C. *mihalabi* 米哈拉比) niche and *qibla* (C. *gebulai* 格卜來) plaque in that niche, both of which indicate the direction for prayer. The *qibla* is considered a sacred object itself, and in Chinese mosques always includes both stylized Arabic and Chinese inscriptions. All mosques include an ablution space for ritual washings before worship, a *minbar* (C. *minbaier* 敏拜尔) or pulpit, the *kursi*, a lectern on which the Qur'an is placed, a minaret (C. *bangkelou* 邦克楼) and the portal or gate in the wall that surrounds the mosque, dividing the outside from the tranquil inner space of the mosque compound. Finally, the main hall of the mosque is a space demarcated for prayer, usually in the form of a rectangular hall that allows all worshippers to be equidistant from the *mihrab*.¹⁹

GLOBALIZATION AND THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE MOSQUE

While most mosques constructed in imperial Chinese periods adopted imperial architectural styles, a few did combine Chinese and Central Asian motifs and styles in some unique ways, as seen in the old mosques in the port cities of Quanzhou and Guangzhou.²⁰ Mosques constructed in the imperial period in Yunnan used traditional Chinese imperial and temple architectural styles, especially in the layout and orientation of the buildings, the roof lines and kinds of materials used in construction. We see this in two examples, the oldest mosque in the provincial capital, Kunming and in Dali, which has the oldest surviving mosque in the region, dating to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 CE)

KUNMING CITY

The old mosque in Kunming (*Shunchengjie Qingzhensi* 顺城街清真寺) is situated behind high walls in the now-destroyed old Muslim quarter of the city (see Figure 1). When the rest of the neighborhood was still standing it was not apparent from outside the compound that a mosque was within the walls. Once inside the gate, it becomes clear that this is a place of refuge and serenity away from the

world. The old mosque has been refurbished recently with substantial donations by the local Hui community. The style of the original building has been maintained, but now rebuilt on a raised platform, underneath which are located rooms for teaching and modern ablution space. In front of the mosque is a traditional ablution pool which is now clearly decorative, but serves as the focal point of the walled courtyard. Surrounding the central prayer hall are multiple-storey buildings for other mosque activities, including school rooms and living quarters. The exterior of the main prayer hall of the old Kunming mosque has retained many stylistic elements of the traditional Chinese mosque, including faux wood beam construction (concrete painted to look like wood), a series of narrow carved panel front doors just inside the overhanging eaves of the building, and a tile roofline in typical Chinese style with arched eaves.



FIGURE 1: KUNMING CITY OLD MOSQUE COURTYARD AND EXTERIOR.

DALI CITY

The old mosque in Dali (*Dali Nanmen Qingzhensi* 大理南门清真寺) is a much better example of a traditional Chinese mosque that was built in the imperial period than the old mosque in Kunming (Figure 2). Like the Kunming mosque, it too is reached by a door in a wall that separates the mosque compound from the neighborhood. This mosque has been well maintained and not renovated to remove any of its traditional features. The main prayer hall inside the mosque compound is a wood building first built in the Ming Dynasty. Its style is very much that of traditional Chinese imperial and religious architecture; a set of intricately carved, painted and lacquered wood doors protect the interior of the prayer hall, under wide eaves with carved wood brackets that serve as both structural and decorative functions. This mosque has escaped all attempts at modernization, still located on its original raised stone platform.

The interior of this Dali mosque is where the striking blend of Chinese and Islamic styles is best seen (Figure 3). First, the wide *mihrab* niche contains a *qibla*

set within a stone framework supporting a traditional Chinese roof system and decorated with highly stylized quotations in Arabic script. On the right side of the *mihrab* stand a set of carpeted steps that appear to be a simple *minbar*. Framing the outside of the niche, not visible in the photo, are Chinese-style architectural brackets supporting a horizontal beam painted in typical Chinese style with Arabic inscriptions. Finally, just to be sure that the focus of the worshipper is correctly oriented, above it all hangs a painting of Mecca and the Ka`ba.

The reader will notice some obvious differences in these two buildings. First, as noted above, the Kunming mosque has undergone extensive renovation and repair, including elevating the building on a foundation that has allowed for a basement area for educational and other mosque activities. Much of the traditional wood architectural elements have been replaced with concrete painted in traditional Chinese motifs and styles and to resemble wood. The traditional



FIGURE 2: DALI CITY SOUTH GATE MOSQUE.



FIGURE 3: DALI CITY OLD MOSQUE MIHRAB NICHE AND QIBLA.

roofline and materials have been retained here, and the overall appearance is one of a highly valued structure that has simply been restored and updated to retain the best of its original features but with modern amenities.

The mosque in Dali's old town is noticeably different, if only from the fact that, while well cared for, it has not undergone any kind of modernization. This may be due to the fact that this mosque is located in the old section of Dali city, now a tourist destination. But that fact has not diminished the role of this mosque as the center of a lively Muslim community.

MODERN MOSQUES

Visitors to either Kunming or Dali who are interested in religious sites will already know that these two historic mosques are by no means the only ones. In fact, several new mosques have also been built in these cities, and they indicate a thriving Hui population. Equally noticeable, however, is the marked shift in style of architecture of these new mosques, most definitely going away from traditional Chinese-style buildings to more modern structures that appear to use a universal, global style of Islamic architecture that is indebted to Middle Eastern designs. Does this trend really represent a rejection of Chinese or local styles, possibly as part of a globalizing Islam? What, if anything, is “Chinese” about the modern mosque in China? And what do these new mosques tell us about globalization in these communities?



FIGURE 4: KUNMING NEW MOSQUE.



FIGURE 5: DALI CITY NEW MOSQUE.

Observing practices in recent mosque construction in Yunnan, it seems that the “Chinese” or local cultural signs have been removed from the mosque in favor of buildings and spaces that look decidedly “classical Islamic.” However, a close reading of some Hui mosques across Yunnan Province reveals a more complex picture, one where local communities have incorporated some global Islamic elements into their new mosques while still retaining a sense of local culture and values. In fact, the architectural programs used in these mosques demonstrate that global Islam is still subservient to local culture, and that it is not necessarily a globalizing force that totally changes or overwhelms local culture.²¹ We might argue that this globalizing architectural trend presents a positive prospect for the local Chinese Muslim community to project to the wider world an identity of spiritual and financial health, something that their non-Muslim neighbors can look on with envy. The range of choices for expressing levels of social power have thus increased for this community when they invoke these new styles.

Compare the old Kunming mosque to the new mosque in Kunming (*Nancheng Qingzhensi* 南城清真寺). This large complex presents us immediately as something quite different from its nearby neighbor, the old mosque. Everything from the building skin and color to the use of the dome and freestanding minaret lets the casual observer know this is a modern Islamic building! To this western observer, moreover, the only feature that might distinguish it from any mosque in other parts of the Islamic world are the Chinese characters above the main portal and the use of the Chinese style screen in front of the door. But a more careful examination reveals a lot of “Chinese modern” features that have also been incorporated into this building, features that tie it as much to expressions or conceptualizations of Chinese “modernity” as to “Islamic” styles, including the extensive use of white and colored glazed tiles on the exterior of this concrete multi-storey building bro-

ken into square lines enclosing tall, clear glass windows. This is typical of contemporary secular urban architecture in China. The building is also clearly marked as Islamic by incorporating the byzantine pointed arch and dome, styles that are much more reminiscent of Central Asian sacred buildings. Finally, unlike older mosques that are completely hidden behind high walls, this structure is obvious to the neighborhood because it is tall and it is protected by a wrought iron fence.

The new mosque in Dali City (*Dali Nantwuliqiao Qingzhensi* 大理南五里桥清真寺) is also strikingly modern in appearance (see figure 5). Its planners and builders almost completely rejected the traditional Chinese-style mosque style in favor of what appears an even more global Islamic style, complete with free-standing minarets, pointed green domes with stylized Arabic inscription, and the single-storey white building with blue trim. The only features of this building that might locate it to China are the carved plain wood panel doors on the front of the mosque.

What can we say in terms of comparisons between the Kunming and Dali mosques? First, we can certainly see that the old imperial-era mosques used the same Chinese imperial building styles and artistic motifs that were also used in other Chinese imperial and sacred buildings. In contrast, the new mosques in both cities emphatically rejected that old imperial style in favor of secular modernist styles that incorporate Islamic architectural vocabulary, especially the minaret, dome and arches. There is no mistaking these new mosques for anything other than Islamic buildings. The new mosque in Kunming is completely “modern” with Chinese elements, while the new mosque in Dali does not strike one as “modern” as much as totally “non-Chinese.” In fact, the new Dali mosque could be transplanted with ease to many other parts of the wider Islamic world and not be out of place!

It is clear that the old imperial-era mosques adopted an organic style that allowed for some Islamic elements in the otherwise-dominant imperial Chinese architectural and decorative program (what may be called an Imperial Sino-Islamic style). This is not surprising since the oldest mosques in Yunnan date to the Ming, when Yunnan was for the first time firmly a part of larger China. It is also not surprising to see new mosques depart from that tradition, but the departure may reflect a variety of reasons and motives. Kunming’s new mosque, which integrates Chinese modernist and Islamic programs, reflects that city’s position as the provincial capital that is also home to a thriving Chinese Muslim community. The fact that the new mosque in Dali eschewed Chinese modernist building styles and themes in favor of what appears to be a wholly un-Chinese, purely Islamic building may reflect the desire of that community’s residents to exhibit their Muslim piety or their possible ties to a wider transnational Islamic world?²²

The choice of architectural and decorative programs in new mosques in Yunnan seems to be open to some interpretation at the local level, and we see this even more dramatically in two other examples from communities in central Yunnan. These demonstrate, I believe, the growing vitality of local Chinese Muslim communities, and their increasing sense of confidence to express their identity to the rest of the world, at least in their vicinity. A new mosque in the city of Nagu in south-central Yunnan and one in the north-central town of Yao’an could not be more different on first glance. Both, however, are examples of vibrant Hui communities who have made decisive statements about their own identity and how they see themselves vis-à-vis their neighbors and the state.

NAGU CITY

FIGURE 6: **NAGU CITY NEW MOSQUE.**

If there is any example of a new mosque dominating its local setting and making a bold statement to the wider community it would have to be the impressive mosque in Nagu City (see figure 6). First, it is clear that this large building totally dominates the city, rising several storeys above any surrounding buildings and visible even several miles outside of the city. It is also a striking example of the fusion of Chinese modern and Islamic styles, with its white-tiled exterior encasing large, multi-storey windows of clear glass in pointed byzantine-style arches, and with the large green dome and four tall minarets, completed with inscriptions in both Chinese and Arabic. It also dwarfs the nearby old mosque, which, interestingly, was not demolished but instead completely restored in traditional style and now serves as the women's mosque for the community.

As the photo makes clear, this is no austere building! The large amount of glass provides for an expansive, light main prayer hall replete with gold chandeliers and ornate fixtures and hardware. The height of the minarets also lends emphasis to the soaring nature of the building into space. It literally towers over every other building in the city, representing the socio-economic position of the Nagu Hui community, who are the economic elite of Nagu City because they dominate the traditional copper mining and manufacturing industries there. These same Hui industrialists who sponsored the construction of this mosque have also built new palatial estates for themselves, homes that are modern in every sense of the word and that would stand up to any mansion in the West. This new mosque is a bold statement of the modernity and the economic health of this Muslim community to nearby towns, if not the rest of the province.

At the time it was completed the Nagu new mosque was the largest in all of Yunnan. It seems to affirm the idea that the Hui of Yunnan are interested in new mosques that have deliberately rejected the traditional Sino-Islamic style in favor of more ostentatious, visible buildings that stand out above and apart from their architectural and cultural context and that appear to adopt some kind of global Islamic architectural style. But lest we think the picture is really this simple, we now turn to a final example of a contemporary mosque that throws this trend into question, a mosque in a much smaller community the north-central town of Yao'an.

YAO'AN CITY

Yao'an City is smaller in population, and more remote and poorer overall than Nagu. The majority of businesses are small-scale merchants, and the Hui population is also much smaller than in Nagu. The new mosque in the center of town presents us with an interesting example of a deliberate mixing of traditional and modern styles that, according to leaders of the Hui community, reflect the religious pluralism of the wider Yao'an community. (see Figure 7). This mosque was under construction when I visited it in 2001, financed exclusively by local residents. It is a three storey structure, the bottom two storeys constructed in the latest tile and concrete technology integrating Islamic architectural features such as the byzantine-style pointed arch and lack of outside ornamentation in a typical modern Chinese building, all concrete with glazed tile skin and clear glass windows. The one nod to traditional Chinese architectural style here is the traditional tile roof with pointed eaves that separates the bottom storeys from the top.

The top storey of this building is where things become interesting; it has been constructed entirely in the fashion of the traditional Chinese religious building, with reproductions of lacquered carved panel doors, octagonal lattice windows, curving eaves and traditional brackets that support a tiled roof. Just like other traditional mosques, the only indication that this is a mosque is the Arabic inscription over the main entrance.



FIGURE 7: YAO'AN CITY NEW MOSQUE, FRONT VIEW.

What does this mosque tell us about the Yao'an Hui community? I was told by the mosque superintendent that the Hui community built their mosque on the site of an old Daoist temple, and in exchange for permission to build their mosque they promised to reconstruct the temple as part of their new mosque. Thus, the top storey was built in that old style. Community interests and shared values thus appear to be more important than sectarian differences. Also of note, while it is a modern building, it was not meant to stand out from its near neighbors. In fact, the only visible portion of the mosque, which is surrounded by a wall, is the top storey. Thus, it would not be immediately identifiable as a mosque to people who did not live in or know the community. Just as important, while this mosque is obviously a building that has required large sums of capital to construct, it is not overly ostentatious. This undoubtedly expresses the socio-economic status of the Yao'an Hui community and their relations to other citizens of Yao'an. The building is entirely appropriate in its cultural context, both as a religious building and as a modern addition to this regional town. Situating it in the local-global discourse, this mosque shows us the continuing importance of local culture and society that mediates or integrates larger modern and Islamic styles and architectural techniques to serve the interests and needs of the Yao'an Hui community who are part of a larger community.

EDUCATION, THE INTERNET AND THE YUNNAN CHINESE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

A far clearer case that demonstrates the impact of globalization on the Yunnan Hui community than mosque architecture is the new Institute of Arabic Studies established a few years ago in the south-central provincial town of Kaiyuan. Kaiyuan is not too far from the town of Nagu, and has a long history as a center of Islam in the province that stretches back to the Mongol era. Its location on the major north-south trading routes between central Yunnan and Vietnam was one reason that Muslim traders settled there long ago. Kaiyuan was also a major transit point on the colonial French rail line that ran from northern Vietnam to Kunming. Kaiyuan City is home to three national minority groups, the Hani, Yi and Hui, which together make up almost half of the population. There has been a mosque in Kaiyuan City at least since the Qing period. In 1979 the provincial government authorized the mosque to open a school for Hui students. It grew over time, both in enrollments and purpose, and in 1999 the government approved the change of name of the school to the "Kaiyuan Institute of Arabic Studies."²³ The reasons for that change, and the current direction of this school all show the impact of globalization on this local institution.

KAIYUAN INSTITUTE OF ARABIC STUDIES

This institute evolved out of the former local mosque school in 1999 under the direction of Mr. Ma Ligu, a local Hui man who had studied at the Imam University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and had obtained his MA in Arabic Literature at Jinnah University in Pakistan before returning to Kaiyuan. This kind of international training would not have been possible before, and it is clear that Mr. Ma had grand ambitions for this school. Now-President Ma has recruited several teachers for this institute from the Islamic "heartland," including a person with a BA from Saudi

Arabia and MA from Pakistan, another teacher who graduated from an educational institute in Pakistan, and three teachers with degrees from Syrian universities.

In 2002 the Institute added a large building of 2000 square meters that included eight classrooms, an assembly hall, gymnasium, and other facilities to accommodate their growing student body. A year later they boasted an enrollment of over 120 students from all around China. Their website, in Chinese and English, boasts a modern curriculum that enables students to “catch up with the rapid growth of the present information era.”²⁴ Their curriculum includes the following required and elective courses:

1. Compulsory courses:

Arabic: Basic Arabic (Volumes 1-4) compiled by the Arabic department of Beijing Foreign Studies University.

Arabic grammar, rhetoric, translation.

Practical spoken Arabic.

Newspaper and magazine reading.

Business Arabic, etc.

Religion: the Holy Koran, the Hadith, the Islamic creed, Islamic law, Islamic ethics

Chinese: Modern Chinese, literary selections from classical Chinese literature, etc.

History: Chinese history, Arabic history, Islamic history.

Social science: Politics, common knowledge of law, etc.

2. Elective / Additional courses:

English and Computer.

The Kaiyuan Arabic Institute also prides itself on its outreach activities. In addition to its website, they publish a regular newspaper called *Islamic Garden*, now over 27 issues and available, apparently, throughout China by regular post in hard copy with a reported readership of 13,500 (curiously, not available in electronic form from their website). Their website also boasts that theirs is the only campus website of any Islamic school in China, and they clearly take pride in attracting domestic and international students and scholars. The Institute’s mission to explicitly dedicated to educating a new generation of Muslim leaders across China. They will allow any Muslim, male or female, to enroll who meet certain criteria: (1) they must be secondary school graduates or those with an equivalent educational level, (2) they must be in good health and exhibit good behavior, and (3) age between 18-25. Their website also situates this school within the framework of and new nationalism in China.

“The aim of the institute is to cultivate talented people, for the national economic development and the improvement of the quality of the nations, for adapting to the needs of reform and opening up and the needs of exploring the great northwestern China, for promoting peace and unity and for building a civilized society; by further adapting itself to the needs of social development and insisting on the principle of that the education should serve the country for its construction and make benefits for Muslims.

With the help of Allah, with the generous support of the local Muslims, and with the continuing efforts of the institute, Kaiyuan institute of Arabic has made progress in all respects. Particularly, the system of post responsibility set up between the institute and the Mosque committee, has made things done and responsibilities taken accordingly, and has got all things running on the right tracks with a favorable circle.

Since the founding of the institute, nearly 4 years (sic) time, the institute has introduced and sent 17 students abroad: 3 to Saudi Arabia, 1 to Yemen, 5 to Syria, 5 to Pakistan, 2 to Iran and 1 to Thailand.

Kaiyuan institute of Arabic will commit and dedicate itself with sincerity to the educational undertakings of the Chinese Muslim community." ²⁵

It is clear that the Hui community of Kaiyuan City has realized the potential offered by the internet to establish their identity as normative citizens of the nation who are serving national interests by promoting this specific religious education. The Hui students that graduate from this institute will be harbingers of local, regional and national development, as well as productive Muslims who will build and strengthen that particular community. This is an especially important message to convey in China since Islam has, according to many Hui, been unfairly painted as an extremist religion by a few but active Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang. It is also noteworthy that this Institute has sent its students to several countries in the Muslim world to study! These students are presumably meant to return to China where they will take up teaching or religious positions in Chinese Muslim communities and mosques. This program of foreign study, and the successful recruitment of teachers from abroad, indicate that the Kaiyuan Hui community are thinking and acting in global terms, creating specific linkages to their brethren in other parts of the Islamic world! These actions, and the fact that the Institute maintains its website in English and Chinese, also probably indicate the interest of the Kaiyuan Hui to make sure that China is part of that same Islamic world. Finally, if we adopt a more cynical view, we might conclude that the Kaiyuan Institute's ability to internationalize in these ways are allowed by the state because they accord with China's growing interests to promote good relations with the various states in the wider Islamic world for national security and energy reasons.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that globalization has substantially increased the range of choices for the Chinese Muslims in Yunnan. There are undoubtedly specific architectural styles that represent modern Islam that have been adopted into new mosques here. Whether those styles are really part of a larger objective "global Islamic" style rather than how modern "Islamic" style is imagined by the Yunnan Hui is another question, one this paper cannot address. In any event, these new mosques are huge departures from the traditional Sino-Islamic mosque.

What is equally clear from the examples of the new mosques in Kunming, Dali, Nagu and Yao'an, is that the Hui in those communities are lively, well organized and upwardly mobile people who want to be seen as normative citizens of the modern nation and who have not rejected their own national and local identities in their quest to have their religious identity recognized. The old imperial-era mosques are well maintained and still provide a full range of services for their communities, from worship to education to housing. At the same time, they proclaim the historicity of the Hui as part of the Chinese imperial ecumene.

The new mosques that have been constructed in these same communities perform different, complementary functions to their imperial counterparts. These buildings are bold statements of the health and wealth of the Hui communities that do not diminish their historic continuity but symbolize their ongoing vitality or centrality to the "new" China that is emerging from the Mao era to become a regional and world power. That 21st Century identity has not, however, eliminated the Chinese stamp. In fact, local or national culture is resilient, and absorbs supposedly global forms into its own modern expression.

The Arabic Studies Institute website provides us with yet further evidence of the impact of globalization on the Yunnan Hui. The Kaiyuan Arabic Studies Institute has embraced the internet and global exchanges of people as a way to expand their teaching mission. It is interesting to note the resilience of the local community in this enterprise; the Institute is clearly an outgrowth of the mosque and religious community in this rather small provincial town which is not on any main route or tourist map. The website's description of the program's goals and curriculum and photos make it clear that this is a modern school intent on being part of a national agenda of development and opening to the rest of the world, but one that is clearly situated in central Yunnan Province. Students come there from other parts of China, and some go abroad to study in other centers of Islamic learning. Faculty come from local and international destinations, and the image imparted by the website is of a unique center of Islamic learning growing in this far southwestern province of China.

What world or worlds do these communities--with their old and new mosques and their energetic schools--envision inhabiting, and how has globalization affected the practice and status of Islam in Yunnan? These Hui clearly have a long history of existing in their local communities, a fact that is celebrated by the numerous restored and fully functioning old mosques around the province. But they are also not being left behind in the development frenzy that is currently consuming the Chinese landscape, and which is part of a wave of urban development going on around China. Their new mosques are nothing if not modern buildings that use an eclectic palate of Chinese modern and Islamic styles and building techniques. The Hui are no longer content to remain as just another part of the undifferentiated religious landscape of China, as they were in imperial times, when notable attempts to sinicize Islam were undertaken by Hui literati. In this post-Mao era they are free to assert their identity as Muslims who are also citizens of a strong state. The ideas, forces and technologies that we see as part of a homogenizing globalization are actually being used to reinvigorate these Hui as proud citizens of their local towns, province, and nation who are also simultaneously citizens of a world community of Muslims. As Fulong Wu has already argued, it is China's new urbanism that makes possible the specific materializations of globalization that we see in these examples of mosque complexes in Yunnan.²⁶ And ultimately, these manifestations of globalization are always due to and found in specific actions taken in specific locations.

ENDNOTES

1. I draw from Sayres S. Rudy, "Subjectivity, Political Evaluation, and Islamist Trajectories," in B. Schaebler and L. Stenberg, eds., *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004): 39-79 for this discussion.
2. Fulong Wu, "Globalization and China's new Urbanism," in Fulong Wu, ed., *Globalization and the Chinese City* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), p.2.
3. Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Encounters* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004), cited in Robert Shepherd, "UNESCO and the Politics of Cultural Heritage in Tibet," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 36.2 (2006): 243.
4. Rudy, pp. 60-61.
5. See, for example, the 1941 study titled "The Question of the Huihui Nationality," cited in Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999): p. 2.

6. Dru C. Gladney, "Islam and Modernity in China: Secularization or Separatism?" in Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang, ed., *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008): 181, citing Yang Shengmin and Ding Hong, eds., *Zhongguo Minzu zhi* 中國民族志 (Records of The Ethnic Groups of China), Beijing: Zhongyang Minzu Daxue chubanshe, 2002.
7. For maps of Mongol and Ming Dynasty Yunnan see Tan Qixiang, *Zhongguo Lishi Ditu ji*, vol. 7 (Beijing: Zhongguo Ditu chubanshe, 1982)
8. For a recent study of this region see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
9. See Xiangming Chen, "Beyond the Reach of Globalization: China's Border Regions and Cities in Transition," in Fulong Wu, ed., *Globalization and the Chinese City* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 21-46.
10. On Sayyid Ajall and his descendants in Yunnan, see Li Qingsheng 李清升, *Saidianchi Shansiding pingzhuan* 赛典赤瞻思丁评传 [A Critical Biography of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din] (Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1998), and Jackie Armijo-Hussein, *Sayyid 'Ajall Shams al-Din: A Muslim from Central Asia, Serving the Mongols in China, and Bringing 'Civilization' to Yunnan*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1996.
11. Donald D. Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986): 105.
12. Research for this article took place during several visits to Yunnan between 2001 and 2007. I would like to thank the invaluable help of Professor Yao Jide and Mr. Zhao Weidong in making it possible to visit many of the mosques and communities discussed in this paper.
13. To claim that there is such a thing as a global or universal style of Islamic architecture is itself open to question. Suha Özkan, the secretary-general of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, in particular, rejects a notion of a global or universal style of Islamic architecture. See his "Defining Architecture," in *Architectural Design* 74.6 (2004): 24-31. His goal is to reawaken the reader to the diversity of architecture found in Islamic communities around the world. While this point of view is certainly valid and needs further discussion, I do not wish to enter into it here, and shall assume, for the sake of discussion, that there is something global or universal inherent in mosque architecture.
14. See Oliver Leaman, *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).
15. On the history of mosques in China see, in addition to Luo's work already cited, especially Liu Zhiping 刘致平, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao jianzhu* 中国伊斯兰教建筑 [Islamic Architecture in China] (Urumqi: Xinjiang Renmin chubanshe, 1985); and Sun Dazhang, *Islamic Buildings* (Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 2003). There are, of course, important studies of some individual mosques in China, especially Jill S. Cowen, "Dongdasi of Xian: a Mosque in the Guise of a Buddhist Temple," *Oriental Art*, new series 29.2 (1983): 134-147, and Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "China's Earliest Mosques," *Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians* 67.3 (2008): 330-361. The best survey of mosques in Yunnan at present is in Chen Leji 陈乐基, Shirong Luo 世荣罗, and Xiaojin Long 小金龙, eds., *Zhongguo Nanfang Huiizu Qingzhensi ziliao xuanbian* 中国南方回族清真寺资料选编 [Selected materials on Hui mosques in southern China] (Guiyang: Guizhou minzu chubanshe, 2004).
16. Jonathan Lipman has made this decentralized, local nature of the Hui "community" clear in his recent article "White Hats, Oil Cakes, and Common Blood: the Hui in the Contemporary Chinese State," in *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers*, ed. Morris Rossabi, *Studies on Ethnic Groups in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004): 19-52. I have not attempted a comprehensive study of Islamic architectural styles across the entire area of Yunnan Province, let alone all of China, and cannot make any definitive statements about local styles, or even at what level "local" may be defined.
17. Oleg Grabar raises this fascinating issue in several essays, including his "The Iconography of Islamic Architecture," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek, *Monographs on the Fine Arts*, 44 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University

Press, 1988): 51-66, and "Symbols and Signs in Islamic Architecture," in *Architecture and Community: Building in the Islamic World Today, The Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (Millerton, NY: Aperture, 1983): 25-31.

18. Ismail Serageldin, "Introduction: A Critical Methodology for Discussing the Contemporary Mosque," in *Architecture of the Contemporary Mosque*, ed. Ismail Serageldin and James Steele (London: Academy Group, 1996): 12-19.
19. Definitions of these terms and their variant Chinese spellings, as well as their Arabic or Persian equivalents are found in Jianping Wang, *Glossary of Chinese Islamic Terms*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2001). For discussion of the essential components of the mosque, see Martin Frishman, "Islam and the Form of the Mosque," in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development & Regional Diversity*, ed. Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994): 17-41, and Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
20. The architectural styles of mosques in Xinjiang are a separate issue and will not be discussed in this paper. For striking photos of many important imperial-era mosques showing traditional Chinese imperial style architecture, see Chen Yuning 陈育宁 and Tang Xiaofang 汤晓芳, *Zhongguo Huizu wenwu 中国回族文物 [Cultural Relics of China's Hui People]* (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin chubanshe, 2008).
21. My approach in this paper has been informed by an innovative article by Abidin Kusno, "'The Reality of One-Which-Is-Two' – Mosque Battles and Other Stories: Notes on Architecture, Religion, and Politics in the Javanese World," *Journal of Architectural Education* 57.1 (2003): 57-67.
22. It is important to note here that there are other modern mosques in Dali that look more like the modern Kunming mosque, with noticeable Chinese modern elements integrated into an Islamic aesthetic program.
23. All information on the Kaiyuan Arabic Institute is based on their website: www.kyaz.com/eg/kyaz.htm.
24. See the Institute's website, cited above.
25. See the Kaiyuan Institute's website for this material, cited above.
26. See Wu, "Globalization and China's New Urbanism," cited above.

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