Community Matters in Xinjiang 1880-1949

TOWARDS A HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE UYGHUR

BY

ILDIKÓ BELLÉR-HANN

CHINA STUDIES

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Community Matters in Xinjiang 1880–1949

China Studies

Published for the Institute for Chinese Studies
University of Oxford

Editors

Glen Dudbridge
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VOLUME 17

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Towards a Historical Anthropology of the Uyghur

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Ildikó Bellér-Hann

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LEIDEN • BOSTON
2008

Cover illustration: Woman baking bread in the missionaries' home (Box 145, sheet nr. 26. Hanna Anderssons samling). Courtesy of the National Archives of Sweden (Riksarkivet) and The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (Svenska Missionskyrkan).

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bellér-Hann, Ildikó.
Community matters in Xinjiang, 1880–1949 : towards a historical anthropology of the Uyghur / by Ildikó Bellér-Hann.
p. cm — (China studies, ISSN 1570–1344 ; v. 17)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-90-04-16675-2 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Uighur (Turkic people)—China—Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu—Social life and customs. 2. Uighur (Turkic people)—China—Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu—Religion. 3. Muslims—China—Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu. 4. Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu (China)—Social life and customs. 5. Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu (China)—Ethnic relations. 6. Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu (China)—History—19th century. I. Title. II. Series.

DS731.U4B35 2008
951'.604—dc22

2008018717

ISSN 1570-1344
ISBN 978 90 04 16675 2

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is about the modern Uyghur, an ethnic group living in the far northwest of the People's Republic of China. They speak a Turkic language and adhere to the Hanafi school of Islam. One of the fifty-six recognised ethnic groups of the PRC, the Uyghur share the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region with twelve other recognized ethnic groups, the second-largest of which is formed by the Han Chinese. In spite of the presence of a number of other groups representing diverse economic, ethnic and religious traditions, the major antagonism in the region consists of the ethnic tensions between the Uyghur and the Han Chinese.

My interest in Xinjiang dates to the mid-1970s, when I began studying Turkic languages at the University of Budapest. The Turcological perspective has determined and influenced the nature of my work. As I started reading about the region, I came to see the linguistic, religious and social traditions of its settled populations as a direct continuation of the Turco-Persian civilisation of Inner Asia, and only secondarily did I consider it as part of the Chinese political entity. I only became fully aware of the powerful presence of the Chinese state during my extended visits, first in the mid-1980s and then in the 1990s.

In recent decades a sizable literature has grown out of Ph.D. dissertations based on empirical research, which, together with the work of historians, now make it possible to speak of Xinjiang studies. The two lines of enquiry still seem to run parallel, with very little overlapping. Contemporary anthropological writings yield rich ethnographic data concerning the reform period but can say little about the immediate antecedents of social values and practices. There is no need here to argue for bringing historicity into anthropology, since many scholars have already done this, but the particular field of Xinjiang anthropology is still 'presentist' and largely dominated by the discourse on ethnicity.

Although the existing scholarly literature makes ample use of the concepts of 'tradition' and 'custom', so far no attempt has been made to substantiate these terms by looking at pre-socialist evidence. Using diverse sources, this work will at least partially fill this gap by drawing

the contours of the economic and social conditions in which the sedentary Turki-speaking Muslims inhabiting the oasis settlements of the region lived and made sense of their lives within the political confines of the Chinese Empire. Augmenting these written sources with data collected during fieldwork carried out in the mid-1990s, I have examined aspects of sociality during the socialist period and draw attention to continuities with the period before 1949.

The original intention, to investigate continuities and changes in normative ideals and daily practices of the Turki/modern Uyghur in the course of the entire twentieth century, could be realized only in part. I had hoped to gain access to local archive materials in China, providing data, both qualitative and quantitative, on key issues in local society, such as marriage and divorce contracts, inheritance and other legal documents issued by Islamic courts, private correspondence and commercial transactions. Although I could establish that such documents did indeed exist, I was denied access to local archives and, at one point, even to a public municipal library. Fieldwork conditions were closely controlled, and thus empirical data collection took place in circumstances which often fell short of standard anthropological practice. As long as political restrictions in China continue to limit research in the region for both local and foreign scholars, this work may nonetheless serve as an introductory guide and a point of departure for scholars in the future.

The initial phase of the research was supported by the British Academy and by small grants from the University of Kent at Canterbury. The major phase of the research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of Great Britain ('The Historical and Contemporary Anthropology of Eastern Turkestan' R00023 5709) between 1994 and 1997. I am also grateful to the late Ambassador Gunnar Jarring for generously allowing me access to his manuscript collections and for his many useful comments. Professor Tsui Yen Hu and Professor Fang Xiaohua of Xinjiang Normal University were instrumental in obtaining a research permit in China. My primary thanks are due to Uyghur friends and villagers in southern Xinjiang, as well as to my host family, neighbours and friends in the Uyghur neighbourhood in Almaty, Kazakstan, who generously welcomed me into their homes. I am also indebted to the libraries of the University of Lund and Harvard, the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, the India Office Library and the Public Records Office in London for allowing me access to unpublished materials pertaining to Xinjiang. Geoffrey Roper at the University

Library of Cambridge always helped me locate materials. I also thank Jay Dautcher, Laura Newby, Kim Ho-dong, James Millward, Justin Rudelson and Jo Smith for letting me read their dissertations (and to quote from them, in the case of those that remain unpublished). Hermann Kreutzmann and Michael Friederich have allowed me to quote their unpublished research report.

This work was prepared for the *Habilitation* degree at the Humboldt-Universität-zu-Berlin. I am especially grateful for the support of Ingeborg Baldauf in this lengthy process. Together with Toni Huber and Ingrid Schindlbeck, she provided very useful guidance and criticism. I also thank Laura Newby and Jürgen Paul for their helpful comments on various chapters of the work, two anonymous readers for the publisher, and Jeremy Spencer for help with language editing. Chris Hann participated in several stages of the fieldwork and was ready with advice and comments throughout. The National Archives of Sweden (Riksarkivet) and The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (Svenska Missionskyrkan) allowed me to access and reproduce the illustrations, the originals of which are housed in the Fränne Collection of the Swedish National Archives. I would further like to thank Dr. Fredrik Fällman (Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien), Ms. Lena Ånimmer (Riksarkivet) and Ms. Katarina Thurell (Svenska Missionskyrkan) for their help in tracing these pictures. I would finally like to express my thanks to my copy editor, Mrs. Nozomi Goto-Jones, and to Mrs. Jutta Turner who prepared the maps.

The writing of this text took place in the excellent academic environment provided by the Orientwissenschaftliches Zentrum at the Martin Luther University in Halle/Saale, Germany.

I. B.-H.
Halle/Saale, September 2007.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND USAGE

Transliteration remains a problem for Central Asian scholarship; all solutions remain inadequate. This also applies to the principles followed below. Transliterations of Uyghur/Turki words follow the system used by Schwarz in his Uyghur-English dictionary, with a few minor typographic modifications. This also applies to Arabic and Persian words in local usage, but Arabic and Persian words referred to in a wider Islamic context follow the spelling used in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Those words, however, which have been formally incorporated into the English language and appear as such in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, are transliterated in their anglicised form (e.g., Koran). Risking the charge of inconsistency, Arabic and Persian words well known in English literature have been rendered in their simplified, anglicised form to facilitate reading (e.g., *khoja*, Shi'ite). Texts quoted from earlier transliterated editions are given in a simplified form, though efforts have been made to preserve the flavour of local dialects. Well-known place names from English travel literature are spelt in their anglicised form (e.g., Kashgar, Khotan), as are numerous proper names known from the English literature (e.g., Ya'qub Beg). The transliteration of other place names follows Schwarz's system. An exception is the name of the autonomous region, which is spelt Xinjiang, the commonly accepted form in modern scholarly literature. Chinese words are spelt according to the *pinyin* transliteration system.

The names Eastern Turkestan and Xinjiang are used synonymously in the context of the pre-socialist period. For want of a better word, references to the pre-socialist period make use of the term *Turki* to designate the Turkic–speaking, sedentary Muslim inhabitants of the oases. When I speak of Central Asia, this includes Eastern Turkestan/Xinjiang.

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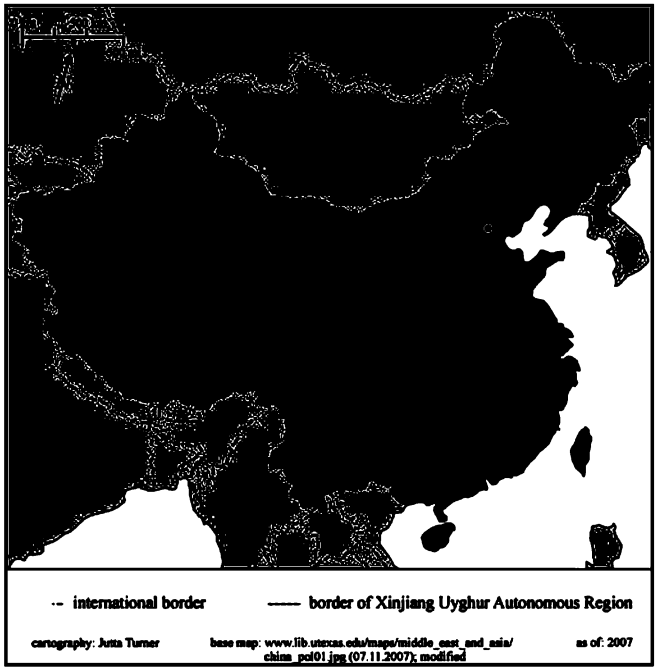

Fig. 1. Map of China (modern borders).

Fig. 2. Map of Xinjiang (modern borders).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Theoretical Framework*

The modern Uyghur, with an official population of almost ten million, constitute the titular majority of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Much recent scholarly work and Western media reports focus precisely upon this issue: the Uyghur as an ethnic group, a recognized national minority within the powerful Chinese nation-state. Their disadvantaged status, sometimes likened to the plight of the Tibetans, is at the centre of attention. The discriminatory policies to which they are subjected are in some accounts balanced by descriptions of Uyghur strategies of resistance and the emergence of ethnic nationalism among them. Some authors discuss the political and social antecedents of the complicated processes of Uyghur ethnogenesis;[1] others focus on the unequal access to resources between the dominant Han Chinese and the Uyghur within the region.[2] Several scholars have investigated the drawing and maintenance of ethnic boundaries between the two major players within the region, the Han Chinese and the Uyghur, while a few have also taken the presence of other groups into consideration.[3]

In his celebrated study of ethnic groups, Fredrik Barth argued that "the critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses"[4] Barth insists that certain concepts are relational by nature and that identities are constructed and can be understood only by studying them in relation to what they are not.[5] This approach to

---

[1] Geng 1984, Gladney 1990.

[2] Dillon 1995.

[3] E.g., Aubin & Besson 1998, Dillon 1994, 1995, Gladney 1990, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, Grobe-Hagel 1991, Hoppe 1998, Millward 1998, Rudelson 1997, Smith 1999, Starr 2004, Toops 1990, Trebinjac 2000, Weggel 1984, *Inner Asia* 2000. Gardner Bovingdon (2001) and Cristina Cesaro (2002) also take ethnicity as their main frame of reference.

[4] Barth 1998: 15.

[5] See also Cohen 2000a.

ethnic relations retains its validity in modern social science studies and in the case of Xinjiang in particular, but it does not altogether obviate the need for knowledge and understanding of the 'cultural stuff' which lies within the boundaries. Thanks to the works noted above, we now have some insight into how Uyghur self-perceptions and self-definitions are shaped by Chinese ethnic policies as well as by intra-group divisions and competition for resources. This research direction also fits very well the increased interest in minorities, or 'peripheral peoples', in the anthropology of China, as recent studies by Louisa Schein, Uradyn Bulag, Stevan Harrell and others have shown.[6] But the dominant ethnic discourse also necessitates the understanding of the contents enclosed by boundaries, since, when subjective or objective ethnic identity is promoted, it is nurtured by notions of difference. For this purpose, intellectuals and ideologues also mobilize similarity, as incorporated in essentialized notions of 'traditions', 'custom', 'culture' and the like. In other words, the boundary focus is important but, in itself, unsatisfactory. I agree with Dale Eickelman's critique of Barth's instrumentalist approach, which "lacks an adequate notion of how social processes relate to the production of the cultural conceptions with which people distinguish themselves from 'other' ethnic categories and with which they account for, evaluate, and weigh the importance of these distinctions".[7]

In trying to shift the focus towards this 'cultural stuff' circumscribed by ethnic boundaries, I am emphatically not searching for some reified and fixed cultural essence. I focus on forms of social interaction which facilitate self-definition and boundary drawing, but I do not see these as operating with equal force at all times, nor do I believe that all people who consider themselves Uyghur uncritically and unequivocally accept these forms as part of their 'traditions'. Instead, I understand these as potential resources for identity building that can be selected and mobilized by individuals and groups. Some of these forms may be so obvious that they never need talking about; others may be verbalized in normative judgments and often, but not always, translated into action. In looking at the processual, dynamic nature of social interaction, I focus on strategies that are developed to create, maintain

[6] See Bulag 2002, Gladney 1991, 1998a, Harrell 1994, Jankowiak 1993, Litzinger 2000, Schein 2000.

[7] Eickelman 2002: 196.

and reproduce social relationships, as well as on the values and norms underlying these strategies.

Although I am inevitably obliged to draw on several academic disciplines and research methods, my primary point of departure is historical anthropology. Precise definitions of historical anthropology continue to vary.[8] There is, however, sufficient consensus concerning thematic and methodological directions to allow us to speak, if not of an academic discipline in the classical sense, at least of a diffuse, increasingly globalized 'scholarly community' A number of intellectual traditions have played a part in the emergence of historical anthropology, a circumstance which helps to explain the multiplicity of related or quasi-synonymous designations: ethnohistory, micro-history, cultural history, history from below, *Alltagsgeschichte*, etc.

The relationship between anthropology and history over the last two centuries has undergone many twists and turns, both within and between national scholarly communities. The interconnections and rapprochement have taken a somewhat different course in the English, the German and the French speaking traditions. These developments have been extensively discussed elsewhere.[9] In the English-speaking countries the late nineteenth century was dominated by evolutionism: under the strong influence of Darwinian Theory, anthropologists tried to explain human diversity in terms of viewing human societies as following the same unilinear evolution, from primitive to civilized, which reached various stages of development. In Britain Henry Maine and Edward Tylor reflected these trends, while in the United States Lewis Henry Morgan was one of the main proponents of evolutionism, even influencing Engels and Marx.[10] But the interconnections were complex. Franz Boas, certainly the key figure in shaping American anthropology in the twentieth century, was born and trained in Germany. As George Stocking and Matti Bunzl have shown, the basic elements of his approach can be traced back through Adolf Bastian to the Humboldt brothers and ultimately to Herder.[11] The entire German humanities tradition originating in the Romantic era was profoundly historicist. The new discipline of anthropology stood in an ambiguous position to this wider intellectual context. At the turn of the twentieth century,

[8] Dressel 1996: 13–7.
[9] For a recent dicussion see Gingrich and Zips 2003.
[10] Kaschuba 1999.
[11] Bunzl 1996: 17–78.

most anthropologists—ethnologists—in Germany still held on to an anti-Darwinian dichotomy between *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker*. The former, in theory, could have no history. Yet in the early twentieth century a new cultural-historical school emerged in the German speaking world, the so-called *Kulturkreislehre*.[12] Its influence declined sharply following the catastrophe of National Socialism and in recent years German anthropologists have increasingly looked to the Anglo-Saxon traditions for their theory and methods. However, the largely separate tradition of *Volkskunde*, re-established in many places under the label *europäische Ethnologie* in recent years, has once again consolidated very close ties with historians; the contributions of Hermann Bausinger have been especially influential.

In Britain anthropology experienced a more problematic turning away from evolutionism, which culminated in a radical break with history in the name of synchronic functionalism. This school, largely created by Bronislaw Malinowski in the inter-war decades, together with the 'structuralism' of Radcliffe-Brown, led a whole generation of anthropologists in effect to exclude history from the anthropological enterprise. From around 1950 onwards, however, Evans-Pritchard played a pioneering role in promoting new forms of engagement with history by British anthropologists, although the full rediscovery of history by British anthropologists was not completed for several decades to come.[13]

The convergence of the two disciplines was largely facilitated by the new trends emerging among historians in the twentieth century. Among the many antecedents of historical anthropology, one of the most influential roles was played by the École des Annales, which emerged around the journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, founded by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch in 1929. The first generation of the Annales School demanded a new, global and interdisciplinary history to end the hegemony of political history. More specifically, they promoted economic and social history as well as the history of *mentalités*. The second generation went further in its efforts to achieve a new paradigm in the historical analysis of social structures and trends over the *longue durée*. From the 1960s, scholars such as P. Ariès, E. Le Roy Ladourie, J. Le Goff and G. Duby began to identify new topics such as death,

[12] Zwernemann 1983: 11–22, 53–4, 149–54.
[13] Lewis 1968.

childhood, ritual, love and marriage, women etc. and made an effort to distance themselves from the structuralism of their predecessors.[14] The practitioners of the new history often work with unusual sources and take 'history from below' as their subject of study.[15]

As for ethnohistory, this concept was first used in the USA in the early twentieth century to refer to the trend towards using archival sources in research into ethnic groups. Alongside such historical sources, the value of fieldwork was soon recognized and for this 'eclectic' methodology the term 'micro-history' was coined. This latter term was also widely adopted elsewhere, e.g., in Italy, and also by some German-speaking historians in the form of *Mikrogeschichte/Alltagsgeschichte* to distinguish their work from that of the *Makrohistoriker*.[16] Ethnohistory received some important impulses from the new trends emerging in Vienna, which rejected the diffusionism of the *Wiener Schule* in anthropology and instead promoted the application of anthropological insights in history. A certain rapprochement of anthropological and historical methods was also noticeable in the Soviet Union.[17]

The concept of ethnohistory has undergone many changes since its emergence in the early twentieth century. In recent years it has become almost synonymous with historical anthropology, but some implications of the term still render it somewhat problematic. The most serious problem is that the label suggests that some peoples (Westerners and dominant groups) possess history, and other groups only ethnohistory.[18] The fact that it tends to focus on the specificities of one bounded group is an additional shortcoming.[19] For this reason I prefer to use the term 'historical anthropology', without, however, denying the value and importance of many works categorized as 'ethnohistory' The theory and the methodological tools are often very similar to those used in historical anthropology.

Historians, like anthropologists, have started taking an interest in 'local knowledge',[20] 'plebeian culture' and 'proctological history'.[21] This

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[14] Ariès 1962, 1974, Ladourie 1982, Le Goff 1984, 2004, Duby 1994.

[15] For theoretical discussions see Acham und Schulze 1990, Burke 1991, Ginzburg und Poni 1985, Medick 1994.

[16] See the work of Hans Medick and Alf Lüdtke.

[17] Wernhart and Zips 1998: 13–7.

[18] Krech 1991.

[19] Gingrich and Zips 2003: 277.

[20] Geertz 1983.

[21] A term introduced by Cohn 2001: 39–42.

'new history'[22] can be best defined in terms of what it opposes: it turns against the historical paradigm that was preoccupied with political history and instead promotes all other dimensions of human life. Without completely neglecting narratives of events, it also promulgates an analysis of structure; it offers a view 'from below' rather than an exclusive focus on the elite perspective, and in addition to traditional historical sources it also advocates the inclusion of other kinds of evidence.[23] Historians have begun to take indigenous sources seriously, without necessarily devaluing the outsiders' point of view, and to analyse oral tradition alongside written sources.[24] In recent decades one can speak of a genuine convergence: numerous historical studies show the strong influence of anthropological insights while at the same time anthropologists are increasingly turning their attention to the past.[25] One of the most influential theoreticians of this emerging intellectual community is South-Asia specialist Bernard S. Cohn, who developed a practice which would 'treat the materials of history the way an anthropologist treats his field notes'.[26] The range of source materials considered by many historians has widened and evaluation is nowadays carried out against a background of wider power relations; 'voice' is given to individuals and groups largely excluded from previous historical studies.[27]

In 1990 E. Ohnuki-Tierney claimed that the unprecedented reflexivity of anthropology and neighbouring subjects has resulted in the emergence and embracing of a multiplicity of complementary theories and methodologies across a wide range of disciplines.[28] This statement seems to have retained its validity up to the present day. My own work is situated in this current. Methodologically, it combines the use of indigenous and foreign sources. I have taken inspiration from both 'classical' ethnographic works and from historical anthropology, but my work cannot be easily assigned to any one specific tradition. My eclectic approach is also influenced by my academic background in area studies,

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[22] *La nouvelle histoire*, named after the title of the French mediaevalist Jacques Le Goff (1978).

[23] Burke 1991.

[24] See the works by Vansina 1985 and Finnegan 1992.

[25] For examples of such studies see Burke 1978, Bynum 1987, Davis 1997, 2000, Ginzburg 1980, Medick 1997, Schama 1987, Bloch 1996, Comaroff and Comaroff 1992.

[26] Cohn 2001: 2.

[27] Cf. subaltern studies, which emphasize the position of the subordinate group vis-à-vis the dominant group. See Guha and Spivak 1988.

[28] Ohnuki-Tierney 1990.

as well as by the pragmatic objective of ensuring an optimal exploitation of the sources which I was able to access. While this idea of 'writing history from below' is attractive, the methods of these micro-studies are not entirely applicable to my material. The indigenous source materials which I am using present local society in a contemporary setting and often describe 'tradition and custom' frozen in time, although there are also sporadic references to change. The predominantly atemporal nature of these indigenous texts, reminiscent of the doggedly synchronic descriptions of the same generation of anthropologists, may be explained by the authors' efforts to describe normative rather than actual behaviour and is counterbalanced by two factors: first of all, in general, these texts are dated precisely and can be identified with a specific geographical region; second, when these texts are juxtaposed with corresponding evidence provided by Western travel literature, the latter often supplies the specific examples to supplement the normative rules. In this respect some of the indigenous texts reflect neither the micro- nor the macro-level, but a normative 'level-in-between'. But the fact that these sources cannot quite produce 'micro-level' information does not disqualify them as records of the past of particular localities and of patterns of ritual and everyday behaviour. Occasionally they illuminate the behaviour of actual individuals, but more often they shed light on the general constraints imposed by society.

The nature of these sources and the other sources used will be discussed in more detail below. It is sufficient here to emphasize that this 'medium-level' history, although it cannot match the classics of micro-history, nevertheless bears important hallmarks of historical anthropology: it considers society as a whole, including lower social groups. Its starting point is that history belongs to all members of society and that it is their social practice which makes up their history. This approach does not attribute an exaggerated autonomy to social actors, neither does it inflate the individual's dependence on nature and society: rather, the person is seen as an active social agent constrained by a range of factors, both natural and social. Some social phenomena may have a multiplicity of interpretations, and this approach also recognizes contradictions. In addition to intentional, rational actions, it also acknowledges feeling and mood, whenever sources allow.[29] Above all, this historical anthropology brings together insider and outsider perspectives

[29] Dülmen 2001: 5–10.

on aspects of economic and social life which embrace the non-elite and the unprivileged, the rural and the urban, life-cycle and religious rituals, the production and transmission of knowledge, work, cooperation and conflict. One recurring theme is the rules governing the inclusion and exclusion of individuals in the group, a theme which ties up with the self-definitions of the modern Uyghur as an ethnic group. But I emphasize that I do not regard the Uyghur a bounded 'culture': few human groups or 'communities' form bounded, discrete units.

I am especially interested in identifying ties which bind people to each other, and in the ideas which underwrite, shape and inform social interaction both in ritual and mundane contexts. In doing so, I find it helpful to adapt two concepts from sociological and anthropological literature: community and reciprocity.

1.1.1 *Community*

Community is a much-used and much-contested concept with a chequered history in the social sciences. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was used in reference to direct, specific social relations. In the second half of the twentieth century, it was subjected to more scrutiny and deconstruction. The renewed interest in the concept in the early twenty-first century reflects the fact that the term has never lost its salience, although it has acquired new, sometimes even 'dishonest', connotations.[30] Since several recent studies consider the history of the concept in social sciences, there is no need to repeat these here.[31] It suffices to make a few points pertinent to our discussion of Eastern Turkestan.

No agreement has ever been reached concerning a single definition of the term. In the 1950s, one scholar identified ninety-four definitions of 'community', with little overlap apart from it being a social phenomenon.[32] More recent overviews differ radically in their classification of the prevailing theories. Some prefer to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative definitions;[33] others situate all theories within the historical currents of social sciences.[34] A distinction may be drawn between sociological approaches, which take a spatially bounded entity as the

[30] Baumann 1996: 15.
[31] Amit 2002, Amit & Rapport 2002, Cohen 2000b, Delanty 2003.
[32] Hillery 1955: 117.
[33] Kemp 1988, Azarya 1999.
[34] Rapport 1996.

unit of enquiry, and anthropological approaches, which select culturally defined groups as their basis.

In his recent book, Gerard Delanty points out that, in early modern thought, community expressed 'bonds of commonality and sociability' It stood for immediate social relations and thus constituted 'the lived world of everyday life'; in other words, it was equated with society.[35] The two gradually diverged, with community retaining the sense of immediate, direct social relations and society gradually assuming a wider meaning filled with the organized realm of the impersonal state. These processes are well illustrated in the work of Ferdinand Tönnies, whose community definition had substantial impact on later theorists. For him, community (*Gemeinschaft*) meant both a social unit and a social relationship or sentiment,[36] with kinship, neighbourliness and friendship representing its original forms. He emphasized the common ties binding members of the community together and contrasted it to the impersonal and formal relationships of society (*Gesellschaft*).[37] Weber's definition of community was based on its members' perception of belonging, which he opposed to rational, bureaucratic societies.[38] Durkheim introduced the notions of mechanical and organic solidarity, associating the former with pre-modern and the latter with modern societies.[39]

Most authors have understood community to mean some kind of social collectivity, although it also carried romantic connotations for many who lamented the 'loss of community' allegedly accompanying the modernization process.[40] Such assumptions were more frequently made about rural as opposed to urban life, as is exemplified by Robert Redfield's definition of rural society as the 'little community'[41] While some emphasized the role of commonalities and social ties in holding communities together, others attempted to define community in terms of its distinctiveness from 'non-communal' formal organizations and associations.[42] In spite of the difference in emphasis, most authors agree that a community is a social entity whose members are bound to each

[35] Delanty 2003: 8.
[36] Tönnies 1991.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Weber 1976: 22–3.
[39] See Durkheim 1997: 31–87. For an evaluation of Durkheim's sociology and reception see Delanty 2003: 36–8.
[40] Nisbet 1969, Stein 1960.
[41] Redfield 1960.
[42] Hillery 1968, Gottschalk 1975.

other by certain common traits and a multiplicity of social ties. In these views, territorial concentration and rootedness are important preconditions for the emergence of a sense of belonging, and attempts to solve shared problems cement the participants together. No matter where the emphasis is placed, traditional approaches tend to understand community 'from inside', as a definable essence. They seek to identify the factors responsible for holding communities together (in other words, for social cohesion) and ignore the dark sides of community, such as conflict and disruption.

Some scholars have approached community as a symbolic construct. Anthony Cohen takes a stance similar to Barth's by focusing on boundaries.[43] Here, community implies both similarity and difference, inasmuch as its members perceive themselves as sharing certain commonalities, which distinguish them from members of other groups. For Cohen, community is an inclusive, aggregate term, best construed in terms of belonging. This is where one learns 'how to be social', where one appreciates the meaning of kinship by perceiving and probing its boundaries. The commonalities shared by members are conceptualized by Cohen not primarily as social practice and rules but as shared symbolic structure. In this view, the quintessential referent of community is its members' belief that they make sense of things in similar ways.[44] Even more influential was the thesis of Benedict Anderson, who proposed to understand nationalist loyalties using the concept of community.[45] In her recent works on community, Vered Amit has pointed out how the enthusiastic acceptance of this approach, in effect, 'decoupled the idea of community from an actual base of interaction in modern anthropology.'[46] Amit makes two points which are particularly relevant here. First, she points out how locality and identity became the focus of scholarly enquiry as modernization was getting under way. Locality became the object of scrutiny at the moment the boundaries of the taken-for-granted 'traditional' community were probed, as anthropological enquiries shifted from the bounded, small-scale village to urban studies, which continued to focus on face-to-face social relations but encountered the problem that community could no longer be identified with a bounded location. Anthropologists, traditionally studying the organizational forms of communities, started to feel the need to account

[43] Cohen 2000a.
[44] Ibid.: 16.
[45] Anderson 1999.
[46] Amit & Rapport 2002: 17.

for the very existence of community. In the urban setting, actual social relations continued to constitute the focus of enquiry, but, in a rapidly differentiated social environment, the basis of collective solidarities had to be explained. Amit's second point is that, in this connection, the concept of identity was foregrounded, and its discussion increasingly became dominated by the discourse on ethnicity. The unit of enquiry shifted from 'small-scale', bounded societies to ethnic groups. Community and ethnicity converged in a discourse which focused on boundaries and emphasized their relational and oppositional nature. In Amit's words, "The convergence between community and ethnicity has relied on their empirical 'hollowing out', a mutual shift from an emphasis on actual social relations and groupings to symbolically demarcated categories of identity.... Just as anthropologists were busily denouncing and distancing themselves from the bounded, ahistorical and homogeneous cultural differences of yore, the invocations of cultural difference and authenticity by 'others' were being interpreted as instances of rational modernity, resistance and empowerment...."[47] Here Amit points out that, while anthropologists have successfully overcome their own analytical essentialization of cultural differences, this should not be replaced by adopting and promoting emic categories uncritically.

In his dialogue with Amit, Nigel Rapport argues against categorical identities, preferring to privilege individual agency vis-à-vis any collectivity, while recognizing the role of social context. Rapport's arguments are very much rooted in the post-modern world in which "the existence of classificatory identities and groups in society, of blocks of opposed interests and labels, becomes increasingly less likely the more multiple, diverse and ongoing are individuals' affiliations, relations and interactions within that milieu."[48]

Since the present work is set in the early modern period featuring a basically pre-industrial, agrarian social structure, Amit's ideas are more applicable than Rapport's. She maintains that "some of the most crucial forms of fellowships of belonging are barely marked by explicit symbolic icons",[49] and instead of putting forward a new, satisfactory definition of community, she calls for a bringing back of the social into the concept of community.[50]

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[47] Ibid.: 45–6.
[48] Ibid.: 148.
[49] Ibid.: 64.
[50] That it is a futile enterprise to try to define community is aptly demonstrated by the history of the concept in anthropology, a thesis which has recently been convincingly

1.1.2 *Reciprocity*

The second key concept I use throughout this work is reciprocity. It has a similarly long theoretical pedigree, notably in economic, sociological and anthropological theory, where it is sometimes discussed within a general framework of exchange and, at other times, tied to 'the gift'. The literature on reciprocity, exchange and the gift is vast, and it cannot be discussed here in detail.[51] In James Carrier's definition, "exchange is the transfer of things between social actors. The things can be human or animal, material or immaterial, words or things. The actors can be individuals, groups, or beings such as gods or spirits." While emphasizing that exchange permeates all social life, Carrier notes that it is more important in the ethnography of some regions than in others, the classic ethnographic example being Melanesia.[52] In the following chapters, I shall demonstrate that in Turki/Uyghur social relations the principle of reciprocity was just as central.

Bronislaw Malinowski, in his famous Trobriand studies, sought to understand why people follow often difficult rules of social conduct, and he found the answer in reciprocity. People are bound together by the obligations they owe each other; what they give to each other is conformity to established norms. He argued that the binding force was constituted by the sanctions imposed on transgressors.[53] Much of the later anthropological discussion is based on the work of Marcel Mauss, who established that reciprocal gift exchange was, in primitive societies, more important than other, more 'economic' transactions. Through analysing the Maori concept of *hau* and many other cases, Mauss looked at the symbolic meaning of the gift and defined it in terms of three obligations: to give, to receive and to return. He also distinguished between three stages of gift giving: total prestations, in which religious, economic and legal aspects were all subsumed, gift exchanges between moral persons representing their respective groups,

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demonstrated by Anthony Cohen himself in the introduction to a collective volume: "Half a century ago, anthropologists and sociologists took the word 'community' (and so many others) from ordinary language and tried to transform it into an analytical category with scientific rigor. Our present authors are returning it whence it came, having decided (entirely justifiably, in my view) that there is no mileage in trying to define it, and are describing its ordinary popular use. It is an exercise entirely appropriate to the ethnographic and anthropological enterprise" (Cohen 2002: 165).

[51] For a good recent overview see Yan 1996.

[52] Carrier 1996: 218–21.

[53] Malinowski 1926.

and, finally, exchange between independent individuals.[54] Although he was also critical of Mauss, Raymond Firth confirmed that the principle of reciprocity was the driving force among the Maori.[55]

Claude Lévi-Strauss, the founder of structural anthropology, insisted that goods were more than economic commodities. They constituted

> vehicles and instruments for realities of another order: influence, power, sympathy, status, emotion; and the skilful game of exchange consists of a complex totality of manoeuvres, conscious or unconscious, in order to gain security and to fortify one's self against risks incurred through alliances and rivalry.[56]

Georg Simmel claimed that exchange itself created the bonds of society; that society is nothing but a synthesis of relations of social cohesion, the division of labour and other institutions.[57] Alvin Gouldner, following Simmel, Richard Thurnwald, Malinowski and others, also defined reciprocity in terms of obligations that people owe to each other because of their prior actions. The two minimal demands of reciprocity are that people should help those who have helped them and that they should not injure those who have helped them.[58]

In opposition to economists' models, which assumed that all exchange was motivated by rational profit seeking, Marshall Sahlins developed an influential typology of reciprocities, which goes back to a tripartite classification of exchange put forward by Karl Polanyi. Polanyi distinguished between economies based upon reciprocity, associated with egalitarian stateless societies: redistribution, where chiefs and governments were present; and market exchange, the disembedded economy characteristic of modern society.[59] Sahlins identified 'generalized' reciprocity, a type of giving without the expectation of return, a category which could be equated with sharing, altruism, generosity, the pure gift, concepts primarily associated with the family. 'Balanced' reciprocity, Sahlins' second type, was defined as less personal than generalized exchange, therefore entailing a precise balance in terms of the value of the goods exchanged. Such reciprocity typically takes place without delay and is

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[54] Mauss 1990. For a recent article concerning the distortions of Mauss's work by later theorists see Sigaud 2002.
[55] Firth 1967.
[56] Levi-Strauss 1996: 19.
[57] Simmel 1978: 174–5.
[58] Gouldner (1960) 1996.
[59] Polanyi 1944.

associated with the community. 'Negative' reciprocity—an attempt to gain something for nothing or at the expense of others—lumps theft together with haggling and barter and is associated with strangers situated outside the community realm.[60]

An explicit connection between reciprocity and community was made by Norbert Elias, whose starting premise was that people are connected to each other by interdependencies. These dependencies are specific and reciprocal, but reciprocity is often unequal and embedded in power inequalities. In predominantly agrarian communities (which represented relatively undifferentiated societies), these interdependencies tended to be all-embracing and aimed at ensuring survival. They included the acquisition of basic necessities and defence, as well as social and biological reproduction. The replacement of the old by the young, as well as institutional continuities, meant the perpetuation of structures which also aimed at preventing destruction through internal conflict and the handing down of knowledge of basic social orientation, skills and a communal sense of identity. The latter could be expressed in ancestor worship, common land use, rituals and festivals. Involvement in communal conflict settlement and belonging to the same gossip circle also figured in Elias's notion of interdependencies.[61]

An even more explicit connection between community and reciprocity is made by Stephen Gudeman.[62] His understanding of community as a social, ideological or spatial domain engendering attachment, security, predictability and identity harks back to earlier definitions, but it also allows for the inclusion of imagined solidarities. The appeal of Gudeman's model lies in the balanced attention it pays to both boundaries and the 'cultural stuff' circumscribed by them. He clearly distinguishes the community realm from market realm and pinpoints four value domains: base or commons, social relationships, trade, and accumulation.[63] The community realm is strongly associated with sharing and reciprocity, in contrast to that of the market, where impersonal exchange and insecurity are dominant attributes. The community realm builds on values different from those of anonymous exchange, but in practice most actors mix the two. Thus community and market realms

[60] Sahlins 1974.
[61] Elias 1974.
[62] Gudeman 2001.
[63] Ibid.: 10.

are conceived as 'complementary, conjoining and separated from each other' In this presentation of Uyghur ethnographic materials, I shall focus on the community realm and the value domains of the 'commons' and social relations.

Gudeman's model builds on many elements of previous definitions of community. It emphasizes flexibility, allowing for simultaneous membership of individuals in several communities, which may be hierarchically ordered, nesting or simply overlapping. The concept of 'commons' (also referred to as the 'base', or foundation) refers to a 'shared interest or value' It is the patrimony or legacy of the community and can include anything that contributes to the material and social sustenance of a people with a shared identity: land, buildings, seed stock, knowledge of practices, a transportation network, an education system or rituals.[64] Without this, there can be no community. By analogy to the external sphere of anonymous exchange, Gudeman argues that the 'base' of a community constitutes its capital, a "savings against contingencies".[65] Society, economy and beliefs are "conjoined in the 'commons' as a singular commitment" [66] The 'commons', or 'base' is the repository of both the new and the old. It is a local or 'situated' reason which allows for the improvement and innovation of the 'base' and thus enables both its perpetuation and its transformation.

The maintenance and perpetuation of the 'base' is achieved first and foremost through sharing within the community, as regulated by a multiplicity of values. The division of permanent funds or stock, such as land, is termed allotment by Gudeman, while apportionment refers to shares in a flow, e.g., the harvest, although the two are not always easily distinguishable. Division of the 'commons' may be influenced by instituted power. The person's share in the 'base' is likely to change as social position changes, e.g., when life-cycle rituals endow the initiates with new allocation rights.

For Gudeman, both reciprocity and sharing are expressions of community, but his model distinguishes between the two. Sharing is conceptualized as the act of maintaining the 'commons', while, through providing an initial gift and then practising reciprocity, one extends the 'base' to others, thereby creating larger communities. The gift is 'an

[64] Ibid.: 27.
[65] Ibid.: 33.
[66] Ibid.: 2001: 32.

initial present' and reciprocity signifies 'non-market, lasting, two-way exchanges' [67] In a recent empirical study Cynthia Werner has demonstrated how Kazakh gift exchange challenges the rigid dichotomy between gift and commodity economy, since gift giving in contemporary Kazakhstan involves "varying combinations of interest and disinterest, instrumentality, generosity, calculation and benevolence" [68] My materials support Werner's argument and suggest that, in line with Gudeman's claims, boundaries between community and commodity realms cannot be clearly drawn: they build on different values, but in practice, most actors mix the two.

Gudeman's model is broad enough to bring economy, belief and social action together in one conjoined project. The ethnographic materials from Xinjiang emphasize principles of egalitarianism and social justice, expressed through numerous implicit and explicit assumptions about sociality, reciprocity and sharing. The materials suggest that 'the norm of reciprocity' pervades the 'commons' itself, which, in Gudeman's model, is identified as the exclusive realm of sharing.[69] At this point, it could be argued that Gudeman adopts the romantic, emic notion of community. However, while he claims that the 'commons' is responsible for creating social cohesion, he adds that it is also an aggregate of individuals with conflicting interests. The principle of sharing may be the dominant mode of dividing the 'commons', but apportioning and allotment do not adequately explain intra-communal power relations, exploitation and competition for resources. Community therefore presents a paradox, showing a degree of unity to the outside world while simultaneously remaining a site of internal tension.

This brief summary does not do justice to Gudeman's detailed and systematic integration of the concepts of community and reciprocity, but it is enough to set the parameters of this book. I shall outline the elements which composed the 'base' or 'commons' among the settled, Turkic-speaking Muslim agriculturalists in the XUAR before 1949. Ethnographic evidence suggests that, in spite of major political interruptions in the socialist era, much of the 'commons' has been preserved, although

[67] Ibid.: 80–90.

[68] Werner 1997: viii.

[69] Gouldner 1960. Gudeman 2001: 28. This does not necessarily contradict the above model, since Gudeman himself makes it clear that communities are never sites of equality and altruism. They also provide ample space for the assertion of power and exploitation.

not necessarily in unaltered or unadulterated form.[70] As Gudeman has suggested, the 'commons' is, in large part, construed around notions drawn from immediate experience. Material objects such as the house and agricultural implements are just as significant as ideas concerning the human body, hospitality and the notion of giving. The notion of altruism, i.e., voluntary giving without the expectation of return (Sahlins's 'generalized' reciprocity), is just as important as the need to balance out real or imagined debts. Religious ideas also provide an encompassing moral framework for reciprocity of the balanced kind.

We certainly need to view community as a realm of rights and moral obligations, which regulate the relationship between the individual and the collectivity as well as between individuals. This becomes clear when we look at the boundaries of communities, which demonstrates the continuous salience of the 'boundary approach'. When an individual fails to fulfil his or her obligations (e.g., a son refuses to perform his filial duty towards his aged parents), he or she will be sanctioned. The sanctions which follow such transgressions may range from mild warnings to the denial of rights and, in extreme cases, to exclusion from a community. So membership in a community is always provisional: it may take on the appearance of permanence, but always underlying it is the expectation of a certain measure of reciprocity between the individual and others. The community fulfils its obligation towards the individual through sharing (understood broadly to include protection and security against all manner of contingencies) but only as long as the individual fulfils his obligations towards members of the community. I suggest that, although reciprocity may be most obviously manifest at the boundaries of community, and in this respect can be usefully contrasted to sharing, in Uyghur society, the relationship between the individual and the community is also pervaded by the norm of reciprocity. Community itself is unstable, its borders are fuzzy, and membership can never be taken quite for granted. Objects, social relations and their symbolic interpretations form the core of community, not persons. In order to maintain and reaffirm their membership, persons are compelled to engage constantly in acts of exchange within the community, and no clear distinction between sharing and reciprocity can

[70] For materials collected in the mid-1990s see my articles listed in the bibliography. Additional fieldwork data collected in eastern Xinjiang in 2006–7 will be analyzed and published elsewhere.

be upheld. Community itself becomes a permanent site of potential tension. The conflicts which may develop between father and son, or husband and wife, are never purely individual conflicts, since judgment and enforcement of sanctions in case of a breach usually depend on the collectivity. Debts and obligations are embedded in community; they form part of social relations, and they are strongly supported by local notions of morality. Those who fail to fulfil their duties towards others are, in effect, endangering the 'commons', the core of community. This tension has persisted in modern Uyghur society, sometimes in partially or even dramatically altered forms. One important change has been that these very practices of sharing and reciprocity may now serve as potential resources to draw upon in the construction of large-scale, 'imagined' communities, in Benedict Anderson's sense.[71]

The focus on these two concepts of community and reciprocity emerged after I had already obtained a good understanding of past and present social relations. The materials I had collected suggested that pre-socialist society was strongly hierarchical, yet this hierarchy was compatible with notions of reciprocity and mutuality underlying social relations, rituals and religion. The reciprocities were hardly ever equal, and they were not always realized, but the principle was always important in regulating various forms of social interaction.

The concepts of community and reciprocity are terms which are rarely mentioned by local actors. In rural areas today the concept of mosque community (*jama'ät*) remains salient, and one talks about forms of cooperation and mutual help (*ittipaqliş̧iş̧, yardämliş̧iş̧*), terms which imply reciprocity. But I am not appropriating a folk model. I agree with Bloch when he maintains that anthropological ways of conceptualizing societies often seem bizarre to people of the societies they describe. Everyday thought is not language-like; rather, "it relies on clumped networks of signification which require that they be organized in ways which are not lineal but multi-stranded. . . ."[72] From this, it follows that people are often unable to describe their thought processes, since language is not an adequate tool. The concepts are therefore vague and do not necessarily correspond to words; the most important aspects of social life may remain implicit and unarticulated: "Normally, the most profound type of knowledge is not spoken of at all" It has to remain

[71] Anderson 1999.
[72] Bloch 1998: 23.

implicit, "which is a great nuisance for the ethnographer, since it is precisely knowledge of this sort that anthropological research claims as its subject matter".[73] So I am not essentializing local folk models, neither am I essentializing community (and, with it, reciprocity) as overriding concepts which trump other forms of sociality in Xinjiang. I simply want to talk about community matters, i.e., social relations and local understandings of sources of belonging in specific historical contexts. I cannot entirely distance myself from the second meaning of the main title, which, in effect, expresses the emic emphasis on the importance of being social, i.e., of belonging. Without wishing fully to identify with it, I concede that "community matters, but it is never everything"; community is "never the world entire, it is only ever one of a number of recognized possibilities."[74]

1.1.3 *Tradition and Custom as Resource*

As mentioned above, with this work I wish to fill out the hollow concepts of 'tradition' and 'custom' as deployed up to now in Xinjiang studies. I shall attempt to reconstruct pre-socialist practices and modes of interaction which serve today's Uyghur as a repository of past values and as potential resources in their self-definition. This self-perception is not devoid of a degree of romanticism. The 'mobilization' of the past takes place on at least two levels. Contemporary actors draw unconsciously on the authority of the past to authenticate their present actions and expectations. They do this by making references to their 'traditions' (*änänä*) and 'customs' (*örp-adätlär*). Mobilization can also take the form of a conscious appeal to selected elements of past practices and values, and this is how Uyghur intellectuals have set about constructing a modern ethnic identity. Some may prefer to put greater emphasis on Islam, while others may want to push the religious element into the background, foregrounding territoriality and pre-Islamic local histories. Similar selective mobilization is also undertaken by those outside the boundaries of the modern Uyghur nationality. Chinese intellectuals make use of similar strategies in putting forward their own ethnic definition of the Uyghur. In doing so they may give positive evaluations to folkloric features such as dances and oral poetry, while obscuring the force of religion, which they will classify as backward and negative.

[73] Ibid.: 46.
[74] Amit 2002: 18, 19.

Some of their arguments may find an echo with some members of the indigenous intelligentsia.

The strategies of foreign anthropologists, historians and other scholars are not really so different, even if all would reject the charge of selectivity and construction. All we can do is widen the scope of our enquiries, use as wide a range of sources as possible, place the small details in a wider social context, 'listen' carefully to the sources and to our informants and try to integrate the diverse data as best we can. We shall never succeed in giving a complete picture of the life-worlds of individuals and their solidarities, but we can at least try to identify enough trends and regularities and pinpoint contradictions and tensions recognizable to the contemporaries about whose past and present we write.

In the following chapters, I shall try to show the many possibilities of drawing and crossing boundaries to mark exclusion and inclusion in the Uyghur case. Some of these boundaries were consciously articulated and perhaps even cultivated through stereotypical representations, while others concerned close, intimate, taken-for-granted relationships, which rendered them almost invisible, needing no articulation. I shall try to bring in the social as much as my sources allow, but I cannot entirely do without the idea of 'imagined communities', since these were also represented to some extent in the early modern period.[75] Modern ethnic categories may have been largely created by the Chinese socialist state, but these categorical ascriptions would have no force in the present without historical antecedents in the form of sentiments of territorial rootedness and belonging. In describing normative and actual social interactions in pre-socialist times, I also aim at exploring those antecedents at the disposal of modern Uyghur ethnic nationalism as potential resources for self-definition. I emphatically wish to get away from the romantic associations of community which imply homogeneity, cohesion, stability and consensus. Instead, I propose to look at the multiplicity of collectivities to which individuals could simultaneously belong and try to understand what such belonging could mean to people in specific and changing historical contexts.

This work is not about ethnic relations in Xinjiang, although it will inevitably feed into that discourse. It argues that, while understanding the boundaries between ethnic groups is of great importance, in itself

[75] Anderson 1999.

this is insufficient to understand the repertoires on which group members may potentially draw in order to assert their sense of belonging. In local discourse these possibilities are often summarized as 'our traditions', 'our customs'. I consider these terms as emic expressions of Gudeman's above-mentioned concept of 'commons' or 'base'.

1.2 *Recent Scholarly Contributions*

A great deal of the literature concerning the history of the region in pre-Islamic times is included in the recently published bibliography by Adam, Laut and Weiss.[76] Further information on this period is found in the works of Golden, Haussig, Mackerras, Sinor and Soucek.[77] For the region as a whole, Hoppe's bibliography remains useful for work published before 1987.[78] Recent scholarship has provided many fresh insights into the political and social history and more recent developments in the lives of the people of Xinjiang.[79]

The arrival and spread of Islam have been studied by local scholars.[80] Utilising both Chinese and Muslim sources, Jo Fletcher's work continues to provide an important baseline for the history of Islam in the region, mostly concentrating on the Khoja period, the long period of Qing imperial control and the role of the Sufi orders.[81] James Millward (1998) gives important insight into the commercial, fiscal and ethnic aspects of Qing imperial policies in the region between 1759 and 1864. Saguchi's (1963) classic study, based exclusively on Chinese sources, focuses on the organization of Qing administration in the region during the nineteenth century.[82] Drawing on a wide range of

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[76] Adam, Laut and Weiss 2000.

[77] Golden (1992), Haussig (1992), Mackerras (1972), Sinor (1990), and Soucek (2000).

[78] Hoppe 1987a.

[79] This review section does not take account of Chinese language studies, nor does it include works explicitly devoted to ethnic groups other than the sedentary Turkic speaking oasis dwellers (Turki/modern Uyghur). It is intended only to highlight some of the most important works which have been published recently by local and foreign scholars on topics pertaining to those covered in this book.

[80] Nurhaji and Guoguang 1995.

[81] Fletcher n.d., 1968, 1978, 1995.

[82] Saguchi's general work on social life in the region and Di Cosmo's publication of Manchu documents concerning tribute missions by the *bägs* of Kashgaria to Peking tell us more about the colonial administration than about life within indigenous society. (Saguchi 1963, Di Cosmo 1993).

sources and some travel literature, Kim Ho-dong (2004) has written an excellent study of the turbulent years of Ya'qub [Ya'qūb] Beg's short-lived Islamic theocracy. The Republican period is covered by Forbes' political history, Laura Newby's study of the rise of Uyghur nationalism, and Linda Benson's analysis of the Ili rebellion.[83] Ljudmilla Chvyr's publications on material culture, religious and ethnic identity, and Alexandre Papas' dissertation on the history of the Naqshbandiyya in Eastern Turkestan deserve special mention.[84]

For the socialist period, we have Donald McMillen's work on Chinese communist policies in the region prior to 1977, Colin Mackerras's studies of minority integration, Michael Dillon on the sources of political conflict, and Dru Gladney's numerous articles concerning Uyghur identity both in the homeland and abroad.[85] German scholars such as Karl Grobe-Hagel and Oskar Weggel have provided general overviews of the situation in Xinjiang, and June Teufel Dreyer's work sheds light on economic issues and development.[86] Recent Western studies focusing on contemporary society are mostly the work of geographers and anthropologists, with a focus on the interaction between locals and the incoming Han Chinese migrants. The studies of Stan Toops, ranging from tourism and the handicraft industry to demographic issues, and Thomas Hoppe's work on diverse topics such as ethnic groups and land use, are also important.[87] German scholarship is also represented by the works of Bohnet and his co-authors, as well as Hermann Kreutzmann and Michael Friederich's report on transformation processes in the western Kun Lun Shan.[88] A representative volume of American scholarship has recently been published by Frederick Starr.[89] A popular account of modern Xinjiang has been published by Tyler, while James Millward's latest book offers a general overview of Xinjiang history from the beginnings to the early years of the third millennium.[90]

All scholarly research on contemporary Uyghur society, whether undertaken by foreigners or locals, is necessarily affected by the political

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[83] Forbes 1986, Newby 1986, Benson 1989.

[84] E.g., Chvyr 1990, 2006; Papas 2004.

[85] McMillen 1979, Mackerras 1994, 1995, 2003, Dillon 1995, 2003, Gladney 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1997, 1998b, 1998/9. There are several introductions to aspects of twentieth century history written by émigré Uyghur authors, see for example Alptekin 1978, Buğra 1989.

[86] Weggel 1984, Grobe-Hagel 1991, Dreyer 1976, 1996,

[87] Toops 1990, 2000. Hoppe 1987b, 1992, 1998.

[88] Bohnet et al., 1998, 1999. Kreutzmann and Friederich 2000.

[89] Starr 2004.

[90] Tyler 2003, Millward 2007.

constraints mentioned above. This is particularly true of recent anthropological studies including Justin Rudelson's on local identities, Gardner Bovingdon's on resistance, Bill Clark's on urbanization, Jo Smith's on changing identities, Jay Dautcher's on traders and male gender identity in Ili, Cristina Cesàro's on food and ethnic identity, and Edmund Waite's study of popular religious practices in the Kashgar region.[91] Sean Roberts has conducted pioneering fieldwork among the Uyghur in Kazakhstan, and other diaspora groups have been studied by Gladney and Besson.[92] Much of this recent anthropological work focuses on ethnic relations, identity and ethnic nationalism, and some researchers have attempted to collect data among diverse social groups.[93]

The interest of modern Chinese scholarship in Xinjiang is evidenced by a bibliography published by Liu and Huang entitled *An index of papers and materials on the history and geography of the western regions* (1988) which includes approximately 8,000 titles of disparate articles published on Xinjiang and other regions classified as 'western'. Some of these are general surveys or deal with the economic and political history of the region and with strategies of control. Representative titles include *Xinjiang moving toward the twenty-first century*,[94] *A history of China's management of the western regions*,[95] *A history of Xinjiang in the Chinese Republican period*[96] and *Uyghur history*.[97] A rare Chinese publication dealing with the post-1949 history of Xinjiang representing the official government line is 'Research on Xinjiang's twentieth century history.[98] Ideological distortion characterizes a recently published work on the history of Islam in Xinjiang before 1949.[99] Questions of Uyghur ethnogenesis and historiography are addressed in the works of Nabijan Tursun, and in a volume edited by Osman and Şaraxman.[100]

Local (Uyghur) scholars have undertaken some important ethnographic research in recent decades, among them Abdurähim Häbibulla

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[91] Bovingdon 2001, Cesàro 2002, Clark 1999, Dautcher 1999, Rudelson 1997, Smith 1999, 2000. Waite 2002.

[92] Cf. Besson 1998, Gladney 1996, 1998, Roberts 1998.

[93] Hoppe 1987a, 1992, Rudelson 1997, Smith 1999, Kreutzmann and Friederich 2000.

[94] Wang 1999.

[95] Zeng [1936] 1986.

[96] Chen 1999.

[97] Yang 1991.

[98] Zhu 2000.

[99] Zhongguo Xinjiang diqu 2000.

[100] Tursun 1997, 1998; Osman and Şaraxman 1993.

and Abdukärim Raxman.[101] Their rich descriptions of customs and traditions do not, however, elaborate on the links between changing social institutions and practices. They are devoid of references to state interference, and regional variation is rarely touched upon. In the old tradition of folklore studies, the publications are instead imbued with a spirit of homogeneity and timelessness. These works thereby contribute to the 'folklorization' of the Uyghur, in line with the authorities' depiction of them as an ethnic minority. Yet in giving voice to an essentialized Uyghur culture, these volumes may also foster an awareness of ethnic identity among those who read them.

Other works published by Han Chinese and Uyghur authors for local consumption also depict Uyghur culture, but, far from romanticizing it, they are very critical. Many features, especially those considered 'Islamic', are vilified and held responsible for all contemporary social ills. For example, tradition and modernity are presented as contrasting entities in Cao's recent work on the lifestyle of the Uyghur.[102] Emigrant Uyghurs, especially in Turkey, publish prolifically on the homeland, but the overt political bias in this literature makes it of little use for the present work.[103]

The introduction and development of Western anthropology in China are closely connected to the name of Fei Xiaotong (Hsiao Tung Fei), a student of Bronislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics in the 1930s. In the 1950s Fei and his colleagues undertook a large scale historical, linguistic and ethnographic survey to identify China's national minorities. In succeeding decades anthropology (during this period better described as minority studies) followed a turbulent path.[104] As in the Soviet bloc, soon after the establishment of the People's Republic Western-style anthropological writings were forbidden; Chinese academics were entirely cut off from Western researchers for several decades.

Since the 1980s anthropology has been reinstated as an academic discipline. In Harrell's words, "anthropology in China is still hampered by the relative lack of synthetic and theoretical materials in Chinese, but the gap is closing rapidly, and many scholars of Chinese origin,

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[101] Häbibulla 1993, Raxman 1989, Raxman et al., 1996, Dawut 2001.
[102] Cao 1999.
[103] E.g., *Iltebir* 1999, and the journal *Doğu Türkistan Sesi.*
[104] For a comprehensive acount see Guldin 1994, and Pieke's review (Pieke 1996).

whether currently employed in China or elsewhere, are fully entangled in the cosmopolitan discourses of the discipline".[105] In spite of this convergence, no comprehensive Chinese anthropological study of the Uyghurs has yet been published. While various scholarly articles may be found in journals such as *Xiyu yanjiu* (Studies of the Western Region) and *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* (Studies of the History and Geography of China's Border Regions), these tend to focus on specific aspects of Uyghur popular culture, e.g., music, dance, dress. The social relations, beliefs and rituals of Uyghurs have been largely neglected, or if studied, then only after being stripped of their social context. There are, however, promising signs that young scholars are beginning to address this deficit.[106]

At the same time China's opening up in the post-Mao years has also made it possible for an increasing number of foreign anthropologists to do research in China. Western research in Xinjiang has not produced community studies in anything like the same way, let alone the same quantity, that characterised other parts of China. The literature on some regions is large and expanding rapidly. Some recent work has addressed cities, migration and even the region as a unity.[107] A valuable historical angle is occasionally made possible by the fact that the village in question has been studied by previous ethnographers.[108] Other recent studies, both rural and urban, continue to take the community as the unit of enquiry.[109] Those which address community as a locus of contested interests and views and which pay attention to the persistence of pre-revolutionary patterns of social relations come close to my work.[110] Other regional studies and studies of minority regions and groups are also pertinent.[111] However, the interdisciplinary combination of anthropological perspectives and historical sources seems to be reaching Xinjiang more slowly than other parts of China.[112] No

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[105] Harrell 2001: 141.

[106] See, for example Wang 2003.

[107] For example see Potter & Potter 1990, Friedman et al., 1991, Chan et al., 1992. For a comprehensive review see Harrell 2001.

[108] Ibid.: 142.

[109] E.g, Whyte and Parish 1984.

[110] Friedman et al., 1991, Huang 1989, Potter and Potter 1990, Chan et al., 1992.

[111] Siu 1989b, Bulag 2002, Gladney 1991, 1998a, Harrell 1994, Huber 1999, Jankowiak 1993, Litzinger 2000, Schein 2000, Sneath 2000.

[112] For examples for other parts of China see Leutner 1989. See also Cooper 1990.

attempt has been made so far to systematically map and understand everyday aspects of social relations in a specific historical setting; this is the gap which this work aims to fill, at least partially.[113]

1.3 *The Time Frame*

This work is based on historical materials related to the pre-socialist era. My discussion begins with the 1880s, following the demise of Ya'qub Beg's power and Qing restoration. The year 1949 marked the arrival of a new ideology and the end of all hopes of autonomy for the people of Xinjiang. Each of these turning points overtly interfered with intimate details of social life. The two events stand in structural opposition: Ya'qub Beg tried to implement Islamic law strictly, to force men into the mosque and make women veil themselves in public. Although his measures were extreme, he was trying to impose the values which were supposedly the dominant local ideas of morality and sociality. His political career proved to be short-lived, but we cannot be certain of the long-term social effects of his reforms.

In contrast, many of the measures introduced in the course of socialist development flew in the face of local assumptions and were intended to destroy the very foundations of dominant Islamic ideology. Socialist rule brought renewed foreign domination. While the degree of pressure varied with the ebb and flow of national politics, the grip of the Chinese state remained intact. The 'feudal' ideologies of the past were either actively combated or at least contained. This imperative did not change with the post-reform period which began in the early 1980s; indeed, fieldwork in the 1990s suggested that authoritarian tendencies were becoming stronger once again. Textual work and empirical data often suggest strong continuities but also major disruptions and changes in social practices. In order to achieve a certain thematic unity, the present work deals with the pre-socialist period only. Fieldwork material which I collected in the mid-1990s in southern Xinjiang and in the course of 2006–2007 in eastern Xinjiang will be published separately. However, such data will occasionally be referred to in order to help interpreting the source materials, or to point out the force of some norms and practices, manifested in their very survival of all the political disruptions of the second half of the twentieth century.

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[113] A discussion of social relations or 'popular culture' is entirely outside the scope of a recently published manual on Xinjiang (Starr 2004).

1.4 *Methods*

1.4.1 *Sources*

The source material used in this work is made up of indigenous accounts, and oral traditions, and the materials available in European languages. The prime reason is my own linguistic competence; the volume of the present work shows, however, that these sources are not insubstantial.[114]

The basic sources may be considered 'indigenous' even though the major group I examine comprises texts collected and published by foreign scholars. In the second half of the nineteenth century, interest in the language and social life of the Muslim inhabitants of Eastern Turkestan increased among foreign scholars, who collected specimens of what by then had become commonly called the 'Eastern Turki dialect'. These texts are of great ethnographic as well as linguistic value, and they largely consist of indigenous narratives concerning aspects of daily life, local tradition, religious and life-cycle rituals, moral

[114] Chinese anthropological writings on Xinjiang may be said to date back to the Qing conquest in the late eighteenth century. These take the form of records which were included under the section entitled *fengsu* ('customs and mores') in the various official gazetteers of the region. One of the earliest and most important of these works is that of the Manchu Qi-sh-yi: *Xiyu wenjian lu* (Record of things seen and heard in the Western regions) c. 1777. (Qi-Shi-Yi [1777] 1835). Although not actually an official gazetteer, this appeared in different forms under a number of different titles, and subsequent official Qing gazetteers drew heavily on it. The *fengsu* section of *Xiyu wenjian lu*, like those of the later gazetteers, comprises brief descriptions of the dress, cuisine, religious practices, ceremonial rituals, etc., found among the sedentary Turkic Muslim population of Xinjiang. While of some use when taken together with other accounts by Central Asian and Western writers, in isolation these records present a somewhat formulaic and often misleading picture of Uyghur society (above all because of the distorted privileging of 'difference') (Cf. Newby 1999).

By the late Qing and early Republican period (1911–49) Chinese writings on the customs of the Uyghurs had taken a new turn. Gazetteers continued to be produced, but the development of travel writing at the end of the Qing saw the publication of works such as *Xinmao shi xingji* by Tao Baolian (1890), *Hehai Kunlun lu* by Pei Jingfu (1906) and *Xinjiang youji* by Xie Bin (1920), all of which offered more detailed descriptions of local customs and social practices than the gazetteers. (Tao Baolian [1897] 1957, Pei Jingfu [1906]). Again, however, the contribution of these works is limited by the fact that they rely primarily on superficial observation rather than extended participation; Chinese travellers had little knowledge of the region and were generally unable to converse with local people. While these charges could also be levelled against Western/European travel literature, some Westerners whose work is quoted here visited the region repeatedly, spent longer periods of time there, and became proficient in the native language. The analysis of the Chinese source materials from the perspective of historical anthropology is a task awaiting Sinologists. For information concerning Chinese sources I thank Laura Newby and Jun Sugawara.

norms and accounts pertaining to local history. In their publications, alongside their translation, these European scholars typically reproduced the original texts as dictated to them by their native informants, often naming the person in question and recording the place and date of the interview. Even though different editors such as Katanov and Menges, Pantusov, Malov, Jarring and Tenishev used different transcription systems, the texts provide rich materials for both socio-cultural and linguistic study.[115] Although transmitted by European scholars, there is no reason to doubt that these texts provide faithful renditions of local narratives, comparable in quality to (and often superseding in precision) the field data brought back by modern anthropologists.

The second group of indigenous sources consists of unique manuscripts produced by local authors. Members of the Swedish mission were especially keen to immerse themselves in local culture, and at their respective mission stations in Kashgar and Yarkand they operated orphanages, hospitals and at some point even a printing press. To improve their knowledge of the local language, the Swedes also employed members of the local Muslim elite as language teachers. Their writing skills and general knowledge were no doubt well above the average of most of their contemporaries. They were asked to write about aspects of local life and society, and the resulting collections of essays are of primary importance for ethnographic knowledge of the pre-socialist period. Two of these are dated from 1905 to 1910 in Kashgar and are the work of Muhammad Ali Damolla and Abul Wahid Axun, respectively.[116] The third group of texts was written by Molla Abdul Qadir in Yarkand, probably around 1930.[117] Finally, another body of authentic indigenous texts was authored by Dr. Nur Luke, from Khotan, who probably committed his work to paper around 1950 in Poonah, India, at the Swedish Hindustani Mission.[118] In spite of its relatively late date, it seems certain that the author described the state of affairs in southern Xinjiang as he remembered it from his stay there before

[115] In this group the most important sources are Jarring 1946–51, Katanov 1936, 1976, Katanoff 1894, Malov 1961, Pantusov 1897, 1898, 1900a, 1900b, 1901a, 1901b, 1901c, 1907a, 1907b, 1909a, 1909b, Radloff 1886. One such collection published by Tenishev dates from a more recent period (1984), but the materials it contains were collected in the early 1950s.

[116] Prov. 207. I–II.

[117] Prov. 464.

[118] Prov. 212.

1949. In contrast to the other authors, Nur Luke, as his name reveals, was a Christian convert who eventually fled to India and went on to earn himself a doctorate. The other authors in this group are likely to have been educated in traditional Islamic schools and, therefore, were representatives of Islamic scholarship, a supposition borne out by their more sophisticated writing of the Arabic script. Finally, use is also made here of further manuscripts collected or purchased by the Swedish missionaries, most probably dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though neither their exact provenance nor their authors can be identified.

The second major group of sources includes accounts of the region by Westerners from the late nineteenth century onward, mostly in English, Russian, German and French. These are extremely varied in length and content. While some provide only fragmentary references to social norms and practices, other authors go into considerable detail. Most can be categorised as travel literature, the work of 'gentleman travellers' or explorers, but there were also some whose interests were scholarly: geographical, archaeological, ethnographic or linguistic.[119] Pride of place has to be given to Ferdinand Grenard, whose extensive work on Eastern Turkestan contains one of the most detailed ethnographic descriptions. Members of the British mission, Forsyth and Bellew contributed informative accounts, and special mention must also be made of the scholarly output of the German Orientalist Martin Hartmann, who spent six months travelling in the region in 1902.[120] Among the archaeologists, Albert von Le Coq is the outstanding figure; even the more archaeologically oriented descriptions of his expeditions include useful references, and he also published a collection of Eastern Turki texts and proverbs, as well as an article devoted to aspects of local ethnography.[121] Some authors' interests in the region derived from the political manoeuvres of the 'Great Game', while others, notably Robert Shaw, were motivated by commercial enterprise.[122] Finally, members of the Swedish Mission were active in the region for half a century,

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[119] For bibliographies on travel books concerning the region see Hopkirk 1993, Dabbs 1963. For an account of the history of the archaeological discoveries see Hopkirk 1980.

[120] Grenard 1898a, 1989b, Forsyth (1875) and Bellew (1875c), Hartmann 1902, 1904a, 1904b.

[121] Le Coq 1911, 1916, 1919.

[122] On the Great Game see Hopkirk 1997, Shaw 1984.

and it is to them that we owe some of the most valuable information about life among the indigenous population.[123]

Although I am fully aware of the 'Orientalist bias' of Western authors, I still regard them as useful, especially when the information presented coincides with or is corroborated by the evidence of other sources, Western or indigenous. Whenever possible, I have tried to privilege the evidence of indigenous sources and to support my arguments with a multiplicity of sources, including the testimony of local oral tradition. In selecting and presenting the source materials, I kept in mind that sources of any provenance are biased in different ways.

In a preliminary article which considered the potential value of various source materials for understanding Eastern Turkestani social life in the era prior to socialism, I addressed the use of 'unconventional' historical materials such as oral tradition and accounts written or generated by missionaries. I pointed out that many of the critical analyses of such materials had been "primarily elaborated within the context of communities subject to European colonisation", e.g, in African societies or in the Pacific.[124] The authors of such texts were well aware of the fact that their source materials emerged, or were first fixed in writing, within a colonial context. I argue that this model was not applicable to the production of materials by the Swedish missionaries because, although like other European travellers, explorers and others, they may have had imperialist attitudes, these did not fit the colonial frame, which in this case was the prerogative of the Chinese. I still find this distinction useful: Xinjiang cannot be adequately subsumed in the literature which takes European colonialism as an analytical framework.

The questioning of the political and intellectual hegemony of the West by modern, reflexive tendencies in Western scholarship has had far reaching consequences for the development of historical anthropology. Cohn himself turned to studying the interaction between colonizers and colonized and "articulated a concern with the productive qualities of power and knowledge, and the contradictions and paradoxes of domination".[125] But the paradigm elaborated by Cohn and others, which built on the confrontation of white rulers and indigenous populations, does not fit the case of Xinjiang. Here the Chinese represent the

[123] Högberg 1912, Jarring 1975, 1979, 1985.
[124] Bellér-Hann 1996: 90.
[125] Axel 2002: 9.

forces of colonialism; Europeans are outsiders. Many had a patronizing attitude towards local people and would no doubt have been apologists of imperialist expansion in other countries, but they were not the power holders in Central Asia. In an attempt to sketch the contours of the historical anthropology of the region, the materials generated by these Europeans cannot be simply dismissed as products of a classical colonial encounter.

1.4.2 *Fieldwork*

My first visit to Xinjiang took place in 1986, when my main aim was to study the Uyghur language. I had a solid background in modern Turkish and was hoping to make quick progress. Since the region had only just opened to foreigners, it was only possible to arrange an extended stay in Urumchi, the provincial capital, if I obtained some sort of employment. Accordingly, I became an employee at the Xinjiang Medical College, where I taught English for five months. My next brief visit took place in 1994. In 1995, I accepted conditions for cooperative fieldwork with Chinese research partners at the Xinjiang Normal University. Two months' fieldwork in Kucha in 1995 was followed by a five months' stay in 1996, about four months of which was spent carrying out fieldwork, first in Kucha, then in rural areas of Kashgar. In 1997 I spent two months in the Uyghur neighbourhood of Almaty, Kazakhstan, mostly talking to Uighur migrants from northern Xinjiang. Finally, in 2006–7, I spent six months in two rural communities of the eastern oasis of Qumul, this time closely cooperating with members of Xinjiang University.

The materials presented in this book are mostly based on written sources, primary and secondary. However, I sometimes draw on my fieldwork experience to augment or support the evidence of the written sources. Reminiscences of elderly people I interviewed concerning the pre-socialist past were of primary importance. Occasionally fieldwork data from the 1990s and 2000s also testify to the partial perseverance of some traditions throughout the socialist period, despite the changing political conditions.

1.5 *Structure of this Work*

Chapter 2 provides a geographical description of the region, with attention paid to indigenous perceptions of space, as well as an overview of its political history and ethnic composition.

Chapter 3 offers an overview of agricultural production, other economic activities, and redistribution mechanisms before the socialist era. The discussion focuses on access to resources by different social groups, and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion from forms of communities. The chapter argues that local structures were characterized by strong hierarchies in a dual sense: the colonial framework created an ethno-religious and linguistic hierarchy, while indigenous landlordism similarly favoured strong social stratifications. But it will also be demonstrated that these were not the only axes along which boundaries of exclusion and inclusion could be drawn: occupational affiliations and regional, trans-regional and supra-regional identifications were just as important. Wherever the sources allow, ostensibly homogeneous categories are deconstructed. Special attention is paid to poverty and built-in mechanisms which aimed, if not at alleviating it, at least at 'keeping it at bay' through ritualised forms of charity.

Chapter 4 considers the force of custom in regulating social life by applying the concept of legal pluralism. Historians of Xinjiang have long been aware that the centuries of colonial rule were characterized by a two-tier legal system, the colonial and the Islamic one, which operated more or less parallel with each other. It is argued that, in addition to these recognized legal systems, indigenous notions of law and justice, imbued by, but not identical with, Islamic law, also played an important part in maintaining and reproducing social order on a daily basis. Customary law could supersede the codified legal systems in conflict settlement, thus playing an important role in containing and regulating tensions between individuals, close kin as well as strangers, the sexes as well as the generations. The law of hospitality ensured the ritualized perpetuation of social relations within existing social groups as well as the extension of communal boundaries to outsiders.

Chapter 5 explores social relations surrounding life-cycle rituals and family structure. Here, community is constituted and maintained by personal and tangible social relations. The reciprocities described here and the rules regulating them are the domain of smaller units, notably kin groups and neighbourhoods. The focus is on how multiple social ties are forged, maintained and reproduced through ritual action, using the examples of the major life-cycle rituals. It is argued that efforts to maintain and extend community are underpinned by principles of mutuality, which, however, are embedded within hierarchical social structures.

Chapter 6 looks at popular beliefs, official and unofficial religious rituals and everyday ritual action to deal with the supernatural. The demarcation of boundaries between this world and the world beyond, and transcendence of these boundaries, both require negotiations and accommodations to reinforce an imagined community with the dead. It will be argued that these strategies are informed by notions of community and reciprocity, which are firmly rooted in notions underpinning local life worlds.

Chapter 7 summarizes the main results of each chapter and provides an overall assessment of continuity and change over the *longue durée*. Although this work is not a study of ethnic relations in Xinjiang, it does constitute an attempt to understand the potential sources of Uyghur ethnic identity. The conclusion therefore makes an explicit connection between community in the past and the shaping of contemporary ethnic identity.

CHAPTER TWO

PLACE AND PEOPLE

2.1 *Place*

2.1.1 *Geography*

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) is situated in the far north-west of the People's Republic of China. Within China, the XUAR borders Tibet, Qinghai and Gansu, and it shares international borders in the north-east with Mongolia, in the north-west with the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—countries which emerged as independent political entities after the collapse of the Soviet Union—and in the south and south-west with Pakistan and India.

With an area of 1,664,900 square kilometres, the XUAR covers one-sixth of the total area of China and constitutes its largest province-level administrative unit. It is one of five administrative units in the PRC which have the status of an autonomous region.

Almost two-thirds of the total area is constituted by uninhabitable desert and high mountains. About 1.8 per cent is arable land, 34 per cent is used as pasture, and forests occupy 2.2 per cent.[1] The geography of the region is determined primarily by the three mountain ranges dominating it: in the south, it is protected by the Karakoram and Kunlun ranges, in the south-west by the Pamir, and in the north-east by the Altai. The XUAR is divided into two major geographical regions by the Tian Shan, Zungharia to the north and the Tarim Basin to the south, which are connected by several passes.

Most of the rivers (more than two hundred) and small lakes of the region are dependent upon the melting snow of the high mountains and eventually disappear in the desert, the sole exception being the Irtysh, which reaches the Arctic Ocean. Numerous small saltwater lakes are scattered throughout the region. The climate is extreme continental, generally very dry, with annual rainfall averaging 100 millimetres in

[1] For the geographical description I have mainly relied on Weggel 1984 and Bohnet 1998, 1999.

Zungharia and only fifty millimetres in the Tarim Basin. The lowest temperatures may reach minus fifty degrees centigrade south of the Altai Mountains, while in the Turfan depression in the east, summer temperatures may reach forty-seven degrees centigrade.

Zungharia is surrounded by three mountain ranges: the Alatau Shan, in the north-west, the Tian Shan, in the south, and the Altai, in the north-east. It largely consists of steppe and semi-steppe areas, with the Ili Valley to its west, and historically has been used mostly as pastureland; in recent times, cereal production has also become increasingly important. The region also has significant oil reserves.[2]

The Tarim Basin is surrounded by mountains as well: the Tian Shan in the north, the Pamir in the west, the Karakoram in the south-west, the Kunlun in the south, and the Altin Tağ in the south-east. The Taklamakan, a stone and sand desert, covers vast areas of the Tarim Basin and the oasis settlements are situated along the desert edge, not far from the foot of the mountains, which are protected by a forest belt. On the northern side of the Taklamakan is the Turfan Basin, which is bounded by the eastern Tian Shan range. As archaeological excavations have revealed, human settlements were situated deeper in the Taklamakan about 3,000 years ago, since water was more widely available. By the early twentieth century, dramatic climatic and ecological changes had rendered these settlements unfit for human habitation and pushed the oasis settlements closer to the edge of the desert. These oasis settlements are entirely dependent on the availability of water, which is supplied mostly by the melting snow of the high mountains, but there are underground reserves as well. The economy of the Tarim Basin is largely based on irrigation agriculture which produces wheat, maize, rice, cotton and fruit. Sericulture, various crafts, trade, mining (coal and oil) and forestry also play an important role in the local economy.

In addition to these two large areas, two smaller regions must also be mentioned. The Turfan Depression in the east is also bordered by large mountains: the Bogda range in the north, the Tian Shan in the west, and the Quruq Tağ in the south; it is divided east to west by the Flaming Mountains. The southern half is situated below sea level, making it extremely hot in the summer. The oasis agriculture is main-

[2] See Khamraev 1998, for an analysis of the geopolitical significance of Xinjiang's oil reserves. On oil see also Bohnet 1999: 163–8.

tained by complex underground irrigation systems and mostly produces fruit, especially grapes and melons.[3]

The Ili Valley in the north-east is separated from the rest of the region by the Borohoro Mountains to the north-east, and the Tian Shan to the south, while it remains open in the west. The land is much more fertile and suitable for agricultural production than the rest of the XUAR, since it gets significantly more rainfall. Two-thirds of the pastureland of Xinjiang is situated in the north, but some areas specialize in agricultural production, and it also has important industries, including textile production, machine industry and mining.

2.1.2 *Naming and Local Perceptions of Space*

The full political unification of the region was first achieved under the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) in the eighteenth century. It took place gradually over a longer period, parallel to the changing relationship of the region with the imperial centre. Its stages signified not only the definitive expansion of imperial China into the north-west but also the emergence of a distinct region, which, within the political borders of China, continued to retain its local socio-cultural characteristics. Indo-European and Turkic-speaking groups met Tibetan and Chinese speakers here, and local traditions were influenced by Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. The region has been regarded as a periphery by the Chinese centre; implicitly or explicitly, it was considered by many scholars as a cultural backwater of the great Central Asian centres of Islamic civilization and perhaps, by extension, of the Islamic world.[4]

The many names given to the region and its diverse geographical features reflect the diversity of the linguistic, religious and social traditions to which it is heir. To denote the region south of the mountain range of the Tian Shan, some foreign sources preferred the term *Şärqi Turkestan* (Eastern Turkistan). The south-western section of this region was sometimes referred to as Kashgaria, while the eastern part was called Uyğuristan. Tartary, High Tartary and Chinese Turkestan were also common names used for the region in the end of the nineteenth

[3] For a brief description of the *karez* system used in the Turfan Basin see Hoppe 1987b.

[4] See Fletcher n.d.

century. Prior to 1884, the whole area was known to the 'infidel' overlords as *Hsi Yü*, the Western Region. In 1884, the official Chinese name of the province became Xinjiang, or Sinkiang, meaning New Territory. The older name Moğolistan, which described parts of the region prior to the Mongol and Manchu occupations, was retained and used by some local people as late as the end of the nineteenth century. The Russians used to call the southern parts Little Bukhara, a designation justified by the close linguistic and cultural affinity of this region with Russian/Soviet Central Asia. The variety of names used to designate the same region, or parts of it, over the nineteenth century reflects the different viewpoints of the authors. Indigenous sources prior to 1949 never refer to the region by its Chinese name. Outsiders generally considered it within the framework of its political affiliation and regarded it as part of the Qing Empire (hence the designation 'Chinese Turkestan'), while some Western visitors, who viewed local society primarily within a wider Islamic or Central Asian context, preferred to use indigenous designations, or names that emphasized Turkic, Islamic, or Central Asian, i.e., non-Chinese, characteristics.[5]

What is the indigenous understanding of the region's position in the world? The classical view of China of herself as the Middle Kingdom was envisaged as a set of concentric circles, with the inner territories (Chin. *neidi*) making up the heartland and the outer circles constituting the periphery, the region 'beyond the borders' (Chin. *bianwai*).[6] This view of the rest of China has persisted to the present day. It is often expressed by the Uyghur themselves, who talk about 'China proper' with reference to the 'inland parts, the interior' (*içkiri kesimlär*). The local usage implies that the Uyghur (and presumably some other nationalities living in Xinjiang) view their own land as peripheral, at least in relation to the rest of China. My fieldwork data suggests that this local designation, which suggests a peripheral self-perception, does not do justice to the full emic view: the former reflects a partial internalization of the Han Chinese view, but the local perspective is more complex.

Indigenous place names may be unintended repositories of emic self-definitions, which tend to remain vague in their boundary drawing. They may merge local self-perceptions of vaguely connected entities with the

[5] On the various designations see Millward 2007: ix–x.
[6] Waley-Cohen 1991: 33.

vantage point of the great empires, which made repeated attempts to expand their influence over the territory. The name Altishahr (*Altä Şähär*) or 'Six Cities', was typically used to designate the oasis settlements south of the Tian Shan, thus emphasizing, if not exactly territorial unity, at least features that these settlements had in common.[7] This designation is particularly apt, because it simultaneously implies similarity and difference, a sense of shared features as well as fragmentation. Before the middle of the twentieth century, oasis names must have dominated the territorial self-perception of the indigenous population, and foreign observers could occasionally use them in a more restricted or extended sense, referring either to an oasis centre and its immediate surroundings or a wider region (e.g., Kashgar and Kashgaria, in English travel literature). Prior to the Manchu occupation, the oases lacked a political superstructure to unite them. It is likely that, in practice, Altishahr, or the 'Six Cities', did not actually refer to a definite number of cities; but foreign visitors nonetheless tried to identify them and the identity of the 'Six Cities' was contested.[8]

Oasis names themselves were designations of whole oasis complexes which included both urban settlements and villages, but it was the epithets habitually attached to them which symbolically turned them from a dot on the map into three-dimensional localities by evoking a ritual landscape. An indigenous source dating from the late nineteenth

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[7] Apparently in the early twentieth century, 'Six Cities' was still known to the Chinese administrators as an old designation of the Khotan district: the six cities were identified as Khotan, Yurungqash, Qara-Qash, Chira, Keriya, and a sixth which was unknown. (Stein 1904: 294)

[8] Albert von Le Coq gives two possible lists. The first comprises Aqsu, Maralbashi, Kashgar, Yengi Hisar, Yarkand and Khotan, while in his alternative list Aqsu is replaced by Kharghalikh (Le Coq 1928: 107). Barthold replaces Yengi Hisar with Kucha, and Valikhanov identified the Six Cities as Uch Turfan, Turfan, Kashgar, Yengi Hisar, Aqsu, Yarkand, Khotan (Barthold 1960, Valikhanov 1961: 325). Kuropatkin substitutes Kucha for Khotan (1882: 123). Other observers evidently gave other combinations (Le Coq 1911: 55). For further examples see Fletcher 1968: 362–3. Sometimes references were also made to seven rather than six cities (*Yättä Şähär*), usually by the addition of Uch Turfan to either of the above lists (Le Coq ibid.). This latter term apparently came into use after Ya'qub Beg occupied Turfan, and the 'Seven Cities' included Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, Aqsu, Uch Turfan, Kucha and Turfan (Hamada 1978: 79, also quoted in Rudelson 1997: 31). The rarely used designation of *Säkkiz Şähär* or 'Eight Cities' is probably a translation from the Chinese usage *Nan-lu-ba-jing*, the Eight Cities of the Southern Road, introduced after the Qing conquest of 1759, which were classified into two sub-categories, the four western cities (Khotan, Yarkand, Yengi Hisar, Kashgar), and the four eastern cities (Aqsu, Uch Turfan, Kucha, Qarashahr) (Ross 1908: 19, Fletcher 1968: 363, Millward 1998: 23). For the politics of onomastics in the late Qing Empire see Millward 1999.

century names the following locations and their epithets as constituting the Six Cities: Kashgar, the City of Saints; Yarkand, the City of Patron Saints; Khotan, the City of [Muslim] Martyrs; Aqsu, the City of the Ghazis; Kucha, the City of the Governing God (after its famous Muslim governors); and Turfan, the City of Strangers (after the numerous pilgrims who annually visit the many holy shrines).[9]

The epithets project images of an essentially Islamic landscape, indicating the close associations of certain localities with the hegemony of Islam. Claims to an exclusively Islamic past are further stressed by the fact that the epithets are all Arabic and Persian derivatives. This extended toponymy already encapsulates claims to locality and a religious tradition exclusively Islamic in nature and disclaims the non-Islamic past and present as alien. Claims to Islamic identity were thus inextricably intertwined with territorial rootedness.

While the epithets emphasize underlying religious unity, the Six Cities designation recognizes both the separate identities of the southern oasis cities as well as their commonalities. This name also implies associations with a sedentary lifestyle which has given rise to urbanism. Unfortunately, we cannot precisely say when the collective usage of the loose term Altishahr became widespread or to what extent it was imposed from the outside or employed by local people. Naming patterns were influenced by the complicated interplay of local and external perceptions. We may speculate that regional fragmentation must have had greater weight at certain times than at others (e.g., during the *khoja* period), as political conditions changed. The Qing conquest must have encouraged this shift of emphasis from difference to commonalities among the indigenous Turki speakers when confronted with their conquerors. Perceptions of Islamic identity as a common denominator among those who also shared a number of other features (language, social practices) must have acted as a cohesive force. This is exemplified by the survival of the epithets given to the various oases; some people I talked to in the 1990s were still aware of these old names, in spite of variations in the precise associations of these extended structures with actual cities.

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[9] Katanov 1936: 1,220–1. On Turfan see also Jarring 1933: 16. Yarkand, Kashgar, Aqsu and Khotan are also mentioned with the same epithets by a Central Asian author, Nushirvan Yavshef, in the early twentieth century in a Tatar language publication, as cited by Zarcone 2001: 138–9.

2.2 *History*

Some authors characterize the history of Xinjiang in terms of a certain duality, as it constitutes part of Chinese as well as Central Asian history: in addition the importance of Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries must be recognized.[10] Owen Lattimore argued that the history of Inner Asia can best be understood in terms of its relationship towards the great empires. Whenever these empires were strong and highly centralized, they tried to extend their influence over the region, while during times of decentralization, the great empires withdrew to their centre and left the small oasis kingdoms to their own devices.[11] Lattimore's cyclical model of the dynamics of the historical relationship between the Chinese centre and the north-western periphery was based on the level of integration and unification of the centre. The changing power relations between the region and the centre established a pendulum pattern, with Chinese influence increasing and decreasing periodically. The same fluctuation of evolution and devolution is echoed by Gladney, who argues that "the ethnogenesis of the [modern] Uyghurs is best understood as a gradual evolution through successive stages of interaction with the Chinese nation-state."[12] Barnett also speaks of a 'waxing and waning' of the power of the Chinese centre in the region.[13] These views, together with other approaches to Chinese history represented by Fairbank and Skinner, have been criticized by Millward for "deflecting interest from Qing Inner Asia."[14]

Most authors agree on the strategic importance of the region for the expanding Chinese empire at various periods of its history, as well as for the European colonial powers from the nineteenth century onward, and all historical surveys emphasize its ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity.[15] Throughout its history, the region remained closely connected to the rest of Central Asia both geographically and culturally. Sporadic and periodic Chinese presence dates back to the

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[10] Ibid.: 30–1. Weggel 1984: 1–22.
[11] Lattimore 1975: 183. Cf. Toops 1990: 63.
[12] Gladney 1990: 6.
[13] Barnett 1993: 344.
[14] Millward 1998: 5–13.
[15] For a recent history of the region see Millward 2007, for brief summaries see Aubin 1998, in 1997. Millward & Perdue 2004, Millward & Tursun 2004.

Han dynasty, and contacts with the Chinese centre prior to the Qing occupation in the mid-eighteenth century typically took the form of commerce, political alliances, tribute missions and armed conflict. It is assumed that speakers of Indo-European languages entered the region prior to 500 B.C.[16] The earliest linguistic documents of these groups date from the third quarter of the first millennium A.D. These were preserved in the sand-buried ruins of ancient settlements in the vicinity of the oases of Kucha, Turfan and Qarashahr.[17] Their presence has been further confirmed by the discoveries of the famous 'Xinjiang mummies' between 1978 and 1991,[18] and their cultural achievements have been crystallized in the products of the Greco-Buddhist artistic style and a large literature in the Tokharian language (translations or local adaptations of philosophical and religious works).

The hegemony of the Indo-European speakers was undermined by the repeated incursions of other groups, among whom proto-Turkic and proto-Mongolian elements can be identified from the third century B.C. from Chinese historical records. This was the era of the great empires of the steppe, under successive confederations led by the Xiongnu, the Ruanruan, the Türküt and, finally, the Old Uyghur. Like some other Turkic groups, the Old Uyghur also had their homeland in the territory of present-day Mongolia. During their hundred-year-long hegemony (745–840), they united various tribes and clans with diverse ethnic and linguistic affiliations, combined nomadic and sedentary groups and built up close economic and political relations with Tang China. One consequence of these ties was that the Uyghur embraced Manicheism as an official religion, which increased the influence of the Soghdians upon them. Uyghur hegemony was overthrown by the emergence of a new confederation, that of the Yenissei Kirghiz. The Uyghur were forced to move on, following migration routes towards the west and south-west. Several groups thus entered the oases of Eastern Turkestan, which may have been Uyghur dependencies before,[19] where they founded the Kingdom of Qocho (Turfan), adapted to a sedentary way

[16] For a summary chapter on the Indo-Europeans of Inner Asia see Sinor 1990: 151–76, and the bibliography on pp. 445–9. For useful summaries see also Millward 2007: 10–7 and various articles in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, especially Togan 1992, Rossabi 1992, Kim 1992.

[17] Sinor 1990: 151.

[18] Mallory 2000; Wayland Barber 2000.

[19] Mackerras 1972: 12.

of life and mixed with the indigenous population.[20] Many converted to Buddhism, while others adopted Nestorian Christianity. In this way Old Uyghur civilization reached its second heyday, which lasted for four centuries (850–1250).[21]

The Turkification of Eastern Turkestan began in earnest with the mass immigration of the Old Uyghur, which led to the linguistic acculturation of the indigenous populations. This was accompanied by other complicated processes, namely the sedentarization of incoming nomadic groups and the spread of Islam. Arriving from the west, Islam must have reached Eastern Turkestan soon after its emergence in the Middle East, but the way to large-scale Islamization was first opened by the Arabs' victory over the Chinese at the battle of Talas in 751 A.D. This process in Eastern and Western Turkestan gained momentum in the tenth century, when Satuq Bughra Khan, the ruler of a Turkic-speaking tribal confederation occupying the Semireche and western Kashgaria, converted to Islam. This brought about the mass conversion of his subjects and with it the emergence of the first Islamic Turkic political entity under the Qarakhanid dynasty, which ruled over the Semireche, Kashgaria, Transoxania and Ferghana. Qarakhanid supremacy represented "a definitive shift from Iranian to Turkic predominance in Central Asia."[22]

Qarakhanid rule in Eastern Turkestan was followed by successive nomadic hegemonies. In the twelfth century, both the Uyghur of Turfan and the Qarakhanids in the western parts of Eastern Turkestan submitted to the Buddhist Qara Khitay and continued to rule as their tribute-paying vassals. The thirteenth century witnessed the Mongol conquest of the whole of Central Asia and the establishment of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China (1279–1368). The locals' peaceful submission to the Mongols saved most of the oasis cities from the horrors of destruction and paved the way to the integration of the Uyghur elite into the bureaucratic classes of the new empire. Following the death of Chingghis Khan (1206–1227), his lands were divided up among his sons. Chaghatay received Eastern Turkestan and Transoxania. About a century later, a ruler of Chaghatayid descent embraced Islam, a

[20] Geng Shimin (1984) calles this the 'fusion of nationalities'.

[21] For the history of the early Turkic speaking peoples in Inner Asia, see Sinor 1990, Scharlipp 1992, Golden 1992, Vásáry 1993, Soucek 2000. On the various religions of the region, see Foltz 1999.

[22] Soucek 2000: 83.

decision which was bitterly opposed by some of the conservative Mongol leaders. This led to the eventual division of the Chaghatay *ulus*, with Transoxania becoming Muslim and Moghulistan in Eastern Turkestan resisting Islamic expansion.[23] However, this resistance gradually diminished, and the Chaghatayids' Islamization was accomplished with the conversion of Tughluq Temür (r. 1347–1363).

The next important period is marked by the name of another famous conqueror, that of Timur the Lame (r. 1370–1405) and the ensuing hegemony of his dynasty (1370–1507). Although Timur's military campaigns also affected Eastern Turkestan, his invasions never resulted in a sustained occupation of the region. Ruling over a unified China, the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) gained control over the former Uyghur oases of Turfan and Qumul. The Muslim rulers of Moghulistan launched a holy war against the infidels of the Turfan region, and the Islamization of Eastern Turkestan was completed during the sixteenth century. By this time, most of Moghulistan had probably become linguistically Turkified and culturally fully integrated into the Turco-Persian Islamic civilization of Central Asia. The mystical stream of Islam, which had entered Eastern Turkestan early in its history, gained new momentum in the sixteenth century, when representatives of the Naqshbandi brotherhood started wielding considerable influence. Chaghatayid rule over Eastern Turkestan was splitting up into smaller political units, with their centres in Aqsu, Kashgar, Yarkand and Turfan. In Kashgar the descendants of Makhdūm-i Aʿzam (d. 949/1542)—a Muslim theologian hailing from Bukhara—established themselves and founded the saintly lineage of the Eastern Turkestani *khojas*. They split into two major branches—the White and the Black Mountains—and became the major political force in the southern oases of Eastern Turkestan. Their rivalry continued to shape regional politics until the eighteenth century.[24]

Internal factionalism was further complicated by the threat posed by various tribal forces, including the Kirghiz, the Kazakhs, the Uzbeks and the Mongols. In the seventeenth century, the western Mongols, adherents of Tibetan Buddhism subsumed under the generic name Oirat, occupied first the area north of the Tian Shan and then gradually

[23] On the strong cultural as well as political ties with Transoxania, see Bellér-Hann et al. 2007.

[24] On this period see Togan 1992, 2001, Paul 2003, Papas 2004.

expanded their hegemony to the south. In 1678, much of the Tarim Basin was conquered by the Oirat leader, Galdan. At various times, the *khoja* factions tried to co-opt the Oirats as allies against each other, while the early eighteenth century was characterized by the military rivalry of the Oirat and the Manchus, which ended with the victory of the latter and the *de facto* incorporation of much of Eastern Turkestan into the Qing Empire.[25] The conquest of Zungharia by the Manchus, together with internecine fighting, starvation and smallpox resulted in devastating depopulation of the region. The southern oases of Kashgar and Yarkand fell to the Qing troops in 1759. The demise of the *khoja* hegemony was only partially caused by factionalism; another important reason was that the *khojas* lacked their own military base; their power was secured by the military support of the mostly nomadic Zunghar and Kirghiz troops.[26] They finally lost political control to the Qing dynasty in the eighteenth century, and the region continued under Manchu rule (with a series of brief interruptions) until the demise of the dynasty in 1911.

Initially, the region was integrated into the Qing Empire as an imperial possession and was ruled by a governor general from Ili. The administration was divided into the Northern and the Southern Route (Bei Lu and Nan Lu), each headed by an *amban*, or lieutenant governor. This was the beginning of a long era of foreign rule, the first decades of which were characterized by relative stability and prosperity, interrupted on occasion by repeated disturbances in the south. These Muslim rebellions typically enjoyed the support of the Khoqand Khanate (1826, 1830, 1846, 1857) but were all successfully crushed. In 1862, Qing forces were diverted by a major Muslim rebellion in Gansu. This enabled Ya'qub Beg (r. 1864–1877), an Andijani, to lay the foundations of an independent Islamic state in 1864. The causes of the Muslim rebellion which led to Ya'qub Beg's ascendance to power were complex and included the worsening socio-economic conditions of the population, the breakdown of Chinese control over the region and Russia's expansion into Central Asia. Ya'qub Beg's short-lived rule was characterized by an almost frantic centralization of both

[25] For a recent history of the Islamic khanates prior to the Qing occupation, see Li 2003.

[26] Paul 2003.

military power and civil government, the establishment of international diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire, Britain and Russia, and further economic decline. His religious policy was particularly resented, since it launched a strong attack on lax morality, which was blamed on infidel rule. In his attempts to promote Islamic law, he enforced the veiling of women in public and the active participation of men in communal prayers. He also attacked wine drinking and gambling, which he considered incompatible with an Islamic way of life; drunkards, brawlers, disorderly behaviour and neglect of prayers were all severely punished. On the one hand, he promoted the building and repair of mosques and saintly tombs and supported pious foundations; on the other, he persecuted prominent Sufi leaders. Even if they enforced his policies, they represented the regional loci of power and therefore posed a potential danger to his rule.[27]

In spite of many drastic changes, Ya'qub Beg's era was marked by a number of continuities as well. The old *bäg* officials employed by the Manchu were integrated into his administration to become part of the new ruling elite; this may have contributed to the widespread resentment of his rule. This continuity may have been behind the words of a contemporary poet, whose sentiments expressed the general perseverance of social practices on the familial and communal levels: "The Chinese disappeared and Islam became open wide. But in cities and countryside the [same] old practices remained."[28]

Following Ya'qub Beg's defeat in 1877, the region was almost completely reconquered by the Qing with the exception of Ili in the north, which remained under Russian occupation until 1881.[29] In 1884 Xinjiang was granted provincial status and was subjected to major administrative reforms. One of the most important changes was that the upper ranks of the bureaucracy—which had previously included Manchus, Mongols and even Turki—were replaced by Han Chinese who attempted to govern directly at the local level, thus limiting the power of the native *bäg*s. In spite of their being downgraded, local *bäg*s still retained a great deal of autonomy, since, on account of the linguistic and cultural barriers between the native population and Chinese bureaucrats, their services could not be easily dispensed with. Thus, in spite of

[27] Kim 2004, esp. pp. 129–31.
[28] Kim 2004: 45.
[29] Concerning the situation of this region under Russian occupation, see Pantusov's detailed report (1881).

Qing efforts to reduce the *bägs* from officials to official servants, indirect rule was not abandoned but restructured.[30] From the late nineteenth century, Xinjiang became the focus of the 'Great Game' The region opened up to European influences, especially at times of decentralization, when the grip of the Chinese state temporarily loosened.[31]

The final defeat of the Muslim rebellions of Eastern Turkestan did not change the fact that the region remained an integral part of the wider Islamic world. This became particularly evident during the first decades of the Republican era (1912–1949), which followed the demise of the Manchu dynasty. This so-called warlord period was shaped by the rule of three long-serving governors: Yang Zengxin (r. 1912–1928), Jin Shuren (r. 1928–1933) and Sheng Shicai (r. 1933–1943). The Republican period brought a certain degree of independence for the province, albeit always under the control of warlords who disregarded the turbulent centre and carried on with their own foreign and internal policies arbitrarily. They collected their own taxes, had their own military forces and built up a Han-dominated group of loyal administrators, among them many Chinese Muslims. Despite these changes native leaders continued to deal with local affairs which meant the perpetuation of indirect rule.[32] Under Governor Yang the Qing administrative system was adopted with only a few changes and, on the lower administrative level, the *bägs* continued to hold power and authority in some areas. Governor Yang's rule was characterized by an excessive fear of revolt, distrust of his subordinates and anxiety towards the reformist and egalitarian influences coming from Western Turkestan. Corruption and abuse of power by officials were rife, and the general economic situation was rapidly deteriorating. This was partly due to the fact that the heavy subsidies coming from the imperial centre in the previous era now ceased and at the same time trade with the Russians declined. Exploitative economic policies contributed to general impoverishment and discontent. Yang's unpopularity grew not only among the Muslim subject populations but also among fellow Han Chinese, and it was the latter who eventually assassinated him.[33]

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[30] Millward 2007: 139–41.

[31] Hopkirk 1997.

[32] McMillen 1979: 19. For two excellent studies of this period see Forbes 1986 and Newby 1986.

[33] Forbes 1986: 13–37.

Yang's successor Jin Shuren pursued similar policies, leaving the administrative system inherited from the late Qing untouched and stepping up the measures of surveillance and censorship. Misguided and exploitative practices such as the dramatic increase in land tax and inflation, caused by the issue of large amounts of paper money, led to a further deterioration of economic conditions. Jin's initial isolationism, which bordered on xenophobia, had to give way to Soviet penetration into Xinjiang and with it an increase in Soviet political influence.[34]

The 1930s and 1940s saw several Muslim insurgencies, growing nationalism among the Turkic-speaking Muslims and increasing Soviet economic and political influence. The series of Muslim rebellions which shook the region in the early 1930s was provoked by the policies of Jin Shuren, who also antagonized much of the population by annexing the Qumul Khanate, the last symbol of Islamic autonomy.[35] In his analysis of the causes of the rebellions, Andrew Forbes attributes a particularly important role to regional factionalism. He emphasizes continuities in the divided political loyalties of the three main regions between imperial times and the Republican era. Thus, due to historical reasons, the Qumul-Turfan area in the east remained generally closer to the Chinese, as did the Han Chinese and Chinese Muslims of Zungharia in the north. The Taranchi population, i.e., the Turkic-speaking Muslims settled in the north from the Tarim Basin, increasingly came under Russian influence.

Even regions with a traditional history of close relations with China were not exempt from rebellions, as testified by the Qumul and Turfan rebellions in the early 1930s, but it was the south, with Kashgar as its centre which emerged as the stronghold of conservative Islamic traditionalists, who opposed both Chinese rule and socialist ideology. It was here that, as a culmination of the uprisings, the short-lived Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan of 1933 and 1934 was declared, with a leadership dominated by anti-Han, anti-Tungan[36] and anti-Soviet sentiments. The rebellions in the south were brought under control following Soviet intervention in 1934 and 1937. Anticipating German victory over the Soviet Union, in 1942 Governor Sheng broke with the

[34] Ibid.: 38–42.

[35] Due to their assistance to the Qing in their fight against the Oirats and continuing loyalty to the Qing, the Khans (*wangs*) of Qumul and Turfan enjoyed special privileges under the Qing, ruling over their khanates with a quasi-independent status.

[36] Tungan is the generic term for the Chinese Muslims (Hui) in Central Asia.

Soviets and instead supported the Guomindang government. Muslim discontent with Chinese rule flared up again, this time in the north, where it was most likely encouraged by the Soviets, who tried to force Sheng to restore their economic privileges in the 'Three Regions'. With Soviet military support, the Eastern Turkestan Republic was established in Ili in 1945. While the rebellion ten years earlier had had a primarily Islamic character, uniting Turkic- and Chinese-speaking Muslim groups against the non-Muslim Han, this second uprising had a pan-Turkic character. The Ili rebellion (1944–1949) had a mostly progressive leadership which distanced itself from conservative Islamic forces and was opposed to the Nationalist Government. This explains how it came to be interpreted by the Chinese Communist Party not as a separatist movement of the Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang but as a manifestation of their support for the Chinese communists. The late 1940s saw the emergence of regional governments, finally ending in the incorporation of the whole region into the People's Republic in 1949. In 1955, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region was established.[37]

2.3 *People*[38]

2.3.1 *The Uyghur/Turki*

The variety of names applied to the region is paralleled by its diverse ethnic make-up. The inhabitants are currently divided into thirteen officially recognized ethnic groups: Uyghur, Han, Tajik, Kirghiz, Kazak, Hui, Sibe, Mongolian, Tatar, Manchu, Daur, Russian and Uzbek. In addition to these categories, numerous unofficial subdivisions based on self-perceptions further complicate the picture.

There can be no doubt that a number of diverse ethnic and linguistic groups have contributed to the formation of the people identified as the modern Uyghur today.[39] In this complicated process, an important part was played by the Indo-European substratum, the Tibetan- and Mongolian-speaking groups, and the various Turkic groups whose

[37] For the history of the region during the Republican period see McMillen 1979, Newby 1986, Forbes 1986, Benson 1989, Millward and Tursun 2004, Millward 2007.

[38] For brief general introductions, see Moses 1984, Gladney 2000.

[39] The complexities of their ethnogenesis have been discussed in detail by Gladney (1990) and Geng Shimin (1984).

arrival preceded the appearance of the 'Old Uyghur', whose empire was defeated in Mongolia by the nomadic Kirghiz and who were then forced to move to the south and south-west. One large group dispersed in the oasis centres of the Tarim Basin where they 'fused' with the local population.[40] In these processes, new loyalties emerged, and old ones were forgotten; certain existing ties became foregrounded at the expense of others; bonds of language, religion and other traits, often regarded as primordial in the literature on ethnicity, were challenged.

In these processes, Islamization and Turkification played particularly important roles. They laid the foundations for a number of features which retrospectively could be recognized both by local actors and by outsiders as commonalities available to be mobilized in the formation of a modern Uyghur ethnic identity, a development which started assuming discernible contours in the early twentieth century. Simultaneously, however, the very same features could also act as catalysts for fragmentation: for example, regional dialects or levels of religious morality could be recognized and exploited for highlighting differences in group stereotyping. On the level of popular practices, adherence to Islam could take on many different forms, for example by stressing distinctions along gender lines, or according to membership in Sufi organisations, craft guilds and other types of affiliation.

The modern Uyghur received this ethnonym only in the early twentieth century, when it was bestowed upon them by representatives of the northern and southern oases at a meeting in Tashkent in May and June of 1921.[41] Prior to this time, they had been referred to by a variety of names, none of which had ever been exclusively applied to the group identified as the Uyghur today. Before 1949, when the region was incorporated into the PRC, the oasis-dwelling, sedentary Muslims of Eastern Turkestan were often referred to by outsiders as Sart, an old term which originally meant 'merchant'.[42] The term was initially used by Turkic- and Mongolian-speaking groups to denote West Iranians after they gained control over trade with nomadic peoples. In post-Mongol Central Asia, Sart was used in the same sense as Tajik

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[40] Geng Shimin 1984.

[41] The decision was opposed by the Russian Orientalist W. Barthold on the grounds that historically the ethnonym had had a much more restricted usage, being exclusively applied to Turkic speaking Buddhist groups (Malov 1934: 307; Cf. Hoppe 1998: 56).

[42] Friederich 2001: 106, 151, note 93.

and essentially meant 'sedentary', in contrast to Türk which connoted 'nomadic' Eventually, it was used generally for settled agriculturalists and especially town dwellers both in the Tarim Basin and adjacent regions, regardless of linguistic affiliation.[43]

The Chinese designation, *chan-tou*, meaning 'turban head', did not distinguish the Turkic-speaking Muslims from the Chinese Muslims or Tungan. The indigenous sources I have used for the present work refer to the language and the people as Turki, and do not distinguish them from other speakers of Turkic languages in the neighbouring areas. Some authors have emphasized the absence of a unified ethnonym over a period of more than five hundred years and pointed out the salience of the local identifications.[44] The profusion of imprecise terms with partially overlapping meanings was largely the result of outsiders' labelling These names were relativist in the sense that they were based on contrasting differences. They drew on various 'obvious', tangible markers of identity, such as economy, religion and language, some or all of which could be shared with others. The fuzziness implied by these names foreshadowed the imprecise, contingent nature of modern Uyghur identity.

2.3.2 *The Han Chinese*

The Han Chinese of Xinjiang, the major political counterparts of the Uyghur, are also far from being homogeneous: they arrived at different times, from different directions and social backgrounds. Lattimore identifies four categories among them:

1. Descendants of criminals and officials who had been exiled from China during the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries;
2. Descendants of families of military and civil officers, who mostly came from the provinces of Hunan, Yunnan, Gansu and Manchuria;
3. Descendants of merchants, including moneychangers from Shanxi, traders from Tianjin and brick-tea merchants from Hubei and Hunan;

[43] Barthold [Subtelny] 1997.
[44] Rudelson 1997: 6, Hoppe 1998: 57.

4. Descendants of peasants who started immigrating into the region in 1776, when an imperial edict provided for a subsidy for those who would settle in Xinjiang.[45]

Millward points out that, although there was a steady influx of Han Chinese into the region after the Qing conquest, there were also major fluctuations in migration policies and patterns. Between 1760 and 1830, when Qing agricultural colonies were developed (especially in Zungharia), the Chinese population in Xinjiang grew to around 155,000, although during this time the Qing prohibited Chinese migrants from settling permanently and bringing their families. This policy was changed after 1831, when permanent Chinese migration with dependents was not only permitted but encouraged. New waves of Chinese immigration were fostered in the post-Qing period by policies to extend and consolidate state power and land reclamation programmes in the 1930s and 1940s.[46] Non-Muslim populations experienced a sharp decline in the 1860s and 1930s.[47]

2.4 *Summary*

Following the Qing occupation of the Tarim Basin and Zungharia in the mid-eighteenth century, the region became a territorially bounded political unit. Habitat and economy differentiated the pastoralists who occupied the mountain slopes from the sedentary populations. The political frame was provided by the Qing Empire, which exercised a form of indirect rule over the local population.[48] The region remained open to neighbouring lands up until the communist occupation, and foreign influences played a major role in the adjacent oases. Nonetheless, the continuous presence of Manchu banner men and Chinese merchants and administrators also shaped local self-definitions and led to a gradual reorientation towards China. This process was contested by other points of reference for local self-definitions, particularly by Russian/Soviet influence in the north. However, the incorporation into the PRC in 1949 marked its completion, which eventually was made

[45] Lattimore 1975: 50.
[46] Millward 2007: 104–5, 190, 212, 215.
[47] Millward 2000: 123.
[48] For descriptions of the bureaucratic organization of this rule in the nineteenth century see Saguchi 1963.

manifest by the closing of international borders. The history of the Uyghur prior to 1949 subsumes the history of many small communities, whose size and other characteristics were determined primarily by geographical factors. Among sedentary populations, the key unit was the oasis. This was recognized in the administrative classification of the colonizers. Indigenous texts from the late nineteenth century indicate a high level of identification with the oasis. This was especially so in the southern oases, to which a specific religious-historical heritage was ascribed through the attribution of Islamic epithets. However, local identification did not start or end at the oasis level. Indigenous texts frequently use the collective name of Altishahr, or Six Cities, for the major oases of the south. It is questionable to what extent this rather imprecise concept designated a land with a shared collective identity, but the permanent Islamic epithets emphasized a common religious heritage. Simultaneously, the oases were conceptualized as locations which were also very different from each other. Each oasis consisted of several market centres and villages, within which hamlets and neighbourhoods constituted lower-level foci for identity.

Gladney's concept of relational alterity allows for the specification of shifting, multiple ties of belonging, ranging from identification with the oasis, township, village and hamlet to the family, gender, occupation and education.[49] It can accommodate ethnic and national loyalties, and a great deal more besides. In one's family and neighbourhood, people learn and practise how to be social. They do this through being socialized into a world where, from the very beginning, they have multiple memberships into nested and often cross-cutting groupings. Social ties with members of these groups give rise to sentiments of attachment, security, familiarity and predictability, which in turn equip and enable individuals to act, create, maintain and perpetuate social relationships. Like the emic models of self-perception and self-definition, modern state discourse also builds on historical antecedents and makes random and contingent use of much of the same repertoire that ethnic identity exploits in its constant recreation. In what follows we shall introduce this repertoire, but before doing so a more general overview of regional identities and social structure is in order.

[49] Gladney 1996.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A late nineteenth-century author perceptively characterized local Turki society as both despotic and democratic, a formulation which referred to the simultaneous presence of both hierarchical and egalitarian principles.[1] I argue that this egalitarian tendency expressed a normative need for social justice, which was based on the ideal of reciprocity and sharing, through which community could be created, expressed, perpetuated and reproduced. Most people living in towns and villages belonged to a mosque community in which membership was fixed. Although it was perfectly acceptable for a person to attend the mosque of another neighbourhood occasionally as a guest, abandoning one's own mosque permanently for another one was considered not only inappropriate but unacceptable.[2] Community membership was therefore ascribed from birth and constituted a stable, given identity. Since membership was closely related to residence, a mosque community could include households of diverse economic and social standing. Its notional equality was far from lived realities, in which differences based on wealth, office and social or religious prestige were regularly emphasized. The strong hierarchical structure emerging from this picture corresponds to the pattern characteristic of other pre-industrial agricultural societies. In this chapter we shall consider the diverse ways in which boundaries were drawn, perpetuated and crossed.

3.1 *From Ya'qub Beg to Mao*

The political history of the region was characterized by many changes, both upheavals and periods of stability, centralization and power vacuums. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, two events stand out for their direct and dramatic influence upon everyday life. One was the seizure of power by Ya'qub Beg, the other the inclusion

[1] Grenard 1898a: 146. See also Lindholm 1996: 13.
[2] Prov. 207. I.17.

of the region into the People's Republic of China in 1949—in socialist rhetoric, the 'Liberation'. The current official view identifies 'Liberation' as the most important turning point in modern history, when political control once again effectively reverted back to Chinese hands.

Political events, rebellions and wars brought temporary disruption, but social practices persisted virtually unimpeded. This pattern was briefly interrupted under Ya'qub Beg's Islamic theocracy, but his extreme measures to enforce the observance of Islamic law did not go against the grain of local tradition, and—ideologically at least—they even created favourable conditions for its persistence.[3] Following 1949, the socialist authorities maintained imperial traditions of indirect rule, but they also introduced fundamental changes in the local economy and society, which subverted local ideologies and were detrimental to the perpetuation of traditional practices.

In the mid-1990s, social life in Xinjiang prior to 1949 was often presented by local people and my Chinese co-researchers as traditional, monolithic and unchanging. They dubbed it *kona jämiyät*, or 'old society' Such a view is deceptive, since important transformations were taking place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This overwhelmingly agrarian, peasant society underwent significant changes between these two dramatic upheavals, but the pace of change was slower than the rapid transformations brought about by social engineers after 1949. This slower pace of change was interpreted by numerous Western visitors as stagnation. Their yardstick was often the industrialized Western world. Typical of disparaging views implying backwardness and underdevelopment is the treatment of certain topics like local medicine in Western reports: when such issues are broached at all, they tend to be negative. Travellers and missionaries often acted as medicine men, not only because the drugs of the West were overrated but also because of the perceived gap between local and Western health care. This situation was still characteristic of the Republican period. During his visit to the region in the years 1927 through 1929, Colonel Schomberg remarked,

> A good hospital and a travelling doctor would save many lives and much suffering in Central Asia. At present between Kashgar and Urumchi (a distance of 800 miles) no skilled aid can be had; and nowhere in the

[3] Kim 2004.

> whole of the immense province of Xinjiang is there any modern equipment even of the most modest kind, without which no small hospital in Europe could exist.[4]

Although this view fails to appreciate local knowledge and its achievements, which had such respectable antecedents as Arabic and Chinese medicine, to some extent it gives voice to local views. During fieldwork in Kashgar in the 1990s, I met a number of elderly people who spoke appreciatively of the medical centre run by the Swedish Mission in Kashgar in the first half of the twentieth century.[5] It was only during the Republican period that the first generation of young people were sent to the Soviet Union to be trained as medical doctors and veterinary specialists in the Western tradition.[6]

Reports commenting on stagnation were balanced out by occasional comments on change. An alert observer such as the German archaeologist Albert von Le Coq could even detect changes over a period spanning less than a decade. Compared to conditions during his previous visit, he noted several important changes in Eastern Turkestan in 1913 and 1914, among them the expansion of cotton production at the expense of wheat. He also noted an increase in the population size of the oasis of Kashgar.[7] The combination of population increase and the partial shift in land use from subsistence-oriented farming towards commercial crops rendered local resources more scarce and increased poverty. Demographic factors caused growing pressure on both land and water, giving rise to seasonal labour migration which typically took Western Turkestan as its primary destination. The scale of trans-regional labour migration of local men was blamed by one author for creating an imbalance between the sexes, which led to an excess of women.[8]

Waves of political migration could take the form of internal migration: at the turn of the twentieth century in Kucha, there were many migrants from Qumul who had been expelled from their homeland at the time of Ya'qub Beg's rule.[9] As a result of Tsarist expansionist policies in the nineteenth century, a sizeable portion of Eastern

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[4] Schomberg 1996: 28–9.

[5] Concerning Swedish presence in the region see Jarring 1974, 1983.

[6] Oral communication from my landlady in Almaty, originally from Urumchi, whose stepfather was one of the first veterinary specialists of Xinjiang.

[7] Le Coq 1928: 30–1.

[8] Lansdell 1893: 409.

[9] Le Coq 1919: 78.

Turkestanis came under Russian rule, especially in the Ferghana and Ili valleys.[10] In the 1920s and 1930s, collectivization on the Soviet side, purges and anti-religious policies caused many to move to China. Such movements changed the horizons of both the migrants and their home communities. Even at times when restrictions were enforced, commercial activities, individual travel and pilgrimages ensured that contact with the outside world was perpetuated.[11]

Although northern Xinjiang experienced a period of Russian colonial administration in the late nineteenth century,[12] Russian and later Soviet influence only really started to penetrate Xinjiang in unprecedented ways in the twentieth century when White Russians sought refuge here and Russian goods flooded the local bazaars. In the cities, the reformist Jadid movement of the Muslims of the Russian Empire, and later Soviet socialist ideology, made inroads.[13] Impressed with what they saw in the West during business trips and the pilgrimage to Mecca, rich merchants started sending their children abroad to study, either to Russia or to the Ottoman Empire. During the early years of the twentieth century, the first efforts were made to modernize the antiquated education system in southern Xinjiang, not only in towns but also in the countryside. Numbering houses in the European fashion was one of the new administrative methods of modernization.[14]

In the second half of the 1930s, under Soviet influence, atheist propaganda demanded that Muslim women should appear in public unveiled. Many boys and girls were sent to Soviet Central Asia to study, and Soviet experts were brought to work in construction, health, education and the military. The anti-Islamic character of this move to modernize is shown by several measures. The modernization of the curriculum meant cutting back religious studies and the inclusion of military training. Turkis who refused to accept the new currency issued in Urumchi were beaten up and, in some cases, "nailed by their ears to the walls of the Id-gah mosque".[15] During the terror of Governor Sheng

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[10] Their presence facilitated later waves of politically motivated cross-border migrations in Soviet and post-Soviet times.

[11] Such contacts, especially commercial and political relations with neighbouring lands and peoples, are outside the scope of the present book (see Millward 1998, Newby 2005).

[12] For a description of this period see Pantusov 1881.

[13] On Jadidism see Khalid 1998.

[14] Skrine & Nightingale 1973: 162.

[15] Forbes 1986: 139.

religious literature was forbidden, but Soviet-style social clubs were encouraged, at least in urban centres:

> These clubs became the centres of Soviet propaganda and proved a great help in increasing Soviet influence. The smoking of hashish and opium was forbidden but drinking *araq* and vodka was encouraged, probably in order to undermine Moslem traditions... At the same time the Soviets tried to liquidate the remnants of the 'reactionary' Moslem and nationalist leaders in Sinkiang, some of whom were refugees from Soviet Asia. The mosques were closed or converted into clubs and theatres. The *mullahs* were publicly ridiculed and persecuted.[16]

It was in reaction to these anti-Islamic trends that the emerging nationalist movements in the 1930s promoted Islam, while at the same time isolating themselves from the non-Turkic Muslim groups. Thus the Committee for National Revolution, founded in Khotan in 1932, had an anti-communist, anti-Christian, anti-Tungan, anti-Chinese and pro-Islamic character. After the capture of the New City in Khotan, many Chinese were forcibly converted to Islam, Hindu moneylenders were murdered and Swedish missionaries were expelled.[17] The Turkish-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan, founded on November 12, 1933, also had a strong Islamic character.[18] However, it did not last long and did not succeed in liberating Xinjiang from Chinese rule.

The break with the Soviets in the early 1940s affected market supplies negatively and, soon led to a shortage of manufactured goods such as sugar, salt and tea. Guomindang policies favoured merchants from China proper, while local traders suffered economic discrimination. Han Chinese settlement in the region was actively promoted. The occupation of land—always a scarce commodity—by Han peasants was deeply resented, while the maintenance of permanent troops also added to discontent, since it entailed increased taxation and forced labour.[19] It was such misrule which eventually provoked the major revolt in Ili, and it was in response to popular discontent that, in 1946, numerous reforms were introduced to placate the Turkis.

Political, ideological and economic changes were closely intertwined, but their influence on the population was sporadic and uneven, especially when compared to the dramatic introduction of new policies after 1949.

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[16] Ibid.: 1986: 137–9; 154–7.
[17] Ibid.: 84.
[18] Shipton 1950: 128.
[19] Forbes 1986: 166–7.

I suggest that it is perhaps justified to characterize the pre-1949 period as 'early modern'. This contradicts local usage, which refers to this period as the 'old' social order, with connotations of 'untainted', 'pure' traditions. This perception of the past is influenced by socialist rhetoric and by the recognition that the rupture of 1949 was deeper and more violent than any previous changes. Previous continuities were violated to an unprecedented degree. The adjectives 'traditional' and 'early modern' emphasize different aspects of the same complex processes, the former term capturing continuities, the latter acknowledging the impact of change. My main goal in this chapter is to reconstruct the pre-socialist social structures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Special attention is paid to 'local knowledge', since these elements constituted important repositories of the 'commons' and, therefore, of community.

3.2 *Demography and Group Relations*

The relative political stability of the first sixty years of Qing rule affected the demography of Xinjiang favourably: south of the Tian Shan, in the Tarim Basin, the size of the population doubled, as did the area of cultivated farmland.[20] There were also changes in the distribution of the population. In 1760, 300 settlers moved from Aqsu to Ili to cultivate the vast agricultural lands of Zungharia and to support the military and civil administrations there. Known as the Taranchi, their numbers approached 34,000 by 1800.[21] This enforced population movement in the eighteenth century must have played an important role in fostering a convergence of social practices and values between the Turkic speaking sedentary populations of the north and the south. Further demographic changes were prompted by the settlement in Zungharia of Han Chinese and Chinese Muslim families that received generous land donations from the government as an incentive.[22]

In contrast to Zungharia, early Qing policies in the Tarim Basin aimed at keeping contact between the local population and the Chinese colonists to a minimum and prohibited soldiers, banner men and mer-

[20] Saguchi 1963: 259, Fletcher 1978: 69.
[21] Millward 1998: 50, Fletcher 1978: 65.
[22] Ibid.: 69. The privileges offered to the new settlers included at least 30 *mo* land, a set of tools, seeds, a horse, and two silver *taels* per household (Millward 1998: 51).

chants from bringing their families to settle permanently. In the wake of the Jahangir rebellion, this policy was reversed in the 1830s and, in an effort to strengthen control over the region, previous restrictions on permanent Tungan and Chinese settlement in Altishahr were lifted.[23] The influx of Han Chinese into the region was occasinally interrupted especially during the Muslim revolts of the nineteenth century, when many were killed or forced to leave.[24] When political power shifted and the Qing regained control over the region, many members of the local elite escaped from Kashgar to Western Turkestan.[25] Wars and massacres during the nineteenth century also resulted in significant losses among locals, especially in the male population.[26]

Travellers often attempted to estimate the population of the various settlements. Although authors usually made it clear whether their estimates were for a market town or for a whole oasis, they typically remained vague as to the boundaries between the town centre and surrounding suburbs and villages. A further difficulty in guaging population size on the basis of these sources is that larger sub-regions were vaguely defined: Kashgaria and Altishahr were often used synonymously to denote the south-western part of Eastern Turkestan, with north-eastern Uyghuristan making up the other part. But, occasionally, 'Altishahr' meant the whole of Eastern Turkestan.[27]

Saguchi estimated the total indigenous population of Altishahr to be 260,000 at the time of the Qing conquest, with the region west of Kucha having a higher population density than the eastern parts.[28] The entire indigenous population of Eastern Turkestan south of the Tian Shan in the early nineteenth century was approximately 300,000, of whom 70 per cent lived in Kashgaria and only 10 per cent in the eastern parts, in Uyghuristan. This figure did not include foreigners living permanently in the region, or their children from native women.[29] The Forsyth mission gave various estimates for individual oases at the time of its visit in the 1870s. A typical entry is that for Khotan, which was said to have about 6,000 houses.[30]

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[23] Ibid.: 51.
[24] Hoppe 1998: 312.
[25] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 58.
[26] Forsyth 1875: 33.
[27] Fletcher 1978: 69.
[28] Saguchi 1963: 198.
[29] Fletcher 1978: 69.
[30] Forsyth 1875: 33.

In the late nineteenth century, Yarkand city centre reportedly had about 5,000 houses, and the total population of the city was estimated at 20,000 souls, mostly Turkis, Tatars, and Chinese converts and the offspring of mixed marriages, while the wider oasis had approximately 224,000 inhabitants. Two thousand families belonged to foreign settlers who came from Andijan, Badakhshan, Kashmir, Hindustan and Kabul. The Qing garrison here was manned by about 5,000 men, and there was a floating population of nearly 10,000 camp-followers, settlers, peddlers and merchants.[31] Yengi Hisar had 8,000 houses altogether, 2,000 of them in the city and the immediate suburbs. The actual town had only 600 houses; the rest of the population lived in agricultural settlements, and the oasis had a total population of 56,000. In the 1870s, the fortification was described as decaying, and the oasis was characterized by general neglect and poverty. This city had many Chinese, who converted to Islam after Ya'qub Beg's ascendance to power.[32] The city of Kashgar and its immediate suburbs had about 5,000 houses, and the whole oasis had 16,000. With an average of seven persons in each house, members of the British Forsyth mission calculated that the total oasis population was approximately 112,000 souls.[33] The oasis of Kucha had about 6,000 houses, 2,000 of which were located in the town and its suburbs. The total population of the oasis was estimated at 42,000 souls, and 600 soldiers manned its garrison.[34] The estimated populations of other oases were as follows: Khotan, 120,800; Uch Turfan, 14,000; Aqsu, 84,000; Korla; 14,000; Qarashahr, 56,000; Turfan, 126,000; Lop, 70,000; Maralbashi, 35,000; and Sarikol, 17,000.[35] At the turn of the twentieth century, the eastern oasis town of Turfan had about 6,000 inhabitants and 1,690 houses.[36] Each household numbered four to a dozen souls.[37]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Russian Kuropatkin estimated the population of Kashgaria to 1,200,000,[38] a figure closely corresponding to Forsyth's population data, according to which the

[31] Ibid.: 35–6.
[32] Ibid.: 370.
[33] Ibid.: 1875: 38.
[34] Ibid.: 44; 441.
[35] Ibid.: 62. It seems that these estimates relate to the whole oases rather than to the oasis centres and their immediate surroundings, as we find in Forsyth.
[36] Mannerheim 1969: 352.
[37] Forsyth 1875: 254.
[38] Vámbéry 1970: 343.

region comprised 1,015,000 people living in 145,000 households. Grenard estimated the total population of the province to be about 2.5 million people, with 800,000 in Kashgar, 250,000 in Yarkand, 160,000 in Khotan, 80,000 around Keriya, and 40,000 in Maralbashi.[39] For Maralbashi, together with its neighbouring villages, Sven Hedin estimated 1,000 houses.[40] Elsewhere, population figures for the end of the nineteenth century are given at 80,000 for Kashgar, and 800,000 for Eastern Turkestan.[41] For the period from the 1920s to the 1930s, the missionary Golomb gave a population aggregate of 150,000 for the city of Kashgar, 300,000 for the rural population of the oasis of Kashgar, and 250,000 for the Yarkand oasis, an estimated one third of which lived in the cities.[42] Even when the figures for individual settlements are more or less consistent, the imprecise definition of place names in general, the lack of local population censuses and the difficulties of separating town and countryside render the demographic figures problematic. In 1909, the Chinese authorities started a census in Sarikol and ordered the *mollas* of southern Xinjiang to keep a register of births, deaths and changes of tenancy.[43] Such measures must have served the purpose of keeping track more systematically of the taxpaying subject populations. However, I have no reliable information concerning how far these orders were followed by the *mollas* and where these records, if ever systematically kept, are located.

As for the unreliability of demographic data, in the 1920s Golomb noted that although he was aware that most authors reported two million to three million as the total population of Eastern Turkestan in 1922, he was assured by the provincial governor Yang that in fact the population was around five million. He added, "No real census has ever been made, any more than in other parts of China, but the governor has a good basis for his estimate in the number of tax-payers".[44] In 1931, the provincial government estimated the total population to be six million, while the Urumchi postal administration reckoned that it was as high as eight million.[45] In a survey of the population landscape

[39] Grenard 1898a: 260–1.
[40] Hedin 2001.I.: 166.
[41] Schultz 1921: 27.
[42] Golomb 1959: 37–8.
[43] Skrine & Nightingale 1973: 162.
[44] Golab 1951: 188, Note 1.
[45] These figures are quoted in Kazak 1937: 9. If we consider the methods of lower level officials described below in more detail, which included underreporting

of Xinjiang, Toops gives an overall figure for the province population in 1941 of 3,730,000, of which 2,984,000 were Uyghur, 187,000 Han, 326,000 Kazakh, 92,000 Hui and 65,000 Kirghiz.[46] For 1949, Hoppe estimates the total population to be 4,334,000.[47] Although all of these figures are no more than broad estimates, they give some idea of the order of magnitude of the various settlements.

3.2.1 *Foreigners and Locals*

Demographic data in the sources were often peppered with references to groups which were considered to be outsiders or foreigners. From all these representations, it is clear that the population of the region was far from homogenous. Although Turkis dominated, many other groups represented neighbouring and faraway regions, including co-religionists from Western Turkestan and India, Chinese Muslims from neighbouring provinces, Han Chinese, Tibetans and Europeans,[48] and there are also references to nomadic groups. Although in some of the descriptions we may recognize definitions of groups which could be identified with modern ethnic groups, the categories of 'outsider' and 'stranger' were not simply constructed along linguistic, ethnic, racial or religious lines but followed more complex patterns.

Some authors describing the region emphasize its openness to foreign influences before 1949, while others prefer to prioritize the pull of localism. The nature and extent of diversity are judged differently by various commentators. The mountain ranges are sometimes seen as obstacles to communication with the outside world, but the importance of the great trade routes in the spread of various faiths, lifestyles and practices is recognized by most. The author of a Western mission report from the early 1930s speculated that, although the region was cut off from adjacent areas by large mountains, it was nonetheless in the heart of Asia, was crossed by important trade routes and "its frontier is the meeting place of four religions and three antagonistic systems

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demographic figures, one wonders whether the Urumchi post was not a more reliable source than the governor. For later demographic figures and the ethnic composition of the rapidly increasing population in Xinjiang see Hoppe 1998: 35, Toops 2000: 159, Millward 2000: 122–4.

[46] Toops 2000: 159.

[47] Hoppe 1998: 35.

[48] For a summary of such descriptions in late nineteenth century English language sources, see Warikoo 1985. Hoppe provides a comprehensive overview of the ethnic groups of modern Xinjiang (1998).

of government" He concluded that all these factors created a unique situation: few outsiders came here, but those who did represented a great variety of ethnic and linguistic, as well religious, affiliations. This diversity explained why the "Turkis were as indifferent as Londoners to the sight of small groups of strangers of widely various speech, clothing or race; but any large foreign colony in the small cosmos of each oasis would have been conspicuous and irritating" [49] While such opinions are highly judgmental, it is probably correct to say that both localism and trans-regionalism played a part in the life of the settled inhabitants.

Travel for commercial, religious, political or personal reasons connected the various oases to each other as well as to regions farther away, but the mobility of certain segments of the population was countered by the permanent residence of many more. Communications with other regions were never one-sided: Turks from the Ottoman Empire and people representing diverse regions of Asia and Europe travelled to the area, but there was evidently a reverse flow of movement, the scale of which is difficult to judge. Sporadic references suggest that at the beginning of the twentieth century, a number of Kashgarians were living and practising medicine in Istanbul, mainly specializing in repairing veins and blood vessels.[50] Some Eastern Turkestanis got as far as Europe, among them Mahmod Rähim, a Yarkandi man whose visit to Budapest in the early twentieth century was recorded by a Hungarian Turcologist.[51] Others completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, a journey which many probably combined with trading activities.

Back in Eastern Turkestan, market centres were exposed to foreign influences and had a more cosmopolitan demographic structure, while smaller settlements in more remote areas had more homogenous populations. According to one estimate in the 1850s, about one fourth of the population were not locals. Local and official understandings of 'foreigner' sometimes diverged. On the government level, the status of foreigners was determined in terms of their rights and obligations. During Ya'qub Beg's rule, for example, religion was a decisive factor; non-Muslim residents, including Hindu traders, were obliged to pay a double rate of tax but were denied certain rights, such as the wearing of turbans and the riding of saddled horses.[52] Informal classification

[49] Wingate 1931: 12.
[50] Hartmann 1902: 108.
[51] Kúnos 1966: 285.
[52] Bellew 1875b: 245, also quoted in Warikoo 1985: 93.

based on popular perceptions reflected group stereotyping, which was often more enduring and influential than government regulations.

Given the very sporadic presence of Europeans, European views played only a limited role in local processes of group inclusion and exclusion. However, since a great deal of the information quoted below was recorded by Europeans, their presence cannot be ignored. The Europeans comprised political representatives of England and Russia, as well as Christian missionaries, the largest number of whom came from Sweden, but there were English, Scottish, German, Dutch and others who, for longer or shorter periods, lived in the region. In addition, travellers, archaeologists and refugees were also present, some of whom contributed colour to the local ethnic constellation. Conspicuous among them was Father Hendricks, a familiar figure from a wide range of travelogues pertaining to the region in the early twentieth century; he was described by another foreigner as "Hollander by birth, Christian priest by profession, Mongolian citizen by love of his heart, dweller in Kashgar by love of change...".[53]

Westerners' accounts concerning locals are full of value judgments which reflect a certain ambivalence. Sometimes they are contradictory. In this respect, they conform neatly to the tendencies described in the 'Orientalism discourse' identified by Edward Said.[54] Many of these are summarized in Warikoo's pioneering article based on English travel literature written in the late nineteenth century. He concludes, for example, that, "known for their easy-going life, love of entertainment and travel, the Uyghurs could not unite to produce a common leader. All the contemporary accounts are unanimous in the opinion that the Uyghurs were peace-loving, hardworking, civil, respectful and contented, producing locally all the means necessary for their food and clothing".[55] Curiously, in the Western imagination, industriousness was perfectly compatible with a happy-go-lucky attitude towards life and a dislike of physical exertion. Thus, Lansdell described the Turkis as being people "beyond doubt hardworking" who earned "their daily bread literally by the sweat of their brow" Grenard confirmed that they were not only hardworking but also nonchalant, apathetic and characterized by a dislike of movement, physical exertion and a certain short-term

[53] Crosby 1905: 45.
[54] Said 1978.
[55] Warikoo 1985: 90.

attitude, as far as trade was concerned.[56] But there were some who attributed the Turkis' lack of physical and moral energy to "a dislike of hard, continuous work, and above all, of discipline".[57]

Observers in the early twentieth century also described the people of the country as good-tempered and hospitable, content to live as small cultivators and traders, lacking in enterprising spirit, and whose interest in politics was confined to local disputes over access to irrigation water.[58] They were also considered to be tame, submissive and ready to serve any master, provided that they could enjoy life in their own way, with feasting, women and music. As good qualities, their hospitality, marked politeness, law-abiding nature and lack of fanaticism are mentioned, as well as the obedience shown to spiritual leaders and lack of inclination towards rebellion,[59] a statement not entirely borne out by the historical experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Others saw them as both primitive and "singularly honest, most civil and respectful, every man rising as we went past and most of them salaaming with arms crossed in front".[60] Western representations display many of the characteristics of European superiority so typical of descriptions of the 'Orient', and negative evaluations of local attitudes towards work are doubtless informed by implicit comparisons with the capitalist world and the so-called protestant ethic. Such comparisons appear to be a common denominator of several descriptions; the explanation is sought not in the spheres of economy and development but in people's character, as is evidenced by the statement that locals' disposition did not favour the spirit of enterprise and initiative, and that they liked trade only because it required less effort and often yielded quicker results than tilling the land.[61]

In contrast, Martin Hartmann used the Kirghiz as his yardstick for comparison and said that the 'population of the plain'—i.e., the Turki—were behind the mountain dwellers in every respect. In his opinion, the people of the plain were given to drug addiction and gambling and carried on with these vices until their last possession was taken to the Chinese pawnshop, of which each district had several:

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[56] Lansdell 1893: 408, Grenard 1898a: 87–91.
[57] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 309.
[58] Skrine & Nightingale 1973: 18.
[59] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 309.
[60] Dunmore 1993: 274–5.
[61] Grenard 1898a: 88.

> These Turks had no moral strength to resist, no will power. Their interest for things spiritual is non-existent. In most cities not even crafts have capable representatives. Those are the best that have brought with them their peasant common sense, as is the case with the people of Yarkand, where life has taken on an urban character only in appearance. They are a sad society, these settled Kashgaris, depressed and sleepy.[62]

Chinese opinions about the Turkis may have influenced some Western authors, many of whom had contact with local Chinese officials to secure the formalities necessary for a longer stay in the region. According to Millward, following the region's incorporation into the empire there was a change of tone in the official representations of the Turki population by their colonial overlords. Negative traits such as craftiness, duplicity, greed, alcoholism, laziness, addiction to sex and other extremely pejorative images, which gazetteers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had attributed to the Turkis, were edited out from official documents in favour of a more positive representation.[63] But the perpetuation of negative representations in popular stereotypes was confirmed in the second half of the nineteenth century by Valikhanov, who stated that the Chinese accused the Turkis of mistrust, deceit, falseness, ignorance, laziness, promiscuity, cowardice and lack of devotion. In this author's understanding, mistrust and the propensity to falsehood had developed in the face of foreign rule; each was therefore deemed to be what a later scholar termed a 'weapon of the weak'.[64]

Some of the other traits of the Turki commented upon by Western authors paralleled the stereotypes of the Chinese sources. The Khoqandis too accused the Kashgaris of promiscuity and a lack of devotion.[65] Just as pejorative evaluations prove to be enduring, it is also possible to find antecedents for simplified positive evaluations, which introduce the local population as exotic and colourful people who dance and sing, an image which is also frequently evoked in twentieth-century popular representations of the modern Uyghur. Continuities with early images of the people of pre-Islamic and pre-Turkic Khotan are demonstrated by the following lines from the Chinese annals of the fifth and sixth

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[62] Hartmann 1908: III.

[63] Millward 1998: 194–7.

[64] Valikhanov 1961: 347, Scott 1985.

[65] Valikhanov 1961: 348. The ambiguous representation of the Muslims of Xinjiang continues to persist today. Pejorative evaluations are common among the Chinese living in Xinjiang, while official representations have adopted a language suited to the needs of minority politics, which 'folklorizes' the groups recognized.

centuries: "The people were Buddhists, ceremonious and polite, and distinguished as clever artificers. They were fond of music and dancing, and the enjoyments of life generally" [66]

In view of the fact that inter-ethnic relations between the main protagonists—the Uyghur and the Chinese—throughout the socialist period remain strained, the following sections focus on the representation of such relations. Relationships with other foreign groups will be discussed in the section on mixed marriage.

3.2.2 *Turki and Chinese: Inter-Ethnic Conflict*

In early modern Eastern Turkestan, the countryside displayed a relatively high degree of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, while the market centres were more cosmopolitan, a situation which is not very different today. In urban centres, ethnic relations between groups of diverse origins were complex, but among these, most references were made to the relationship between the local people and the colonizers.[67] By the mid-nineteenth century, Manchu rule was identified with Chinese colonization.[68]

Just as Europeans present in the region did not constitute a homogenous group, the Chinese entering the region also had diverse geographical and social backgrounds. Among them were merchants, businessmen, petty traders, craftsmen and functionaries of the civil and military administration, soldiers, adventurers and exiles. Social strata, occupation and even religious affiliation divided the Chinese: some of the officials were Confucians and despised Buddhism as the religion of the 'small people', while others adhered to Buddhism.[69] Following the

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[66] Bellew 1875a: 111, Grenard 1898a: 85, Gladney 1994b.

[67] Owen Lattimore quotes a pre-Islamic legend to demonstrate the incompatibility of local and Chinese cultures, even though 'local' then had a very different meaning. "In penetrating into Sinkiang, the Chinese for the first time encountered not barbarism but an agricultural and urban civilization as sophisticated as their own. A story from the first century shows that the people of Inner Asia, though recognizing the power of the Chinese, were not overawed by their culture. The ruler of the oasis of Kucha spent a year at the Chinese Court, as a dutiful vassal, and returned with a Chinese wife. He then built a palace in the Chinese style and introduced ceremonies, costume, music, and an administration system in imitation of the Chinese; but the people of Kucha ridiculed this imitation as 'half horse and half donkey'—a sterile 'mule culture'" (Lattimore 1975: 8).

[68] Radloff 1886: 87, 89. Cf. also Newby 2005.

[69] Le Coq 1926: 46. I thank Laura Newby for pointing out the diversity within the officials.

occupation of the region, the central administration started dispatching political and criminal exiles to the area. In Qing law, banishment to Xinjiang was a most severe punishment, second only to execution.[70] Banishment typically served several purposes: punishment, rehabilitation and the colonization of the frontier region. Thieves and political exiles were permanently banished, sometimes together with their relatives. In contrast, the banishment of scholars and officials was usually temporary. The exiles could sometimes take their wives and children, but many of them never saw their families again. Permanent exiles were obliged to take part in public construction work and constituted a relatively large reserve of cheap labour.[71]

The influx and distribution of Chinese settlers in the region varied over time; most poor peasants and traders came from Gansu and Shaanxi. Before the 1830s they were discouraged from entering the south, and the first Qing settlements were limited to the north of the Tian Shan. In Zungharia, large-scale projects such as land reclamation through the building of irrigation canals and mining activities were undertaken, and agricultural colonies were established to take part in farming.[72] In most regions, Han Chinese were allowed to settle on untilled land only, with the exception of Qumul.[73] Exceptionally, government farms were also established here, which was not the case in most other oases, where food supplies for the army were typically supplied by native farmers who leased land from the government. During the mid-Qing only a few exiles were sent to the south for isolation; they were not settled on farming colonies but were enslaved to local dignitaries who received them as gifts or reward.[74] Those established in southern Xinjiang in the late nineteenth century seem to have led isolated lives. They remained Chinese in appearance and habit, wore Chinese clothes, ate tinned Chinese food with Chinese crockery and used objects they were familiar with. In contrast, those employed in the civil administration or the army received local food products at reduced prices.[75] In the early twentieth century, the influx of Chinese immigrants was paralleled by emigration. George Hunter, the Scottish missionary who spent almost

[70] Waley-Cohen 1991: 7.
[71] Ibid.: 1–6, 26–32.
[72] Millward 1998: 51.
[73] Forbes 1986: 45.
[74] Waley-Cohen 1991: 167.
[75] Lansdell 1893: 193; Grenard 1898a: 159.

forty years based in Urumchi during the first half of the twentieth century, remarked:

> As far as I can gather, about ten thousand Chinese emigrants come into Sinkiang every year; but, as I was told recently by Chinese officials, almost as many return so that there is no marked growth in the population. Almost all the Chinese settlers long to return to China proper. Those who are not banished by the Government are either runaways or such as hope to make a fortune. Very few of the former manage to pay their way back again, because they usually squander what money they get. Those who come on business return as soon as they have made enough money. The answer one gets, from almost all of them, if you question them about returning, is 'I would go to-morrow if I had enough money to pay my way back.'[76]

The Chinese in Xinjiang did not always have it easy, in spite of the privileges granted them by the Qing. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was very unpleasant for the Chinese to live among the Turkis who mostly regarded them with contempt.[77] The conscious maintenance of ethno-religious boundaries was observed in the early part of the twentieth century by British missionaries, who noted the superficial mingling of the two groups in the bazaar, where "the Chinese buys at Chinese stalls, the Turki shops among his own people, and the food vendors serve men of their own race. The pleasures and entertainments of Turkis and Chinese are of a different order, for the mentality and outlook of each nation are profoundly different and neither trusts the other".[78] This suspicion was rooted even deeper than worrying about boundary maintenance between the consumption of 'lawful' and 'unlawful' foods, which was also often exaggerated: although the consumption of duck was normally allowed for the Turki, apparently they never ate it when it was prepared by the Chinese and even showed abhorrence for it.[79] The superficial nature of inter-ethnic contact in the bazaar and the deep distrust underlying it was encapsulated in the saying: "When buying, you say, 'Oh, Elder'; when going, you say, 'Infidel'" [80] In other words, when one bought something from the Chinese, one said, 'Oh, Elder', an expression of respect, but after one had paid him, he could

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[76] Hunter 1908: 170.
[77] Grenard 1898a: 273.
[78] Cable & French 1942: 190–1.
[79] Le Coq 1926: 35.
[80] *Alurda ya-pir dep, Barurda kafir dersiz.* (Pantusov 1909b: 45, 64.)

be denigrated as an infidel.[81] This saying testifies to inter-ethnic distrust; at the same time it suggests that dislike of the Chinese did not prevent the Turkis from entering into commercial contact with them, and this was particularly the case when it came to using the services of Chinese moneylenders.[82]

The same pragmatic approach was articulated by another proverb: "[Approach] the Chinese with [polite] words, the Qalmuq with presents."[83] Turki attitudes were also characterized by fear of the Chinese. The foregrounding of fear, contempt or distrust no doubt depended on the prevailing political atmosphere, as well as on the actual situation. In the first half of the twentieth century, when the central government lost its grip over Xinjiang to Chinese warlords, contempt occasionally seems to have overcome fear. A Naqshbandi dervish from Aqsu predicted that eventually the province would be taken over by the Russians, since the Chinese were weak, led by opium-smoking officials who did not command much respect from their subjects at that time.[84] Even the moral depravity of local Turki officials was sometimes blamed on Chinese influence.[85]

At times, lack of respect for the Chinese coupled with the opinion that they were unable to rule firmly rendered them more desirable overlords than the Russians. Perhaps it was to counter such attitudes that Chinese military governors often had to demonstrate scorn publicly, as the following incident witnessed in the late 1920s indicates:

> On that particular day the narrow streets of the district were very crowded and it was hard to get around. Suddenly, the crowd moved to one side as though obeying a magic wand. A Chinese soldier came riding at a full gallop, shouting at the people to make room. After him came an elegant Chinese carriage, drawn by four horses and surrounded by attending officers on horseback. The party stopped in front of one of the larger shops on the street, steps were lowered from the carriage, and a red carpet was rolled out. Then, two elegant Chinese ladies descended, with coral red lips and pink cheeks. The officers saluted, and the ladies walked into the shop. In the meantime, the people on the street had moved closer to the carriage in order to look at the two apparitions. One poor soul had been pushed so far to the front of the multitude that he was very close to the carriage. Immediately, a skinny little Chinese appeared with a whip. The

[81] Ibid.: 45, 64.
[82] Valikhanov 1961: 353.
[83] *Xitayğa söz, qalmaqqa böz.* (Le Coq 1911: 16–70.)
[84] Hartmann 1902: 119–20.
[85] Valikhanov 1961: 349; Katanov 1936: 1 218–9.

> mistreatment inflicted on the poor Uyghur is hard to describe. Then, the little Chinese crowned the whole incident by pulling a couple of other Uyghurs out of the surrounding throng and subjecting them to the same treatment. All of this was accompanied by loud cheering from the other officers. The Uyghurs let it all happen without offering resistance. They knew that it was useless.[86]

A one-sided evaluation of inter-group relations does not do justice to the ups and downs brought about by political change. During the short intervals of political uprisings and turbulence, when the Turki had the upper hand, inter-group relations underwent a temporary role reversal. During Ya'qub Beg's rule, many Chinese underwent forced conversion to Islam, which was interpreted by those concerned as a form of punishment, as was the case with the approximately 3,000 Chinese soldiers recruited in Ya'qub Beg's army. Having been forced to convert to Islam, they had to cut their queues, were deprived of several other privileges and were also isolated from other troops.[87] History repeated itself when hundreds of Chinese shopkeepers and pawnbrokers converted to Islam under direct or indirect pressure in the wake of the Islamic rebellion of the early 1930s.[88]

That inter-group violence could escalate to the point of revenge is illustrated in a British diplomatic report dated from the period following the fall of Ya'qub Beg and the recapturing of the province by the Chinese:

> It is known that the Chinese, since the occupation of Kashgar two years ago and the subjugation of its inhabitants have not desisted from burdening the Kashgarians with immoderately heavy taxes, which are imposed on the cattle and all the other property of the population. Not satisfied with these, the Chinese took from the Kashgarians their wives and children, subjecting them to the grossest outrages. The last exhibition of their despotism was the prohibition to open the doors of the mosques on Fridays, the Chinese officials driving away the people who collected for the purpose of worship. This restraint on the performance of their religious duties exhausted the patience of the inhabitants, and a revolt broke out in Khotan, which commenced by the Kashgarians massacring the whole Chinese garrison of the town, numbering 500 men.[89]

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[86] Jarring 1986a: 85–6. By the time Jarring published his recollections, the ethnonym *Uyghur* was commonly used inside and outside Xinjiang, but the way he applies the term for the early 1930s is somewhat anachronistic.

[87] Forsyth 1875: 13. On the symbolic significance of the queue, see Millward 1998: 203–5.

[88] Ambolt 1939: 160.

[89] FO 539.16.367, inclosure 3: 342, report dating from 1879.

Oral sources convey more information about extreme forms of inter-group relations which were manifested in hostility and violence. Published specimens collected mainly from the north illustrate how bitterness over foreign rule was frequently incorporated into oral tradition and preserved in collective memory. A poem commemorating violent events and inter-group enmity dating from the late nineteenth century is characteristic of this genre. The first part celebrates the heroic deeds of Ya'qub Beg and his victories over the Chinese and the Tungans. The arrival of the Chinese is described with the line: "The Chinese came from Beijing baring their teeth".[90] The second part contains couplets relating to the heroism of a certain Şäyx Xojam and his martyrdom at the hands of the cruel Chinese.[91] The third part commemorates Mahmut Beg, or Mahmut Xan, son of Şäyx Axun, who also fought against both the Tungans and the Chinese and was exiled first to Turfan and later to Urumchi.[92] The fourth part, composed in Kashgar in 1879, describes how the reassertion of Chinese rule under their leader (*zongtong*)[93] was carried out following the demise of Ya'qub Beg's theocracy.

Inter-group conflicts continued to make their way into oral tradition in the twentieth century. The following pieces of poetry were composed during the rebellion of 1931–1934, celebrating the deeds of Xoja Niyaz, a local leader from Qumul who played a central role during the rebellion.[94]

Father Hodjam Niaz Ghazi
his guns are killing five.
When he is fighting with the Tungans
he is killing thousands of victims of war.[95]

Local perceptions of the Tungans or Chinese Muslims were just as negative as those of the Chinese, as the following poem demonstrates:

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[90] Pantusov 1901b: 8, 30.
[91] Ibid.: 9–10.
[92] Ibid.: 11, 35.
[93] Chinese *zongtong*; here most likely used to mean 'the foremost Chinese official'. The common term for head official in Altishahr was *canzan dachen*. I thank Laura Newby for this information.
[94] For a detailed history of the rebellion see Forbes 1986: 48–56; see also Newby 1986: 41ff.
[95] Jarring 1948: 126–8.

In Bayanday there is a brick factory,
it had been built by the Chinese.
If the Chinese are killed by soldiers,
the Tungans take over the plundering.[96]

The Turki did not mix much with their co-religionists, the Chinese Muslims, and differences in judicial affiliation between the two groups could not have been the only reason for mutual distrust: otherness expressed in language and social practices, as well as the role the Tungans played in local history, were just as important.[97]

Recollections of local people also included violent conflicts between the Tungans and the Chinese, and these were indeed quite frequent. It was this double-dealing of the Tungans—once siding with the Chinese and, at other times, with the Turkis—coupled with their anomalous social position as Muslim by religion and Chinese in language and appearance, which gave them the reputation for being cultural middlemen between Eastern Turkestanis and Chinese, but at the same time for being unreliable allies and potential adversaries. The Turkis were said to display even more distrust towards the Tungans than towards the Chinese. Allegedly, it could happen that a Turki gave his daughter in marriage to a Chinese but never to a Tungan, and the Turkis never entered a Tungan mosque.[98]

While a shared religion with the Tungans was insufficient to create community, vis-à-vis the Chinese religious difference was drawn upon as boundary marker, as the following account from the early 1870s in Kashgar indicates:

> To-day the new moon was first visible, and the Yoozbashee went through a queer ceremony, which, it appears, is the custom in Toorkistân. It consists in jumping up and down seven times following, with the face towards the

[96] Pantusov 1890: 75/1. It is clear in this example that local sources equate the Tungans with the Chinese.

[97] In spite of numerous individual contacts, settlement patterns also reflected a closer affinity between the Chinese and Tungans vis-à-vis the Turki. For example, the settlement of Lukchen in the eastern part of the region had a predominantly Turki population. The Tungans had 64 houses and the Chinese 36 houses. There was one small Chinese temple, eight big mosques, an Islamic college and two schools. Trade was nevertheless dominated by the Chinese, who ran ten shops, compared to three owned by Tungans and four by Turkis. Most of the Chinese and Tungans lived in the town, outside the town most inhabitants were Turki. (Katanov 1936: 1 218–9.)

[98] Le Coq 1926: 60.

> moon, and by this means the sins of the preceding month are supposed to be shaken off. My Moonshee most inappropriately asked whether it was a Khatai (Chinese) custom. The bystanders shouted 'Yok, yok' (No, no), with horrified face, declaring it to be an orthodox Mussulman practice. The Yoozbashee added, 'What have the Khatais to do with shaking off sins? Their sins all remain on their heads.'[99]

At times, religious differences could give occasion for the ruled to regard their rulers with contempt. A written formulation of this contempt is expressed by an indigenous author, not in explicitly ethnic but confessional terms. A Muslim *molla*, describing Buddhists, whom he called idolaters, defined them as 'people who walk in the dark': they made images of people, animals and birds from all sorts of materials, worshipped them and used them for healing and diverting ill fortune. He also added that idols separated people from God and took people to a path leading to hellfire.[100]

Negative stereotypes were not exclusively based on religious difference; 'otherness' in appearance and social position could be simultaneously articulated: "The deaf mute is worse [off] than the stutterer, worse than a flat-nosed man without a country."[101] These lines also indicate how the Chinese in local popular lore were regarded as displaced people who had to live in a strange country in which they did not belong. This permanent displacement—the state of not belonging—enhanced their otherness in comparison to the Turkis.

Boundaries were not naturally given, and local policymakers had the power to divide groups which shared language, religion, lifestyle and culture. The following episode, narrated by Hämär Waki, took place in the period falling somewhere between the years 1828 and 1829. Owing to the uprising in Kashgar, the Taranchi in the north suffered greatly; they had to supply the army with horses and food. The winter was very long and cold, and many people and animals froze to death. The Sart—or Turki-speaking Muslims from Tashkent, Andijan, Khoqand and Bukhara—residing in Ghulja were required by the local governor to perform labour service and provide animals. The population gave 500 horses but refused to provide the desired labour force. When the governor required more horses, they refused, so he turned to the Chinese overlords and complained about the strangers'

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[99] Shaw 1984: 303.
[100] Prov. 207. II. 1.
[101] Jarring 1985: 22.

lack of cooperation, requesting that they be expelled from Ghulja. All the Sart were then expelled, and only the Taranchi were left in the city. The source of this tradition, Hämär Waki, remained in Ghulja with his mother, but his father, Xuda-Bärdi, moved to Tashkent only to return two years later.[102] The narrative is self-explanatory: the conflict between the local governor and the subject population over access to resources was resolved by the governor turning to the Chinese for help against the subject populations. Distinguishing between Turkis (the Taranchi) and the inhabitants from Western Turkestan (Sart), whose languages, religion and social organization were very close to each other, fostered a sense of difference between them and may have contributed to the subsequent emergence of separate ethno-regional identities.

Although most reports focus on the relationship between foreigners (e.g., Chinese) and the Turkis, clearly rivalry and conflict could also characterize relationships between other groups. It is reported that, in the early twentieth century, Afghan merchant colonies in Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan were openly hostile towards the Tungans, presumably on economic grounds.[103]

3.2.3 *Turki and Chinese: Peaceful Interaction and Accommodation*

While the examples above touched upon representations of hostilities along ethnic and religious boundaries, some data demonstrate boundary crossing in daily interaction.

Indigenous stories of officials sometimes diverge from the conventional hostility conveyed in oral poetry and even reverse stereotypical images. Qing officials may appear as the holders of positive values, while indigenous dignitaries may become vilified. The story of a high Manchu dignitary, himself a relative of the emperor, is a case in point. As a young man of twenty-eight he had been banished to Ili by the emperor for excesses he had shown during the execution of the emperor's orders. After only six months of exile in Ili, he was forgiven by the emperor and recalled to Beijing. In Ili, he was very popular among local officials. Although, as a relative of the emperor, he was shown the greatest signs of respect, he was not proud but affable and wore simple clothing. Furthermore, he consciously tried to avoid imposing heavy burdens on local officials and the Taranchi population and travelled at his own

[102] Radloff 1886: 9–10.
[103] Hartmann 1908: 38.

cost. On one such trip, he was offered food and drink by local officials as a gift, but he turned them down. Instead, he asked the officials to keep the horses and distribute the food among their subjects. Upon the officials' insistence, he eventually accepted the food.[104]

At the same time, negative representations of indigenous dignitaries also found their way into local lore. After becoming governor of Ili, Xalimsat was shown great favour by the emperor and consequently became conceited and so contemptuous of local officials that he would not even grant them an audience. He became an opium smoker, played with Chinese boys and gambled with the Chinese. He took pretty girls as wives for a few months and then sent them back to their parents. To warn him, the Muslim religious dignitaries gave him a document with all the tenets of Islamic law written on it. He became furious, tore the document into pieces and cursed. His lack of integrity was further demonstrated during a visit to Toqquz-Tara, where he married off 300–400 local girls to young men without consulting the girls' parents. The parents complained to the religious dignitaries, who admonished him upon his return and threatened to make a complaint to his Chinese superiors. He showed signs of repentance, sacrificed a sheep and some cattle and invited the *axuns* for a meal, begging their forgiveness. Nevertheless, he continued his evil ways for many years. Eventually, complaints were submitted to his Chinese superior (*jiangjun*), who duly investigated the case. 'Only' eighteen charges against him could be proved, because he denied most of the other accusations. What shocked the Chinese *jiangjun* most was the accusation that the governor had disregarded Islamic law. He therefore handed him over to the Islamic courts. Although Islamic law would have required stoning him to death, the *axuns* did not wish his execution, so he was banished to Turfan. When, a few years later, his son became first a high-ranking dignitary and later governor, he apparently carried out the job as expected.[105]

The accusations against the local governor were serious. He showed his moral depravity by contracting temporary marriage with many young girls, engaging in homosexual relations with Chinese boys, smoking opium and marrying hundreds of young people off without parental consent. His contempt for Islamic law and Muslim dignitaries and his bad relationships with local officials contributed to his demise.

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[104] Radloff 1886: 20–5.
[105] Ibid.: 25–30.

Here, the Chinese overlord is represented as a benign outsider and representative of good governance.

The precise details of the observance of rules of interaction and avoidance between the overlords and the subject population varied according to a number of factors, among which social stratification was significant. Interaction between the upper echelons of local society and the Chinese overlords was strictly regulated and, at this level, ethnicity determined the subordination of the local officials (*bägs*) to the Chinese *ambans*. Aurel Stein reports an incident which occurred during one of his visits, when the Chinese governor refused to allow Stein to take pictures of him with local *bägs* as long as the latter were in a sitting position.[106] Although the hierarchical subordination had to be observed formally, the governmental structure of indirect rule required a relatively close cooperation between local and Chinese officials. This inevitably led to a certain degree of acculturation of the *bägs* to their Chinese superiors. Among the local elite, Chinese influence seems to have been primarily manifested in external formalities. In interactions, local *bägs* made partial concessions to Chinese practice. For example, upon presenting documents to the Chinese authorities, the Turkis employed the Chinese system of chronology, although they made use of the Islamic lunar calculations for other purposes.[107] At public celebrations of festivals in the nineteenth century, the local officials rode out. On such occasions they followed Chinese custom, ordering their servants to disperse people to make way for them. Second-grade *bägs* wore the indigenous gown (*xalat*), but their cut and flowery ornaments corresponded to Chinese taste. They also used Chinese mule carts, a violation of indigenous notions of pollution: mules were widely regarded as unclean by Muslims, and breeding them was considered a great sin.[108] Some also learnt the Chinese way of squatting and bowing, "so that they do not appear ignorant in front of the Chinese officials".[109] Almost fifty years after these observations were made, *bägs* were still expected to adjust to imperial formalities, although when it became too troublesome, clever compromises were reached, as was noted by the archaeologist and explorer Sir Aurel Stein:

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[106] Stein 1912: 218–9.
[107] Raquette 1912: 179.
[108] Valikhanov 1961: 145, 352, 356.
[109] Ibid.: 345–6.

> Etiquette evidently required that they should meet me in their quasi-Chinese official garb. The fur-lined little cape of 'Khitai' fashion was easily worn over their warm, homely 'Chappans' or long coats. But the black silk cap with the red button of office is a poor head-covering for a good Turki Muhammadan, accustomed to shelter his shaven head under a substantial fur-cap when the temperature is so low as it was just then. So my Begs soon compromised comfort and appearances by making one of their attendants wear the cap imposed by their Cathay masters, while they themselves kept their heads warm with mighty furs.[110]

Further signs of at least superficial acculturation were shown by the privileged classes by the mid-nineteenth century: they had their windows papered in Chinese fashion.[111] At one point it was apparently decreed that male inhabitants of Kashgar and Turfan should remove their facial hair with small tweezers as a compliment to their Chinese overlords, who had no facial hair.[112] In an effort to familiarize the *bägs* with the etiquette to be followed by their subjects, the Qing published the Confucian Book of Rites in Turki translation, following the restoration of Chinese power in the 1880s.[113]

Moral decadence was neither an ethnic marker nor the exclusive characteristic of the ruling classes. A Scottish protestant missionary saw how "the opium-smoking Chinaman, the hemp-smoking Turk, the degraded Tongkan and the drunken Mongol were all gambling together on the ragged-looking street".[114] This suggests that there may have been more scope for mutual rapprochement at the two extremes of the social scale: commonalities cutting across ethno-religious boundaries could be more easily found and forged among the ruling groups and among the urban poor.

Language use displayed a certain asymmetry which, however, did not exclusively run along ethnic lines since occupation and social position also played a part. Chinese petty merchants were more likely to learn the local language than Chinese officials were. In any case, the latter cared "little about the language, life, customs, and point of view of the people and preferred to operate through a native interpreter who could speak Chinese".[115] Most Turkis who had contact with the

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[110] Stein 1904: 313.
[111] Valikhanov-Veniukov 1865: 147.
[112] Le Coq 1916: 17.
[113] Le Coq 1925.
[114] Tongkan, i.e., Tungan, see Hunter 1908: 168.
[115] Lattimore 1962: 195.

overlords mastered oral Chinese to some extent. Daily communication was made via a pidgin Turki, a kind of Turco-Chinese jargon which only those accustomed to associating with the Chinese could understand.[116] But there were always exceptions to the rule, contradicting the stereotype of lopsided communication. Owen Lattimore and his travel companions had a Chinese escort between Maralbashi and Kashgar who was well versed in Turki ballads, 'being country-bred.'[117] Martin Hartmann reported that Arif, a Naqshbandi dervish from Aqsu who was almost entirely ignorant of written Chinese, could speak the language well. Furthermore, he showed an avid interest in Chinese proverbs and even had some ethnographic knowledge of the Chinese.[118] In the north, where the percentage of Chinese settlers was higher, Chinese songs apparently greatly influenced the Turki agriculturalists who sang many songs with Chinese tunes. Some melodies showed a mixed composition, simultaneously displaying characteristics of both musical traditions.[119] Another example of accommodation of the commercial sort was the printing office of Nur Hajjim, a tailor from Yengi Hisar who had originally learnt the art of lithography in north-west India. In his Kashgar printing office he printed Turki poetry as well as Chinese works, among them an instruction book for soldiers, 4,000 copies of which were commissioned by the authorities in Urumchi.[120]

On the grassroots level, positive stereotyping could also find its way into common opinion; for example, it was widely accepted among the Turki that Chinese books were full of wisdom and that the way to get rich and powerful was to model oneself on the Chinese.[121] Chinese medicine enjoyed particular respect. In 1892, Nay-Xan praised the superior knowledge and expertise of a Chinese doctor coming from Tianjin,[122] and some local healers even resorted to buying medicines from the Chinese.[123] The systematic help of Chinese medical experts was sought in the 1880s, following repeated outbreaks of smallpox

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[116] Jarring 1951b: 28.
[117] Lattimore 1930: 314.
[118] Hartmann 1902: 120.
[119] Pantusov 1890: xvii–xviii.
[120] Hartmann 1904a: 75–6.
[121] However, in reporting this, the author also juxtaposes this positive evaluation of things Chinese with a negative one, by adding that it is also common opinion that the Chinese must be the most corrupt people in the world, for all who have anything to do with them become oppressors, thieves and liars (Lattimore 1962: 95).
[122] Katanov 1976: 36–7.
[123] Katanov 1936: 1218–9.

in Turfan, to which many people, especially children, fell victim. The governor sent for Chinese doctors, who came all the way from Beijing to inoculate Chinese, Tungan and Turki children.[124]

Some cultural borrowings affected wider social groups and included influence on local cooking, crafts and trades.[125] Even life-cycle rituals were affected: it was said that women in Kashgar adopted white as the colour of mourning[126] and kept the birth of a baby secret; these practices were attributed to Chinese influence.[127]

Another point of peaceful inter-ethnic contact was adoption, which could take the form of a commercial transaction. In southern Xinjiang the Chinese often bought a local child with the purpose of adoption, and they paid more for such children than a Turki purchaser would have, because of the religious prohibition surrounding the act. For this reason, such purchases occurred less frequently.[128] In Qumul, the pattern was different. In the first half of the twentieth century, well-to-do local families adopted Chinese children who had to work for the household but were eventually integrated into the family.

In daily interaction, compromises were reached whereby certain unwritten rules of avoidance between the two groups were followed, which must have served the purpose of conflict prevention. Thus, we learn from a dervish that in the early twentieth century there were many Chinese living in Aqsu, but they had to keep their pigs outside the city to respect Muslim sensitivity.[129] At other times, even religious boundary crossing could be viewed positively: the charitable donations from a high-ranking Chinese official for a Muslim shrine in Khotan further enhanced the shrine's prestige.[130]

3.2.4 *Intermarriage*

Contact between strangers and locals often assumed forms which went beyond market exchange. The major Islamic legal schools agree that it

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[124] Katanov 1976: 38–9.

[125] Valikhanov 1961: 345–6.

[126] Vámbéry 1970: 341. The Chinese origins of white as the colour of mourning are also mentioned by Turki informants in the late 19th century, cf. Katanov 1936: 1184–5.

[127] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 315.

[128] Grenard 1898a: 167.

[129] Hartmann 1902: 115.

[130] Stein 1904: 227. For Chinese visiting Muslim shrines elsewhere, see Pantusov 1909a: 436.

is unlawful for both male and female Muslims to marry those whose religion does not possess a revealed scripture. As far as marriage of a Muslim male to a woman belonging to a revealed religion is concerned, the schools tend to be more flexible, but they are more restrictive when it comes to Muslim women marrying 'out' of Islam.[131] Defying such prohibitions, Turki women often married foreigners. Mixed marriages were not judged by the same yardstick. Some foreign observers explained that intermarriage between Turki women and Chinese men occurred due to female poverty.[132] Locals were not interested in motivations; they condemned any Turki woman who entered the house of a Chinese, since it was a sure sign that she could not be anything but a prostitute, regardless of whether a marriage contract had been drawn up or not. In this respect, local opinion corresponded to Islamic law, since, even if a Muslim *molla* could be persuaded to draw up such a contract, the marriage remained unlawful. Communal condemnation, however, was compensated by a number of advantages, since these women enjoyed the protection of the Chinese. This meant that Islamic jurisdiction had no real power over them. They could typically keep their own earnings and were also exempted from paying the prostitution tax to Chinese and indigenous officials.[133]

Turki women who were married to Chinese men certainly had different rights and obligations from the wives of Turki men. When a *molla* tried to enforce the wearing of the veil among local women in the great bazaar of Kashgar by hitting them with a stick, "by mistake he chastised a Kashgari woman married to a Chinaman, whereupon the irate husband set upon him with a big stick and castigated him soundly".[134] Another advantage enjoyed by such a woman was that her husband had no legal rights over her. If she ran away, the *mollas* made no effort to help the husband find his wife to reassert his conjugal rights over her. She could "hold over him [her husband] the threat of returning to her family, and tap his money-bags with confidence for herself and her relations. Upon his death she typically received some or all his property" Reasons beyond the economic one could also play a part in a local woman's decision to voluntarily enter a mixed marriage: both

[131] For a detailed discussion of the legal positions see Bakhtiar 1996: 416–9.

[132] Valikhanov 1961: 350.

[133] Katanov 1976: 44–5. The source suggests that prostitution constituted an additional source of illegal income for both indigenous and Manchu officials.

[134] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 61.

Hindus and Chinese were considered to be better husbands than the Turkis.[135] But there were also disadvantages. Upon their death, these women could not be buried in the Muslim cemetery because it was feared that on account of their impurity they might contaminate the other graves.[136] But local actors' pragmatism seemed to enable them to resolve this moral dilemma: some of these women used their wealth to purchase the right to an Islamic burial, which they could easily do by settling in a town where they were not known and making generous donations to saintly shrines or dedicating some of their land to pious foundations.[137] Evidently, intermarriage between Muslims and non-Muslims continued to be practised throughout the pre-socialist period, as can be discerned from the fact that in the late 1940s such marriages had to be prohibited.[138]

Intermarriage was not limited to the Turkis and Chinese. The alleged contempt of local women for other infidels such as Russians, Jews, Armenians and Hindus did not prevent them from marrying such men during the first decades of the twentieth century.[139] In 1902, Hartmann met a Syrian Arab who had been exiled from the Ottoman Empire because of his convictions. Eventually, he came to Kashgar through Khotan and married a Turki woman. Mixed marriages also involved men hailing from Badakhshan.[140]

The balance between the advantages and disadvantages for all those concerned was influenced by the prevailing political atmosphere and was also subject to negotiations and pragmatic accommodations. For example, during the reign of Ya'qub Beg many Afghan warriors were said to have married Turki women, but when they wanted to leave the country, the women were not allowed to go.[141] Although Islamic law declared Turki marriages to people without a revealed religion

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[135] Local wives of Hindu traders were in a disadvantaged position: such a woman could lose her male children upon her husband leaving or upon his death, because the Hindu husband's (and his family's) property rights over his male children born from a marriage to a Turki woman were recognized by the *mollas* (Skrine 1971: 203).

[136] Hedin 2001.I.: 189.

[137] Skrine 1971: 203.

[138] Forbes 1986: 119.

[139] Högberg 1912.

[140] Hartmann 1908: 37.

[141] Bellew 1875b: 246–7. Some ethnic designations were used in a loose and general sense, for example the term 'Afghan' could mean natives of that country but also Indians, Persians and even Bukharans (Skrine 1971: 74).

unlawful, the children of Chinese men from unions with local women counted as indigenous, local children.[142]

Some of these mixed marriages were contracted on a temporary basis which was also widespread within Turki society. Often, such alliances were concluded without making use of the services of the clergy:

> When a Chinaman is called back to his own home in China proper, or a Chinese soldier has served his time in Turkestan and has to return to his native city of Pekin or Shanghai, he either leaves his temporary wife behind to shift for herself, or he sells her to a friend. If he has a family he takes the boys with him—if he can afford it—failing that, the sons are left alone and unprotected to fight the battle of life, while in the case of daughters, he sells them to one of his companions for a trifling sum.[143]

In light of all this, Andrew Forbes' claim that Muslims 'rigorously observed' the Islamic prohibition of Muslim women marrying non-Muslims is certainly untenable.[144] The above fragments show that the prohibition was frequently violated, but tolerance of such relationships varied: inter-ethnic marriages and sexual relations crossing religious boundaries could certainly function as a trigger for inter-ethnic violence, but this was not always the case.[145]

Language itself confirms that mixed marriages straddling ethno-religious boundaries were not uncommon. The word *arğun* seems to have been used as a generic term to describe the offspring of marriages between members of groups which were perceived as different enough to produce a 'cross-breed'. In fact, the original meaning of the term is just that—the cross between a bull and a yak.[146] When applying the term to humans, Forsyth defined it as, "the hybrid offspring between the male and female of the opposite stocks, between Mongolian and Caucasian".[147] A descendant of a Kashmiri immigrant and a local

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[142] Valikhanov 1961: 350.

[143] Dunmore 1993: 328–9.

[144] Forbes 1986: 48; 277. Forbes' evidence in support of this claim is that the immediate cause of the Qumul rebellion was that a Chinese from Gansu—a tax collector and chief of police in a small village north of Qumul—tried to force an Uyghur to give him his daughter in marriage.

[145] For historical incidents when officials' raping local women triggered violence and uprising see Millward 1998 and Forbes 1986; such incidents could equally involve indigenous and Manchu officials.

[146] Schwarz 1992: 25.

[147] Forsyth 1875: 81. The author defines the local term using his own classification, in which 'Mongolian' includes Manchu, Mongol, Qalmuq, Kirghiz, Noghay, Qipchak,

woman was also described as *arğun*.[148] Children born from the unions of Turkis and Ladakis were similarly categorized.[149] Another term, *çalğurt* was used to describe the offspring of an Andijani father by a Kashgari woman.[150] According to Valikhanov, in the mid-nineteenth century this was used for descendants of foreigners in general. They were regarded as locals, since they spoke Turki as their mother tongue and were permanent residents of Eastern Turkestan, but their political status was that of foreigners.[151] Shaw heard that the term was used by a Turki official about a merchant who was "half Cashmeeree and half Turki".[152] Mixed marriages did not always entail abandoning stereotypes of the spouse's group: a Tibetan man married to a Kashgari woman complained bitterly about Turki women's idleness, greed, dirtiness and dishonesty.[153] Although the pattern seems to be that foreign men married local women, there were also exceptions to the rule. In the early twentieth century, the Hungarian Turcologist Ignác Kúnos interviewed Mahmod Rähim', a Yarkandi man, during his stay in Budapest. His father was a certain Abdulkarim, a native of Yarkand, and his mother was a Tibetan woman from Ladak.[154]

Under the Qing, the various trade privileges granted by the government attracted a great number of foreign merchants. In the late nineteenth century in Yarkand, the most cosmopolitan of all oases, the proximity of neighbouring regions could be felt. Even the oasis of Khotan, the most isolated from outside influences, boasted a sizeable Hindu merchant community.[155] The influence of Western Turkestan was considerable; this becomes particularly clear from the repeated Qing efforts to restrict Khoqand's influence over the region. Khoqand controlled trade between Russia, Central Asia and China, and the

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Uzbek, and those designated as 'Tatar' included the Qara Khitay, Khitay, and Tungan. The 'Caucasians' in this classification comprised the Tajik, Wakhi, Badakhshi, Kashmiri, Kabuli, and Punjabi.

[148] Bellew 1875b: 276.

[149] Le Coq 1926: 24.

[150] Forsyth 1875: 82.

[151] Valikhanov 1961: 364. The Qing did not consider such people to be their subjects, in spite of their large numbers; they therefore had an ambivalent social status.

[152] Shaw's translation as 'mule' and spelling as 'Shalghoord' is closer to the modern standard, which is *çalğut* and means 'crossbreed, hybrid'. Shaw 1984: 396. See also Schwarz 1992: 516.

[153] Shipton 1950: 93.

[154] Kúnos 1966: 285.

[155] Skrine 1971: 205–6, Crosby 1905: 49.

Qing authorities went so far as to prohibit marriage between Kashgari women and Khoqandi merchants.[156]

Sexual relations across ethno-religious boundaries between the Turki and Chinese or Tungan were often the immediate cause of armed conflict. But 'group jealousy' of women did not stop there. Andijani merchants, whose linguistic, religious and cultural affinity to the Turki of Eastern Turkestan is well known, were regarded as rivals both in business and marriage. The negative stereotyping of the Andijanis in oral tradition can be viewed as simplistic ethnic stereotyping but it may also reflect the complex and contingent definitions of the category of 'stranger', as is suggested by the following proverb:

> *Do not plant elm trees on your land* [because it dries the soil].
> *Do not let a man from Andijan into your h*ouse [because the Andijanis were keen on flirting with women].[157]

3.2.5 *Intra-ethnic Boundaries*

Western sources conspicuously lack references to the self-stereotyping of the Turkis vis-à-vis other groups. This may be an artifact of the nature of the sources or it may indicate the lack of this level of group cohesion prior to their incorporation into a strong state. However, numerous references highlight characteristics associated with a particular oasis. Oasis stereotypes portray the Kashgaris as lively and apt to use rude language, the Khotanese as hypocritical and the Yarkandis as timid and good-natured people who never do anything without asking others' opinions. In contrast, the people of Kucha were said to be quarrelsome, while the inhabitants of Aqsu were said to be good and hospitable, though a bit foolish.[158]

Some stereotypes seem to have referred to the social or professional characteristics of a locality, such as those which described Khotan as being famous for its big landowners and Kashgar for its moneychangers.[159] Honour and morality were prominent in the politics of stereotyping: Sayram was said to be a place for thieves, while Kucha

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[156] Kim 2004: 22. On Qing relations with Khoqand, see Newby 2005.

[157] Le Coq 1911: 22–3.

[158] Oasis stereotypes show remarkable continuities with pre-Islamic patterns as recorded by the legendary Chinese traveller Xuan-Zang and the Annals of the Tang dynasty (Grenard 1898a: 91–2).

[159] Le Coq 1911: 46–7.

was often associated with complacent husbands.[160] Khotan, on the other hand, had the dubious reputation of supplying every city with prostitutes (including those who cohabited with the Chinese).[161] Oral tradition also preserves examples of positive stereotyping:

The place called Artush is a good place,
It has a market on Mondays.
They take care of poor orphans.
The shrine of the Sultan is there.[162]

Stereotypes of various localities were also formulated by outsiders, and such images could also be informed by local prejudices. Valikhanov's evaluations emphasizing the brightness, diligence, sociability and extreme politeness of the Kashgari, the good heartedness of the people of Aqsu and the natural shyness of the Yarkandis may have been influenced by local judgments. In his understanding, the people of Khotan were both beautiful and good-hearted, neither lazy nor pretentious, and were diligent farmers and weavers.[163] In the late 1920s, the Khotanese were said to have retained their reputation as clever craftsmen.[164] The Chinese *amban* (governor) of Yarkand characterized the oasis under his authority as a city of poor peasants who knew nothing save a bit of agriculture. He contrasted it with Kucha which was rich and boasted many talented craftsmen.[165]

Such representations were not limited to the large oases but could also be applied to localities below and above this level. One example of the former is expressed in indigenous oral tradition:

A man from Toquz-aq wears a footcloth,
as a girdle and in addition his boot is patched.
If a guest enters his house he doesn't break bread
with his guest. Such are the people *of Toquz-aq.*

The large village of Ujat in the vicinity of Khotan had a long-standing reputation for being "weak in faith and addicted to heretical ways".[166]

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[160] Ibid.
[161] Dunmore 1993: 329.
[162] Jarring 1948: 81–81.
[163] Valikhanov 1961: 347, Iskhakov 1975: 48.
[164] Schomberg 1996: 154.
[165] Hartmann 1908: 34.
[166] Stein 1904: 229.

Language was certainly not the only and not even the most important criterion for demarcating groups. A low-level official called Togda Xoja explained that the Dolans of Merket did not consider their own language any different from the language of Kashgar, although there were minor differences in vocabulary. He also found that the people of Merket displayed a number of peculiarities, among them a hard and cold character coupled with an unforgiving nature, which was the main cause why meaningless, petty disputes could drag on among them for years.[167]

Representations of imagined communities above the oasis level emerged between the north and the south, Zungharia and Altishahr. The unflattering stereotype of the Taranchi in the north was expressed in the rhymes popular among southerners:

A Taranchi is a fool.
In his girdle he has flint and steel.
In whichever town he is
he [is ready to] *sell his own town.*[168]

Here is one example of a Taranchi retort:

Kashgarian, you dolt,
It has become springtime.
Throw away your ragged leather sandals.
Make yourself a drum.

Kashgarian, you dolt,
Scratch my back.
It has become springtime.
Throw away your ragged sandals.[169]

In oral tradition, we frequently encounter mocking stereotypes of the women of various localities. Thus the girls of the town of Toqsun ride thin oxen sideways, while the girls from Yamçi are so immoral that, upon seeing a Chinese man, they open their door for him. The girls from Turfan wear a small cap upon their big heads; the girls from Sangim and Murtuq consume a lot of candy and accumulate debts; the women from Lämjin and Xando roll in garlic beds; the girls from Şoga play on the mountain slopes; the daughters of Lukchen have

[167] Hedin 2001.I.: 185.
[168] Jarring 1948: 130.
[169] Dautcher 1999: 38.

heads and eyes like raw marrows; those from Yang-çi are like dolls nicely arranged on a plate; the girls from Toyoq are like pearls; and the girls from Astana and Qarakhoja have a tendency to run away with men.[170] While all these localities were relatively close to Turfan, a different set of comparable verses about the girls of other large oases situated in Altishahr underlines the popularity of mocking gender stereotypes:

> *Straight and slender-waisted are the maids of Kashghar.*
> *Short, with sack-like figures, are the maids of Yangi-Hissar.*
> *A goitre above, fat below,* [such] *are the maids of Yarkand.*
> *Arranging apples on saucers are the maids of Khotan-Ilchi.*
> *Eating many currants and grapes are the maids of Ujat.*
> *Wearing felt caps, with foreheads wide* [or high], *are the maids of Sariqol.*
> *Snub-nosed,* [but] *sweet-tongued are the maids of the Kirghiz.*[171]

Humorous representations could serve as tools of benign demarcation but could also potentially be used to emphasize group boundaries and exclusion. Incorporated into oral tradition, they also formed an important part of communal property, which contributed to self-definition, thereby reinforcing communal boundaries, typically on an abstract, 'imagined' level.

In his recent ethnographic study of the Uyghur of Ili, Jay Dautcher attributed great importance to oasis stereotypes, but he also allowed room for intra-oasis divisions, which he explained primarily in terms of differences in migration history.[172] While this must also have played a part, examples from southern Xinjiang suggest that lower-level boundary-drawing was the order of the day even without diverse patterns of migration. Exclusion and inclusion took place continuously at all settlement levels and marked the potential for community identities. Stereotypes were applied to both males and females. Negative stereotypes implying sentiments of exclusion were no more frequent than positive stereotyping, which usually indicated some form of trust and even shared community.

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[170] Le Coq 1911: 52–5.
[171] Shaw 1878: 107–8, Le Coq 1911: 52–5, Bang and Marquart 1914: 16–8.
[172] Dautcher 1999: 38–9.

3.3 *The Economy*

3.3.1 *Urban Space*

In distinguishing between town and countryside, local *mollas* apply formal criteria rather than assuming substantial difference in everyday practice. Before 1949, the formal criterion was that a town should be a walled compound with four or five gates. The city wall constituted the most obvious boundary marker between town and rural areas, even though the landscape and wealth may have been comparable inside and outside the wall.

In the first years of the twentieth century, Muhammad Ali Damolla stated quite categorically that "anything outside the gates, no matter how prosperous it is, is never called a town. In the town there are inns (*saray*) for merchants, shops for shopkeepers, street markets, streets, mosques, dervish convents, Islamic colleges, schools, baths and Friday mosques".[173] He repeated that "no matter how prosperous it is, a place outside the city walls where important merchants are accommodated is not called a *saray* but a *dañ*".[174]

Molla Abdul Qadir emphasized Yarkand's physical boundaries as well as its dual, divided nature, which was also characteristic of many other colonial cities. According to him, the New Town (*yeñi şähär*) was surrounded by a double city wall, one high and the other low, with a deep moat between them. The new town was situated inside the two city gates with a Chinese garrison (*yamul*) and a roadside inn (*läñgär*) but no Turki living quarters. The old town, which was also surrounded by a high wall, had five gates. It had a prosperous street market, and the centre also boasted a covered market. Some areas of the town were fertile, while other parts were described as desert-like. The city mosques were more sophisticated than their village counterparts: they had a platform on top of a minaret from where the muezzin called the faithful to prayer, and the Friday mosque had minarets and a dome. The primary distinction of the city was its commercial centre because here "all things necessary could be obtained".[175] Towns were also the sites of weekly markets.

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[173] Prov. 207. I.41.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Prov. 464. 43.R–V.

An important characteristic of Kashgar was the presence of officials who formed the local administrative and religious elite, comprising the governor, a judge (*qazi*) and a legal expert (*mufti*). Rich merchants, craftsmen and other ordinary people had their permanent residence in town. Market centres were marked out by the presence of the Chinese civil and Islamic courts of justice.[176] Market towns were simultaneously the centres of religious learning and commerce. In the early twentieth century, Aqsu was a centre of Islamic scholarship, controlled by and large by the *mollas* of its two *mädräsä*. Aqsu also boasted a large caravanserai with thirty rooms and about thirty-five shops selling cloth.[177]

Western travellers drew whimsical comparisons with other countries within Europe, Central Asia and India:

> The cities and towns in general appearance and plan of arrangement much resemble those of Afghanistan, and some parts of Persia to the west. They are surrounded by fortified walls, and are everywhere built of clay, stone being never seen and baked bricks only in the more important buildings, such as mosques, colleges, and saraes. The streets are unpaved, and wind irregularly amongst the blocks and rows of tenements, and are mostly narrow and more or less filthy. There are no large open spaces, nor any public gardens or plantations. The drains and gutters are mostly open, or indifferently covered for footways in front of the shops; and empty on to some low ground only a few yards beyond the city walls, or else stagnate within their enclosure.[178]

But the shops and bazaars could "not compare either in build or in the display of stores to the shops of any cantonment bazaar in India, far less to those of the commercial cities of the Panjab".[179] Others based their judgments on locally observed differences, commenting on the conditions of the native quarter of Yarkand, the open cesspools of which compared unfavourably with the sanitation of the more recently built Chinese quarter.[180]

3.3.2 *Markets*

Production for the market followed regional and social affiliation, rather than ethnic lines.[181] Some oases achieved fame for their manufacture

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[176] Prov. 207. I.41.
[177] Hartmann 1902: 115–6.
[178] Forsyth 1875: 94.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Dunmore 1993: 287.
[181] Although we know that in the Qumul bazaar, for example, the Chinese worked

industry. The oasis of Guma was well known for its paper and silk.[182] Khotan, the centre of silk and carpet production, also boasted flourishing industries of gold, jade, musk and raw cotton.[183] In the nineteenth century, prior to Ya'qub Beg's rule, crafts and industries flourished with the exception of the cotton industry, which underwent a sharp decline due to interrupted production in the wake of the devastation of wars and massacres.[184] Peasants were forced to sell under the most unfavourable conditions, and a big drop in the price of foodstuffs in the 1880s resulted in a deterioration of living standards among producers. Following the restoration of Chinese rule, taxes were initially kept low and producers could keep their prices high. But as taxes increased again, a big drop in food prices followed.[185] While farmers were experiencing difficulties and setbacks, the number of small merchants and entrepreneurs grew, although the low level of prosperity of farmers and herders who constituted their clients created obstacles to their expansion.[186] Even if this was so, recovery must have been relatively quick, if we are to believe the descriptions of lively market scenes dating from the end of the nineteenth century. A later industrial decline was reported from the oases on the southern fringes of the Tarim Basin under Tungan rule during the 1930s. The silk industry almost came to a halt. The jade mines were in a similar state, and the famous Khotanese carpet industry also showed signs of serious decline: the government factory started producing mostly "carpets of blatantly Chinese design, characterized by shoddy workmanship and unstable dyes", giving up traditional designs.[187] At this time, as a result of very high rates of inflation, peasants kept their flour, and it could not be bought at the markets. The rich exchanged their money for wool which they sent to India, where they had bank accounts.[188]

At times of relative stability, such as the end of nineteenth century, the weekly urban markets attracted sellers and buyers from the township and neighbouring settlements. By this time, in contrast to the period

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as bankers, pawn-brokers, druggists, cooks, and fruit and vegetable vendors, it is also evident that these paralleled the activities of local producers and no group enjoyed any monopoly (Cable & French 1942: 134).

[182] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 198.

[183] Forsyth 1875: 33.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Grenard 1898a: 156.

[186] Ibid.: 157.

[187] Forbes 1986: 131.

[188] Maillart 1937: 244.

prior to Ya'qub Beg, the markets constituted a rotating system, so that each town had a market day "arranged geographically so to speak, e.g., if Monday is a market-day at Sanju, Tuesday is at Kostagh, Wednesday at Oi Taghragk, Thursday at Borah, and Friday at Qarghaliq, and so on within a certain radius to suit the convenience of all commercially concerned".[189] Some towns had two market days a week, as was the case in Khotan in the end of the nineteenth century.[190] The reason for the rotation was that smaller village 'satellite' bazaars that sprang up in the vicinity of big market centres were unable to support many permanent businesses and craftsmen.[191]

The marketplace was, of course, far more than the scene of commercial transactions. It was also the space where gender, regional, ethnic, religious, occupational and other boundaries were crossed. As one observer summed it up in the second half of the nineteenth century, "the bazaar is to the constituent elements of the township what the capital is to the component parts of the province".[192] The marketplace had numerous unwritten rules and norms, which were dictated and shaped by a number of factors, such as the necessities of the domestic economy, the tax system, gender relations, etc. It was a place for public entertainment, where information and services of all sorts were exchanged:

> There were musicians, acrobats, fortune-tellers and story-tellers, who moved about amongst the crowds and diverted the people. There were flags and banners and all sorts of pictures floating at the shop fronts and there was the *jallab* [prostitute], who painted her face and decked herself in silks and laces to please her customers... Yes, there were many rogues and gamblers, too, and people got drunk and had their pockets picked.[193]

Female presence could also assume diverse forms: some decades later, Sven Hedin noted that, in the weekly bazaar of Merket, each trade had its own assigned street, and on tables taken out of the houses, veiled women would sit and sew.[194] Although, even in the 1990s, many rural people found it in principle unacceptable that women attended the

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189 Dunmore 1993: 328.
190 Hedin 2001.II.: 62.
191 Lattimore 1975: 165–6.
192 Forsyth 1875: 77.
193 Ibid.: 36.
194 Hedin 2001.I.: 185.

markets either as vendors or as customers, in practice female presence in the marketplace in both capacities had a long, well-established history which contradicted the normative expectations based on moral considerations. Women participated in commerce as much as men did.[195]

Markets often spilled beyond the city wall, which was the place where rotating salesmen, long-term visitors and travellers could find accommodation. This arrangement may have served the purpose of keeping strangers outside the city during the night. Opening times varied: at the end of the nineteenth century, the Yarkand bazaar had 320 shops and stalls on a market day, one third of which remained closed on non-market days.[196] Kucha had 205 principal shops inside the city walls, approximately 100 of which were permanently open; the others were closed except on market days. There were 140 shops outside the wall, as well as fifteen caravanserais.

The spatial arrangement of markets in oasis centres followed ethnic boundaries. Within the Turkis' market, however, the arrangement followed the principle that vendors selling similar products were clustered together. Besides visiting the shops of textile merchants, moneychangers and druggists, one could purchase boots and shoes, agricultural tools, household goods made of copper and goods for personal use, such as combs, gold and silver rings and bracelets. Leather wares and wedding chests were available, as well as bolts, felt rugs and prayer rugs, Russian porcelain and Chinese goods. Next to bakers and fruit and vegetable sellers, local producers were also selling wheat and maize. Booksellers sold printed books imported from Tashkent, Kazan and India. There were also watch repairers and people selling tea from samovars.[197]

Peasants sold their garden produce to greengrocers and to middlemen who transported it to other oases. Although most oases were autarkic in theory, there was a brisk inter-oasis trade, because different oases grew different subspecies or different-quality produce. Thus, much of the fruit sold at the Kashgar market was imported from other oases: melons, grapes, peaches, apricots, dried fruits, jujube, *jigdä* and raisins were brought from Khotan; walnuts came from Qarghaliq; pears were imported from Kucha; dried apricots and raisins came all the way from Andijan. Kashgar had the reputation of being the leading

[195] Ibid. II.: 63, Prov. 207. I.43.
[196] Dunmore 1993: 327.
[197] Prov. 207. I.43, Dunmore 1993: 273–4.

fig producer. Although Kashgar did grow its own pomegranates, pears and apples, the pomegranates from Qarghaliq were considered better, and Yarkand grew a juicy type of apricot which was not cultivated in Kashgar.[198]

After the obligatory grain tax had been paid and enough grain had been put aside to ensure the family's subsistence needs for the year to come, farmers marketed the rest of their produce. Sale of cereals was usually done in the form of whole grains, because bakers and cooks preferred to do the grinding themselves to prevent cheating. As far as basic foodstuffs were concerned, most people tried to do bulk shopping since wholesale purchase was cheaper. One indigenous author grimly remarked that only people living in palaces could afford to have their provisions bought on a daily basis.[199] In consequence, consumer behaviour also emphasized boundaries between social groups. The normative expectation was that married men, local merchants and craftsmen would not buy bread at the market; they ate the bread and food prepared in their homes. The customers of the bakers and cooks in the marketplace were mostly country people and nomads from the mountains who came to town on business to attend the weekly market and bought whatever they could find. Another group of customers were strangers or short-term visitors who were travelling on business and had no family locally.

Vendors could distinguish between those with sufficient 'insider' knowledge and strangers lacking such information and treated the two groups differently. It was well known that outsiders such as people from the country, nomads, Europeans and others who were unfamiliar with local prices, paid the first price they were told, which was often two or three times more than the usual. Local knowledge also played a part in doing business with textile merchants, some of whom literally used different yardsticks for different customers; the accurate one was used for friends and officials (who were either regular customers or had the power to punish a merchant caught using false measurements); a slightly smaller yardstick was used for other local customers, and an even smaller one was used for the nomads and other outsiders, who were often cheated twice, once with the false measurement and once

[198] Prov. 207. I.6a–b.

[199] Most necessities could be preserved, including onions, turnips and other vegetables. The one product which had to be bought on a daily basis was meat, to which, however, not all social groups had access.

with the higher prices.[200] On the other hand, local people with enough insider knowledge bargained. Bargaining had its own ritualized forms; the following description relates only to one form of business transactions concluded between men:

> All the bargaining in the bazârs is conducted in a silent manner with the hands. The seller, the buyer, and all the officious assistants who never fail to present themselves on this occasion, pull their long sleeves over their hands, and in this way make bids on each other's fingers, saying, 'so many hundreds'—a pull of the fingers. 'So many tens'—another pull—'and so many units'—another pull. They seem to think that no offer is valid, unless it has been conveyed in this manner.[201]

However, bargaining was not so sophisticated everywhere. In the first half of the twentieth century the Khotanese did not follow this 'gentle interplay of give and take'. On the contrary, it was normal for "the purchaser to fly into a passion, use most hair-raising epithets, and then with a final crescendo of foul abuse, name the last price possible—and leave the shop".[202]

Self-appointed brokers (*dällal*) were also permanently present in the marketplace:

> Under the name of 'dalâlgee' (brokerage), a certain small sum is always paid when any purchase or sale is affected. It is not given to a professional broker, but to any officious third persons who have assisted at the transaction. When a bargain is being made, the passers-by generally stop and put in their word or opinion, as elsewhere in the East; but here they do not do it gratis, they get their share (often only a few coppers) of the brokerage. Thus, any man, with some knowledge of mercantile matters, a loud tongue, and a pushing manner, can make quite a living merely by walking about the streets and assisting at any sales he may see going forward.[203]

In addition to barter, money also played an important part in the local economy. Because many different types of currency were simultaneously circulating, money changing and banking often involved exchanging coins for so-called paper money. The latter was not accepted by shopkeepers and traders, but moneychangers used it among themselves. Some of these had their own capital, but others had to borrow

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[200] Golomb 1959: 57.
[201] Shaw 1984: 464.
[202] Schomberg 1996: 155.
[203] Shaw 1984: 408. For a description of how the *dällal* operates in late twentieth century markets see Dautcher 1999: 258–60.

the necessary capital, e.g., 100 *sär* silver in exchange for a valuable object; cash loans usually had to be paid back with interest. Those with little capital speculated by purchasing and selling paper money. Banks operated on the same principle as private moneychangers. Some well-to-do people took their money to the bank because of the dangers of travelling with a lot of cash. After they had paid some money into the bank, they received a receipt which they presented in another town at the bank to draw their cash.[204]

A significant role was played by the local pawnbroker (*göräkäş*). Those in need of cash took their valuable possessions to him. If an object was worth, say, ten *täñgä*, then he got two *misqal* for it. Some pawnbrokers were called *bir pulçi* ('one *pul* traders'), because they took one *pul* per *täñgä* in interest each week. The pawnbroker made three copies of a transaction certificate. One copy went to the owner of the pawned object, one was kept with the object and the third copy was put into the account book (*dañze*).[205] Some pawnbrokers gave as much as five *täñgä* for something estimated to be worth ten *täñgä* and asked for two *pul* interest for each *täñgä* lent; therefore they were called *ikki pulçi* ('two *pul* traders'). After six months, the loan and the interest evened out; this was expressed using kinship terminology: 'the mother money has been evened out by the child money' (*ana puli bilän bala puli täñ bolur*). At this point, the pawnbroker had the right to take the pawned object to the bazaar and sell it. Although the waiting period was six months, the owner could return the borrowed money with interest—the mother money with its child (*pulni balisi bilän*)—and retrieve his possession.[206] However, if he did not pay when the pawnbroker asked him to, he faced losing his possession for good. If the customer lost his transaction certificate, he also lost his right to reclaim the object. If another person happened to find this lost certificate, he could retrieve the pawned object. Abuse of the system was frequent. Occasionally, stolen goods were taken to the pawnbrokers who became the accomplices of thieves,

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[204] Prov. 207. I.46.

[205] *dañpuzul* < Chinese *dangpuzi* = pawnshop (Schwarz 1992: 257).

[206] The waiting period is denoted with the term *'idda*, evidently borrowed from the Islamic legal vocabulary relating to the obligatory waiting period of a divorcee before a new marriage.

selling the stolen goods and sharing the money thus gained.[207] This local author did not air his views on charging the interest and its compatibility with Islam, although a Chinese visitor to the region in the 1930s explicitly stated that, among the Turkis, lending money at a high interest rate was 'considered disgraceful'.[208]

Pawnbroking remained a highly lucrative business throughout the period discussed until the early 1950s, when the socialist authorities abolished the institution altogether. It has been suggested that, during the first century of Qing rule in Xinjiang, money lending was commonly in the hands of the Chinese and could be a source of ethnic conflict.[209] However, the Chinese held no monopoly over this trade: in the first half of the twentieth century, pawnshops were also managed by Turkis, Indians and Tungans. In the first years of the twentieth century, the large village of Xanarik (twenty-eight miles from Kashgar) had as many as eighteen Hindu usurers, which suggests that local cultivators were progressively becoming indebted and impoverished.[210] At the time of Sven Hedin's visit, the Indian caravanserai in Yengi Hisar housed ten Hindus from Shikarpur who imported Indian textiles to the region. But their main occupation was usury, and they "knew how to hold the people in their hands charging shamelessly high interest rates so that a large part of the main crop benefited them".[211] As private entrepreneurs, they charged an interest rate between 7 and 10 per cent each month. In contrast, the government-run money bureaus were allowed to charge a monthly interest of only 1 per cent. In spite of such precautions, local bureaucrats got involved in usury by loaning money from the public money bureaus to rich merchants, who re-loaned this money to pawnbrokers. These in turn lent the money to the poor at the highest possible interest rate. Often the merchant was himself a local official who used his position to enforce the collection of the money and interest. In 1922 Governor Yang tried to curtail abuses by forbidding the use of public money for private loans.[212]

Another institution of the marketplace operating on principles quite similar to the pawnbroker's was the den of the hashish smokers. In the

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[207] Prov. 207. I.45.
[208] Wu 1984: 221.
[209] Cf. Millward 1998: 208–11.
[210] Stein 1904: 140–1.
[211] Hedin 2001.I.: 84–5.
[212] Lattimore 1975: 57.

second half of the nineteenth century, the hashish (*bäñ*) shop was "a mean little shed, in which two or three pipes are at the disposal of the passers by. There are besides, several opium divans, places more like a pawn-brokers' shop than anything else. Obscure chambers, dimly lighted by a row of flickering lamps along the floor, on which lie the somnolent devotees of this 'thief of reason and riches' On shelves ranged around the walls are neatly folded and labelled bundles of their household chattels even to the clothes off their backs, all kept in pawn till released by cash payment".[213] The use of stimulants persisted among the inhabitants of the region throughout the period under discussion, as both indigenous and foreign descriptions testify.[214]

Gambling was another popular pastime. Gamblers gathered at public places, usually where public amusements also took place, typically the marketplace. The most commonly played game was a dice game played with sheep and goat bones, although card games and other dice games were also introduced by the Chinese.[215] Like pawn broking, gambling knew no social hierarchy; officials gambled just as passionately as beggars and prisoners. Some of Gustaf Raquette's patients in the Swedish mission hospital in Yarkand described themselves as professional gamblers.[216] These were also credited with issuing counters which were accepted by some shopkeepers as ordinary coins, in addition to the various currencies circulating in the marketplace.[217]

3.3.3 *Rural Space*

Rural and urban spaces did not constitute sharply opposed entities. There was little visible difference in landscape, lifestyle and daily practices between town and the immediate countryside, although differences were probably quite substantial between towns and remote rural areas. The sense of continuity was fostered by the similarity in the built environment. Houses in both villages and towns were constructed in a similar fashion. Mud walls created a barrier between the house and the outside world. House-building reflected economic, rather than regional, divisions: the houses of most common cultivators and city dwellers were built of sun-dried bricks or stamped clay.

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[213] Forsyth 1875: 38.
[214] See Jarring 1951b: 181–3, Le Coq 1916, Warikoo 1985.
[215] Jarring 1975: 20.
[216] Mannerheim 1969: 75.
[217] Jarring 1975: 20.

The construction of buildings with a timber frame and hard plaster cost more, mostly because wood had to be purchased and often transported, but the result lasted much longer. Only the private houses of the well-to-do and public buildings such as mosques and inns were built in this way.[218] Irrigation canals and poplars were just as much a part of the urban as of the rural landscape. The irrigated area was dominated by scattered farms. Settlement patterns were highly irregular, determined primarily by the availability of water, rivers and irrigation canals. The openness of the farms was conspicuous; they lacked fencing and fortified enclosures characteristic of houses elsewhere in the Islamic world.[219] A typical village in Altun Artush consisted of a number of small hamlets "scattered around the plain, at intervals from each other varying from a quarter of a mile to a mile. Each hamlet consisted of a number of scattered farm-houses, each farm having its separate irrigation canal, its trees, its fields and out-houses, forming the residence of a family".[220]

Using Chinese sources, Thomas Hoppe noted another scattered settlement pattern prevalent in the Tarim Basin prior to 1949. These settlements were usually situated a long distance from villages and constituted autonomous economic units. They typically comprised one rich landowning family, its serfs, sharecroppers and permanent labourers with their families. The number of these dependent families ranged between six and ten, and their farms were situated at a distance ranging between fifty-five metres and two to 2.5 kilometres from each other. Hoppe argues that this settlement type was common in areas where the danger of salinization was particularly threatening, since it proved to be an effective countermeasure.[221]

Muhammad Ali Damolla defined the Eastern Turkestani township (*känt*) as an inhabited place with trees and vegetation, situated outside the city walls, where farmers lived and engaged in agricultural work. He attributed differences in rural landscape to the socio-economic position of its inhabitants: rich people owned a great deal of land and several farm buildings in addition to their living quarters, and therefore their houses were not immediately surrounded by other houses. The

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[218] Stein 1904: 302.
[219] Forsyth 1875: 76.
[220] Ibid.: 254.
[221] As a result of the socialist restructuring of the economy in the 1950s, this settlement type has by and large disappeared. See Hoppe 1992: 231–6.

dwellings of poor people with little land, however, were surrounded by other houses and courtyards. Wealth therefore granted increased access to space and more isolation. Scattered houses, oleaster trees, poplars and fruit trees, as well as cultivated plots, dominated the landscape alongside irrigation canals and small ponds. The village landscape included public buildings, such as a small mosque, a school and a mill. Most villages had their own cemetery and often a saintly shrine and a Sufi cloister. Villages situated in the vicinity of towns were more densely populated: houses here were built closer together because of the lack of space. They also possessed fewer trees and a smaller acreage of cultivated land.[222]

In the early twentieth century, the rural and urban sectors were not yet highly specialized. Many families residing in the market centre drew their income from mixed economic activities, and the same was true of villagers residing near town. Villagers living in the vicinity of a market centre attended the market there, but from the late nineteenth century some rural settlements also had their own weekly markets. Although many craftsmen and traders were concentrated in market towns, some rural cultivators also worked as craftsmen. Some made money by resorting to more unusual strategies. For example the lonely traveller from Maralbashi met by Sven Hedin's party, collected rock salt in the mountains and sold it, making a handsome profit.[223] While there was a greater concentration of rich merchants and craftsmen in towns than there was in villages, recollections of local people in the 1990s in Kucha and Kashgar indicated that inhabitants of the Muslim 'Old Town' were cultivating land until the mid-twentieth century, a practice which had its roots in the past. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Englishman Robert Shaw described how a shoemaker had a melon garden dug in town, just behind his own house. It must have been a large piece of land because he had to employ labourers to do the job.[224] In northern Xinjiang, it was also common that arable land immediately surrounded the city.[225] Agricultural production was not exclusively associated with rural people; rather, the majority of the urban population was engaged in agricultural work.[226] There was no

[222] Prov. 207. I.42.
[223] Hedin 2001.I.: 211.
[224] Shaw 1984: 469–70.
[225] Golomb 1959: 45.
[226] Kazak 1937: 26.

clear-cut, rural-versus-urban economic specialization, and household management ideally favoured a model of autarky. It is misleading to speak of similarities between town and countryside: rather, the two constituted an almost unbroken continuity of ecology, landscape, economy and practices. It was this continuity which doubtless prompted the opinion that the city landscape of Kashgar was dominated by a fort, a bazaar and some caravanserais but otherwise looked more like a large oriental village with small, simple-looking mosques.[227]

Many rural and urban households relied on a mixed domestic economy, although with the increase of market-oriented production, the proportion of specialized households grew gradually. Since villages were ethnically more homogenous, the perceived contrast between town and countryside may have had important ethno-religious undertones as well. But this difference did not result in a positive evaluation of the countryside and country people as the repositories of uncontaminated Islamic or 'pure Turki' values structurally opposed to urban cosmopolitanism. Instead, urban-rural stereotyping assumed a structure similar to what we find in European societies, where urban sophistication was contrasted to rural simplicity, as the mocking of the country bumpkin in oral tradition also demonstrates: "We were very bored of the wooden ears and thick shit [i.e., the country bumpkins]. Is not the leader of the urban population the most learned *axun*? The city kids say: Are not these villagers all card players?"[228] In popular stereotypes, consumption patterns were also considered to be indicators of urban, as opposed to rural, belonging. They were also crucial in distinguishing between nomadic mountain people and the sedentary agriculturalists of the plain. Country people's diet in the oases of Xinjiang was based on corn, turnips and carrots, while inhabitants of the mountainous areas consumed more barley and beans. Rural people were in the habit of adding turnips to their porridge and making pilaff with linseed oil without meat fat; in contrast, townspeople used sheep fat and meat to make their pilaff. Well-to-do urbanites had ready access to wheat, rice, maize and corn.

[227] Schultz 1921: 43.
[228] Pantusov 1890: 75–6.

3.3.4 *Property Relations and Production*

Prior to 1949, the overwhelming majority of the local population engaged in agricultural work, crafts and trade. Agricultural production was largely subsistence-oriented and individual oases were mostly self-sufficient in cereal production. Any surplus was sold on the market. Cotton production, the primary source of cash income for many farmers, became very important after the Russians started buying cotton in the early decades of the twentieth century.[229] During these changes some factors remained relatively constant: the organization of production and its dependence on access to resources.

The two vital pre-conditions of agricultural production were the availability of land and water. It was a truism that, through the construction of new irrigation canals, land could be reclaimed from the desert and brought under cultivation and, conversely, whenever irrigation canals were abandoned or neglected, land cultivation receded. This was not always simple, since the quality of land was uneven, and the bitter complaint of an elder of a settlement called Qalti Aylaq to the effect that where there was plenty of water, good land was lacking, and where water was scarce, it was often the reverse, was probably echoed by many.[230] In general, the state of the irrigation system was a reliable indicator of the political stability of the region: political unrest usually entailed the neglect of irrigation works and as a result large cultivated areas were lost to the desert. Their recovery was made possible only through years of hard work, which presupposed a measure of political stability. Land equipped with irrigation canals represented the most valuable of goods: the Qumul rebellion of 1931 was triggered by the confiscation of irrigated land from Eastern Turkestani peasants by the Chinese authorities.[231]

Throughout most of the Islamic centuries landlordism prevailed, with many peasants reduced to the status of quasi-serfs, though others owned the land they cultivated. Following the Qing occupation, land in northern Xinjiang theoretically became the property of the emperor, who could confiscate it if he wished. This happened only rarely, typically as punishment for criminal acts, especially for taking part in anti-government rebellions. Cultivators had use rights over their land but

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[229] Kazak 1937: 25.
[230] Capt. Trotter's report in Forsyth 1875: 254–5.
[231] Newby 1986: 43. For a history of this rebellion see also Forbes 1986: 70–81.

no secure ownership rights. All arable land was taxable, with the exception of land which formed the property of pious foundations. During the investigated period in the north, the provincial government had a vested interest in the construction of irrigation works because they contributed to public welfare and land reclamation opened up new sources of tax revenues. The governor, summoning his immediate Chinese and indigenous subordinates, discussed and eventually authorized the plans, but the central authorities did nothing more to aid the execution of the project. Village headmen and local irrigation officials organized the work, figuring out how many draught animals and persons each settlement benefiting from the new canal had to contribute. No conceptual distinction was made between urban and rural populations. Farmers' labour contributions were determined according to the size of their property, and craftsmen too were recruited for labour service. Even merchants had to contribute, given the understanding that they benefited indirectly, but their contributions could take the form of money.[232] In the Tarim Basin, village communities had a higher level of autonomy in such matters. This was similar to the situation in earlier centuries in Transoxania and East Iran, where the state interfered in the organizing of irrigation only in the 'imperial oases'; otherwise, communities treated it as an internal affair.[233]

Throughout this period, individuals could retain their ownership rights over their houses and courtyards. Following the demise of the Qing in 1911, Zungharian peasants became legal owners of the land which they cultivated. From this time on, in theory, Republican laws applied which stipulated that undisputed ownership of property had to be verified by obtaining a sealed document from the authorities. Few people had any such document and a new title could only be drawn up if the claimant could prove with witnesses that he had either bought or inherited the property. In disputed cases, the land was given to the person who had cultivated it in the previous year, which was customary practice. Republican laws also stipulated that 10 per cent of the value of the sale of land or house had to be paid by the seller to the state. Similarly, tax had to be paid whenever water rights were transferred. In spite of these legal provisions, customary law appears to have superseded state law in most cases. Even in the northern

[232] Golab 1951: 196.
[233] Cf. Paul 1996: 61.

part of Xinjiang, where government control tended to be stricter, customary law had such force that no Chinese or local official dared violate it, since they would have risked being killed. This reportedly happened on occasion.[234] This is plausible, partly because accepting state regulations entailed economic loss since tax and legal expenses had to be paid, and partly because customary law was familiar to most, regardless of one's level of education, and therefore more trust-worthy.

Given the similarities in ecological conditions and agricultural production, resource management and local customary norms were probably not entirely dissimilar to the situation in Russian Turkestan. There, too, water and land rights appear to have been closely intertwined and, as a written formulation of an official report from 1908 testifies, customary law and Islamic law were drawn upon simultaneously to legitimize prevailing practice. The report begins with the statement that, according to both Islamic and customary law (*adat*), water is a gift of God, and for this reason it cannot be owned by anyone, neither can it be sold or bought. Those who want to use water for irrigation are obliged to take part in the construction and maintenance works of the canals. Water cannot be sold without land. Use rights to water which flows over land are transferred to the person who becomes owner of this land.[235] This formulation itself is riddled with contradictions, especially concerning the point as to whether water could be sold without land. In fact there are indications that, in practice, water and water rights could constitute private property in some parts of Central Asia. For example, when several persons invested into land reclamation by building irrigation canals, only these persons could exercise water rights.[236] There are also indications that prior to the Chinese conquest in Eastern Turkestan some religious authorities such as the Kucha *khojas* may have enjoyed special water rights and responsibilities concerning irrigation. The founder of the saintly lineage of the Kucha *khojas* married and settled in Kucha. There he built three irrigation canals and conferred them on the people. His son had a dam built, and with this he saved the people of Aqsu during a drought.[237] It was perhaps due to these

[234] Golab 1951: 198, Golomb 1959: 56.

[235] Ibid.: 55–6.

[236] Paul 1996: 61. For a description of water rights elsewhere in Central Asia in the nineteenth century, see König 1962. Similar principles applied to mining. Apparently, the rights of the original workers of a jade mine were acknowledged many years after the first digging (Stein 1904: 235).

[237] Hamada 1978: 84.

special water privileges that the *khojas*' estates were considered 'models of neatness and thrift', and their apples, pears and pomegranates enjoyed particular fame.[238]

This is an example of how ownership rights over water could be secured through constructing irrigation canals for land reclamation, a practice widely known elsewhere in Central Asia and Iran.[239] This may explain why, in some places, there was an apparent discrepancy between water and land rights. Before 1949, landlords and rich peasants in Xinjiang, who constituted approximately 8 per cent of the total population, owned half of the total water supply; middle and poor peasants, i.e., 75 per cent of all households, had half of the total water supply under their control, which amounted to one third of a '*kätmän* of water' (explained below) for each household, and 17 per cent of the population had no water rights and had to purchase it with their crop.[240] Thus, Ayip's father had to give his entire crop to his landlord in exchange for water. In return, he received just enough food to live on and a small 'gift' of money now and then.[241] Chinese reports give the following information concerning the distribution of property rights in 1949 in a village south of Kucha. The largest landowning family owned 11.78 per cent of all the arable land belonging to the village; 14.51 per cent was owned by rich peasants; and 73.71 per cent belonged to ordinary smallholders. However, the latter had to leave 78.09 per cent of its arable land fallow, while this figure was 48.05 per cent for rich peasants and 48.02 per cent for the landlord family.[242] This situation illustrates how the relatively egalitarian distribution of land could still mean unfavourable conditions for the majority of smallholders when they were deprived of the corresponding water rights.

The missionary Golomb, who lived in Xinjiang between 1922 and 1939, gives a detailed description of the allocation of water rights in the north, not merely as an outsider but in his capacity as landlord, since he also owned a garden plot and alfalfa fields in the vicinity of Urumchi:

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[238] Forsyth 1875: 44.
[239] See Paul's description of the situation in sixteenth century Isfahan (Paul 1996: 61).
[240] Lattimore 1975: 163. These figures are also quoted in Davidson (1957: 157).
[241] Davidson 1957: 167.
[242] Hoppe 1992: 188.

> The main rule for the portioning out the water is this: He who can show a duly processed title to his land, and has paid the taxes due on it (payment is made in wheat) has a right to water. If an owner is unable to till a portion of his field because not enough water is available, he need not pay taxes on the uncultivated part. On the other hand, he who cannot or will not pay taxes on his property receives no water... The quantity of water allotted to each [cultivator] is determined by the total amount of water at hand and by the area of the fields to be irrigated. A certain definite time is fixed for each mo of land. In the oasis of Hutupi...a period of four to five minutes was allowed per *mo*. Since very few people in that locality owned clocks...the time for watering was reckoned by walking at a slow pace around an area of one *mo*. That would be four or five minutes....[243]

The same author explains that the days for irrigation were strictly regulated. Similar to the rules quoted from Russian Turkestan, those fields situated closest to the head of an irrigation canal had access priority. If there were a dozen average-sized farms for a small canal, each the size of fifty to a 100 *mo*, then each farm had access to irrigation water every ten to fourteen days.[244]

Others who needed water as a source of energy were also subject to regulations. Owners of water mills had special rights to run water over their wheels, but afterwards it had to be returned to the canal.[245] Families who lived near a canal, river or water tank carried water for drinking and household use with buckets, a job mostly performed by women. Those living farther away used donkeys or donkey carts, while the Chinese city dwellers had their water delivered on special water carts. There were also professional water carriers who transported water to Turki homes and to owners of teahouses, hotels and restaurants, who paid their bills monthly.[246] Like water tanks, canals also served numerous purposes, including irrigation, drinking, ritual ablution and other domestic use.

As elsewhere in Central Asia, the distribution of water presumed a high level of communal consensus concerning customary rights and obligations, as well as obedience to the decisions made by the elders. State interference seems to have remained limited. Similar to Jürgen Paul's conclusions concerning Transoxania and East Iran in the pre-

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[243] Golomb 1959: 56.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Lattimore 1975: 164.
[246] Golomb 1959: 55.

Mongol period, the distribution of water in Eastern Turkestan could be seen as a manifestation of peasant democracy rather than 'Oriental despotism'. As Paul warns, however, this democracy should not be idealized, since it was open to abuse.[247]

3.3.5 *Indigenous Knowledge*

Broadly defined, control over water and land can be understood as the implementation of knowledge of agricultural and related works accumulated and passed down between generations but also as social control over resources as property, its produce and the social relations it creates. While social relations will be dealt with in more detail in later sections and in the following chapter, the first type of control, indigenous knowledge, is introduced here. Although subject to changes, modifications and innovations, this form of knowledge is perceived as unchanging tradition and constitutes intangible communal property.

For irrigation in general, river water was used since wells were difficult to dig, while springs typically supplied water for domestic use and gardens only. Like today, the system of irrigation canals was crucial in shaping the inhabited landscape. The *eriq*, or smaller irrigation canals, were ubiquitous in both rural settlements and in the market centres. They received their water from the *östäñ*. The word *östäñ* appears to have been used in a generic sense to mean irrigation canal *per se*, but it was also the more specific designation for a canal larger than an *eriq*. Larger again was the *mişar*, which took its water from the *yilçaq*. The largest canals were referred to as *örpä*.[248]

The importance of irrigation was reflected in the local language, which carefully distinguished between the different types of water used for irrigation at different stages of the growing season.[249] River water was known as black water (*qara su*), which was supposed to have a fertilizing effect, while spring water was called white water (*aq su*).[250] In Turfan, the fields sown in the second month of the year were known as *bağni*, and the water of the first irrigation phase was called white water

[247] Paul 1996: 65.

[248] Prov. 207. I.42. Grenard only mentions the *eriq* and the *östäñ* (1898a: 172), terms which were still commonly used in southern Xinjiang in connection with irrigation in the 1990s.

[249] Katanov 1976: 14–5.

[250] Kazak 1937: 27.

(*aq suyi*). The water of the second irrigation phase, which was routed to the fields ninety-five days after the first phase, was known as second canal water (*aq tara suyi*). The water of the third phase, which took place sixty days later, was called water of the riverbends (*gejigä suyi*), also known as green (*kök*) water.[251] The fourth phase, one month later, was called ploughing water (*qir tartim suyi*).[252] The terminology was probably even more complex than what is recorded in the sources, and it reflected local cultivators' know-how.

A more specialized set of tools were those necessary for the construction and maintenance of irrigation canals. The cultivator-missionary Golomb supplies a detailed description of how dams and irrigation networks were constructed in the early twentieth century. He emphasized that native methods were simple but usually produced excellent results, as was the case in Russian Turkestan where local builders often proved to be more skilful than the Russian engineers, with their more sophisticated technical equipment. His description of how the precise survey was done by the 'master of the horizontal' (*duzliq başi*), laying out the course of a large canal in the Ili valley using only his big toe as an instrument, is an excellent example of indigenous knowledge:

> On the river bank, near the dam, a level spot is selected that stands a little higher than the ground about it. A similar spot is picked out at a distance of about one *aqryn* (literally 'vicinity', i.e. about one quarter of a mile), in the direction in which the canal will go. A man of average height is stationed at this latter point, to serve as a sort of measuring stick. Now the 'master of the horizontal' takes off his boots and lies down on the ground on the flat of his back, his feet pointing towards the second man. A rock about nine inches high is placed beneath his head, then he raises one leg across the other in such a way that one foot rests somewhat higher than the other. An assistant checks to see that the eyes and the big toe of the man's body form a perfectly horizontal line. If so, the 'master of the horizontal', from his recumbent position, sights with one eye across his big toe at the man stationed in the distance, and advises how much of the man's body he can see. By shouted directions the man is ordered to change his position to higher or lower ground until only his head is visible to the 'master of the horizontal'. A marker is placed at this spot. If the canal passes through this point, one may be sure that it will have

[251] Katanov 1976: 15–7. Schwarz, however, translates *gäjgä suyi* as referring to 'second irrigation' (1992: 842).
[252] Katanov 1976: 14–5.

> the proper gradient. No greater fall is allowed for than strictly necessary, in order to make the water reach as far as possible, and also to avoid the risk of a swift current overflowing its banks...[253]

In addition to ensuring a sufficient supply of irrigation water, land to be brought under cultivation also had to be prepared by digging up its edge with a hoe. In effect, the farmer was creating a ridge around his field,[254] which ensured the flow of water into the field from the irrigation canals. With this act, he created cultivated land (*ätiz*) from the uncultivated soil (*zämin*).[255] How exactly this was done is described below, giving examples of the rich local vocabulary:

> The number of *etiz* in a large cultivated area can change but they are usually even. The total number of *etiz* cultivated by one owner for a certain crop is called *pacae jer* or *taxtae jer*. Water is led to these through a big canal, called *aejiq~ariq*, into a smaller one called *ojEk*, which runs through the whole system of *etiz*. These openings are called *aeghiz* 'mouth'. To open them is called *ac-*, to close them *baghla-*. Downstreams in the *ojEk* there is a dam, called *tugh*, which can be opened or shut depending on which *etiz* one wants to irrigate. Around the inside edges of the *etiz* there remain mounds of mud after irrigating. They are called *dos*. These are removed when the *etiz* is prepared for a new crop. The act of removing the *dos* is called *doslE*.[256]

Although peasants knew and used the plough in this region, the hoe (*kätmän*) has remained the symbol of agricultural work in southern Xinjiang, and Lattimore's observation that it is 'to this day more widely used than the plow' seemed still to hold in the 1990s.[257] Lattimore mentions the survival of an ancient local practice in the oasis of Kucha in the concept of a '*kätmän* of labour' which combined units of labour, land and water. One *kätmän* of labour was the "work of one man contributed through the digging of a canal, which entitles him to a '*kätmän* of water', enough to irrigate 10–14 acres".[258] The very concept encapsulates an awareness of the combined importance of the availability of the three resources—land, water and labour—

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[253] Golomb 1951: 192.
[254] The process was known as *etiz tärtiş* or *etiz säliş*.
[255] Prov. 207. II.7.
[256] Jarring 1951b: 19.
[257] Hoppe 1987b, Lattimore 1975:163. Dr. Bellew translates it simply as 'spade'; see Forsyth 1875: 549.
[258] Lattimore 1975: 163.

indispensable for growing a crop, and therefore, survival. Memet Niyaz, a sixty-nine-year-old man from Aqsu interviewed in the 1950s, recalled pre-1949 times when an irrigation canal had to be dug by local people. He remembered that each household contributed to this communal action one or three *kätmän*; in other words he measured the participating labour force in units of 'hoe'.[259]

The *kätmän* had a certain symbolic value as well: because it was used in digging canals, and because of the general association of agricultural work with men, it was the symbol of male work par excellence. It could also symbolize affiliation to specific social groups, especially small landowners and poor landless labourers. A wooden plough (*buqusa*) pulled by oxen was also used in land cultivation, but only by the wealthy with larger landholdings, who could afford to purchase draught animals.[260] A local source defined peasants' work as "digging with the *kätmän* and planting and doing agricultural work".[261] A piece of oral tradition also extols the hoe as the symbol of the labouring classes:

> *He who lies flat on his back* [the rich one] *eats bread loaf.*
> *He who hoes with a kätmän eats the fruit of oleaster.*[262]

The most important local agricultural products were cereals. In the Tarim Basin, some crops had two harvests; in the north, only one. Wheat sown in August and September was known as autumn wheat, while the summer crop had to be sown in March and April. Both types were harvested in July, but the winter seed yielded twice as much as the summer seed.[263] Sown in April and harvested in September, maize was grown for both human and animal consumption.[264]

Indigenous authors give a more detailed insight into local knowledge and practices of agricultural production in the region. 'Late maturing' wheat could be left in the fields for as long as two or three months after ripening without the seeds falling on the ground. Peasants who sowed 1,000 or 2,000 *çaräk* wheat used this type for sowing. There was also an early-ripening type which had to be sown in the summer.

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[259] Tenishev 1984: 30.
[260] Jarring 1951b: 20.
[261] *kätmän çapmaq terilğu zira'at qilmaq* (Prov. 207. I.42).
[262] Jarring 1985: 40.
[263] As noted by Forsyth 1875: 77.
[264] Grenard 1898a: 173.

In strong winds, its seeds scattered easily. This applied generally to the two main summer varieties, which, however, provided good quality seeds. Wheat was the prestige cereal mostly consumed by the wealthy classes, while maize was the staple food of the poor. Maize was also grown in several varieties. One was the late-maturing type, and another was the white maize which would ripen in six months, while a yellow type took five months to mature. The early ripening types had a white variety which was ready in two and a half months and a yellow variety that needed three months. When these varieties were planted following the harvested wheat, they would still be ready before the onset of winter.[265] Other crops were grown more sporadically: millet was cultivated typically in the southern districts, while lucerne had a wider distribution. Rice cultivation was limited; the best was grown around Aqsu. In the second half of the nineteenth century, cotton production was important in the oases of Khotan, Yarkand and Turfan.[266] Informants' memories connect cotton production in traditional society primarily with the well-to-do classes who had enough land for this purpose after having grown enough cereal to satisfy their households' needs. Cotton was usually grown from seed and then processed at home by women. Flax was extensively grown in the western districts. Indian hemp was largely grown in the Yarkand region.[267]

Saguchi, who used Chinese sources for his research, concluded that traditional practice in Kashgaria was to leave land fallow regularly. In Ili, this could be done for two years, but in Aqsu, Yarkand and Kashgar, land was left for only a year at a time. Due to the increase in population size this customary practice was frequently breached under pressure from the *bägs* and was almost completely abandoned by the mid-twentieth century.[268] Leaving arable land uncultivated was often done out of necessity because of problems with the irrigation system or water shortages. Even when peasants were forced to leave

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[265] Similarly, other types of cereals and rice also had an early and a late variety. The indigenous author explains that early and late varieties could be found also among fruits and vegetables, among which he mentions the most popular ones, i.e., the turnip and the carrot (Prov. 207. I.7).

[266] For the early history of cotton cultivation in Xinjiang, see Raschmann 1995: 13–9.

[267] Forsyth 1875: 77–8, Grenard 1898a: 173–5.

[268] Saguchi 1963: 187, 218. This trend continued after 1949: the percentage of cultivable land left fallow in 1949 was 17.9%, this had decreased to 13.1% by 1979 (Hoppe 1992: 185).

some of their land fallow, they ploughed it twice a year to prevent the overgrowth of weeds. In many places, crops were rotated every two to four years.[269]

There was also variation in the use of fertilizers. In the south, regular use was made of natural fertilizers, and in the bazaar, night soil was marketed for this purpose.[270] That manure could be purchased was confirmed by an indigenous farmer from the oasis of Guma: "In spring we grow the wheat in Guma. If water comes, the result is a very good crop. If not, the money for day-labourers, the money for the manure which has been put on the soil as well as seed-corn is lost".[271] Since natural fertilizer was an expensive commodity, only the relatively wealthy could purchase it in the required quantity. Poorer people resorted to other means if they could. Where there were old ruins in the vicinity, "women spaded out earth from the ruined walls, which was then carried down in big baskets and spread over the fields, as it was believed to be excellent manure".[272] In the north, natural fertilizers were rarely used because supplies were limited; their use was limited to vegetable gardens. Farming households had no more than one or two cows, an ox and perhaps a horse or a donkey and some sheep. For gardens, only horse and donkey dung was used; for cereal fields, cow or sheep dung was used. Supplies were also limited because much of the sheep dung was dried and used as fuel. Human fertilizer was never used because of ritual prohibitions. Fear of pollution also prevented any use being made of pig dung. Ostensibly, the use of pig dung as fertilizer was turned down by the Eastern Turkestanis because it was said to be too 'cold' for the plants; in reality, the avoidance clearly stemmed from pollution beliefs.[273] Even if regular fertilizing was not always possible, there was an awareness of the excellent fertilizing qualities of the mineral-rich irrigation water from the melting snow in the mountains. Even today, it is local wisdom that this water, which 'has seen the sun', is greatly preferable to water for both the soil and for human consumption.

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[269] Golomb 1959: 66–8.
[270] Lattimore 1975: 166.
[271] Jarring 1951b: 19.
[272] Ambolt 1939: 107.
[273] Golomb 1959: 66–7.

3.4 *Social Structure: Access to Power*

Since the most fundamental resources in a primarily agricultural economy were land and water, access to them shaped social relationships. Ownership of these assets was recognized as the surest way for accumulation of wealth, which often led in turn to social recognition and prestige. Of course, prestige and social recognition—or, in Bourdieu's words, 'symbolic capital'[274]—could also be acquired through inheritance or personal and religious charisma. Social position and access to power were based on complex ideas concerning types of property and wealth, as well as influence and prestige.

Members of the Forsyth mission, who took Indian society as their yardstick for comparison, emphasized the lack of caste restrictions and the relative social mobility of Eastern Turkestani society: "The father may be a blacksmith and the son a tailor; the mother may keep a shop, and the daughter may be a seamstress".[275] Some twenty years later, another author remarked that opportunities to rise and fall socially were limited.[276] There is no necessary contradiction between these two observations. Social mobility in theory had far more scope than in India, but it also had its limitations. These limitations were only partially due to imperial policies which stipulated that access to the highest offices should be barred to indigenous people. In many instances, the wish to hand down family tradition, combined with the absence of other opportunities, resulted in a situation in which not only real estate and other forms of property but also skills and occupational specialization became subjects of intra-familial transmission and inheritance.

Pre-1949 social structure was highly stratified, although divisions were far from clear-cut. Saguchi Toru's study of local society under the Qing reveals a dominant pattern of patron-client dependency, a system which was essentially preserved up to 'Liberation'. At the pinnacle of this system stood a foreign elite: the Mandarins divided the local population among themselves, each having a number of clients, i.e., indigenous officeholders. These patron-client relationships were reproduced between indigenous officials and the local population, following a similar pattern. Rural clients were expected to perform

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[274] Bourdieu 1977.
[275] Forsyth 1875: 89.
[276] Grenard 1898a: 168.

labour services, while urban clients had to procure meat, fat and other things for their patrons.[277]

The local population was categorized into three recognized groups: the *bägs*, who represented indigenous officialdom, the *axuns*, who comprised the religious establishment and the *alban qaş*, or common subjects.[278] This classification reflected the economic interests of the rulers, since the principles of classification were taxation and participation in local administration. The first two groups were exempt from paying taxes, while the third group, consisting of landowners and tenants of both government-owned and privately owned land, were subject to taxation. The term *alban* meant corvée, which indicates that the lower social classes were primarily defined in terms of their labour obligations. Another synonym for the lower, ordinary classes was *qara qaş* (black side), which stood in structural opposition to *aq qaş* (white side), designating the elite, comprising indigenous officials and religious dignitaries who were exempt from taxation.[279] A further designation occurs in the indigenous Nay-Xan's account of the marital position of the ruler (*xan*) of Lukchen. The *xan* had four wives. The father of the eldest wife was an ordinary person (*qara kişi*), but her mother, coming from a distinguished family, was described as a 'white bone' (*aq ustuxan*).[280] His own mother, on the other hand, was a *qara ustuxan*, or 'black bone' from Yarkand. His second wife was his stepsister, and his other two wives were the descendants of ordinary tax collectors (*qara albançi*).[281]

Indigenous classification points to further complexities. For example, the people of Lukchen called the two waterways running through their oasis Peasant River (*dixan su*) and Sipa River (*sipa su*) because peasants lived along the former and officials lived along the latter.[282] Other 'small

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[277] Valikhanov 1961: 344.

[278] Fletcher 1978: 73, Valikhanov 1961: 343.

[279] Valikhanov 1961: 343. The use of the colours white and black as markers of social or political difference was well-known among Turkic speaking groups.

[280] The modern Uyghur word for aristocrat is *aqsöngäk*, literally meaning 'white bone'.

[281] Katanov 1976: 20–1. It is not quite clear if in Eastern Turkestan the adjective 'black' simply denoted ordinary people, the non-elite, or if the symbolic opposition of the white and black bones referred to aristocratic groups of equal rank belonging to different descent groups, i.e., the Black Mountain *khoja* faction based in Yarkand and the White Mountains based in Kashgar. It is possible that the same colour pair had two cross cutting meanings, reflecting both horizontal political allegiances connected to lineage and vertical social stratification connected to status in other contexts.

[282] Katanov 1976: 10–1. *Sipah* is originally a 'military officer' but Mijit Axun uses the term in conjunction with *ämäldar*.

people' of Lukchen who were neither officials (*sipah*) nor peasants (*dixan*) were called the *ormeçi* (harvesters).[283] These 'small people' were landless day labourers hired at harvest time who, lacking real estate and regular employment, were probably not taxed.

Local actors characterized social structure in the 1930s in terms of economic differences based on unequal access to resources. People were classified as rich (*ağniyalar*), middle income (*ğäniliqi ottura hal kişilär*) and poor (*kämbäğäl biçarälär*).[284] The native Nur Luke estimated that, prior to 'Liberation', 95 per cent of the sedentary inhabitants of Eastern Turkestan were large landowners (*zimindar*) and peasants (*dixan*), and 5 per cent were merchants (*sodigär*) who had nothing to do with agriculture; he did not break down the peasant category into landowning and landless cultivators.[285]

3.4.1 *Officialdom*

The organization of local administration under the Qing is one of the best-studied topics in Eastern Turkestani history, albeit mostly from the colonizers' point of view.[286] This section introduces insider and outsider views of this organizational structure and local power-holders, paying special attention to the all-too-rare perspectives 'from below'

The imposition of an enduring supra-regional political structure created a framework which generally did not impede the perpetuation and persistence of local practices. This framework itself was not permanent and unchanging, but even at times when it weakened and when regional power became almost entirely independent from the centre, foreign rule continued to be maintained through the mediation of local officials, and ordinary people's relationships with the power-holders continued to be defined in terms of their obligations, with paying taxes and providing labour services the most prominent among them.[287]

Power was concentrated in the hands of foreign and indigenous officials, although the ethnic affiliation of these groups was also

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[283] Cf. Schwarz 1992: 424.

[284] Prov. 207. I.14.

[285] Prov. 212. 23. In describing variations in performing life-cycle rituals, Nur Luke repeatedly used similar simplified categories: *bay* (rich) *ottura halliq* (middle) and *kämbäğäl* (poor). This basic classification has persisted to the present day.

[286] Saguchi Toru utilized Chinese sources for his classic study of the social history of the region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See also Fletcher 1978, Millward 1998 and Newby 1998.

[287] Fletcher 1978: 77.

complex. As a rule, Qing officials superseded indigenous ones.[288] The local level remained dominated by indigenous officials, while the high-level posts were consistently held by Qing dignitaries.[289] At this level ethnic difference defined the hierarchical structure. At the time of the Qing conquest, the imperial ranking system was introduced to the newly occupied lands. The highest offices in the Chinese bureaucratic system that could be held by indigenous officials were third grade or lower ranks. The most important criterion for the appointment of such officials was the family's loyalty to the Qing, and often such families happened to be descendants of old, well-established aristocratic lineages whose nobility and titles had been handed down from the *khoja* period that preceded the Qing era. The *bägs* were recruited to mediate between the Qing and the subject populations. The Qing allocated large landholdings to their officials for the period during which they remained in office, but they only enjoyed use rights over this property, which had to be returned as soon as the person ceased to serve as an official. However, many *bägs* remained rich landowners since they were recruited from well-to-do landowning families and because, through the manipulation of the system, they increased their private property and fortune while holding office.[290]

The political organization of the eastern part of the region differed from the rest, since this area had a longer history of interaction with China, and the princes (*wang*) of Turfan and Qumul, integrated into the imperial nobility, were hereditary rulers who paid tribute to the Qing. Although some of the arable land was under government supervision and cultivated by Green Standard soldiers, exiles, Chinese civilian colonists and immigrant merchants, these hereditary rulers had complete control over the revenues and labour services of the indigenous population, with the exception of a few who cultivated imperial land.

The Tarim cities did not have hereditary rulers. Instead, they were governed by superintendents accountable to a councillor in Kashgar and Yarkand, as well as to the military governor based in Ili. These officials were responsible for defence, banner affairs and the jurisdiction of their soldiers. A lower-level administrative body, also recruited from

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[288] On the position of local administrators in the early nineteenth century, see Di Cosmo 1993.

[289] Hartmann 1908: 100.

[290] Saguchi 1963: 155–8.

foreigners, was responsible for the affairs of Chinese civilians and the Han Green Standard Troops. The civil government of local society was constituted by an indigenous ruling hierarchy under the *hakim bäg*. Its officials were responsible for collecting taxes as well as for organizing labour services. In theory, appointments could be given and withdrawn arbitrarily, but in practice important offices could only be filled by those who had the material means to afford the gifts, bribes, feasts etc., which were the prerequisites for such appointments. This could be achieved through the manipulation of family wealth, prestige and influence: one sees here the interconnectedness of economic, cultural and social capital. So it could happen that titles and offices were passed down from father to son, despite the political principle to the contrary; amassed wealth enabled whole descent groups to continue to hold on to their title for generations. But not all *bäg* families managed to stay in power over many generations. Not only could *bäg*s be removed from office by their superiors, their fall could also be brought about by dissatisfied subjects who rebelled against their excesses. Thus, in areas where offices could not be officially inherited, numerous pragmatic factors helped to determine access to power; hereditary succession was common, but there was also scope for social mobility.[291]

The ambiguous position of local officials in Eastern Turkestan between 1760 and 1864 has been discussed and evaluated by Laura Newby, who sees them as "neither unequivocal collaborationists, nor passive recipients of the experience of colonization" [292] Drawing primarily on Chinese sources, Newby describes the processes which ultimately led to the emergence of a new political elite that gradually grew apart from the traditional religious elite. The Qing administration changed the structure of the local elite and turned the honorific title *bäg*, previously a marker of social status in Central Asia, into a marker of political office. In this respect the Qing introduced an innovation in the administrative system inherited from the *khoja* period by affixing the title *bäg* to the office designation, instead of using the title of the office on its own, as had been the practice under the *khoja*s, the Zunghars and the Mongols. With this measure, they marked their own representatives vis-à-vis the expelled *khoja*s and their followers.[293]

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[291] Saguchi 1963: 129.
[292] Newby 1998.
[293] Ibid.: 550.

Within the local elite, secular government officials were placed above religious functionaries. The measures introduced did not attempt to strip the latter of their power; the aim was merely to limit it. However, in spite of the clear-cut rules, the traditional practices of the old hereditary nobility remained in force, and the new, imperial framework in practice enabled more abuse of power and corruption than had been allowed by the previously fragmented structure of local society. As Newby put it, "The difference was, now that the traditional checks and balances had been removed, that the reformulated Manchu-sanctioned elite had much greater potential and scope for abuse. Any rising against the oppressive rule of the local elite would constitute rebellion against the Qing".[294]

Following the Manchu restoration in the wake of the Ya'qub Beg episode, the functionaries responsible for policing, tax collection and customs were all Chinese, and therefore subject to Chinese laws. Nevertheless, the region continued to retain a relatively large degree of autonomy, and the central government continued to respect local tradition. The administrative system under the Qing resembled the structure of the local Islamic government as it had been organized under the *khojas*.[295] The governor was responsible for justice, taking administrative, judicial, police and legislative measures, organizing public work, and nominating and sacking prefects and sub-prefects. He also arranged troops and conducted diplomatic negotiations relevant to the province.[296]

In spite of the changes, the two-tiered system of local and foreign administration and the principle of non-interference into local practices persisted. When Dunmore visited in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the governor general was known as the *futai*. He and his chief secretary were based in Urumchi and had two *taotai*s, one based at Aqsu, the other in Kashgar, and they had *amban*s under their control. The *amban*s were in effect provincial assistant governors. The most important duties of the *amban* included the collection of revenues.[297] Among the local population, there was a tendency to view representatives of foreign rule as homogenous; they called all high-ranking Chinese administrators by the generic Manchu title *amban* without making

[294] Newby 1998: 293.
[295] Fletcher n.d.: 549.
[296] Grenard 1898a: 260–1.
[297] Dunmore 1993: 270, 279.

any distinction between higher- and lower-ranking officials.[298] Indigenous officials were classified in five groups, ranging from the third to the seventh degree of the official scale. Chinese documents in early Qing times listed thirty-five *bäg* titles in the region, but of these only a few had practical relevance. Each village had to have a *hakim* and an *işikağa bäg*, and many of the various officials, some of them holders of newly created titles responsible for taxes (*şañ*), and others with traditional titles such as the official in charge of water distribution (*mirab*), were given landholdings and serfs. However, officials recruited from the ranks of the rich landowners received no additional land donation from the Qing. It is possible that many *mirab*s also fell into this category, although there was considerable variation and cases of land donations were considered individually. Similar rules applied to high-ranking Muslim dignitaries, because they had access to much of the income of large pious foundations.[299] While the above list pertains to conditions prior to the mid-nineteenth century, in the early twentieth century the situation was not very different; the most important offices were held by the *hakim bäg*, or local governor, the *işikağa bäg*, or deputy governor, the *şañ* and the *kaçanaçi bäg*, both collectors of revenues, the *qazi*, or judge, and the *mirab*, or superintendent of agriculture.[300]

Looking at the administrative hierarchy 'from below', lower-ranking officials with whom members of the population had frequent and direct contact become visible. Just as most Chinese officials were called *amban*, most indigenous officials were commonly known as *bäg*s. Perhaps the best known among commoners were officials in charge of organizing irrigation, the postal service, corvée, policing, food stores, schools and conflict settlement. Each large village, urban district, cluster of small villages or mountain district was subordinated to a *bäg*. Indigenous administrative divisions retained the Turkic terminology of traditional military divisions. The head of a hundred, the *yüzbäşi*, was in charge of approximately 100–200 courtyards; the *miñbäşi*, or head of 1000, had to supervise the administration of as many as 10,000 to 15,000 courtyards; and the head of ten, (*onbäşi*) was in charge of ten to twenty courtyards. The *yüzbäşi*'s job was mainly the keeping of the tax register and the collection of taxes in kind from all landowners, as well as the

[298] Ibid.: 99.
[299] Saguchi 1963: 133–4.
[300] Hartmann 1908: 95.

maintenance of order in his administrative district. The *kökbäşi* was the lowest-level official in charge of irrigation, including maintenance work and water distribution. He was elected by landowners whose property was situated by the same irrigation canal. Although most indigenous officials received no fixed annual salary, the *kökbäşi* had an annual income of two *çarăk* wheat from each household paid directly to him.[301]

The above description reflected a situation in which the number of households determined the rank of the official in charge. But, according to indigenous reports, the ranking of officials in charge of a settlement could be determined by the total amount of tax levied on it. So villages which had to pay 200 *dän*[302] of grain to the stores were administered by a *yüzbäşi*, who was the superior of several *onbäşis*. A *yüzbäşi* could be in charge of several villages. This report makes no mention of the *mïñbäşi*; instead, above the *yüzbäşi* stood the *mirab* in charge of water distribution.[303] In Lukchen, the *dorğa* was responsible for organizing corvée, the collection of taxes and all police enquiries in the district. The *mirab* was in charge of the land and water of the region. The elders (*aqsaqal*) also had a say in land and water issues and were assisted by one or two officials. The *dorğa* and the *mirab* and community elders lived on the income of land allocated to them, on which they grew grain. All work, including irrigation and harvesting, was done for them by local people; community elders had to transport the crop.[304]

In Khotan at the end of the nineteenth century, the district head was the *bäg mïñbäşi*, immediately followed by the *mirab* or the *arqa bäg mïñbäşi*, who either helped in district administration or were in charge of the administration of larger townships. Underneath these functionaries stood the *yüzbäşi* and the *onbäşi*. The *dorğa* executed official instructions and juridical mandates, and he was also in charge of all the preliminary enquiries in criminal offences. Here, *bäg*s were nominated by local notables but could only be appointed by the *taotai*. *Bäg*s were in charge of maintaining the police force, imposing fines, intervening in border disputes and initiating investigations in cases of murder, fights, injuries and other criminal offences. They were also responsible for water distribution, the maintenance of irrigation canals, bridges and roads, for

[301] Ibid.: 25–7.
[302] One hundred litres (Schwarz 1992: 1079).
[303] Prov. 207. I.42.
[304] Katanov 1976: 8–13.

organizing corvée, for the collection of taxes and for collecting grain and foodstuffs.[305]

The meanings of titles must have undergone certain changes over time. The English tea merchant Robert Shaw warns that by the time of his visit to the region in the late nineteenth century, the terms *yüzbäşi* (head of a hundred) and *miñbäşi* (whose office he calls *miñbegi*) had lost their former meaning, and there were cases when the *yüzbäşi*'s power superseded that of the *miñbäşi*, which may have been connected to their civil rank. The civil *miñbegi*, though in charge of one thousand villagers, remained inferior in rank to the military *yüzbäşi*, who commanded a hundred soldiers.[306]

The *mirab* was in control of matters such as the supervision and upkeep of irrigation canals and the keeping of water registers.[307] Although he was locally elected, influential families usually had an important say in who was appointed.[308] Under him served the *kökbäşi*, or officials whose job it was to watch the water day and night.[309] Where the irrigation system was complex, the *mirab*s of one district were subordinated to the head *mirab* (*mirab bäşi*). In spite of local variations, the typical pattern was that the *mirab* distributed responsibility over certain stretches of water among other village elders who allocated water proportionally to each farmer. At each harvest, the *mirab* received one part in fifty of the total harvest from each elder in his hamlet as a fee. The *mirab* could then retain about half of the payment in kind; the other half he had to pay to the government or landlord.'[310] Water distribution was far from egalitarian: the *mirab* could withhold water from the peasants until his demands for payment were met, and he extracted labour services from individuals who were dependent on him

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[305] Grenard 1898a: 275–6.

[306] Shaw 1984: 314.

[307] Although the Qing administration created a new indigenous aristocracy—partly through integrating the previous ruling classes, and partly through recruiting new clients—the low level administration simply perpetuated those offices which had played a role in local community management prior to the conquest. The *mirab*, whose ubiquitous presence in Central Asia well predates Qing rule in Xinjiang, is a good example. Irrigation necessitated the organized management of resources and the appointment of a *mirab*. The Qing merely adjusted their administration to local conditions. This reproduction of local, indigenous structures played a key role in maintaining communities.

[308] Lattimore 1975: 164.

[309] Prov. 207. I.42.

[310] Forsyth 1875: 77.

for their water supply.[311] At the end of the nineteenth century, "the Beg of Tazgun received an annual sum of one thousand tenges from the inhabitants of the Tarim and Yupugay oases in the Maralbashi district for allowing the water to flow through their lands. He cut off the required water supply after the natives withheld the payment of bribes to him for about two years. Their complaints made to the Taotai of Kashgar against the arbitrary action of the Beg produced no result".[312] Oral tradition in Ili has preserved bitter memories of the unequal distribution of water as well as the obligation to participate in the construction of irrigation canals in the form of corvée, as the following lines illustrate:

> *The Mirabs ride on their ponies*
> *and send water to the rich.*
> *If the poor but mention water,*
> *their heads are stuck in a ditch.*[313]

Since water management was central to the local economy, this official retained his key position throughout the period in question. In the early twentieth century, the *mirab*'s responsibilities continued to be manifold, and his power, prestige and influence were considerable. In Kashgar, he could also be called upon to settle minor disputes.[314] In Yarkand, at times when it was crucial to have sufficient water supply, the *mirab*'s power could temporarily supersede that of other officials.[315] In spite of official controls, disputes over water use often flared up seasonally. Conflicts were common, both between individuals as to who would receive water first on his land and between upstream and downstream communities.[316] When a quarrel over water broke out on one occasion in the Kashgar region, many people were wounded in the ensuing fight. After this, local *mollas* went to every house and broke the points of all knives to prevent further damage.[317]

Given their subordinate position in relation to the Chinese *ambans* in the official ranking system, indigenous *bägs* frequently cooperated with Qing officials. Their interests often coincided, especially when it came

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[311] Warikoo 1985: 81.
[312] Ibid.: 110, quoting Deasy 1901: 286.
[313] Quoted from Dautcher, who cites the full text (1999: 42–3).
[314] Prov. 207. I.42.
[315] Prov. 464. 44V.
[316] Lattimore 1975: 164.
[317] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 173.

to trying to hold onto their office.[318] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, even powerful *bäg*s had a precarious position. Entangled in complicated webs of mutual dependencies, a *bäg* expected presents and services from his subordinates, but he could hardly avoid handing out gifts in order to safeguard his own position. This cooperation often took the form of bribes paid by the Turki officials to the Chinese *amban* to retain their position.[319] The *amban*'s best way to secure a steady flow of income was to choose his officials from among the wealthy,[320] since higher indigenous officials could be appointed by the *amban* and lower-ranking officials by their nearest indigenous superior.[321]

While in the late nineteenth century native *bäg*s could still continue in their offices for decades or even for life, which put them in an advantageous position vis-à-vis their Chinese superiors, a change came in 1915 when this privilege was abolished. Governor Yang ordered that the *bäg*s who formed the District Elders first had to be elected locally, then recommended by Chinese superiors, then appointed by the governor himself. After appointment, a District Elder could be dismissed but he could also be re-elected.[322] In effect, this regulation further strengthened reliance on patron-client relations and promoted informal payments and extractions for office. The position of *bäg* was sought after because even though regular benefits were meagre, it opened up access to substantial irregular revenues.[323]

Most commentators presented the *bäg*-subject relationship in terms of one-sided exploitation: the *bäg*s extracted taxes and labour services from the locals.[324] However, at least one indigenous report implies that sometimes a degree of symbolic reciprocity was observed in these exploitative relationships. In the late nineteenth century in Turfan, presents of horses, sheep or similar things were habitually taken to the governor. If he liked the 'present', he would give his client 100 kilograms of wheat or maize; if, however, the present was not to his liking, he would turn them away.[325]

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[318] Rossabi 1975: 170.
[319] Forsyth 1875: 96.
[320] Grenard 1898a: 147–8.
[321] Mannerheim 1969: 70.
[322] Lattimore 1975: 54.
[323] Grenard 1898a: 148.
[324] Valikhanov 1961: 344.
[325] Katanov 1976: 16–7.

3.4.2 *Interpreters*

The district- and local-level administration at the end of the nineteenth century was entirely in indigenous hands, although Chinese officials were expected to familiarize themselves with the local legal situation. To facilitate this, a bilingual Chinese-and-Turki book was produced on a hand press in Kashgar.[326] There was no serious attempt to assimilate the *bägs* into Chinese culture,[327] although there were some signs of acculturation. A successful example of partial sinicisation was the *wang* of Qumul, Maqsud Şah, who "spoke Turki with a marked Chinese accent, and wore Chinese clothes; on the other hand, he had a long white beard and always wore a turban or an Uyghur cap. His bodyguard consisted of forty Chinese soldiers".[328] In practice, few *bägs* had a good command of Chinese, and reports submitted to their Chinese superiors were typically composed in Turki.[329] For their part, the Chinese only exceptionally learnt foreign languages,[330] and they were "too foolishly imbued with their sense of superiority to debase themselves to learn a barbaric language".[331]

To solve the problem of communication, a professional class of interpreters was trained. They were recruited from the indigenous population, and their 'cultural capital' consisted entirely in their fluency in both Chinese and Turki. As controllers of communication between rulers and ruled, between the Qing and the indigenous elite, they occupied a key position which enabled them to gain access to irregular benefits but which also rendered their position precarious. Native interpreters were employed by Chinese officials, and some of them were descendants of *bägs* 'of former days' whose families had lost their influence and property through competition with the new, emerging elite or because of their participation in anti-Qing rebellions.[332]

Formal qualifications were indispensable, and at the end of the nineteenth century schools were established in some locations with the aim of spreading the Chinese language and recruiting interpreters.

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[326] Hartmann 1902: 117.
[327] Newby 1998: 295.
[328] Forbes 1986: 43. This was no accident. For the historical alliances between the Qing and the hereditary rulers of Qumul and Turfan in eastern Xinjiang, see p. 118 above.
[329] Mannerheim 1969: 70.
[330] Hartmann 1908: 95.
[331] Grenard 1898a: 274–5.
[332] Dunmore [1893] 1993: 290.

Since the students' clothes, as well as food and tuition fees, had to be paid for by their parents, only well-to-do families could afford to send their sons there. The students wore Chinese clothes and styled their hair in Chinese fashion, and the language of instruction was Chinese. Islamic practices were forbidden but were followed secretly by the boarders. The minimal duration of studies was ten years, after which very few students transferred to Urumchi to sit the provincial examinations. After this, they could proceed to Peking for final examinations, although such cases were rare and most remained in Xinjiang to serve in the local administration. These young men were formally socialized in the Chinese way, which contradicted their informal socialization. This ambivalence continued to haunt the interpreters throughout their career. They were feared because they had plenty of influence. They benefited financially from their position through accepting bribes, but there were many other ways to gain profit. The legal system provided them with particularly good opportunities to make money when their services were needed to resolve disputes between the Chinese and locals. They were constantly accused of corruption and abuse of power.[333] Their vulnerability increased if they were away from their hometown. When a certain Khotanese interpreter had to accompany a European traveller to Kashgar, the interpreter changed his Chinese clothes for indigenous costume and hid his hair under his cap soon after leaving his office. Nevertheless, he was recognized and had an unpleasant journey. One day he was upset because people doubted the sincerity of his Muslim faith.[334] Because of their assumed insincerity as adherents of Islam, they were contemptuously labelled 'half-Chinese' The ambivalence was also reflected in their costume, which was not entirely Chinese but a mixture of local dress and Chinese attire.[335] This ambivalence was indicated by the compound word used to denote an interpreter: *tungçi* was a derivative of the Chinese *dong*, 'to understand', and the Turki suffix *-çi*, referring to occupation.[336]

The corruption attributed to local interpreters and even their potential for stirring up enmity between the Chinese and the native populations is illustrated by a story which was recorded as a piece of oral tradition and must have referred to an incident that took place during one of

[333] Grenard 1898a: 262, 273–5.
[334] Ibid.: 273–5.
[335] Skrine [1926] 1971: 247.
[336] Hartmann 1908: 95.

the Muslim rebellions in the nineteenth century. It is about the Friday Mosque of Yarkand, which used to have a beautiful minaret. When a Chinese official arrived from Beijing with a huge army to suppress the Yarkandis' rebellion, he was told by a scheming interpreter that the purpose of the minaret was to facilitate the calling of local people to rebel against the Chinese. The Chinese leader duly had the minaret demolished, although he was apparently very sorry when he heard of the purpose it had really served.[337]

Compared to the situation before 1864, interpreters' power had gradually declined by the end of the nineteenth century. Before the Muslim rebellions, they had been men of considerable prestige with many clients who paid them bribes to avoid corvée and be exempted from paying taxes. Since the Chinese rulers recognized that the corruption of interpreters antagonized the subject population, they gave strict orders to limit their power.[338] But in many places, the interpreters continued to play an important role in the management of interethnic relations. In Dunmore's words, "and woe betide the wretched plaintiff in a 'case,' if he happens to be inimical to one of these gentry, for not only is he certain to lose his case, but to be punished as well, and for nothing".[339]

The system inherited from Qing times seems to have survived under the warlords during the first half of the twentieth century. As in the past, during the rule of Yang Zengxin (1911–1928), "administrative salaries were quite inadequate, and it was understood that an incumbent official, having bought his way to office, was free to make as much as he could from bribes and 'taxes', leaving his subordinates to fend for themselves and thereby extending corruption to the lowest levels of the system".[340] Although at some point Governor Yang introduced penalties for interpreters who abused their position, the ensuing political struggle under Sheng's rule (1934–1944) did not put an end to such practices.[341] Wu, a Western-educated Chinese observer, noted in the middle of the twentieth century how the lack of knowledge of Chinese among the indigenous people was the root of the population's

[337] Ibid.: 50.
[338] Grenard 1898a: 274–5.
[339] Dunmore [1893] 1993: 306, Mannerheim 1969: 73.
[340] Forbes 1985: 32.
[341] Ibid.: 33.

discontent, since this made it possible for native interpreters to exact money from the population.[342]

3.4.3 *Landowners*

Because of the natural properties of the region, the size of land belonging to individual families was everywhere limited. These limitations had very different reasons in the north and in the south. In Zungharia, much of the fertile land was traditionally used by nomadic groups as pasture, and arable farming on a larger scale was a relatively late nineteenth-century development. In contrast, the south had a long history of farming, and inheritance practices led to a considerable fragmentation of land. More densely populated than the north, here only a relatively small proportion of the total surface area could be farmed because of the extreme scarcity of water.

In the first half of the twentieth century in the Ili valley, the smallest farms were approximately six hectares, and the largest twenty hectares. In the Tarim Basin half of the landowning population had access to an average of 1.5 to three hectares (22.5–45 *mo*), and only a small proportion up to forty hectares (six hundred *mo*).[343] Based on data provided by the *Allunions-Orientalische Handelskammer* for four districts of Kashgaria, the ratio of landowners and land size was in 1929 as follows: the number of peasant households was 434,285; of these, 325,239 farmed their own land, 60,132 farmed leased land, and 49,914 households farmed both their own and leased land.

Ten or more *mo*—159,400 landowners
Ten to thirty *mo*—151,341 landowners
Thirty to fifty *mo*—62,889 landowners
Fifty to one hundred *mo*—44,914 landowners
More than one hundred *mo*—14,832 landowners[344]

In this light, the statistics provided by a Chinese report describing the property of a very rich landlord before the land reform in Aqsu seem to be quite exceptional a certain 'Rou-si-tan bäg' (Rustäm?), the richest man in Aqsu, possessed 2,800 *mo* (186 ha) arable land, more than 1,000 *mo* (60.6 ha) wasteland and 500 *mo* (30.3 ha) pasture.[345]

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[342] Wu 1984: 221, Golomb 1959: 56–7, Kazak 1937: 28.
[343] Golomb 1959: 56–7.
[344] Kazak 1937: 28.
[345] Hoppe 1998: 116.

Exceptionally large properties were held by members of big, well-established, families which, through marriage alliances, accumulated more land than others in their class and had a large flock of clients recruited from among members of their kin, their domestics, labourers and debtors. This landowning aristocracy was known as *zimindar* or *mülkdar*. The richest of them had their estates cultivated by tenant farmers, landless serfs and labourers. One important factor which enabled many of the indigenous aristocrats to retain their social prestige, wealth and power in the long term was their skill in investing into large flocks, herds and commercial businesses. Engagement in mixed economic enterprises balanced out the precarious nature of economic production: a particularly bad harvest, a dramatic fall in market prices or an epidemic among the animals did not hit them as hard as it did those whose wealth was concentrated in one enterprise. Members of this group also had a wide network of clients among farmers, merchants, craftsmen and nomads, whose alliances could occasionally be mobilized for a range of political purposes and even for military support.

Land, however, retained its position as the supreme good in symbolic, if not economic, terms. Large landowners who merged with the old aristocratic families commanded more respect than rich merchants. Some of the latter had a large clientele of debtors, but their influence could only match that of the landowners when they themselves broke through into their ranks through amassing relatively large landholdings. In Khotan, some merchants, in spite of their wealth, often exceeding that of the landed aristocrats, continued to live in more modest houses, wear simple clothes and to ride horses which were inferior to what they could actually afford. They may have been the wealthiest, but they had less social influence than the landowners.[346] Local society therefore demonstrated opposing trends in consumption patterns: those whose social prestige matched their economic wealth engaged in 'conspicuous consumption', while others whose income level exceeded the social prestige ascribed to them were obliged to 'play it down'; there was a substantial overlap but no precise equivalence between wealth and social standing.[347]

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[346] Grenard 1898a: 151.

[347] Similar tension between such countertrends can be noted in modern, post-reform Xinjiang (Cf. Dautcher 1999: 22–3).

The difference between middle peasants and smallholders was more a matter of scale than of structural position. Prior to the first land reform in the early 1950s, the proportion of the so-called middle peasants was estimated at 28 per cent.[348] They were the most self-sufficient, in the sense that they could cultivate their own land by using unpaid family labour. At times of temporary labour shortage—caused, for example, by the evolving domestic cycle—they resorted to employing seasonal workers or drew on local forms of inter-household labour cooperation with kin and neighbours.[349] Labour cooperation took the form of open-ended mutual obligations based on reciprocal principles. It usually comprised an exchange of labour, although assistance could also be reciprocated with payment of grain.

In spite of possessing their own land, many of the smallholders were vulnerable. Some created strategic alliances with *bäg*s, thus avoiding the much resented corvée and minimizing their tax liabilities. But they were at the mercy of big landlords, rich merchants and moneylenders. In the spring, they were already in need of money and sometimes had to sell their crops in advance at half their real value to rich neighbours or urban merchants and speculators. A quarter of this money was then taken as tax, and by the autumn, they were again left without resources after they had repaid their debts with interest. Many fell prey to moneylenders. Entangled in a web of debts, their property was eventually seized. Some sank to the ranks of domestics, labourers or mendicants. In conformity with Islamic principles, which condemned interest, the secular authorities tried to control Chinese moneylenders, but with little success. In Keriya in 1891, when the rate of interest was fixed at a low level, the merchants refused to lend money, and the peasants were the first to request the return of usury.[350]

Some smallholders tried to combine agricultural production with holding low-level offices. Such a person was Toxta Axun of Niya, who served as the messenger and policeman of a *bäg* and possessed nine hectares of mediocre land on which he grew wheat and maize. He also produced fruit and vegetables for family consumption. He owned

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[348] Hoppe 1998: 107. Of course, all estimates which rely on the official categories of the socialist state have to be treated with caution.

[349] Modern terminology in the Kashgar area refers to such cooperation as *yardämläşmä*, *hemkarlişiş* or *ittipaqlişiş* but a 1915 source refers to labour cooperation practices in Aqsu as *lapqut*, a word remembered today, also in eastern Xinjiang (Malov 1961: 54).

[350] Grenard 1898a: 154–5.

a horse, seventy sheep and fifteen cattle, the wool, meat and milk of which were used to satisfy household needs. His family at the time consisted of twelve members. Another smallholder was a certain A'la Xoja who was eighty years old with a wife and seven children. The children were between twenty and fifty years old and three had already left the paternal house. They possessed four cows, two donkeys, four sheep and a piece of good land, upon which they grew vegetables, fruit, lucerne and cotton.[351]

3.4.4 *Tenant Farmers and Sharecroppers*

Tenancy was widely practised in pre-socialist Xinjiang.[352] In practice, the obligations of landowning peasants and tenant farmers largely overlapped: all were subject to labour services and various other levies, both in kind and in cash. The pattern of land tenure which enabled some farmers to cultivate government land, while others farmed private landlords' property and others their own small plots, had persisted from the *khoja* period, which preceded the Qing conquest.[353] Some farmers no doubt combined these various possibilities in flexible ways.

According to a Chinese author, prior to the first land reform in the early 1950s in about 80 per cent of the villages in Xinjiang 44–45 per cent of the land was concentrated in the hands of 10–11 per cent of the population. Landless peasants made up 50 per cent of the rural population, and a large percentage of draught animals and farm implements were also owned by well-to-do landowners. In the Yarkand oasis, access to agricultural implements and draught animals was a problem which also affected the so-called middle peasants; among the latter, every three families jointly owned two hoes, while among the rural poor, every five households owned two.[354]

Tenancy agreements whereby the tenant paid a fixed annual rent for the land were not common, although this seems to have been the case with Isa Hajji, a seventy-five-year-old farmer in Kashgar whose tenancy comprised three small properties belonging to merchants. He grew wheat and millet. Corvée obligation demanded by the Chinese

[351] Ibid.: 1898: 155–6.
[352] Hoppe 1998: 112.
[353] Saguchi 1963: 199–201.
[354] Hoppe 1998: 107.

authorities for public works and transport was met by paying cash. Isa paid nothing for the use of irrigation water, and only an estimated 5 per cent of his two main crops were taken up by taxation. Two of his five sons—ages eighteen and sixteen—did all the ploughing, harvesting and threshing. His two eldest sons ran a grain shop and the third worked as a bricklayer. The other two, when not working on the farm, worked as day labourers for others.[355]

Sharecropping (*yär ortaqqa beriş*) was the most widespread form of tenancy. Agreements were typically made for a year and could be renewed annually if both parties were satisfied. Payment of rent took the form of agricultural produce rather than cash, but the actual division of the harvest was seldom fifty-fifty. Agreements varied according to the respective contributions by tenant and landlord. If a landlord provided only the irrigation water, the sharecropper had to deliver half of the crop to him, but if the landlord also supplied tools, seeds and animals, then he could claim two thirds or even more of the harvest.[356] The seeds provided by the landlord for sowing usually had to be reimbursed. Relying on Chinese sources published in 1951, Hoppe describes sharecropping arrangements in a village in the Aqsu oasis immediately prior to 'Liberation', i.e., in 1949. At this time, the village had eighteen families with substantial land properties. All claimed descent from one landlord family which had established itself here in the mid-eighteenth century. Each of these families had a number of dependent clients, some of whom were serfs, the others tenant farmers. Of the 272 village families, twenty-three were rich landlords, and seven were classified at the time of the land reform as rich peasants. These two groups comprised 11.4 per cent of all households and possessed 76.2 per cent of the land. Poor peasants and labourers, including tenant farmers, made up 75 per cent of all households but possessed 8.2 per cent of the land. It was common practice that the landlord provided the seeds, oxen and a plough. The harvest was then equally divided without the landlord demanding any reimbursement for the seeds and the use of the animals. In rarer cases the sharecropper provided the seeds and the animals. In such a situation, he took the seeds he needed to replace his investment and the remainder of the harvest was equally divided. Similarly, when the landlord provided the seeds he had to be

[355] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 303–6.
[356] Lattimore 1975: 181.

reimbursed for this outlay before the remainder of the harvest was equally shared. In some cases, the seeds provided for sowing were not taken into account at all.[357]

Arrangements showed a great deal of diversity: according to one report from the north in Republican times, in cases when the landowner had provided the seeds, come the harvest the sharecropper was charged twice the amount of the seeds originally provided.[358] Yet another pattern reported from northern Xinjiang was that farmers with no seeds of their own were forced to buy these at high prices from speculators, who often demanded payment in kind.[359] These sources fail to distinguish between tenancy on government-owned and privately owned lands. In the nineteenth century, government tenants received seeds, tools and animals from the authorities; the tenancy arrangements resembled sharecropping, inasmuch that the harvest was shared.[360] In the north, land was often leased to sharecroppers when the owners lived in the market centre permanently. In such cases, sharecroppers also had to pay a rent for the buildings. Payment was made in kind or cash and was collected by the landlord himself, who came to his fields equipped with sacks at the time of threshing.[361]

Local accounts corroborate outsiders' reports. In the first decade of the twentieth century in Kashgar, rich people with substantial land properties employed their neighbours as sharecroppers (*ortaqçi*). The harvest was equally shared out between the landlord and the sharecropper, but the latter also had to pay one-tenth of his own share to the landlord as interest. The landlord also received labour services from his sharecroppers one day a week. In a symbolic gesture to uphold apparent reciprocal principles, the landlord provided food and drink for the sharecroppers on such work days. In contrast to foreigners' accounts, this indigenous reference to sharecroppers as neighbours suggests that sharecropping was more than just an economic relationship.[362]

In the late 1920s sharecropping was still important in recruiting agricultural labour. The basic patterns remained the same as thirty

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[357] Hoppe 1998: 112.
[358] Golomb 1959: 58.
[359] Ibid.: 58.
[360] Fletcher n.d.: 555.
[361] Golomb 1959: 58.
[362] Prov. 207. I.42.

years before: ideally, the sharecropper received half of the harvest and occupied half of the house. In practice, the sharecropper often received less than half the crop, because he was charged interest and one-tenth had to be paid as tithe (*öşrä-zakat*).[363] The sharecroppers' weekly corvée obligations also persisted. Local language carefully distinguished arable land cultivated by sharecroppers (*ortaqçi tirilğusi*) from land which remained under the direct control of the landlord (*pari tirilğu*).[364] In areas where arable land was plentiful but water scarce, water could be rented without land, but the principles for the division of the crop remained the same.[365]

Leasing arrangements outside agriculture sometimes followed the pattern of sharecropping. The owner of a mill might request payment both before and after grinding. The quantity of grain taken before grinding was known as *ğällä*,[366] which amounted to about one *çaräk* of grain per sack.[367] *Postäk* was the miller's fee, which he withheld from the flour after the grinding had taken place. Both types of payment could be made either in kind or in cash, according to the agreement reached before grinding. The mill owner could lease his mill to another person (*postäkçi*). The latter would take the *postäk* flour together with the flour dust and give the owner the *ğällä* grain or its equivalent in money.[368] In the vicinity of Maralbashi, a mill owner received one sixth of the ground cereal. He ground approximately 240–300 kilograms of maize and wheat daily. In the same area, a miller operating a rice-cleaning mill received one-tenth of the end product; each day he cleaned about 110 kilograms of rice.[369]

The detailed descriptions imply the coexistence of diverse arrangements, which did not always conform to the logic of rational profit-making. Hoppe notes that the form most favourable for the tenants was the most common. This confirms the hypothesis that such arrangements were embedded in personal relationships, and they were crucial in

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[363] Jarring 1951b: 68–80.

[364] Prov. 207. I.42.

[365] Hoppe 1998: 113.

[366] Schwarz translates this as public grain or tax paid in grain, but Jarring's informant definitely uses the term in the sense that this was the miller's due (Schwarz 1992: 829, Jarring 1951b: 78–9).

[367] About 10 kg, although before the 1950s one *çaräk* appears to have been considerably less and a great deal of regional variation existed (Schwarz 1992: 334).

[368] Jarring 1951b.IV: 78–9. Schwarz translates *postäk* as 'flour kept by the miller as fee', and *postäkçi* as 'millhand' or 'sweeper in a flour mill' (Schwarz 1992: 128).

[369] Six *täñgä* equalled approximately 1.40 Mark. Hedin 2001.I.: 167.

determining the form of the tenancy. The indigenous reference to neighbourly relations implies that both sides were simultaneously entangled in multiple reciprocal relationships, including mutual neighbourly obligations, belonging to the same mosque community and participating in collective religious and life-cycle rituals. Sharecropping implied reciprocity, which was symbolically played out when the landlord provided food for his tenants on days of labour service. His temporary assumption of the role of host turned his sharecroppers into guests. The gesture served as a means to turn a relationship of dependency based on economic inequality into a relationship of social equals, using the idiom of hospitality. This mitigation of inequality emphasized the embeddedness of hierarchical social relations in reciprocal communal relations. Leasing arrangements simultaneously divided and connected people who enjoyed unequal access to resources and drew them into complicated relationships of mutual dependency.

3.4.5 *Labourers, Domestic Servants and Serfs*

Poorer peasants, whose landholdings were too small to secure their family's subsistence, worked as hired labourers on the land of rich landowners and often subsisted on grain loaned from their masters. The term *medikar* seems to have been applied to such day labourers and seasonal workers employed both within and outside the agricultural sector. Many of these may have been recruited from among client farmers who were unable to break out of the position of permanent debtor.[370] Owners of large estates rented out land to agricultural entrepreneurs who then employed day labourers, as is explained by a local in Republican times:

> When the melon-planters have asked the people for a place where they have not cultivated melons for at least thirty years, they lease it from the ground-owner for eighty to ninety sar. Having watered that place and then ploughed it and brought seven or eight day-labourers there they say, 'To-day we will make channels to the melons!' and bring the day-labourers to the place where they are going to grow melons.[371]

At harvest time daily wages were twice the usual level. Arrangements typically required that the labourer should bring his own tools and

[370] Grenard 1898a: 150, Hoppe 1998: 113.
[371] Jarring 1951b: 37.

food, while the landlord provided tea.[372] Farmhands and shepherds who had a monthly or annual contract with payment fixed beforehand had somewhat more security than day labourers.[373] Their contracts too were highly flexible: strongly built workers might be offered as much as thirty *çarāk* of wheat and thirty *çarāk* of maize, while weaker workers received only ten *çarāk* of wheat and thirty *çarāk* of maize as annual wages.[374] Various excuses were utilized to deny workers payment in kind, and female and child labourers often obtained only their daily meal of bread and gruel. Regional differences in remuneration were considerable, e.g., wages in Kashgar were nearly as high as wages in Western Turkestan, and higher than in Khotan.[375] Though primarily hired for agricultural work, labourers were also engaged for building a house or a mill.[376]

Domestic servants received full board but no salary. They lived in complete dependence on their masters and their responsibilities included cultivating their masters' land, tending their flocks, driving their caravans, repairing their houses and other buildings and even negotiating their business affairs. For the master, it seems to have been a source of pride to have well-fed and well-dressed domestics, which enhanced their prestige, and from whom they could also expect faithful service.[377] The relationship was regulated by fixed politeness rules: upon leaving his employer after a long service, the domestic left uttering the formula: "Good-bye, I have eaten much of your salt, and have performed a little bit of service" or "Be satisfied with me, do not ever be angry with me!"[378] When trouble started in a house after the arrival of a new servant, he was blamed with the euphemistic formula "the foot of this man did not fit here".[379]

Some rich persons in Khotan bought Shi'ites as domestic slaves, while another source of slaves was the local poor, who were sometimes forced to sell their children to rich Turkis or the Chinese. Slaves had no property and all their earnings belonged to their master. A father could

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[372] Golomb 1959: 58.
[373] They were respectively called *ayliqçi* and *yilliqçi*. Prov. 207. I.42.
[374] Hoppe 1998: 116.
[375] Grenard 1898a: 164.
[376] Jarring 1951b: 68–80.
[377] Grenard 1898a: 163.
[378] *xoş, özlāriniñ jiq tuzlarini yādim, az xizmātlārini qildim; razi bolsunlar māndin, hārgiz xapa bolmasunlar.* Prov. 464. 15V.
[379] *ol adamniñ ayāgi yaraşmadi.* (Prov. 464. 15V.)

sell his underage children, but once they reached the age of maturity their slave status could be maintained only with their own consent. At the turn of the nineteenth century there were many slaves in Khotan, and the head of the local religious establishment himself owned about fifteen. Since selling Muslims into slavery went against the grain of Islam, such sales were masked. The seller claimed that he merely hired the services of the sold person for a period of fifty or sixty years by uttering the formula "I have paid rent for his service".[380]

Slavery was officially abolished in Eastern Turkestan in 1897, and the British agent Sir George Macartney himself freed 2,000 slaves between the years 1893 and 1897.[381] Since we only have outsiders' descriptions of slavery, we do not know how indigenous people conceptualized it. It seems that the wholesale application of the term may be misleading: slavery and bonded serfdom were almost synonymous in practice. Serfs could be sold with the land, and in spite of the previous prohibition, between 1935 and 1945 the sale of adult serfs had to be repeatedly prohibited, which suggests that the custom did not die easily.[382]

Bonded serfdom was an old Central Asian institution. Such households had to provide two adults, male or female, to work the landlord's farm. In addition, the landlord could at any time make claims on the labour services of the whole family. Known as *çakar* or *yänçi*,[383] in the mid-1950s the concept was "still evocative in Sinkiang, a word so full of misery and hunger that no one spoke of it lightly...".[384] A field investigation carried out in Southern Xinjiang by Chinese researchers in 1949 revealed a landlord in Kucha with over two hundred households of bonded serfs.[385] According to Fletcher, many serfs were the descendants of former *khoja* supporters or prisoners of war, but some people became serfs voluntarily to escape debt and taxation. The increase in their numbers reflected the increasing burden of the rest of the peasantry.[386]

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[380] Grenard 1898a: 166–8. On slavery in Islamic law see Marmon 1999, Schneider 1999; for slavery in Central Asia see Paul 1991: 115, 118. For slavery under the Qing see Waley-Cohen 1991: 166–9.

[381] Filippi 1932: 475.

[382] Hoppe 1998: 111.

[383] Following Chinese accounts, Hoppe regards *çakar* and *yänçi* as synonymous. Fletcher sees a small difference, claiming that the landless, bonded peasant known as *yänçi* may have ranked even lower than the *çakar* (Fletcher n.d.: 556, Hoppe 1998: 110). Lattimore 1975 [1950]: 164. Schwarz translates *çakar* as 'hired laborer, servant' (1992: 337).

[384] Davidson 1957: 154.

[385] Lattimore 1975: 164.

[386] Fletcher n.d.: 556.

3.4.6 *Merchants and Craftsmen*

The significance of trade and speculation as the quickest means of social mobility is illustrated by the following indigenous story of the fate of some *nouveaux riches* related by Abul Wahid Axun from Kashgar (1905–1910). In the village of Yan Bulaq near Kashgar, there lived two relatives, both merchants, Ğujaq Hajji and Hidikar Hajji. One day they were taking part in a communal entertainment where they met a visitor from Urumchi. Having learnt the course of the Russian currency in Urumchi, they set out for the city, taking all their savings with them. They sold their Russian money to the moneychangers at a vast profit. They then invested their earnings in brick tea which they hurriedly transported to Kashgar, where they sold it at forty-seven *täñgä* per block to local merchants (payment was made in weekly installments). Having accumulated considerable wealth, the speculators later bought up numerous houses and much land. Ğujaq Hajji even acquired office in the local political structure. At this point, the story of economic success turns into a cautionary tale. Initially, these kinsmen were honest people who also helped the poor, but as their wealth, prestige and influence increased, so their arrogance grew. They became conceited and started treating their clients badly and made use of their inferiors' services without offering payment.[387] In spite of its simplicity, the story confirms that the *nouveaux riches* could only command social recognition and respect as long as they displayed exemplary moral integrity, subscribing to Islamic norms governing charitable redistribution and to the local rules of reciprocity.

The profile of a rich Khotanese merchant provides a close-up ethnographic illustration of this indigenous narrative. It also exemplifies how divisions between rural and urban, and between sedentary and nomadic, could be bridged and even rendered irrelevant by people whose wealth derived from complex investment patterns. This merchant's fortune consisted of three houses, one with seven hectares of garden and one with 3.5 hectares of land, two plots in two separate locations, 3,000 sheep, fifty camels and forty yaks. In addition to its real estate and other possessions, the family owned moveable valuables: fifty felt mats, twenty-five carpets, numerous silk cushions, blankets and other household items, as well as clothes and jewellery. The merchant's land was entirely tilled by domestics. His commercial operations included

[387] Prov. 207. II.54.

lending money to nomads who repaid their debt in wool, which he then sold at a profit. He bought sheep from the nomads and sold them for double the price in town. He also invested in gold mining. At the time his financial position was recorded in the final years of the nineteenth century, his family consisted of eleven members: his mother, his wife, his young son, and his two married brothers with their wives and two children, as well as an unmarried brother. The household had thirty-two domestic servants and seven slaves.[388]

These examples demonstrate that wealth could be accumulated by successfully combining agricultural and commercial activities. But the order suggested above where merchants bought up land and became cultivators, could also be reversed. Because of the fragmentation of arable land through inheritance, most cultivators in Eastern Turkestan could not survive solely from farming. A viable option for some landowners was to lease their land, invest the profits in commercial enterprises and perhaps engage in trans-regional trade. This was the pattern followed by a man who travelled from Kashgar to Ghulja with a donkey load of cotton. He repeated the journey several times, buying up cheap cotton in the south and selling it in the north at a profit. Eventually, he settled in Ghulja, opened a textile shop within ten years, and acquired flocks in the mountains. He also started trading with the Russians. He opened a leather factory in 1910, and in the 1920s he had established businesses in most of the big oasis centres, which were managed by his wives. At his death he was head of a family of seventy persons, one of the richest of the region.[389]

But not all rich merchants were natives, and it was not only Chinese speculators who took advantage of locals' gullibility. An old Tatar came to Khotan from Orenburg towards the end of the nineteenth century. After ten years of permanent residence there, he owned a big house in the town centre and ran a tannery by the River Jurunqaş. Each year, in February, he had his 'factory' demolished to pretend that he was about to leave Khotan for good. Eager to get rid of their hides, the Khotanese sold him their goods cheaply. In May, he would restore the factory and carry on with business as usual.[390]

In contrast, Abdurrahman Bay, a native of Khotan, represented a lower stratum of well-to-do merchants. He used his limited capital

[388] Grenard 1898a: 152–30.
[389] Golomb 1959: 57.
[390] Hedin 201.II.: 63–4.

to set up a draper's shop. He possessed a big townhouse but no land. He lived with his wife, three married sons, who all helped the father in his commercial activities, and his two daughters. They had several domestic servants, and in addition to furniture and jewellery they also possessed a good horse. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, the number of merchants in Khotan who could match the wealth of Abdurrahman Bey was, at the most, thirty.[391]

Although manufacturing required special skills and knowledge, craftsmen commanded less prestige than merchants. Important enterprises grew up in a few select branches, such as felt-making or the famous carpet industry in Khotan. A reasonably large, successful workshop employed up to fifteen workers, but such large workshops were still the exception rather than the rule. Seasonal variation in the number of employees was not unusual; the level of activity also responded to market demands. Many craftsmen worked with only one or two apprentices. Their income may have been minimal, but they were regarded as respectable even in poverty. Paçar was a thirty-five-year-old cobbler who used his minimal capital to buy leather, glue and thread. He worked with a single apprentice, who lived with his master's family. He received a meagre payment for each pair of shoes he made. The patron himself used most of his monthly income to support himself, his wife and two young children. He lived in his own house, which had two modestly furnished rooms. Others were not in a position to employ an apprentice: Toxta axun made a living producing strings for coats and trousers and, with his wife and two children, was dependent on the charity of a successful craftsmen for his miserable one-room accommodation. Living below the poverty line, they did not even possess a cooking pot, which they needed to borrow regularly, and for clothing the family relied on the patron's charity.[392]

Owners of smaller workshops occupied a structural position similar to middle peasants, while artisans—those who worked with one or two apprentices, sometimes recruited from their immediate family—resembled smallholders. But craftsmen did not form an independent urban class: many peasants with little or no land engaged in handicrafts, while continuing with seasonal agricultural production as day labourers or perhaps as sharecroppers. Occupational diversity characterized many households. The skills could be passed on either through formal

[391] Grenard 1898a: 153.
[392] Ibid.: 160–4.

apprenticeship or through informal socialization into the profession by a family member, typically the father. The advantage of the latter was that it came cheap, since formal apprenticeship required a financial outlay for ritual purposes.

3.4.7 *Religious Dignitaries*

Just as members of the indigenous secular officialdom became known as *bägs*, religious dignitaries were commonly addressed with the generic title *axun*. By the late nineteenth century the *mollas* had lost a great deal of their previous prestige, partly due to the aggressive role they played under Ya'qub Beg's rule in imposing Islamic observances. However, religious taxes continued to be duly collected. Muslim dignitaries managed to retain a certain degree of prestige, not only because of the supernatural powers attributed to them but also because of the political influence commanded by some of the high-ranking *mollas*.

Indigenous power-holders in both the religious and the secular spheres based their power on patronage. Not only was power maintained and reproduced in much the same way, but representatives of secular and religious officeholders also forged and reinforced already existing alliances through intermarriage. For example, A'la Xan, an influential *molla* from Khotan, was one of the richest men in the area. His prestige derived from multi-stranded sources: wealth, direct family connections to the local Islamic hierarchy (his father had been supreme judge) and, through the matriline, to pre-Islamic power-holders in the region. His clients were drawn from both the secular and religious spheres.[393]

Religious officeholders' activities centred upon the mosque and connected institutions such as the primary school, the Islamic college and the Islamic court, while the activities of mystic brotherhoods focused on the dervish cloister.[394] *Şäyxs* were usually the guardians of saintly shrines who claimed direct descent from the saint who was buried there or one of his immediate followers or pupils. The *şäyx* made his living partly from the profits of the pious foundation attached to the shrine and partly from donations of grain, bread and livestock by pilgrims.

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[393] Ibid.: 232.

[394] The binary model of two groups of religious specialists in Central Asia put forward by Valikhanov (1961: 365–6), which distinguishes those who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad, from the caliphs and various other saintly personages (*säyyids*, *xojas*) and *mollas* and *ulama*, is untenable. There was overlapping between these groups.

At least some *şäyx*s amassed large amounts of wealth as the following example illustrates.

In 1875, the *şäyx* of the tomb of Satuq Buğra at Astun Artush near Kashgar, was executed. Following his death, his property was duly confiscated by the treasury. This included large landholdings, several houses, large grain supplies and half a million *yambu*.[395] Learning from this example and trying to avoid the same fate, other *şäyx*s for a while tried to live more modestly, avoiding conspicuous consumption.[396] Contradictory attitudes to religious authority are aptly illustrated by a case in Niya, where the population continued to pay the shrine one *çarät* of flour per household each year, even after the Qing conquest had liberated them from paying this religious tax. However, devotion did not prevent people from abusing the economic power of the religious hierarchy: shepherds habitually infringed upon *mazar* property, making free use of its land, and some shepherds treated the animals of the shrine as their own, shearing them and selling their wool for private profit.[397]

In contrast to the *şäyx*s, whose prestige rested on their descent or on charisma, those striving for higher office at the central religious institutions had to have formal qualifications. During the Republican period, some members of the religious elite had a long training in colleges, sometimes augmented by study with a Sufi master. Studying abroad and completing the Hajj were important steps in their career. In the first half of the twentieth century, Amit studied in a *mädräsä* between the ages of seven and twenty-three and completed his advanced studies between the ages of twenty-four and forty-seven in India. Upon his return to Xinjiang, he acquired the title *damolla* and was appointed professor in a Kashgar *mädräsä*. Alim Abdurräşit studied in a *mädräsä* between the ages of seven and twenty-seven, after which he was appointed judge in the New Town of Kashgar. He became head of the county administration at the age of forty-seven, and four years later he rose to the rank of supreme judge. Molla Halibat studied in a *mädräsä* between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five; at forty he was appointed clerk at the judge's office and became the *qazi imam* of Kashgar at forty-three. Xoja Sopi studied in a *mädräsä* between the ages of seven and fifteen,

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[395] Shoe-shaped gold or silver ingot used as money.
[396] Valikhanov 1961: 345.
[397] Grenard 1898a: 233.

after which he received mystical instruction until the age of twenty-seven. He continued his studies in Pakistan and completed the Hajj when he was twenty-eight. Upon his return to Xinjiang, he succeeded his father as leader of a Sufi brotherhood. He had the reputation of being a holy man, indeed a descendant of the Prophet.[398]

The highest echelon of Turki dignitaries shared some features with their secular counterparts: they were exempt from paying taxes, they enjoyed high social prestige, and their offices often had a hereditary character. Their ranks, however, could also be entered by outsiders through education or charisma, although these resources were more readily drawn upon by those born into these groups.[399] Although in the late nineteenth century Muslim judges had to be appointed by the Chinese authorities, the hands of the Chinese overlords were tied: they could not nominate an unworthy or incapable person to such a post, because of community pressure. Those appointed usually came from wealthy families with kinship ties to other Turki dignitaries. Upon entering his post, the judge gave the Chinese *amban* a modest present. In this respect, their appointment followed the recruitment patterns of civilians. A foreign observer noted that the Chinese authorities often tried to appoint men of mediocre knowledge because they were considered less dangerous and easier to influence.[400]

The mosque functionaries were the *mäzin*, who called the believers to prayer; the *imam*, or community priest; the *muhtasib*, or commissar; the *reis*, or prefect, who stood above the commissar; the judge, or *qazi*; and the learned religious dignitaries, or *mufti* and *mu'allim*. The *xatip* recited the prayers in the Friday mosque. *Qaris* were often called to recite the Koran. When the full text was to be recited, it could be jointly undertaken by a group of such specialists.[401]

The ordinary faithful had most contact with those religious office holders who served in the community mosque. A small village mosque

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[398] Trained in the pre-socialist years, in the 1950s these persons came under the control of the young socialist state. The Chinese author of this report concludes that all these people appear to have made compromises with the new regime, although at least one of them had to undergo re-education before consenting to sever his ties with reactionary elements. Apparently, this person's understanding of the party's policies was improved following re-education, and he "positively urged the government to confiscate his land and properties" (Wang n.d.: 12).

[399] Valikhanov 1961: 343.

[400] Grenard 1898a: 234–5.

[401] Prov. 464. 20V.

community needed only the services of the *mäzin* and the *imam*. If there was a pious foundation associated with the mosque, its profits went to these officials. Their job consisted of taking part in communal worship five times a day, but they were also responsible for the general management of the affairs of the mosque community. This comprised a range of community services: when a person became ill, a party of representatives of the community elders (*aqsaqal*) visited the sick person. When someone died, the mosque functionaries were responsible for preparing the corpse, for organizing the communal prayer and for arranging the funeral. They also acted as guardians of public order, as for example in the incident in which a water dispute in the Kashgar area led to violent conflicts, after which the *mollas* went into every house and broke the points of all knives.[402] Respected *mollas* were also part of the community leadership.

Some persons had neither formal appointment nor educational credentials but enjoyed high respect among the local community on account of their religious devotion and other qualities. Such a person was Niyaz Beg who, although not very rich, enjoyed social recognition for his piety and personal qualities: he had been to Mecca and always gave wise councel.[403]

Apart from officeholders there were numerous self-appointed 'small' *mollas* who lacked both office and formal qualifications. Many of them were poor and possessed little or no prestige. The local author Molla Abul Wahid likened these *mollas* to singers, acrobats and other public performers of very low prestige.[404] These 'free-lance' *mollas* delivered public lectures in the bazaar, worked as scribes, exorcized evil spirits, cast spells and engaged in divination, all for a meagre payment. Unable to benefit from the revenues of a pious foundation, they were dependent on payment for their services, and it was their greed and exploitative behaviour which shaped their popular image in oral tradition:

Do not go to see holy persons
if you do not bring gifts and presents.
In order to have his prayers,
you have to bring [at least] *a head of onion.*[405]

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[402] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 173; see p. 124, above.
[403] Ambolt 1939: 3.
[404] Prov. 207. II.3.
[405] Jarring 1985: 27.

> *Two mollahs equal one man, one mollah equals one woman; Do as the mollah says, not as he does; Do not do what the mollahs do. Do what they teach you; To get money from a mollah is like picking hair from an oily bread; To get money from a mollah* [is as easy as] *taking out a hair from a slack-backed loaf.*[406]

This negative image of the *molla* who demands payment for his services suggests exploitation rather than mutuality. It seems to contradict the principle of reciprocity, which dictates that services must be paid for and debts must be repaid. But the *mollas*' negative image is consistent with reciprocal ideals: *mollas* were suspected of not delivering the goods promised or overcharging their clients. They were suspected of violating the principle of mutuality. On account of their claims on religious authenticity, they were expected to be exemplary moral persons, and any behaviour falling short of this expectation was severely criticized. The limited respect for and tolerance of the *mollas*' fallibility is aptly illustrated in a popular story. Seypul Molla from Qarakhoja was made fun of because his speeches were tedious. While he was delivering his sermon, most of the believers fell asleep, except for one person who started to cry desperately. The *molla* thought that this person was moved by his sermon but in fact he was crying because his goat had died the day before and he was reminded of his dead goat by the white beard of the *molla* and the manner in which he moved it.[407]

3.4.8 *Status and Consumption*

It has been noted that the old hereditary nobility merged to some extent with the indigenous officials, or *bäg*s, recruited by the Qing. After 1884, the situation began slowly to change. It was at this time that, in Lattimore's words, "money standards started to supersede the old standard of hereditary status"; the prestige and importance of the landowner endowed with feudal rights decreased and was gradually replaced by the *bay*, or "rich, wealthy man" [408] By the late 1920s, the title of *bäg* had already lost much of its previous prestige, so much

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[406] Ibid.: 37, Grenard 1898a: 237–8.

[407] Le Coq 1928: 102. Reactions to heightened piety, which could serve as a source of social prestige and other benefits, are often ambiguous. For example, it was said of Hajjis: "Only those are true pilgrims who die during the pilgrimage: those who return are true blood-suckers" [because many sought to defray the expenses of the pilgrimage as fast as they could after their return] (Le Coq 1911: 16–7).

[408] Lattimore 1975: 180.

so that it could be bought.[409] This change was articulated in a proverb collected in the early twentieth century:

> *The word of the person with money is right,*
> *The word of the person who has no money is uncouth.*[410]

Another proverb warns against borrowing money from the *nouveaux riches*:

> *Don't take money from a rich man,*
> *Don't be friends with a hide-dealer.*[411]

In spite of the growing potential for social mobility, inequalities continued to be reproduced through the ceremonial marking of prestige informed both by wealth and inherited social standing. Nur Luke remarked how the prestige of a man in the southern oases in the first half of the twentieth century was reflected in his position in the carefully planned sitting order at assemblies.[412] Simultaneously, in communal face-to-face relations, a certain sense of equality was stubbornly upheld; social unequals could share the same pipe, and many social norms were upheld as ideals by all groups.[413]

Interaction between persons of unequal social standing was governed by a number of paternalistic rules, which stipulated that deference had to be shown by women to men, by younger persons to their elders, and by social inferiors to their social superiors. In the early twentieth century, fathers had always to be addressed as 'my Lord' rather than by name, and a number of rules of avoidance had to be observed by a son in respect to his father: he was not to sit in his father's presence without the latter's permission; instead, he was expected to stand with his head bowed and his hands folded in humility. He was also not supposed to go to sleep before his father did, and it was forbidden to smoke in his father's presence. Although rules of avoidance were also operating between generations of women, it is likely that, as is the case in other Islamic societies, they were not so strictly observed as among men.

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[409] Ambolt 1939: 3.

[410] *puli barniñ gäpi oñ, puli yoqniñ gäpi toñ* (Le Coq 1911: 8–9). Le Coq translates *toñ* literally as 'cold' and then explains it as worthless. But *toñ gäp* as an idiom means 'uncouth remark'.

[411] *yeñi baydin pul alma, tärçi bilän dos bolma* (Le Coq 1911: 10–1).

[412] Prov. 212. 27.

[413] Jarring 1951b. IV: 90.

Among men, deference had to be demonstrated by social inferiors to their superiors by dismounting from horseback and prefacing an answer with the word *taksir* (fault), which was practically used as a way of address, roughly the equivalent of 'sir' [414]

> On receiving any attention or favour, the recipient carries the right hand to the heart and forehead, and with a bow says, 'ashk-ull' ('God's love'); or he takes the thing presented and raises it to his eyes with the same gesture and expression; or if the gift is not placed in his hands he, if seated, rises and with a comprehensive sweep of the arms strokes his beard, either real or more frequently imaginary. When seated at an entertainment this ceremony is gone through on each occasion that he is addressed by a superior, or is handed a morsel from the 'table cloth', and one may be seen constantly getting up and down from and on to his heels in acknowledgment of civilities and commands from a superior...[415]

Social rules were often legitimated in religious terms. For example, it was considered a tradition (*sunnät*) to wear a long caftan with wide sleeves; hiding one's hands under very long sleeves was considered a way of showing respect towards superiors.[416]

Politeness rules prevailing in Yarkand in Republican times varied according to the social standing of the actors. When two men of equal standing met, they had to hold each other's hands with both hands. However, when a rich man met a poor man, they mutually greeted each other with the Islamic formula but stretched out one hand only. If a man stood in front of his own house, and another person was going past, the owner of the house greeted him and invited him into his house. If a man rode past on horseback, he was greeted with the word *xoş*. If the house owner happened to be richer, the horseman was expected to dismount and walk past the house, but if property relations were the other way around, then the horseman did not dismount but simply rode past.[417]

Demonstrating respect was informed by many sets of values, including religious ones. Laughing or using vulgar language in a mosque, or entering it with an uncovered head could destroy forty years of meritorious behaviour.[418] Considering such rules within the general

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[414] Forsyth 1875: 89, Sykes & Sykes 1920: 322.
[415] Forsyth 1875: 89.
[416] Prov. 464. 39V, Sykes & Sykes 1920: 43, Jarring 1988.
[417] Prov. 464. 35V–36R.
[418] Ibid.: 39V.

framework of patriarchy, it seems that social hierarchies established along gender and generational lines, between patrons and clients and towards religious authority were conceptualized in a form which conformed to rules in other parts of the Islamic world, but which did not contradict the Chinese model of filial piety either.

Social stratification was a recurring theme in oral tradition:

> *What a rich man says is right.*
> *What a poor man says is stupid* [unripe].[419]
>
> *In the well-born there is no fault.*
> *In the low-born there is no confidence.*[420]

These lines emphasize the connection between economic and political power; the following lines, on the other hand, make it clear that all households were expected to participate in ritual action in accordance with their economic capabilities:

> *A powerful* [rich] *man will kill a sheep;*
> *A weak* [poor] *man a chicken or a cock.*[421]

Ritual participation was universally expected, but its forms had to be pragmatically adjusted to the realities of the household economy. The rich could afford to slaughter a sheep for redistribution; the poor had to have recourse to poultry. In the following lines recorded in Republican times, social differentiation was often expressed through the metaphor of food. The rich refused to eat maize-bread, the traditional staple associated with the poor:

> *Roze akhond bai does not eat maize-bread.*
> *Ghazi akhond bai does not eat maize-bread.*
> *The behaviour of these rich people*
> *is not in accordance with the law of the republic.*[422]

Again in reference to the Republican years after 1912, the anonymous author asks, 'When they work, do not the rich people chew the meat of the workers?' (i.e., do not the rich people take the profit?).[423]

Yet others emphasized differences in patterns of hospitality. In interviews made in 1956, some locals recalled pre-socialist times, saying that

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[419] Jarring 1985: 44.
[420] Ibid.: 13, 15.
[421] Ibid.: 44.
[422] Ibid.: 48.
[423] Ibid.: 37.

the rich landowners and officials used to attend communal entertainments (*mäşräp*), and "they told us poor people that our lot was the hoe".[424]

Cooked food was classified into social categories. Certain types were associated with affluence and prestige and were frequently offered on ritual occasions, while others were considered inferior and associated with the poor. The rich had a much more varied diet, which included pilaff and vegetables, various types of wheat bread, meat dumplings, meat soup, sweetmeat, the heads and hooves of oxen and sheep and so on. Some added cream, sugar or fruit jam to their tea, and some even made wine from various fruits, such as apples, pears, figs and others.[425] In other words, dishes which required more sophistication were associated with the well-to-do. In his 'Description of food and drink', Muhammad Ali Damolla confirms that pilaff, meat dumplings and wheat bread, as well as milky tea, were primarily consumed in affluent households.[426] Pilaff, often called *aş*, was given the status of food par excellence.[427] It was the ceremonial dish of the rich and was recognized as a 'dainty dish' by a piece of oral tradition which traces its origins to Alexander the Great.[428]

Lattimore noted that, in pre-1949 Xinjiang, most of the rural population ate little or no meat, and the consumption of sugar and fats was also limited to the wealthy. He estimated the daily caloric intake of an adult villager from Qarghaliq in 1943 as 1,215 calories of wheat flour, 1,215 calories of corn flour and 150 calories of mutton.[429] The association of more conspicuous 'luxury' consumption with urban centres in the early twentieth century is another indication that development of the money economy had led to the emergence of wealthy strata concentrated in the oasis towns. Consumption patterns were also markers of belonging: homemade food prepared by women had a much higher prestige than food bought in the bazaar, which was typically prepared by men.[430]

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[424] Tenishev 1984: 31.

[425] For an indigenous elaboration of the sophisticated vocabulary pertaining to fruit see Prov. 464. 33V–34R–V.

[426] Prov. 207. I.7.

[427] For the use of the word *aş* in a more general sense, see Prov. 464. 37V.

[428] Jarring 1951b: 145–7. For more information concerning consumption patterns see Grenard 1898a: 109, 153–5, 160–3. Evidence of the Forsyth mission some twenty years earlier contradicts Grenard in claiming that meat was widely consumed and was "so cheap as to be within the reach of all classes as a constituent of the daily meal." Nevertheless, even this source admits to social differences (Forsyth 1875: 92).

[429] Lattimore 1975: 166.

[430] Jarring 1951b: 90.

Eating was widely perceived as a ritual act. Even the simplest meal was introduced by a brief prayer performed in a sitting position with raised hands. The prayer recited was the *fatiha*, the introductory part of the Koran which everyone murmured to him- or herself, and when it was concluded the two hands were brought down after the face had been touched with a movement resembling the washing of the face. At the end of the meal, the host or the eldest male recited a brief prayer accompanied by similar movements, and all others followed suit. Food was always served on a large tablecloth (*dastixan*) spread on the floor, on top of carpets or felt mats inside the house, on the veranda in the courtyard or by the edge of a field when people were working. The *dastixan* was central to communal eating; spreading it was the first step towards turning a profane meal into a communal ceremony. Bread was kept in this tablecloth between meals and it was in the *dastixan* that food was wrapped and taken as a ritual gift to friends and relatives. The *dastixan* was thus the symbol of commensality and, by extension, of community.[431]

3.4.9 *On the Fringes of Society*

Although the indigenous authors are silent about slavery in the region, all sources give plenty of information about the poor and the destitute (*faqir-miskin, ajiz*).[432] Accounts of poverty and social marginality again reveal considerable diversity in this category.

Reports from the second half of the nineteenth century suggest that miners were the poor of the country *par excellence*, "who sell gold to established buyers, who keep a supply of utensils of food etc. to meet the requirements of the workers".[433] At that time in the Khotan region, about 7,000 workers were engaged in extensive gold mining, most of them recruited from the ranks of the poor. The government claimed one-fifth of the gold; the rest could be sold by the miner under the control of government officials. The mining of copper and iron were also kept under surveillance although there was no monopoly over these metals.[434] Jade mining was also a source of income, at least for some. Rich men from Khotan and other market towns engaged

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[431] Shaw 1871: 171, Jarring 1988: 21. Practices surrounding commensality show a remarkable persistence down to the present day.

[432] Prov. 464. 1, 207. I.44.

[433] Forsyth 1875: 447.

[434] Kim 1986: 125.

groups of labourers comprising ten to thirty people from among the poorest farmers. They received food, clothing and six Khotanese *täñgä* as their monthly wages.[435] In Republican times, the miners' situation deteriorated even more, so that "the whole business of mining extraction [became] a kind of forced labour or punishment, with miners heavily in debt to local usurers" [436] In 1933, bad working conditions and the government's financial policy—which caused them to trade their gold on very unfavourable terms—caused the miners of the southern oases (notably those employed in the vicinity of Khotan and Qaraqash) to rebel.[437]

Silk production was also the preserve of disadvantaged and marginal groups. Forsyth mentions poor people who disposed of spun silk in the markets that was chiefly bought up by Andijani merchants.[438] From the mid-twentieth century, another pattern is indicated. Where mulberry trees were abundant, silkworms were caught by both 'rich people and beggars', all of whom stood to gain. This may have applied to the initial stages of collecting silk husks, but organized silk production was under the exclusive control of rich merchants, who bought up silk husks in the bazaar and employed fifty to sixty people, both men and women.[439] Like other poor artisans, such as bricklayers and felt makers, silk producers were poorly paid. In such jobs, the overwhelming majority of the work force was made up of women and children.

At the end of the nineteenth century, many people survived on charitable donations. Beggars' ranks included individuals with diverse physical or mental conditions and social background, young and old, male and female, sane and insane, mutilated and able-bodied: ruined rural debtors, unemployed labourers and the idle pious. This diversity is indicated by the multiplicity of words used to label them, although it seems that most of these were used interchangeably: *tilämçi, diwanä, xäyriçi, qäländär, gaday, sädiqiçi*. Some beggars were reportedly not ashamed of their trade, and children habitually begged if they did not get enough food at home. There was a consensus that beggars were favoured by God and therefore had to be treated with politeness

[435] Stein 1904: 235.
[436] Forbes 1986: 286.
[437] Ibid.: 74.
[438] Forsyth 1875: 448.
[439] Jarring 1951b: 54–5.

and kindness.[440] Begging was regarded by many as a profession. As elsewhere in the Islamic world, poverty was chosen voluntarily by the members of various brotherhoods.[441] Such mendicants formed an occupational underclass: their economic status and standard of living differed little from that of beggars; the difference was that they were voluntarily poor. Some claimed a semi-holy status, a claim that was echoed by some ordinary beggars.

Attitudes to the poor, and especially to beggars, were ambivalent. Members of the poorest stratum of the population were credited with a higher level of religiosity than other groups. Vámbéry claimed that all over Central Asia it was the poor who provided the most pilgrims to Mecca even if they lacked the necessary means for the long journey.[442] Oral tradition confirms the great piety of the poor and even attributes beneficial qualities to their sacrifices:

> *The heart of the thin* [poor] *is light*, (That is, only the poor are truly pious.)
> *The food of the poor* [given as alms] *is medicine for the tooth.*[443]

But poverty was not unambiguously considered to be ennobling. It was suspected that the economic interests of the poor superseded their piety, as is expressed in the following verses, in which dervish and beggar stand as virtual synonyms:

> *The dogs bark when they see a beggar.*
> *The dervishes are pleased when they encounter calamity* [because they profit from it].[444]

In Forsyth's view, mendicants were religious beggars and vagabonds who

> go about in companies of five or six. They sing and dance and dress in a grotesque fashion, and affect a demented character, with dishevelled hair and patched garments, often covered with a cape of some wild animals' skin... They always carry a staff topped with a tuft of yák-tail hair, or an iron mace on which is fixed a string of steel rings. This they jingle in keeping time with their vociferous songs and dances of gesticulation.[445]

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[440] Grenard 1898a: 64–6.
[441] Sabra 2000: 27–8.
[442] Vámbéry 1970: 342.
[443] Le Coq 1911: 12–3.
[444] Jarring 1985: 30.
[445] Forsyth 1875: 88.

Muhammad Ali Damolla's description some decades later corroborates foreign views, at least as far as the appearance of beggars was concerned. He acknowledged that ordinary beggars and mendicants were difficult to tell apart outwardly, but he also made every effort to distinguish dervishes who had voluntarily abandoned their earthly possessions from those who were not wilfully poor and had no connections to dervish orders.[446] His descriptions are introduced with a parable to illustrate the difference between true and false beggars, as well as true and false dervishes. A king sent his *vezir* with a certain sum to be distributed among beggars (in one version) or among dervishes (in the other). The *vezir* came back with the money and explained that he was unable to fulfil the order, because those who were true beggars or dervishes did not accept it, the act of refusal being proof that they were true beggars or dervishes, while those who wanted to accept the money could not be given it because their eagerness to accept proved that they were undeserving. True dervishes renounce the world and are content with whatever they get from God. "They do not beg of anybody and do not appear to people, but stroll about in the wilderness and worship".[447] A Naqshbandi dervish from Aqsu also distanced himself from crooks: he reported that, in contrast to Russian Turkestan, the pious swindler had no place in Kashgar and Aqsu.[448]

Muhammad Ali Damolla condemned aggressive beggars as 'brigands' (*bulañçi qäländär*). They mostly pestered country people and provoked them until they said, "There is no money in my pockets" The beggars sometimes continued to pester and even beat their victim, and created a public disturbance. Accomplices supported the beggar and attempted to put pressure on the victim by saying, "Why cannot you give him something?" Eventually some alms were usually given. The author considered young and strong dervishes equally undeserving. In the Damolla's opinion, only the sick, old and truly poor should receive alms.[449]

Drug users constituted another link between mendicants and the 'undeserving poor', since their poverty derived from their addiction.

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[446] Similar efforts to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor are also known from the history of mediaeval Islam in the Middle East, cf. Sabra 2000: 36–8.

[447] Prov. 207. I.31, Prov. 207. I.78. Jarring 1987: 14.

[448] Hartmann 1902: 116.

[449] Prov. 207. I.44.

Reportedly, Kashgar had a very large number of opium addicts with connections to dervish orders. Such people, said to be of modest origins, took shelter in dervish convents and lived on alms.[450] Among drug addicts, the smoking of *çaras* (a derivative of cannabis) was also prevalent; it was also enjoyed by some women.[451]

Many who sought to demonstrate their association with mysticism through participating in Sufi rituals were suspected of doing this not for spiritual reasons but to gain social credit. Some *şäyxs* were also exposed as pious swindlers and accused of duplicity: they may have begged from the rich and redistributed whatever they got through spreading a ceremonial tablecloth for the poor, in order to spread their own fame. Some were in the habit of going out to the fields in the summer at the time of the harvest and, claiming to be the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad or the *khojas*, demanding the special harvest alms (*käpsän*)[452] from the threshed grain. They were generally disliked, but people gave them alms, because it was feared that one of them could be the Prophet Xizir, who was in the habit of appearing in the shape of a mendicant. For this reason, everyone gave them something, and no beggar returned empty-handed from the threshing fields.[453] The *käpsän* appears to have been sanctioned by custom, and the beggars' strategy to go to the fields and gather their 'due' paralleled the strategies of the feudal landlord who similarly collected his due personally at the time of the harvest. The ritualized collection of harvest alms demonstrates an institutionalized form of begging, which reveals the close associations between poverty and religious devotion. Some beggars took up residence in the vicinity of a shrine, often located in or close to a cemetery. They received donations from pilgrims, but they could also profit in other ways. Some who took up their abode in a cemetery were paid to keep some graves in order. After the elapse of a certain interval they resold the plot for a new grave, although this sale was an illegal act since they held no title to this land.[454]

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[450] Valikhanov 1961: 349. Prov. 207. I.44.

[451] Consumption was not limited to the lower classes: more refined people took it in the form of sweet cakes, when it was called *majun*. *Bägs*, community elders and other officials were also prone to smoking opium (Dunmore 1993: 338–9, cf. also Jarring 1993).

[452] Schwarz 1992: 684: alms given to the poor after a harvest.

[453] Prov. 464. 10R.

[454] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 69.

In this context the Abdals need to be mentioned. According to legend, these people were cursed because of their involvement in the death of Imam Husayn. In Abdal villages, the act of begging became ritualized and served as an important marker of group solidarity and identity. Once a year, usually in the autumn, men, including rich peasants, went begging with their sacks on their backs to faraway places where no one knew them.[455] This ritualized begging was self-imposed action which served as a symbolic attempt to gain expiation from the sins attributed to one's ancestors.

There are some indications that professional beggars developed their own internal organizational structure to control distribution. When French visitors staged a public distribution of alms at the end of the nineteenth century in Khotan, the beggars "came with their president and vice-president carrying long batons, organized them, and indicated who deserved more, who less, and made sure that no one was given alms twice and that some was left to those who were too ill to leave their lodgings" [456] In the southern oases, each town had an association of the poor with an elder who presided over them and ensured the equal distribution of the alms among the needy. Beggars in Yarkand formed a guild-like professional body recognized by the local authorities. They were a group large enough to reproduce itself both biologically and socially, and many of them owned some property, or at least horses.[457] These mounted beggars reminded passers-by of their religious obligations towards them by repeating the word *haqq* ('the rights' or 'the dues').[458] At the end of the nineteenth century, the chief of the beggars was said to be the richest man in Yarkand, this may have owed much to his close cooperation with the police in organizing burglaries and thefts.[459]

Organizational qualities were also attributed to the beggars of Kashgar, whose head was held responsible for the conduct of his subordinates and had to report regularly to the authority. Furthermore, he arranged the monthly payment of a fixed sum by shopkeepers which could be interpreted as institutional alms or alternatively as protection money. It was certainly beneficial for the beggars, who could count on a 'regular

[455] Ladstätter & Tietze 1994: 17, Hoppe 1998: 76.
[456] Grenard 1898a: 165–6.
[457] Gordon 1876: 43.
[458] Jarring 1987: 7–8.
[459] Skrine 1971: 76–7, quoted in Jarring 1987: 8.

income', and for the shopkeepers who, if they complied with these arrangements, escaped frequent harassment by individual beggars. If they did not comply, they could be on the receiving end of aggressive, threatening behaviour from whole groups:

> A dirty and dishevelled party will appear and demand alms. Their odoriferous presence scares away customers, potential buyers cannot get anywhere near the shop even if they wish, whilst traffic is held up and all business is at a standstill. If the shopkeeper still proves obdurate, his resistance is countered by an increase in the number of importunates, who press their demands for charity until nothing can be heard above the din. Finally he is forced to capitulate and the beggars retire with flying colours.[460]

Foreign and local authors thus agree on the close associations between begging and crime. Since beggars imitated mendicants in their appearance, they spoilt the reputation of the latter: "They have their hangouts in bazaars and lanes. They may block up the road and hang on to people who are rather rustic and say 'Give [us] money!' If they do not have money to give, they abuse them and, if they perhaps are rather dull people, they do not stop at abuse, but give them a couple of blows with the fist."[461] Although such incidents no doubt took place they were not standard practice. Corporate action, internal solidarity and endogamous tendencies were characteristic of many groups. Beggars were bound into a larger, imagined community by their inclusion into the recognized 'professions': like shepherds, farmers and craftsmen, they also had a 'code of conduct' or religious-moral prescriptions compiled especially for them (*risalä-i diwanä*).[462] Some beggars acted as spies and allies for the police.[463]

The underclass was characterized by as much internal diversity as any other social stratum. Beggars also included prisoners guilty of minor offences only and therefore not incarcerated; instead, they were "allowed to roam about at large begging in the streets, carrying a heavy bar of iron weighing about 100 pounds, which has two strong rings attached to it, one made fast around the prisoner's neck and the other

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[460] Etherton 1911 : 63–4, also quoted by Jarring 1987: 8–9.

[461] Jarring 1987: 25. Professional beggars had scandalized their environment elsewhere as well, and a sizeable literature deals with their methods of deception in mediaeval Arab society (cf. Bosworth 1976).

[462] Muginov 1962: 127.

[463] Skrine 1971: 76–7.

round the right ankle; therefore when he moves he has to carry this iron bar in his arms" [464] Although the sources rarely specify this, the local underclass was not ethnically homogenous: those who sought medical relief from Aurel Stein included many destitute Chinese "mendicants and loafers" [465]

Some beggars were very mobile: they moved about between market centres and sometimes covered considerable distances to beg and to visit holy shrines. In Bukhara in 1844, Wolff met a dervish from Yarkand; in 1882 in Khiva, Lansdell met a group of dervishes from Kashgar. Mendicant dervishes may have profited from extensive Sufi networks, and were the mediators of news and gossip.[466]

Beggars fit uneasily into our modern category of the unemployed, since we know that they often offered their services to earn their bread. Classifying them as beggars may have been justified by their appearance, their general poverty, the fact that they lived among other beggars, perhaps in an almshouse, or that they simultaneously engaged in working for money and begging. But their activities were underscored by principles of reciprocity. Not only did they distribute blessings and good wishes to those who gave them alms, but male beggars worked as public entertainers and could also be hired to join funeral processions as singers.[467] Some tried to earn a living doing handicrafts.[468] Two British missionary women described how "for the remaining stages to Hami our caravan was augmented by a little self-appointed protégé in the shape of a very small elderly kalender, begging his way across Asia" In return for food, he "collected camel dung from the Gobi dumps to feed the camp fire".[469] Wandering mendicants often doubled as public storytellers known as *mädda*, "telling with feeling in the streets and squares of the splendour of great historic events of bygone days and captivating their audiences by their talents as story-tellers" [470] Their tales often included satirical remarks on current events and to this extent beggars were therefore shapers of public opinion. In short, their positions were mutable, and they constituted a large army of reserve labour for unskilled 'spiritual' work.

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[464] Dunmore 1993: 279–80.
[465] Stein 1904: 232.
[466] Jarring 1987: 5–6.
[467] Ibid.: 8, Cable & French 1942: 193.
[468] Mannerheim 1969: 65.
[469] Cable, French & French 1934: 126–7.
[470] Mannerheim 1969: 49–50.

3.4.10 *Charity*

The period discussed saw a number of systematic attempts to counter poverty. One was initiated by the local authorities; the other represented communal mechanisms which took the form of ritualized redistribution.

Providing the poor with a minimum degree of social security by the government seems to have begun in different localities at different times. The distribution of regular grain aid to the needy started in Kashgar just before the end of the nineteenth century, after the oasis had been hit by an earthquake. As a result, there was a dramatic rise in prices which had an immediate impact on poverty. The Chinese authorities had a certain amount of grain put aside to aid the victims from the state granary. Each person was given a board which he had to take along to the granary every month to get his grain allowance. Those who had no such board did not receive any grain ration. By the early twentieth century, taking care of the poor in Kashgar (*ajizlarni baqmaq*) had become a public concern. Almshouses (*qäländärxana, ajizlar üçün olturğali yurt*) were established by the Chinese authorities and destitute persons received either permanent or temporary shelter. Saintly shrines and cemeteries continued to serve as alternative abodes.[471] The almshouses were adobe houses divided by long, narrow passages into small cubicles similar to caravanserais. One almshouse in the south had 130 rooms, and 284 people resided there either in groups, as married couples or as single individuals. Each resident was entitled to forty *jiñ*[472] of maize monthly from the municipal authorities. Some were cheated out of their due by the greed of the Chinese officials, who used false weights. As part of the aid package, a pair of padded trousers and a coat were handed out to each person each winter, but no special provisions were made for the sick.[473] In Turfan, which at the turn of the century had about 6,000 inhabitants and 1,690 houses, the local almshouse had ninety-two residents. Boarders received two sets of clothes annually, one padded for winter use and the other for the summer. Their grain allowance was 120 *jiñ*, although we are not told how often they received this; a small amount of cash was also provided. Their funerals were paid for from the public coffers. Bribes had to be paid to gain entry

[471] Prov. 207. I.44.
[472] One *jiñ* equalled 500 gr (cf. Schwarz 1992: 1080).
[473] Filippi 1932: 475.

to the almshouse, and it sometimes happened that able-bodied young people benefited from the system while the old and ill were left to their own devices.[474] Occasional displays of public charity were very popular: when at the end of the nineteenth century, the governor of Khotan announced a general distribution for the poor, apparently 3,000 people turned up.[475]

In addition to the government's feeble attempts to care for the poor, other mechanisms in local society enabled a periodic redistribution of resources that was rooted in religious and local understandings of morality and reciprocity. These expressions of charity were embedded in local social institutions.

The presence of the poor and destitute could be a nuisance—and threatening—but they were also credited with bringing good luck and blessing to a house. It was commonly held that if no beggar entered a courtyard for more than seven days, then some calamity would befall members of the household. The underlying logic was that of reciprocity; the donation of alms gave an opportunity to the family to fulfil their religious obligation, for which they would receive blessings in exchange.

It is necessary to distinguish between the religious tax demanded by the local authorities and voluntary and ritual donations. Local concepts of alms were rooted in the Islamic tradition: *säḋiqä* meant both voluntary and mandatory alms, while *zakat* was the alms tax.[476] As one of the five pillars of Islam, payment of the alms tax is considered the obligation of every adult Muslim who does not suffer from mental infirmity, possesses a minimum amount of property and has accumulated sufficient wealth within a lunar year.[477] Ability to pay *zakat* was an important indication of economic and social status: in effect, it divided local society into those benefiting from donations and those making these donations.

Both religious and life-cycle rituals were occasions for communal almsgiving. Since all these rituals will be considered in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6, let it suffice here to stress their function as redistributive institutions. Ritualized almsgiving typically took place at the

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[474] Mannerheim 1969: 352.

[475] Grenard 1898a: 165.

[476] Originally *zakat* was a religious tax, but by the early twentieth century it had taken on a wider meaning; it was the main tax levied on caravans and commercial transactions (Hartmann 1908: 98). A similar semantic shift to a more general economic meaning took place in Russian Turkestan (Schuyler 1966: 112).

[477] Sabra 2000: 33.

time of religious festivals, a practice well known in other parts of the Islamic world.[478] In the first half of the twentieth century, alms were regularly distributed on the Night of Power (*qädir keçisi*) to commemorate the revelation of the Koran. Although this was normally identified as the twenty-seventh day of the month of Ramadan, a beggar's Ramadan song implies that almsgiving could start as early as the fifteenth day of the fast.[479] The Festival of Sacrifice was another occasion when redistribution assumed institutionalized forms. On this day, among the Turki-speaking Dolanis of the Yarkand river valley,

> Sheep were only sacrificed at the houses of the well-to-do; those who cannot afford one of their own go around in batches to the houses of their wealthiest friends for the 'salaam' ceremony. Standing before the owner of the house they bow with a sweeping movement of the arms and a stroking of the beard intoning a sonorous 'Amin' the while, after which each person is entitled to a sup of sacrificial mutton. On the first two days of the Festival of Sacrifice only men perform the salaam; second is the women's day, when separate tables are spread in the andarun for the fair visitors. The skin of each sheep sacrificed goes to the Imam, the head and feet to the Mu'azzin, the neck and offal to the butcher and a portion of the meat to the beggars.[480]

The *Barat* celebrations took place in the middle of the Islamic month of *şä'ban* (Sha'bān). During this festival, ritual cakes were taken to the graves of the dead where they were consumed by mendicants and beggars.[481] Each year on the eleventh of the month of *säpär*, rich people gave food or grain to the very poor of their neighbourhood.[482]

Life-cycle events were also occasions for charitable redistribution. After a wedding ceremony, the party started with musicians playing their instruments and guests dancing. The music informed beggars and the poor of the neighbourhood about the event, and many of them gathered to have their bowls filled. "No-one left empty-handed, because we believe that Allah will listen to the prayers of the poor and we were anxious that they all should pray for our prosperity" [483] In the first half of the twentieth century, the concluding ceremony of the wedding ristual in Kashgar, known as the ceremony of 'White Road',

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[478] Ibid.: 53–8.
[479] Jarring 1986: 193.
[480] Skrine 1971: 186.
[481] Grenard 1898a: 247.
[482] Prov. 464. 32R.
[483] Jarring 1975: 27.

took place after the bride had entered her new husband's home. At this point, some cotton and flour were placed in front of her and later given to the poor.[484]

On the last day of the hair-tying ritual, a *rite de passage* for young women, beggars were invited to be entertained.[485] On the day of death, alms consisting of cash and a piece of soap were distributed among beggars.[486] On the fortieth day following death, invited guests arrived to take part in the festive meal offered to commemorate the dead. In the courtyard, all male guests who as a sign of mourning had left their hair and facial hair grow for forty days, had their hair cut as a sign that the mourning was over. The barber's expenses were met by the landlord, and beggars were also invited to join and benefit from this communal ritual.[487]

Healing ceremonies and other special events were also marked by almsgiving. To ease her approaching delivery, a pregnant woman from Kashgar engaged a healer to perform a séance. Following the conclusion of the ritual, she paid the healer and gave alms to the poor.[488] Offerings to the poor could be made to help cure the sick, presumably even without the explicit framework of a healing ritual.[489] Almsgiving was also an integral part of male communal entertainment, notably in the *mäşräp*. Before the main dishes were served to the guests, piles of large bread were placed on the tablecloths in front of the guests, with small round bread on top. The latter were for the guests to consume, but the large bread underneath was distributed among the poor.[490] The *mäşräp* was the prerogative of the well-to-do, and a display of one's wealth in the form of offering a lavish feast to one's social equals had to be accompanied by the distribution of alms. Free meals were offered to the poor upon completing the building of a new house.

All ritualized communal meals involved the charitable distribution of food, which was known as *näzir*. Indigenous explanations consider *näzir* an altruistic act, when food is offered to others with no expectation of return. This definition contradicted reciprocal ideology which

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[484] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 312.
[485] Jarring 1975: 29–30.
[486] Skrine 1971: 204.
[487] Prov. 212. 90–8. For other examples of the connection between death rituals and charity, see Sabra 2000: 95–7.
[488] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 314.
[489] Jarring 1951b: 81.
[490] Jarring 1975: 15.

considered charity a meritorious deed. Beggars and other alms-receivers habitually prayed for the well-being of the donor and asked for blessings for him and his household. According to a Taranchi informant, when a poor mendicant begged in the street and received alms, in return he prayed for the donor, and therefore the sacrifice pleased God.[491] The theme of almsgiving also found its way into oral tradition:

> *Whatever you give with your hands will follow you.*[492]

The eschatological significance of almsgiving and the reciprocal assumptions underlying it were elaborated by the indigenous informant as follows:

> *If you give alms to please God while you are alive,*
> *it* [the good deed] *will accompany you in the afterlife.*[493]

On a more pragmatic level, religious and secular officeholders practised charity as a device to extend their circle of clients. Exceptionally rich individuals used almsgiving to generate and maintain prestige. A'la Xan of Khotan regularly kept an 'open table' in his house which was always buzzing with visitors, ranging from *mollas* to mendicants and other clients.[494] Although voluntarily poor mystics had no possessions to give away, they shared the donations given to them, as the case of the superintendent of a Kashgar dervish convent, Egerçi Işan, demonstrated. He once received a thoroughbred mount as an offering from a disciple. He refused to sell the horse and instead had it slaughtered and distributed the meat among the poor. Later, he did the same with other offerings brought to him by the Kirghiz in the form of camels, horses and cattle.[495]

Property relations and piety were intimately connected to the idiom of charity. The rich and powerful converted some of their property into symbolic capital to increase their social influence, as well as their religious merit. Their prosperity depended on the prayers of the poor. The poor made a living from the donations and reciprocated with blessings and prayer. The beggar's blessing was gratefully received, and his curse was greatly feared. This, and the ambivalent perceptions

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[491] Radloff 1886: 5.
[492] *här nä bärsäñ qoluñ bilän, ol barur säniñ bilän.*
[493] Pantusov 1909b: 61, 85.
[494] Grenard 1898a: 232.
[495] Jarring 1979: 18.

which reduced differences between mendicant dervishes and ordinary beggars, strengthened belief in the idea that the recipients of charity possessed magical powers. Charity was conceived in reciprocal terms, and in addition to serving as a redistribution mechanism it was also a means to integrate members of the lowest social groups into religious and life-cycle rituals from which they would otherwise be excluded. Through this participation, community was temporarily extended to those who were not themselves in a position to host rituals. This incorporation of social marginals as indispensable participants of major rituals amounted to ritual role reversal: beggars became guests or, as shall be demonstrated in connection with the *isqat* payment in Chapter 6, equal partners in a 'market-like exchange'. The temporary extension of community to them on special occasions did nothing to overcome their long-term exclusion. However, through enabling them to participate, the poor were integrated through rituals into the social institutions which constituted the chief repositories of community values.

3.5 *Taxes, Corruption and Migration*

Those whose main livelihood did not depend on begging had to work and thereby enter complex dependencies. This characterized most of the working population, especially peasants. Their burdens underwent little change, and methods of surplus extraction relied on well-established patterns, some of which pre-dated the Qing era.

The rule of thumb was that taxes had to be paid in cash by city dwellers, while rural people had to pay in kind.[496] In general, tax collectors could demand much higher taxes for their own benefit from villagers living farther away from the centre, because the abuse of power by officials was harder to control there.[497] The major forms of peasant burdens can be summed up under the subheadings of taxes and labour service. While labour services affected land proprietors, tax extortion affected all those taking part in market exchange.[498] In the mid-nineteenth century, the oppressive taxes extracted by *bägs* forced many people to migrate.[499]

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[496] Valikhanov 1961: 343.

[497] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 303–6.

[498] Warikoo discusses taxation and corruption under two separate headings, and makes no mention of the labour services. (1985: 87–9; 105).

[499] Valikhanov 1961: 344.

3.5.1 *Land Tax*

The tithe (*öşrä*) was an old form of tax levied by religious specialists serving a mosque community. By the period under discussion, the term *öşrä* referred to a grain-tithe generally, regardless of whether the beneficiary was a member of the religious or secular elite. Ostensibly a land tax, its equivalent was also levied on artisans and merchants.[500] From farmers, it was collected in kind during the harvesting season. Care was taken that only the very highest-quality grain was accepted. To ensure the highest profit, the grain had to be dried for seven days in the sun before it was weighed. The weighing took place on the so-called heavy scales, which weighed seven *çaräks* for every eight *çaräks*, so that the tax in effect was unfairly increased.[501]

Both the tithe and an additional land tax were extracted from land which belonged to the hereditary rulers in the eastern part of Xinjiang. Taxpayer registers were kept and taxes were collected within two weeks of the harvest. The size of the land tax was determined as follows: the local official had all private land surveyed and classified it into three groups according to quality. Tax was levied differently in each category:

1. Level: five *şiñ* cereal, five *jiñ* straw
2. Level: three *şiñ* cereal, three *jiñ* straw
3. Level: 1.5 *şiñ* cereal, three *jiñ* straw[502]

We may assume that Hartmann's figures from 1902 apply to one *mo* landholding because closely corresponding figures are quoted by a native informant from Turfan in 1891. Here it is explicitly stated that for each *mo* of land, the landowner had to pay five *şiñ* (kilograms) of cereal to the local governor as tax. The governor's due also included five *jiñ* of straw for each *mo*.[503] While the annual land tax in itself was not very high, the total burdens were considerable because additional extractions were not controlled.[504]

Additional land tax was collected in August, when farmers were obliged to transport the prescribed amount of wheat, corn, straw and

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[500] Fletcher n.d.: 576.
[501] Grenard 1898a: 276.
[502] Hartmann 1908: 28.
[503] Katanov 1976: 11–3.
[504] Hartmann 1908: 28.

wood to the district government stores, which supplied government troops stationed in the region. Peasant burdens varied according to the size of the troops: where there were many, the tax was often twice as high as tax paid elsewhere, and it had to be paid in kind. When the size of the army stationed in the area was relatively small, part of the tax could be paid in cash. However, the value of tax in kind was calculated in cash at an artificially high rate which did not correspond to market realities. The grain tax paid to the central authorities was stored in the public granaries, and it also served to meet the needs of the administration at times of food shortage. In practice, these taxes were often subject to speculation and abuse. Smallholders rarely had enough grain left for sowing. In theory they had the right to go to the public granary and procure up to half the amount of grain which they had paid as tax. If they did so the light scales were used, and the borrower received seven *jïñ* instead of eight *jïñ*. This practice constituted a hidden grain tax.[505] There are some hints that it was the size of landholding, rather than the quantity of the harvest, which determined the method of payment, regardless of whether the entire plot was under cultivation.[506] In Kashgar in 1929, the Chinese taxed farmers who owned one hundred *mo* of land or more in kind, which had to be delivered to the public grain stores, while others had to pay cash.[507] In Khotan, when grain was expensive, the basic tax was required in kind, but when grain was cheap, it was collected in cash, in which case the rate was fixed by the governor. Sometimes tax was demanded in silver, and the price of grain was fixed arbitrarily by the Chinese authorities.[508] Indigenous power-holders, such as the hereditary princes of the eastern oases, were just as exploitative: when a farmer produced a hundred bundles of cereal other than wheat—sorghum, for example—he had to give fifty to the governor or his wife.[509]

3.5.2 *Sales Tax*

The decision as to which goods were liable to taxation and which were exempt lay ultimately in the hands of the Chinese administrators, but

[505] Grenard 1898a: 276. Hartmann 1908: 28–9.
[506] Ibid.: 27.
[507] Jarring 1985: 19.
[508] Mannerheim 1969: 72.
[509] Katanov 1976: 18–9.

tax collecting could be farmed out to people who purchased the right.[510] The tax to be paid on the sale of animals (*mal beji*) depended again on the greed of the local authorities and on the needs of the administration. Both seller and purchaser had to pay 4 per cent of the selling price. Taxes were levied on the registration of property sales, which at the end of the nineteenth century were close to one fifth of the sale price.[511] Each time an inanimate object changed proprietors, the authorities required the payment of tax. Excessive taxation sometimes went so far that it provoked popular discontent. In 1900, low-level officials in Yarkand and Yengi Hisar extended the tax on cattle sales to all cattle, even those which were not being sold, under the pretext that each animal had at some point been bought or was born from cattle which had been purchased. The ensuing unrest in Yarkand in September 1900 put an end to this abuse.[512]

Sales tax was levied several times over in the case of textiles: once when the manufacturer sold it to merchants and then again when merchants resold it to customers. In such cases the goods themselves were sealed. Regulations concerning the taxing of fruit and vegetable sales interfered in everyday local practices more directly: the seal certifying the payment of taxes was stamped on the vendors' chest or arms. This meant that he could not do his ritual ablutions before he had sold all his goods, unless he was prepared to pay taxes for the same produce for a second time. This practice contradicted a nominal prohibition on taxing insignificant sales.[513]

3.5.3 *Irregular Taxes*

In Khotan, a poll tax was collected annually. Each household received a form from the administration in which all family members had to be entered, together with their sex and age, and this piece of paper had to be fixed to the entrance of the house. In theory, this paper was also the basis of official population statistics, which, however, were unreliable, because *bägs* and Chinese administrators left about one fifth of all households out of the tax registers in order to keep the tax money for themselves. The tax was initially fixed at twenty-five *pul*, but this was

[510] Mannerheim 1969: 72.
[511] Hartmann 1908: 28, Grenard 1898a: 276.
[512] Hartmann 1908: 28–9.
[513] Grenard 1898a: 276.

later raised to forty-five; in Yarkand it was seventy-five *pul*. Although mendicants and the other dispossessed were not liable to pay taxes, they, too, were registered. At the turn of the twentieth century, officially and unofficially levied taxes typically amounted to 30–40 per cent of people's annual income.[514]

Throughout imperial times the hereditary princes of the eastern oases paid tribute to Peking, a practice which brought additional burdens to the population. When the prince was getting ready to leave for Peking, a progressive grain tax was levied: one *tağar* from wealthy farmers,[515] and half a *tağar* from poor ones. The local narrator added that all this was collected without any compensation.[516] Irregular taxes were levied when the Chinese *amban* travelled around the oases to inspect guard stations, and the local governor also imposed levies to cover the *amban*'s travel expenses.[517]

In Turfan towards the end of the nineteenth century, the needs of the officials responsible for organizing labour services had to be met by the local population. They had to be supplied with horses and carts, and when they travelled to Qumul or Urumchi, they were also paid cash, at the time the sum of five *sär*. Four horses were also provided by the local government.[518] This requisition of food, transport and accommodation for travelling officials was known by the Manchu term *wula* and provided officials with many opportunities for further abuse. In 1916 Governor Yang tried to reform this requisition system to prevent local officials from abusing it, but his attempts failed.[519]

3.5.4 *Speculation and Manipulation*

Speculation constituted another source of income for both local and Chinese officials. In a way this resembled the manipulation of the collection of grain tax from farmers. When tax was collected in cash, the light scales were used, which weighed forty-seven ounces, instead of the supposed fifty. When the authorities were making payments, they used scales which had the opposite property. Correct weights were used

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[514] Grenard 1898a: 265, Hartmann 1908: 29.

[515] Literally a 'sackful'. The measurement was locally 224 kg, although in the 1990s in Kashgar it was said to equal 100 kg.

[516] Katanov 1976: 18–9.

[517] Fletcher n.d.: 574.

[518] Ibid.: 10–1.

[519] Lattimore 1975: 56–7.

only when payment was made between social equals such as high-ranking officeholders.[520]

Turki notables often took advantage of popular festivals to extract extraordinary taxes. The governor of Turfan owned tens of thousands of sheep. These were presented to the governor by local dignitaries each year at the New Year's festival and at the Festival of Särä (to be discussed in Chapter 6). In the fifth month, these were forcibly sold to the subject population: local officials (the *mirab* and the *aqsaqal*) took one sheep to each house and forced farmers to accept them. They then had to pay two *sär* for the sheep in the seventh month. Those who refused to buy a sheep were charged an extra *sär*. At the end of the year, households also had to pay the *zakat*, which consisted of two felt mats and two sheep for every hundred sheep owned; in addition one sheep had to be paid for grass, which was in effect a pasture tax.[521]

Indigenous officials could be subjected to extractions by their superiors. When, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the governor of Lukchen decided to marry the daughter of the governor of Qumul, the local *bäg*s were each expected to give ten sheep, six rolls of brocade and one horse as a wedding present, and *axun*s were invited to give five sheep and a roll of silk stuff. Other rich people gave one sheep and one roll of silk each. The 'presents' totalled 1,000 sheep.[522]

Forcing the subject population to purchase grain at fixed prices was also a favourite profit-making method of the governor of Turfan.[523] Some local officials did not refrain from appealing to the force of 'local custom' to justify their expropriations. In one case the official in question claimed that custom prescribed that the population donate him 500 lambs annually![524]

Upon the appointment of a new governor, it was customary that he brought a great deal of merchandise, such as tea, silks, paper, matches etc., with him and obliged his subjects to buy it at twice the market price. Debts accumulated by officials were shared out among their subjects. When the vice governor of Keriya got heavily into debt, he purchased cotton stuff at one *täñgä* apiece and resold it to his subjects at

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[520] Grenard 1898a: 266.
[521] Katanov 1976: 14–5.
[522] Le Coq 1919: 103.
[523] Katanov 1976: 12–5.
[524] Grenard 1898a: 276. For the practice of demanding 'presents' at feasts and holidays, see also Hartmann 1908: 25–7.

four *täñgä*. His extortion upset the population so much that several hundred of them eventually went to the Chinese *taotai* in Kashgar to complain. He had the case investigated, and the official was removed from office. Ironically, all these measures required a great many journeys by a number of officials, and the expenses had to be covered by the local population.[525] Speculation with land and water was another means to gain illicit profit. Indigenous governors illegally bought up land cheaply and sold it to merchants at higher prices. They even "cheated peasants out of their irrigation water, and reclaimed farmland which had become disused because of the lack of water, then did not register them and engaged in usury".[526]

Officials were ready to manipulate the system even at the expense of the government. During the late 1920s, Ma Tonglin, a high official in Khotan, was also district commandant of 400 soldiers for whom he received pay, clothing and supplies. He kept 200 instead of 400 troops and "as the country was at peace and the soldiers had nothing to do, it was best that they should have some occupation for their long hours of leisure. Khotan had long been famous for an outstanding industry—rug weaving. To begin with, Ma taught his soldiers to weave rugs, but by degrees he changed over to the opposite system, and engaged rug weavers as soldiers!"[527]

Chinese officials and indigenous *bägs* were both partners and rivals in the exploitative measures they employed to line their own pockets. Demands by Chinese officials had to be met by the indigenous *bägs*, who in turn compensated themselves with further taxes levied in kind. At the same time, they were also rivals for revenue, because the taxpaying population's resources were limited. Exploitative measures seem to have persisted into Republican times: the district governor had the right to demand tax in cash and to fix the price of cereal as he wished; land tax was fixed according to the size of the harvest in a very good year, and in subsequent years the same amount was demanded without taking into account the fluctuations in the size of the actual crop. Chinese tax collectors could also demand high taxes for their own benefit, which led to the impoverishment of peasants, many of whom fell victim to usurers who often charged 100 or even

[525] Grenard 1898a: 268.
[526] Fletcher n.d. 576.
[527] Ambolt 1939: 110.

200 per cent interest for their loans. In this respect the nomads were considered to be in a better position, because they had little direct contact with Chinese officials.[528]

Such conditions were not limited to Xinjiang. In his study of rural North China in the first half of the twentieth century, Duara points out that in the whole region:

> The formal salary of the county magistrate was nominal, and his real income derived from a tacit right conferred on him to retain the surplus from his jurisdiction remaining after submitting the stipulated taxes to higher authorities. In other words, the absence of a practical distinction between private and public funding in government tempted local administrators to levy taxes and use 'public' monies as they pleased.[529]

That the excesses of local administrators were widely known is illustrated by a large yellow bilingual poster which Sven Hedin saw on the wall of 'an unusually clean' caravanserai in the village of Meynet, situated on the road between Maralbashi and Yarkand. It read, "Since I [the emperor] have heard that some of the bägs levy unlawful taxes from the people, and have appropriated the right for fishing, I will that any such infringements should be reported at the nearest Tao Tai. If he does not listen to the complaint, the people should come directly to me. Guangxu" (r. 1875–1908).[530] The poster bears witness that appropriating use rights over certain resources, in this case fishing in the River Yarkand, was yet another method for officials to gain profit.

3.5.5 *Corvée*

Labour service is mentioned as the major burden of the population in both foreign and indigenous sources. Robert Shaw is alone in insisting that no corvée was expected from the local population in Eastern Turkestan.[531] The explanation for his observation may be that his visit to the region coincided with Ya'qub Beg's rule, when a great deal of public works was taken over by the army. But private landlords still continued to demand labour services from their clients, though this seems to have remained hidden from this particular foreign visitor.

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[528] Kazak 1937: 23.
[529] Duara 1988: 45.
[530] Hedin 2001.I.: 174–5.
[531] Shaw 1984: 469–70.

One local tradition legitimated corvée in historical terms: when the two *khoja* factions were competing with each other, both parties tried to secure alliances with outsiders. At some point, Afaq/Apaq Xoja, the leader of the White Mountain faction, turned to the Tibetans—and, later, to the Qalmuq—for support against his Black Mountain rivals. During these negotiations, Afaq promised the Qalmuq a payment of 100,000 *täñgä*s if they supported him. From then on the *khojas* became burdened with this debt, which is commemorated by the labour obligation (*alban*).[532]

An early nineteenth-century practice of distributing corvée was based on the unit of the *çoka*, which comprised ten or fifteen courtyards. Each *çoka* had to give one labourer and a wagonload of building materials for construction activities. For the building materials, a nominal payment was given to the *çoka*, which was worth about one tenth of the real value of the materials contributed.[533] By the early twentieth century, household burdens had increased: each landed household had to provide either one worker or pay a 'buying tax' of sixty *puls* instead.[534] The wages paid for labour services were nominal, which rendered the institution very unpopular. A Turki proverb bluntly stated, "Who does corvée? The lunatic" (A smart guy could buy himself out.)[535] Indeed, it was possible for richer individuals to purchase their freedom from corvée by paying poorer people to work in their place.[536]

Bosuq Niyaz, a native of Qumul, reported how the inhabitants had to transport natural fertilizer for twenty-one days in the course of the three winter months without even nominal payment. Poor people who possessed no carts had to contribute by shifting earth for those driving carts. Bosuq Niyaz, whose narrative dates from about twenty years after Shaw's observations, describes labour services as a major burden violently forced upon the population: "After the people have been gathered for the purpose of corvée, they are beaten with a whip until they bleed without giving them so much as a piece of bread or one-third of a penny. We, poor people, ask God to save us from corvée. Some have fled to Kashgar. We are hoping to get permission

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[532] Hartmann 1905: 211. The modern pronunciation is *alwañ*. In the eastern regions labour requisition was also known as *gänçäy* (Katanov 1976: 10–1).

[533] Hartmann 1908: 28.

[534] Grenard 1898a: 265.

[535] Le Coq 1911: 22–30.

[536] Hartmann 1908: 29.

to move to Urumchi." The farmers of Qumul were subject to labour extractions on the land of the governor and his wife, as well as on the land of officials.[537] Labour service could also be demanded from city dwellers. Craftsmen working under the leadership of a master had to perform five days of work each month for the authorities for a payment of eighty *pul* each day.[538] Further workdays extracted by the authorities were paid according to agreement. Only those with no land property and no real estate were exempted from taxes and arbitrarily defined labour services for the government.[539]

The organization of work depended on forms of property, as is illustrated by the example of digging water tanks. The permanent availability of drinking water was a public concern. Although a water pond (*köl*) could be leased out to a private person, more often it constituted public property (*mülki köl*) and belonged to a pious foundation. Such organizations could initiate the digging of a pond by day labourers, who received their wages from the foundation. In contrast, ponds on

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[537] Katanov 1976: 16–9.

[538] In spite of the presence of Chinese currency reckoned according to the decimal system, locals insisted on using the 'time-honoured reckoning in "Tanga" and "Pul"'. The value of these units varied vertically (in time) and also horizontally, i.e., regionally. The complications concerning monetary reckoning are best illustrated by Stein, who noted that at the time of his visit the Khotanese *täñgä* was worth twice as much as the *täñgä* of Kashgar. However, these units were only measurements, and there were no coins representing them, "so all sums had to be converted into Miskals, the smallest available silver coins, at the ratio of eight Tangas to five Miskals, unless one is prepared to handle the dirty rolls of Chinese coppers which the local trader keeps strung up like sausages. But the exchange rate between silver and copper is not stable, and the silver Miskal was just then considerably above the value of forty copper pieces which the ratio just mentioned would indicate. So after successfully converting Tangas into the legal coin, a varying discount has to be calculated before payment can be effected. It only adds to these monetary complications that prices of articles imported from Russia are reckoned in 'Soms' (Roubles), which in the form of gold pieces of five or ten Roubles widely circulate through the markets of Turkestan, while the heavier Chinese silver 'Yambus,' of horse-shoe shape and varying weight, have a discount of their own. During my stay in the country the value of the gold Rouble as against the local currency of Tangas represented by Chinese silver and copper pieces, steadily declined, and with it unluckily fell the Rupee too, the exchange value of which seems in Turkestan to depend mainly on the Rouble rate" (Stein 1904: 159). Because of the instability of the currency, in this work money values are always given as the source indicates. Such figures may be useful at least to indicate proportions and relative value. The relationship of *pul* and *täñgä* seem to have changed dramatically within less than a hundred years: in the early nineteenth century fifty *pul* made one *täñgä*. Although *pul* resembled Chinese money, the place of the mint was given both in Manchu and in Arabic (Fletcher 1978: 61).

[539] Hartmann 1908: 28.

private land were dug by forced labour. If the pond was to be a large one for public benefit, without the supportive role of a *waqf*,[540] a request could be made to the Chinese officials, who then mobilized the necessary labour force. Digging a drinking pond could be entirely organized by the local community.[541]

Sometimes corvée services, which included the construction and maintenance of irrigation canals and public buildings, benefited the community. It was this communal aspect which prompted some foreign observers to defend the institution as ultimately beneficial for local interests. But in the 1930s, Fleming, writing about the Keriya oasis, suggested that not all public works served communal interests:

> There was no doubt that Tungan rule lay heavily on the oases; the Turkis were groaning under the weight of other people's military ambitions. Almost all the activity that was going on was for the benefit of the garrison; the donkeys trotting in from the outskirts of the oasis with loads of fodder or fuel, the men who were levelling the new parade ground—these and other signs of forced labour abounded.[542]

The Taranchi in the north had to perform corvée at the river dam for fifteen days twice each year, but they also had to meet the Manchu officials' additional demands. This could include the digging of irrigation canals, work in the copper and silver mines, transporting food for the army and accompanying officials to Kashgar and Yarkand, for which both people and horses had to be provided.[543]

Corrupt practices concerning corvée were reminiscent of the corruption which surrounded taxation. In the late nineteenth century, when the copper mines of Turfan needed a labour force, the governor ordered his subordinates to recruit fifty men from his three administrative districts. The officials recruited 200 men instead. Only the required number was sent to work; the rest were forced to pay a bribe to the local officials in order to be let off.[544] In the Tarim oases, it was also common practice to requisition more labourers and materials than

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[540] Modern Uyghur: *wäxpä*.

[541] Prov. 464. 2v. Digging a well was presumably a last resort, and was done only when a pond could not be dug for some reason. In modern Xinjiang villagers still maintain that the water gained from drinking ponds is healthier for the human body and they regard water from a well as inferior.

[542] Fleming 1936: 288, quoted in Forbes 1986: 131.

[543] Radloff 1886: 71–3.

[544] Katanov 1976: 12–3.

were actually needed. Without considering the distance of the workplace or the season, people and materials were often withheld unnecessarily without compensation.[545] Similar complaints were registered decades later during the Republican period. At the end of the 1920s, the number of days of labour obligation was determined according to the size of land property as before, but there is no mention of even a nominal payment for the service. A person who owned 100 *mo* of land had to send one man to the team which had to dam up the river to divert the water into the canal which irrigated the fields.[546] Rich landed households met their obligations by mobilizing their own clients, tenants and serfs, who were therefore doubly burdened: they had to perform their landlord's labour-service obligation to the government on top of their own obligations to the landlord.

Land reclamation and the construction of irrigation works were organized through corvée when the projects were large-scale and initiated by the authorities; small-scale works were organized on the communal level, and these labour contributions were considered truly voluntary. As sixty-nine-year-old Memet Niyaz recalled in 1956, work for communal benefit was typically performed on a voluntary basis in the Aqsu region during the Republican period, with each household contributing one to three labourers. Participation was in effect obligatory through communal membership and through the force of custom, and the exact labour contribution depended on the household's position in the domestic cycle. Memet Niyaz also emphasized the customary nature of such labour contribution.[547]

3.5.6 *Mobility*

To escape taxes and corvée, many people resorted to migration. In the early twentieth century, their destination was often Western Turkestan. According to the Russian Consulate's register dating from 1904, the region sent about 10,000 seasonal workers to the cotton fields of Ferghana annually. During the years immediately preceding the First World War, the numbers surged to reach as high as 40,000 to 50,000 before returning to the earlier levels; in 1926 the figure was 25,000.[548]

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[545] Hartmann 1908: 29.
[546] Jarring 1985: 19.
[547] Tenishev 1984: 30.
[548] Kazak 1937: 13–4.

Labour migration from southern Xinjiang to Western Turkestan was popular because higher wages were paid there.[549]

Oral reminiscences also testify to the popularity of labour migration before 1949. Poor people went to Andijan in Russian Turkestan as seasonal labourers mainly employed in agricultural work such as picking cotton. In 1929, seasonal cotton workers crossing over to Russian Turkestan tried to avoid the border controls which they considered an unnecessary hindrance on an arduous journey: "When the season was over, they travelled the long and difficult road back over the mountains to Kashgar, on foot, with a little money saved in their pockets",[550] a statement further illustrated by a folk song:

I went to Andijan for work.
I threw away my worn-out clothes.
After I had spent the money I had,
I chewed a piece of brick, calling it bread.[551]

Although, for many people, spatial movement, migration and travel with various purposes were important components of their lives, the significance of this should not be overestimated. For each person who set out on a journey, there were many more who never left their birthplace. When Aurel Stein visited the Pişa valley near Khotan, he met Hakim Şah among the mountain people (*tağlıq*), who claimed to be no less than 100 years old. "He had once in his life been to Khotan, and was evidently in the eyes of his people a man well-up in the affairs of the world."[552] Shepherds, mobile by definition, also constituted relatively stable groups whose mobility was determined by the needs of their flocks, but they did not participate in trans-regional movements and only rarely visited their local market centres. A shepherd with the double name Husayn-Hasan looked after a large herd outside the town of Keriya. About 150 people cared for the numerous flocks grazing there. Flock sizes varied between 300 and 2,000 sheep, the large herds belonging to landlords and entrepreneurs residing in Keriya. Husayn-Hasan's case was probably not unique: the owner of his flock came out to count and shear the sheep twice a year, once in the spring and once in the autumn. He brought corn flour and other provisions for

[549] Forbes 1986: 34.
[550] Jarring 1986a: 72.
[551] Jarring 1985: 60.
[552] Stein 1904: 195.

the shepherd and his family, so that the shepherd only visited a small market centre (not even the largest one in the oasis) once every two years. Such people had direct social relations only with the proprietor of the sheep and their immediate neighbours. Some lived in such isolation that they did not even know that Ya'qub Beg's rule was over and that the country was once more in Chinese hands. They had no contact whatsoever with the Chinese authorities and did not pay taxes, as was the case of Muhammad Bay, who lived an isolated life with his wife, children and grandchildren.[553]

3.6 *Summary*

In this chapter we have looked at various types of boundary drawing, which simultaneously created a sense of exclusion and inclusion. In considering stereotypical representations it has been shown that, while oasis identity was important, it did not always trump other types and levels of local identity. Similarly, ethnic belonging was not the sole determinant for inclusion in or exclusion from imagined or real communities. Just as modern identities cannot be reduced to ethnicity alone, boundaries between groups were simultaneously drawn along religious, linguistic, residential, gender, social and economic lines in pre-socialist times; all of these were sources of identity formation.

In the description of the localities in which actors moved and lived, special attention has been paid to the economic situation in the countryside, because the greatest part of the local population worked in agriculture. Access to basic resources played an important role in determining the distribution of power and social prestige. Internal social stratification involved a number of groups according to the criteria of ownership and access to consumption goods, as well as prestige. In emphasizing social differences, strategies of exploitation were highlighted; these were practised by local and foreign elites alike.

The social structure of the oasis settlements shared many of the general characteristics of other pre-industrial peasant societies: the majority of the population under the Manchu in China proper were also peasant cultivators and craftsmen whose livelihood depended on

[553] Hedin 2001. II: 90–1, 96.

irrigation agriculture and whose contacts with officialdom were limited to local representatives of the central power. Their social structure too was hierarchical, informed by unequal access to resources, though property relations were not always the decisive factor.[554]

Two main themes emerge from this chapter. One is the multiplicity of loyalty ties, which constituted patterns of interaction within a basically hierarchical social structure. The other theme embraces local know-how: designing irrigation canals, the social control of the water supply, the use of the hoe and the diverse symbolic meanings attached to it, even methods of bargaining may all be perceived as repositories of communal values and, as such, constituents of the 'commons'. Arguably, even strategies of exploitation and evasion could become a source of commonality, because over time they were narrated as elements of a shared past. Although one expects similar access to resources to lead to community horizontally—i.e., among social and economic equals—the day-to-day control of resources often cut across social classifications. Physical propinquity tied landlords and serfs, retailers and small traders to each other, in vertically structured communities. Daily interaction required the sharing of space by social unequals. That even the most marginalized groups could benefit from regular redistribution and at the same time regularly participate in community was ensured through ritually institutionalized charity. Such mechanisms were governed by rules of social behaviour which could be summed up as custom. The force of custom in regulating social relations often augmented other legal institutions, and this forms the subject of the next chapter.

[554] Sprenkel 1966: 7–27.

CHAPTER FOUR

REGULATING SOCIAL RELATIONS: THE FORCE OF CUSTOM

Chapter 3 has set the economic and social parameters for late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century society, in which inequalities resulting from unequal access to resources created a highly stratified structure characteristic of pre-industrial peasant societies. This was strengthened by the colonial framework, which also engendered ethnic hierarchies. Conflict was not limited to strife between ruling and subject populations, or between ethnic, linguistic or religiously defined groups. It could potentially challenge the communal cohesion of any interest group, including the household, kin group, neighbourhood or mosque community, but conflict could also threaten dyadic relationships of all sorts, including that between husband and wife. This chapter looks at mechanisms of conflict resolution at all these levels, as well as the ideologies in which these were embedded; particular attention will be paid to discourses on gender and the concepts of insider—outsider. Aspects of social control will be considered from the perspective of legal pluralism, privileging the role of informal mechanisms.[1] It will be shown that conflicts and the mechanisms mobilized to control and regulate them necessarily draw attention to community boundaries and to efforts to challenge, dislocate and reconstitute them.

Historians of Xinjiang present pre-socialist dispute management as essentially governed and informed by two normative systems: state law (imperial and, later, republican) and Islamic law.[2] Authors commenting on this duality note that civil cases involving Muslims were dealt with in Islamic courts, which were only abolished in the 1950s, and only criminal cases such as murder and treason or lawsuits involving Muslims and non-Muslims were taken to the Chinese magistrates. There is some evidence that the number of the latter was not small; however, to date we know very little about the functioning of these courts in Xinjiang.[3]

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[1] For an overview see Roberts 1994.
[2] Millward 1998: 121–4. Fletcher 1978: 77.
[3] Laura Newby, oral communication.

Similarly, the functioning of Islamic courts in the region has not been studied.[4] Sporadic evidence suggests that the opening of local archives could shed light on these issues, since court proceedings were recorded, but given the limitations on archival research in the region, such a study is not yet feasible.[5] This chapter offers an introduction to some aspects of social control and argues that the historians' binary model is insufficient. Codified normative systems representing the state and Islamic law undoubtedly played an important role in managing social life, but alternative mechanisms were also at work; conflicts were often settled by mosque community elders, and informal conflict management was governed by a number of unwritten rules.

Following the definition proposed by legal anthropologists, I suggest that this set of social rules should be called 'customary law', or 'local law' [6] Although definitions vary in detail, they agree on the point that legal systems are essentially 'bodies of norms', and they recognize the existence of normative orders outside state law in many societies.[7] Legal anthropologists depart from the narrow, étatist definition of law, which acknowledges only those systems directly bound to, created by and appropriated by the state. Instead, they propose a much broader definition, which goes beyond state legal systems to include 'non-state normative orders'.[8] This approach assumes that most societies display a degree of legal pluralism and conceives of law as a contested field in which state-based and non-state-based normative systems co-exist, often in competition with each other. The framework of legal pluralism is particularly useful when discussing aspects of social life among the Turki population, because indigenous discourse on social organization invariably interpreted concepts of rights and obligations as religious and moral categories, rather than legal ones. Isolating customary or local law from mere custom remains a problem. Josselin de Jong, after pointing out the confusion in the definition of legal pluralism, went so far as to suggest that the term should be altogether abolished.[9] However, dispensing with the term does not eliminate the idea behind it.

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[4] I have recently learnt about the accidental discovery of hundreds of legal documents by the Japanese historian Jun Sugawara in Kashgar. The documents are still awaiting detailed study.

[5] See the examples cited by Bellér-Hann 2000: 14–5.

[6] K. & F. von Benda-Beckmann 1988.

[7] Woodman 1999: 8, 11.

[8] F. von Benda-Beckmann 2001: 48.

[9] Josselin De Jong 2001.

My adoption of a wider, general definition is suggested by the nature of the indigenous materials. Local authors constantly make statements concerning customary practice. It is frequently represented implicitly alongside explicit statements: authors give descriptions of actual events, but the normative tone of 'this is how it should be' is frequently discernible. They often digress from the specificities of one single occasion and merge several similar experiences in order to generalize. They oscillate between normative and specific modes of representation and do not make a clear distinction between local practice and local law. Instead of interpreting this as a sign of inconsistency and a failure to separate norms from practice, I see it as a reflection of the interaction between the two domains: normative assumptions informed practice and practice contributed to the norm by constantly reshaping and remoulding it.

'Local' or 'customary' law is defined here broadly as a set of normative rules which has fuzzy boundaries, lacks codification, jurisdiction and organized executive force. Since we assume that various elements of customary rules emerged at different times and had heterogeneous origins, it cannot be considered either static or homogenous. Deviations may have had a wide range of consequences, ranging from relatively mild corrective measures, such as gossip, to harsh sanctions such as expulsion from the community. Normative measures could also be enforced by appealing to the authority of parallel legal systems, such as the state system or the religious courts. The various normative systems did not exist side by side in isolation but influenced each other in complex ways.

In Chapter 3, implicit references were made to the force of local law in regulating the division of water and forms of tenant farming. We have seen that community elders could act as a corporate group and influence the selection of officials. In other cases, the local religious leadership exercised judicial power. In this chapter, we shall look at further examples of how both Islamic and local law exerted influence upon regulating people's daily lives.

It is probably safe to assume that following the Islamization of the region, beginning in the tenth century, the oases had a two-tiered normative system: Islamic law was enforced through Islamic courts, while customary law was communally imposed. During the Qing, imperial law was introduced. Of the three realms, the Islamic and imperial legal systems were codified, institutionalized and had trained specialists. These two systems operated parallel to each other in some respects, and observed a certain division of labour. This often ran along ethnic lines,

but there were also cases when their activities overlapped. The pattern was that civil disputes between local Muslims were tried in the Islamic courts, while those concerning non-indigenous imperial subjects were taken to the imperial magistrates. There are some indications that, at least during the early Qing, civil disputes involving Muslims and non-Muslims could also be tried in the Islamic courts. Serious criminal cases such as murder had to be referred to the imperial courts, including those which involved local Muslims; in practice, however, even in such cases the choice of courts could vary.[10] These instances illustrate that, throughout the Qing period, religious law was basically subordinated to imperial law. This pattern was temporarily broken during Ya'qub Beg's rule,[11] when Islamic law became the only acknowledged codified legal system. Following Ya'qub Beg's demise, Chinese rule and, with it, imperial law were restored. After this, in spite of the ensuing political upheavals and the gradual transformations in economic and social life, the legal status quo—in which state law dominated but Islamic law retained its salience in local society—persisted until 1949.

In the pre-socialist period (especially following Qing restoration), state law insisted on its superior position but was content to share space with other forms of normative systems; it observed a certain division of labour with Islamic law and tolerated customary law, inasmuch as it did not interfere with the management of everyday social relations among the indigenous population.

4.1 *Dispute Settlement*

Lawsuits (*soraq*) at the Islamic courts in Kashgar were presented somewhat critically in one local account authored by a *molla*. When two adversaries resorted to an Islamic court, the legal professionals consulted Islamic legal books before arriving at a verdict.[12] In some cases, the *mufti* was asked to give a legal opinion (*fatwa/pätiwa*), and the judge formulated his decision accordingly. When preparing a *fatwa* concerning a certain case, the *mufti* did not ask the person submitting the case to prove the truthfulness of his words; he merely accepted his

[10] See Millward 1998: 121–4; Fletcher 1978: 77.

[11] On this period see Kim 2004.

[12] Because of the difficulty in accessing sources we must assume that, similarly to other parts of the Islamic world, Muslim legal experts here too resorted to handbooks of the Hanafi legal school.

verbal account. When someone denied an accusation, it was necessary for him to take an oath. For example, when two adversaries went to the judge, and one claimed that the other owed him a certain sum but refused to pay his debt, the other could say that he had already paid his debt. In such a case, the taking of an oath was considered necessary. If a person had someone else's money without a legal document, he could not retain his money without taking an oath. But if he had two witnesses to prove his case, no oath was required. If the witnesses took an oath, the person was entitled to receive his money. But in many instances the judge was bribed, and the source makes it plain that the verdict was bound to be unfair.[13]

An oath was usually taken by laying one's hands on the Koran, although alternative methods were also used: a Chinese visitor in the 1930s mentions the method of stamping on cooked rice to symbolize the fate of the oath-taker if he did not tell the truth.[14] Muhammad Ali Damolla, himself a learned religious dignitary, was highly critical of the Islamic courts. He likened the *mufti*'s job to that of a soothsayer whose client had a dream in which his nose was bleeding. The soothsayer could interpret this as a lucky sign indicating that the person was about to acquire wealth. However, for another person, he might interpret the nosebleed as an inauspicious sign. Thus the author emphasized the contingent nature of judgments which combined elements from ostensibly disparate realms of Islamic law and custom. He also pointed out that the most important lawsuits referred to the Chinese magistrates concluded with a fair judgment only when the investigation was carried out attentively. Unfair judgments were often blamed on the interference and corruption of local *bägs*, who frequently took bribes.[15]

As the indigenous author suggests, bribes were accepted not only by the *bägs* but also by legal professionals. In the late 1920s, one of the four chief Muslim judges of Aqsu received a suspended sentence of six months for selling his judgments. He then continued in his profession but made the same mistake repeatedly "and finally lost his nice house and garden and frittered away his subsistence".[16]

The judge who reached his verdict conscientiously was considered wise and "deserved to be likened to a person who takes a candle into

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[13] Prov. 207. I.52.
[14] Wu 1984: 220.
[15] Prov. 207. I.47.
[16] Schomberg 1996: 35–6.

a dark place and thus eliminates darkness".[17] Whenever the spiritual guidance of Islam (*hidayät*) was followed, criminals were appropriately punished. Punishment could take the form of the amputating of a limb or an ear or the blinding of an eye. Some criminals were beaten, while others were jailed. Some had fetters put on their feet, shackles on their hands, or iron locks or chains around their neck. Some were simply jailed, others were whipped by the officials of the Islamic court, and yet others were beaten and paraded through town.[18] Although many criminal cases were probably left unsolved, sometimes the arm of law reached the guilty ones. On his way from Korla to Urumchi, Colonel Schomberg saw three sticks marking the grave of a murdered Andijani merchant. The merchant and his wife had interrupted their journey and lay down by the roadside to rest, where they were attacked by a Kashgari who knew that the Andijani's wife was a famed beauty. "He knocked the husband on the head and carried off the lady, whom he kept a prisoner. She managed to escape and brought the murderer to justice, and he was executed near the scene of the murder".[19] Although we are not told which court was responsible for the sentence, the incident highlights two important facts: the woman's word was taken seriously in the murder trial, and efforts were made to mete out punishment at the scene of the crime.

Muhammad Ali Damolla differentiated clearly between the religious and secular legal systems, which favoured different modes of capital punishment. Muslim judges could sentence a murderer to be stoned or hung. Some criminals were slaughtered like sheep or cut into pieces. In contrast, secular judges typically meted out a prison sentence. When they decided that the criminal should be executed, the method preferred was strangulation, beheading with a sword, or slitting the throat. A relatively new practice in the early twentieth century was death by shooting. A Muslim ruler of Khotan, himself a *hajji*, employed the method of clubbing to death.[20]

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[17] Prov. 207. I.48.

[18] Prov. 207. I.48.

[19] Schomberg 1996: 137.

[20] Prov. 207. I.49. Under Ya'qub Beg, when Islamic courts for a short time represented the exclusive formal legal authority, the favourite method of capital punishment was the slitting of the throat, while minor offences could entail beating. This was the punishment of a butcher who had been detected in the bazaar using false weights. He was seized, his neck and legs bound together, and repeated blows were struck on his back with a thick broad leather strap (Forsyth 1875: 6).

Court settlement of disputes took the form of a written agreement (*razinamä*), and divorce cases were concluded with issuing a divorce document (*talaqnamä*).[21] Civil court cases such as inheritance and alimony were recorded, with date, the names of the adversaries, the nature of their dispute, the names of witnesses and the judgment passed. An example of such records comprising cases from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was acquired by Martin Hartmann in Kashgar, in 1902.[22] Other documents acquired by Hartmann include: deeds of a house sale; an inheritance document in which a man named Bay Xojam transfers land, money, a hoe, a coat, a sack and a bed to his younger brother from the paternal inheritance; and a lawsuit in which several sisters demand their share of the paternal inheritance from their brother.[23] These samples were representative of the civil cases brought to Islamic courts, which mostly dealt with aspects of family law, civil disputes, endowments and property rights.[24]

Representatives of the secular authorities could also fulfil legal functions. For example, legal documents had to be obtained from the local *bäg* before contracting a marriage.[25] A certificate from the *imam* of the neighbourhood was also needed to prove that a woman was free to marry.[26] In such instances, the legal and religious authorities were fulfilling parallel functions, which were unconnected to the courts. Many people prioritised their own interests and, instead of resorting to Islamic courts, directly approached influential religious or secular dignitaries, who sometimes conducted the investigation themselves and sometimes delegated it to other *bäg*s. Impartial settlement of a dispute was rare, since cases were often decided according to the adversaries' respective ability to bribe the judges.[27] Indigenous statements to this effect are corroborated by an eyewitness account describing such proceedings in south Xinjiang in the late nineteenth century. Riyaz Beg, the richest man in Merket, held court in his yard every day. He was aided by his scribe, and the audience consisted of his clients and

[21] Examples of such documents were reproduced in the Oriental and Indian Office Library, London (L/P & S/7/4. 1875, p. 29).

[22] Hartmann Sammlung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 2 3296.

[23] These are housed in the collection of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* in Halle, Germany (Hartmann Collection B 185 Hülle A).

[24] Cf. Hooker 1997.

[25] Forsyth 1875: 84.

[26] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 311.

[27] Prov. 207. I.48.

servants. The first case of the day in question concerned a man who had five wives. His youngest wife had run away from her husband with another man all the way to Kashgar. The *bäg* notified the Kashgari authorities, who found the woman and duly sent her back to Merket. Having been found guilty of adultery, she was slapped on her cheeks by the *bäg*. Her excuse was that she found life with her co-wives unbearable. She constantly carried a knife with her, which she intended to use to commit suicide if she was forced to return to her husband. She was sent first to reside in the house of the local *molla* before finally being forced to return home to her husband. Another case involved two men who had an argument over gambling. The loser promised to bring the money from the bazaar. The other, however, insisted on getting his due straightaway. His opponent then took his knife and stuck it in his own ear, shouting, "This is what you get, instead of money!" Since he had inflicted a deep wound on himself, his face and clothes were covered in blood by the time they arrived in court. The *bäg* sentenced the winner to a public beating in the street. The other was supposed to recover before getting his share of the beating. It was noted that the *bäg* made some profit on each case brought to him.[28]

It is not clear if this *bäg*'s court could be seen simply as a customary court. It seems more likely that the *bäg*'s decisions were also informed by his knowledge of Islamic law; he may have been advised by religious officeholders in the mosque community, but his opinion and judgments were also inevitably influenced by communal opinion rooted in local law. In other words the *bäg*'s court merged Islamic and customary normative orders; it combined both systems. This form of practice then provided an uncodified legal framework for the local community (consisting of one or perhaps several mosque communities) and strengthened the sense of communal belonging.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lawsuits could also be initiated collectively. In the first half of the twentieth century, two rainmakers were taken to the Chinese magistrates by the people of Kashgar after the rain they had 'made' became devastatingly heavy. The culprits were sentenced to a couple of hundreds of lashes and put in a cangue—a type of pillory—for a fortnight.[29] Legal decisions

[28] Hedin 2001. I.: 187–8.
[29] Jarring 1979: 14.

could also affect a whole community: in 1880, following the stabbing of a man by his wife, the *amban* of Yarkand ordered that only knives with broken points should be carried by the inhabitants.[30] This was evidently a widespread mode of retribution, since this same method was reportedly used by the *mollas* a few decades later in Kashgar, following a dispute over the distribution of water.[31]

The above passages present a grim view of the practical abuse of the codified legal systems. Such impressions were confirmed in an indigenous satirical document obtained by Robert Shaw in 1908 in the bazaar of Yarkand, "where it went from man to man and was read with universal amusement" Shaw claims that this humorous parody of a legal document faithfully reflected the legal style of the time. Some uncertainty remains about whether the aim of the author was to mock the legal language or the whole legal system:

> In the year one thousand three hundred and twenty-five, the month *räjäb* the sixth. I, who am Muhammad Niaz Axon, from the quarter Quruq-köl-bash, little beard, medium sized, Muhammed Kurban Khuja's son, have [herewith] made open, legal and judicial acknowledgement, that I am indebted ten kicks, four boxings on the ear, ten cuts with a whip, ten blows with a stick, five blows with a fist to Roze Axon, from the quarter of Aq-mesjed, uncle Kurban Bay's son. The aforesaid boxes on the ear, kicks, cuts with a whip, blows with a stick [and] blows with a fist I have undertaken within the course of a month, not making legal process, to pay in full. [His Mark]. Five ringdoves, four crows, ten sparrows, four hoopoes, two quails are witnesses.[32]

No doubt the dubious reputation of the courts also contributed to the persistence of informal forms of dispute settlement which, however, rarely get mentioned in the sources. These alternative methods of dispute settlement derived their force entirely from local law. In Khotan, in case of a serious dispute during which one of the parties was hit, injured or otherwise hurt, the adversaries went to the street, accompanied by their wives and children, where a 'Homeric exchange of mutual verbal abuse' took place in public. The curious onlookers from the neighbourhood interfered only when physical violence was used. At this point, the person who had struck harder asked his adversary to acknowledge that he had done wrong and apologize. The offender

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[30] Dunmore 1993: 305–6

[31] See Chapter 3 p. 124 above.

[32] Raquette 1909: 14, 29, 47.

was expected to offer his pipe to his adversary: his acceptance concluded the affair. Although 'more serious people' tried to avoid the scene in the street, they, too, resorted to the 'pipe ceremony', which was mediated by respected members of the mosque community.[33] To what extent the verbal exchange and violence acted out in public could be considered a premeditated and orchestrated ritual is impossible to tell. But resorting to communal mediation and public reconciliation which had to be concluded with ritualized commensality must have been widespread: in Yarkand, too, lesser disputes were concluded with reconciliation ceremonies which included the smoking of the water pipe and drinking tea.[34] Some seventy years later, the water pipe and the teacup still played symbolic roles in dispute settlement. In such cases, "the ensuing reconciliation apparently had much more force than a written agreement and many solemn words".[35] In the first half of the twentieth century in Khotan, if the instigator of the dispute offered a cup of black tea to his opponent in the assembly, it was accepted as a symbolic act indicating that he gave up his claim.[36]

4.2 *Family Law and Gender Relations*

It has been argued that customary law cannot be separated from other normative frameworks, such as ethics, morals and good manners, since it is "concerned not only with what is permitted and prohibited, but also with the ethical world in which actions and relationships take place. It has a strong moral component that passes judgement on how people ought to behave. 'Customary law' is very much a moral system".[37] It has also been suggested that the study of legal pluralism, including customary law, should not be limited to conflict and conflict management.[38] I propose to look at specific issues concerning marriage and divorce in Chapter 5. Here, I shall consider the force of custom in other areas of family law, such as inheritance, where it has proved particularly persistent. By way of introduction, it is necessary to look at more general understandings of gender relations and locally endorsed ideas about morality.

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[33] Grenard 1898a: 145.
[34] Raquette 1909: 22.
[35] Jarring 1975: 18.
[36] Prov. 212. 64–8.
[37] Ambler 2001: 43.
[38] K. von Benda-Beckmann 2001: 29.

Most foreign commentators emphasized moral laxity among the Muslims, which they contrasted to their own Christian cultural expectations, thus reproducing European Orientalist discourse in Said's sense.[39] Some authors used other Islamic lands as their yardstick for comparison. A closer reading of the available texts points to the complexity of gender relations, which were mostly governed by customary law. In a departure from the approach of foreign observers, who usually considered the 'position of women' in local society, I prefer to look at conjugal rights and obligations, property relations, budgeting arrangements and assumptions about male and female participation in economic production.

The generic term for women in pre-modern society in itself implied denigration: the word *mäzlum* is of Arabic origin and meant both 'woman' and 'oppressed'. During fieldwork in the 1990s local cadres and my Chinese co-researcher saw in this term the best evidence of women's oppression in pre-socialist society. In this generalized interpretation, they disregarded the fact that the designation used to be commonly applied only to the wives of the lower strata. Social differentiation was reflected in a variety of terms applied to the wives and daughters of men who had a higher social standing on account of their access to religious knowledge, high office or other sources of social prestige: officials' wives were known as *ayim* ('my moon'), while their daughters had to be addressed as *xenim*. The wives of great *mollas* were known as *appaq; ağaça* was the honorific title of the spouses of hereditary officeholders in the eastern parts of the region; the title *quşnaç* was reserved for the wives of master craftsmen, schoolmasters and *mollas*.[40] This list is based on the indigenous report of Mijit Axun from Turfan, but ethnographic data suggest that social position was reflected in distinct terms of address in other areas as well.

Skrine described Turki women as energetic, sharper-tongued and quicker-witted than the men, whom he characterized as lazy, good-natured, easy-going and slow-witted, concluding that the term *mäzlum kişi* need not be taken too literally.[41] With this remark, Skrine points to the tension between the apparent patriarchal bias and the complexities of the actual position of women. Other authors attributed the devalued

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[39] Said 1978.

[40] Katanov 1936: 1250–1. Vámbéry translates the word *ejgetsche* as 'maiden' (1970: 338). In Russian Turkestan, *quşnaç* meant a female religious specialist. Basilov translates the term as 'female shaman' (1995: 275).

[41] Skrine 1926: 202.

social position of women entirely to the oppressive effects of religion: they remarked that, although the Kashgari woman was spoken of as the mistress (*xatun/xan*) of her house, "the law of Islam presses heavily upon her in many ways".[42] Inequality in gender relations and a patriarchal bias dominate specimens of indigenous oral traditions which discuss the ideal behaviour of women:

> *A good woman does not speak uselessly, does not go to places without a purpose, but pleases her husband with sweet words.*[43]
>
> *If in the house of a good woman there is no flour to eat for ten years, she does not say to her husband "get me some flour", she does not trouble him by saying "get me some money!"*[44]
>
> *A good woman does not tell her husband's secret in public. If she remains hungry, if she has no clothes to put on, she says "no matter that my husband is poor and has nothing, I do not need another husband."*[45]

Another proverb which likens the good woman's behaviour to that of a servant is explained so that it should not matter if a man scolded his wife a hundred times; she still should not pull faces or show anger.[46] A slightly more positive statement concerning the obedient wife and how to treat her was:

> *If your wife's behaviour is good, do not call her a woman, call her the husband's ornament.*[47]

Negative utterances also abound:

> *The bad woman is Satan's whip; she is a rope which ties your hands.*[48]
> *A woman is a burden, a dog is loyalty.*

The indigenous explanation was that when you deeply offended a woman, she went off to marry another man: she tortured you. But no matter how badly you beat your dog and chased it away, it would never leave your gate but always remain loyal to you.[49] Another version of this saying from the north was:

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[42] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 64.
[43] Pantusov 1909b: 97, 136, no. 363.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.: 98, 137, no. 370.
[46] Ibid.: 97, 136–7, no. 366.
[47] Ibid.: 97, 136 no. 361.
[48] Ibid.: 99, 139, no. 381 and another version of the same saying at no. 382.
[49] Ibid.: 69, 96.

The horse is not faithful, neither is a woman, the woman brings suffering, the dog loyalty.[50]

These formulaic expressions of patriarchal ideology, collected among the Taranchi in the north, show full agreement with oral tradition collected from the south about thirty years later.[51] Denigrating verses juxtapose women with other marginalized social groups and also question the sincerity of their religious devotion:

The dogs bark when they see a beggar.
The dervishes are pleased when they encounter a calamity.
A woman has nothing to do with God.
She is not able to be patient when she meets trouble.[52]

Women's ultimate responsibility for the moral integrity of the household is suggested by the following proverb:

The woman builds the house and the woman destroys it.[53]

Women were regarded as the backbone of the house and family, and as such they held the key to its prosperity, as well as its disintegration. This interpretation certainly runs counter to the lopsided images of a male-dominated society, as suggested by other pieces of oral tradition, and helps to integrate the apparent contradictions which emerge from various comments.

4.2.1 *The Moral Code of 'Honour and Shame'*

Both male and female behaviour were regulated by local concepts of morality. In line with the honour and shame concepts well known from the anthropological literature on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies, these expectations usually centred on women's behaviour and their spatial movements.[54] The local concept in which a number of related norms were encapsulated was the term *namähräm*, derived from Persian and Arabic, meaning 'a stranger, whom a woman in theory is allowed to marry.[55]

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[50] Radloff 1886: 2.
[51] Jarring 1951a: 100–6, Le Coq 1911: 64–5.
[52] Jarring 1985: 30.
[53] Kúnos 1966: 300.
[54] For a general discussion see Peristiany 1965.
[55] It is remarkable that the term *mäzlum* was often mentioned by foreigners, but the term *namähräm* never gained such currency. While it was frequently referred to by indigenous authors, foreign works rarely mentioned the concept.

A great many sayings and proverbs refer to female modesty. Some expressly use the term *namähräm*; others refer to more specific ideas encapsulated in this blanket concept. In the oral tradition collected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the concept was frequently mentioned and was not entirely devoid of humorous images:

> *The woman who looks at a stranger* [i.e., a *namähräm* man] *is a four legged female donkey.*
>
> *A woman who looks at strangers, at men other than her husband, and if she is pretty like the moon and the sun, is well-built and pleasing, she is a four legged female donkey.*
>
> *The woman who does not hide her face, and shows herself to namähräm [strangers], speaks to namähräm, is equal to a donkey.*[56]

The spatial movement and behaviour of women in public spaces were encapsulated in the concept of *namähräm*, but the values implied by it could be invoked without explicit mentioning of the term. One proverb also implied the normative expectation that women should display shame:

> *What does the woman without a sense of shame resemble to?*
> *She is similar to unsalted food.*[57]

Conformity to the rules of modesty and the display of shame were expected from all Muslim women, and modesty was sometimes conceptualized as a continuum rather than as a fixed category: Chinese prostitutes in Turfan were not restrained by the Islamic morality code and were therefore ready to bare their bodies to their clients, while Muslim prostitutes were never prepared to do so.[58] For some, modesty and shameful behaviour constituted opposing categories: British missionaries mentioned a sick woman who "asked to die rather than allow a male doctor to attend to her".[59]

Some observers were sensitive to social variation, even if their comments were frequently accompanied by value judgments. Covering one's hair was obligatory for all: only prostitutes belonging to the poorest social groups did not wear a headscarf.[60] For a woman to appear with uncovered hair in public was equated with immorality, lack of male

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[56] Pantusov 1909b: 96, 134.
[57] Le Coq 1911: 26, 27. See also Raxman u.a. 1996: 120, 179.
[58] Katanov 1976: 44–5.
[59] Cable, French and French 1934: 127.
[60] Katanov 1976: 46–7.

protection and a complete disregard for moral expectations and rules.[61] Veiling was unevenly observed. In the early twentieth century, women of the wealthiest classes were strictly veiled, but even they had the liberty to visit each other's houses, which they mostly did in the evening, accompanied by a maidservant.[62] These women had to be greeted by a man with a bow and with his hands crossed over his belly, "since even to touch a woman's hand in greeting was considered improper".[63] More freedom was attributed to lower-middle-class women, who could ride their own donkeys and do their shopping in the bazaar.[64] At the end of the nineteenth century, women in the bazaar of Qarghaliq were selling their goods unveiled, although they all wore a long white veil down their backs, which some of them brought round to cover their faces as foreigners went past them.[65] Women in Kashgar wore some kind of veil in public, but it was more often than not thrown back over the head. It was only pulled down when an important man appeared, such as the British consul general or a Chinese official.[66] Some people took veiling seriously: when Lansdell, a European traveller, wanted to photograph a Turki woman, she refused to remove her veil. Joseph, his local servant, was surprised that his master did not know that "a woman once unveiled dropped forth with an undefined number of degrees in the social scale" [67] Even men dressed as women conformed to such expectations. In Aqsu, at a public event with a carnival atmosphere, a Turki man was selling trifles while dressed as a beautiful woman. When the Finnish Mannerheim wanted to take a picture of him, he covered his face with his veil.[68]

The concept of *namähräm*—and, therefore, of the 'stranger'—seems to have been closely connected to the concept of community. The mosque community was a face-to-face society in which membership assumed familiarity. Members were aware of each other's social and economic standing, and most people had kinship ties with their neighbours;

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[61] In Russian Turkestan only prostitutes and women of questionable morality went about unveiled. The fact that country women there often did not wear a veil did not mean the complete absence of a headdress. They usually wore a headscarf (Harris 1996: 79).

[62] Dunmore 1993: 338.

[63] Forsyth 1875: 89, Jarring 1975: 19.

[64] Skrine 1926: 201, Etherton 1911: 126.

[65] Dunmore 1993: 275, 338.

[66] Skrine 1926: 202.

[67] Lansdell 1893 II.: 143.

[68] Mannerheim 1969: 161.

they may have been connected through the patriline, fictive kinship or through marriage. Due to spatial propinquity, some people developed kin-type relationships. My own ethnographic observations from the 1990s suggest that the rule of thumb in villages and small towns was that *namähräm* boundaries roughly coincided with the boundaries of the local mosque community, but judgments concerning appropriate and inappropriate behaviour were always subject to local interpretations of honour and shame. There was no universal interpretation of the 'stranger'; the definition was flexible, just as social boundaries within the mosque community were also mutable.

4.2.2 *Property and Inheritance*

The local patriarchal model divests women of their control over property, while Islamic law grants them half the amount of their brothers' entitlement. My informants in the 1990s subscribed to the local model, maintaining that women traditionally did not inherit real estate. However, some sources suggest more complicated patterns of actual property relations.

In the early twentieth century in Kashgar, inheritance relied on a predominantly Islamic legal vocabulary with some admixture of terms of Turco-Mongolian origins: an heir was called *waris*, and the person who left the inheritance was the *mawrus*. The inheritance was known as *miras*, *tärkä* or *mal äşya*. When it was divided up, the different portions were known as *oq*. Prevailing inheritance practices, according to which a man was entitled to inherit twice the amount a woman might get, were legitimized with the Koran. When a married couple had no children and the woman died, her husband received half her possessions. If the man died, his wife's entitlement was one fourth of his legacy; the rest went to their respective families and relatives. If they had children, the man's share was one fourth and the woman's one eighth. If a man had four wives, the four women collectively received one eighth of the inheritance after his death. Any debt left by the deceased had to be paid from the inheritance and the rest was divided among his heirs. When a will was left, it was binding in theory, except when it was judged to be unlawful. For example, it was considered sinful for a man to leave his possessions to one child and disinherit other children either during his lifetime or in his will. It was equally sinful to leave everything to one wife and dispossess the other. An unlawful will could be contested in court. If there were several prospective heirs, the case could be

taken to the Islamic court. But, the learned *molla* adds pointedly, only those wealthy enough to bribe the lawyers stood a chance of winning their case.[69]

When a man died in Yarkand, his immediate family shared out his inheritance, concluding with the words "we have accepted these rights".[70] To prevent later animosity, a written document (*höjjät xäti*) was drawn up and completed with the judge's seal, which rendered later lawsuits in the matter invalid.[71] If a married man died without children, his wife was entitled to receive half of the inheritance; the rest went to the dead man's relatives, which is different from the inheritance practices reported from Kashgar. If there was a child, the inheritance was divided into four parts: one part was given to the wife and three parts to the son. If he had a daughter as well as a son, two parts (*oq*) were given to the son and one part to the daughter. If the man who died had no living parents and his son had gone away, the son's part of the inheritance had to be kept for thirty years; if during this period no news came from him, his inheritance could be shared out among the other heirs.[72] The above descriptions discuss inheritance practices within an Islamic legal framework and say nothing about possible discrepancies between theory and practice, of the kind I found in my ethnographic data. Using the force of customary law as justification, my interview partners insisted that, in pre-socialist society, daughters typically did not inherit real estate, and exceptions were made only if a family had no sons. Although there can be no doubt about sons' inheritance rights, it is not clear when exactly they could claim them. In southern Xinjiang,

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[69] Prov. 207. I.5a–b.

[70] *här birimiz oşbu haqlarğa razi vä qani bolduq.*

[71] Prov. 464.16V.

[72] Prov. 464. 16R. On the proportion of sons' and daughters' entitlements see also Prov. 464. 41R. Modern Uyghur ethnographers allow for both types of provisions. They confirm that both sexes had entitlements but in practice girls typically received half of their brother's share. A woman received one-quarter or one-eighth of her deceased father's inheritance. If there was no son in the family, the inheritance was shared out equally among the girls. If there were no children at all, then it was divided equally between the wife and the dead man's relatives. If the dead man had no living blood relatives, but a stepbrother with children, then these were to inherit. If there was absolutely no relative to inherit, then the dead person's possessions were considered community property, which could be used for charitable purposes. If the dead person had made specific inheritance arrangements for part of his possessions before his death, this property could not be subject to normal inheritance rules following his death (Häbibulla 1993: 235–6). The value of this description is diminished by the lack of historicity.

generations could stay together in extended households, a pattern more common among rich landholding families, but the rule of thumb was the relatively early separation of sons following marriage.[73] In contrast, one modern Uyghur ethnographer states that it was shameful for a son to ask for his inheritance while his parents were alive.[74]

Divorce also necessitated the redistribution of wealth. At the end of the nineteenth century, the wife of Muhammad Beg of the district of Keriya petitioned and was granted a divorce after she decided that her husband was too old for her. Property relations were complicated: although the land belonged to her, the buildings on it, including the family house, had been erected by her husband. The woman insisted on keeping her land; the husband refused to give up his house. In the end, the *bäg* saw no other solution but to pull down his buildings and transport them elsewhere.[75] Unfortunately, we have no direct indication whether the conflict was settled by an Islamic court or by self-appointed representatives of customary law.

We have somewhat more information about Turki women's access to and control of property in cases of mixed marriages, where marital conflict was more than just a gender issue since ethno-religious differences also added to the complexities. These cases at least partially explain how a Turki woman could obtain property. If she married a Chinese or Hindu, her husband had no legal rights over her. If she ran away, the *mollas* did nothing for him. Upon his death she was usually able to take possession of some or all of his property.[76]

4.2.3 *The Division of Labour*

The gendered division of labour was entirely regulated by unwritten rules and norms. Indigenous authors carefully differentiated between the male and female domains. These somewhat idealized accounts echo sociological assumptions concerning the dichotomy between the private and the public spheres, the inside and the outside. Land cultivation,

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[73] Grenard 1898a: 128.

[74] Raxman u.a. 1996: 109.

[75] Grenard 1898a: 167.

[76] Skrine 1971: 203. However, the Turki wife of a Hindu trader was likely to lose her children to the husband upon divorce. In case he died, her children could be and often were claimed by his relatives. The Hindu husband's (and his family's) rights over the children of such a mixed union were apparently not contested by the *mollas* (Ibid.: 203).

handicrafts and business were all ascribed to men. Tasks ascribed to women—processing raw products, preparing food, making clothes and performing domestic services—ostensibly tied them to the privacy of their households or courtyards.

In 1935, Maqsut Hajji, a thirty-five-year-old farmer from the southern oasis of Guma, gave the following account of the typical day of men and women:

> Some peasants in Guma rise from their beds at the time of azan and go to the mosque and perform the namaz and if the mosque where they perform the namaz is near the tombs of their parents they go to the tombs of their parents and pray and then return home. This praying of their [means] that they pray for the forgiveness of the sins of their parents. Also, if somebody goes to the heads [tombs] of his parents and prays [for a] long time that man will within [a] short time become rich. His parents also, as a result of the prayers, will, if they have sins, be saved from punishment. Until that man has come back from the mosque, his wife will also have risen early, perform the namaz and prepare tea for breakfast and if there is soft bread in the house she will spread the table-cloth and bring [put] it [the bread] on the table-cloth and arrange everything. When that man comes back he will sit down with his wife and children and take breakfast. Then, having given grass to the horses and beasts of burden and given them water, he will go to the fields or he will water the maize or, if it is time for wheat water the wheat. Having worked until noon and then returned [home] and eaten [his] noon-food, he will sleep for a while. Again, when it has become cool, he will bring grass... to his sheep, cattle and beasts of burden or he will pull up maize and give them or he will cut branches from the trees and give them and once more give the beasts of burden water and let the horses and sheep bathe in the water. He then enters the garden and having eaten grapes together with his family and having shaken down peaches and eaten them... and having gathered some small plums, prunes, grapes, peaches and fruits like this and brought them along he will arrange them on plates in his house... Finally, he offered hospitality to guests.[77]

The rules governing the division of labour were similar in Turfan, as is indicated by Bosuq Niyaz who described normative expectations about thirty years before Maqsut Hajji. Here, too, men were expected to pray five times a day. The man supplied the household with wood for heating and cooking. He grew cereal, irrigated the fields and harvested. But women were also present in the fields: they tied the cereal in bundles which were then loaded on carts by men. Some jobs were 'gender

[77] Jarring 1951b: 85–7.

neutral': both men and women could do the threshing. Women were responsible for making the fire in the oven, for cooking, for making the beds as well as for sewing. Child care was a female responsibility and so was milking. Income-generating activities, such as the construction of houses, boot- and felt-making, carpentry and tailoring, were ascribed to men, who were also expected to work as barbers, smiths and coppersmiths. Sometimes it was not the nature of the work but its purpose which constituted the normative boundary; for example, bread intended for the market was baked by the man, but bread for home consumption was invariably prepared by the woman. In Qumul, some men worked as weavers, making materials from linen and wool, although the same activity when intended for domestic consumption was a female job. But actors' pragmatism appears to have penetrated even this normatively inclined account, since it is stated that when a wife was sick, her tasks could be performed by her husband. Customary norms were sometimes evoked in the form of prohibitions: fetching water from the irrigation canals or from the well was firmly defined as a female job, because it was considered shameful for a man to carry water.[78]

The division of labour was also informed by principles other than gender. An indigenous author from Kashgar remarks that the wives of the rich employed the services of professional dressmakers: only commoners' wives spent their time sewing, sweeping the house and washing laundry. Skilled women from the lower social strata often produced for the market, made skullcaps, embroidered head scarves and sewed overcoats and dresses, while others spun yarn for sale. Many country women actively participated in agricultural tasks, including weeding, cleaning maize, winnowing, caring for draft animals and harvesting. They also took part in sowing, which even during my fieldwork in the mid-1990s was normatively denied or played down.[79] This was in fact not so unusual. Maqsut Hajji described how men and women worked side by side at the time of sowing maize or wheat, putting the seeds in the furrow prepared by the men.[80] A similar observation was made by George Sheriff in 1928: "A woman follows behind the plough, pouring

[78] Katanov 1936: 1,216–7.

[79] Prov. 207. II.15. Water and arable land, the two vital resources for subsistence were considered prone to pollution by women whose bodies so frequently underwent periods of impurity, which rendered them both vulnerable to evil influences and simultaneously highly dangerous for others.

[80] Jarring 1951b: 91.

seeds into the furrow. She keeps the seeds in a gourd. Then a few men and women just walk over the sown area and kick the sandy earth over the seed—a very easy business."[81] Some women performed other jobs, which aimed at ensuring a good crop: as noted above, it was standard practice to use the soil of ruined walls as fertilizer; for this task baskets and spades were the necessary equipment.[82] It is likely that the ideal of women withdrawing from agricultural production could only be adhered to by a limited number of women, those belonging to well-to-do families. Their behaviour was held up by lower-ranking groups as a norm to aspire to, although they were seldom in the position to realize it. One woman, commenting on changing social norms following socialist collectivization, confirmed this in 1956 by saying "There used to be women who did not do any work. Today there are no such women" [83]

Participation in agricultural production was also determined by age, household size, the number of children and the stage which had been reached by the household in the domestic cycle. Women among the richest strata were the most house-bound. Their large estates were cultivated by a number of day labourers and serfs belonging to the household. The women of landless peasants employed as sharecroppers and day labourers often worked for the landlord as domestic servants. Female members of middle-range households were likely to be found in the fields alongside their husbands, often participating as full agricultural producers or just helping out at peak periods, as the family's changing needs dictated.

Women's domestic responsibilities gave them control over food, which, in subsistence-oriented economies, meant an important source of power, at least among the affluent who produced more than what their household consumed.[84] Local interpretations support this assumption. The control of food by women for magical purposes is a recurring theme in oral tradition.[85] Fear of the evil eye, mostly associated with women, was widespread. It was held that people afflicted with the evil eye had the capacity of 'eating' other people, and it was considered

[81] Sheriff 1928.
[82] Ambolt 1939: 107.
[83] Tenishev 1984: 137.
[84] This is also supported by specimens of oral tradition. In the story of the forty men and forty women, the forty sons first appreciate the value of women when they eat some good food prepared for them by their mothers (Jarring 1946: 35).
[85] Le Coq 1928: 91.

particularly important, when taking a wife, to ascertain that she was not afflicted.[86] The idea that women's magical powers were connected to their control over food may be best illustrated with the case of the twenty-four-year-old Yusup, who once received a 'love message' from the daughter of a rich peasant. The symbolic message was a small bag containing pieces of food, each one of them conveying a different meaning. Upon the suggestion that he could consume the food, Yusup objected vehemently, saying that, since it was quite possible that the woman had read magical formulae over these objects, his eating them could potentially render him dependent upon her.[87] Since women were generally the controllers of food within the household, it is possible that, as this piece of tradition indicates, the distribution of alms in the form of food was also primarily a female preserve. It is no coincidence that in ritualized gift-giving the handing over of edibles was an exclusively female preserve.

4.2.4 *Control over the Budget*

Women's active contribution to subsistence-oriented production did not always entail their direct access to and control over family income. The stated norm today in southern Xinjiang names the male household head as the primary controller of the budget, which corresponds to patriarchal ideology. However, some sources indicate that in the past women could and did challenge male authority in money matters. One indigenous description from the 1930s described a domestic arrangement in which full control over household finances was assumed to lie with the wife:

> If her husband has sold something belonging to the house and brings the money along, his wife will spend it for a necessary purpose without asking her husband. Her husband will not ask, 'What have you done with the money?' Sometimes his wife [will say], 'I will invite some guests. Please give me ten or twenty sar!'... Her husband will say, 'Ten or twenty sar is not sufficient. As you have the keys in your own hand, why do you ask me! Take yourself from the box and spend as much as you like to spend!' That wife [says], 'Why, [it is true that] even if I did not ask, it would do. But [I would rather] spend it with your permission.'[88]

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[86] Jarring 1979: 9.

[87] Le Coq 1928: 89–91. This representation of a woman as the initiator of a love affair also contradicts patriarchal ideals.

[88] Jarring 1951b: 89.

The above no doubt presents an affluent household where the box containing the common funds was controlled by the wife. Not only did she hold the keys to the box, but she had the freedom to take money from it whenever she liked. She was also free to invite guests, and her husband even tried to persuade her to take more money than she had originally intended. While lavishly entertaining her female friends surely enhanced the husband's and the whole family's prestige, the scene described here by Maqsut Hajji was somewhat idealized. This is exactly what makes the source interesting, since the normative granting of economic control to the wife runs counter to patriarchal values. A late nineteenth-century lawsuit reveals a less peaceful situation:

> A sum of thirty-three tangas was lost from the house of Sufurgi Bai from his bed, and afterwards Sufurgi Bai said to his wife Ai Khan: 'If you have put away this money, thirty three tangas, produce it, [and] I will add twenty-four tangas, and will make a cloak after your heart's desire and give [it to you].'[89]

That the incident took place in an affluent household may be discerned from the honorific title of the household head and from the fact that he kept substantial sums of cash in his bed. He must have had some grounds for suspecting his wife of stealing the missing sum of money, perhaps because she had been caught before helping herself to some cash without asking him, or because this was common practice in families where financial decisions were exclusively made by men.[90] Although the husband was the plaintiff, all he expected from his wife was admission of the theft. He declared himself prepared not only to let her have this sum but also to augment it to enable her to buy herself a new cloak. Rather than threatening with divorce or other forms of retaliation, the husband favoured a conciliatory settlement of the conflict. That domestic budgeting and conjugal obligations were intimately connected is illustrated by another court case, also quoted by Shaw:

> Malaq, the son of Qabil Bai, made a legal agreement [as follows]: that on account of contentions [with] my wife Aqlim Bibi, I, who now agree, having been unreasonable, henceforward have undertaken not to strike or beat [her] without reason; to give [her] the necessary cost of living

[89] Shaw 1878: 86.

[90] Stealing from the husband was one of the many strategies to which married women, for example American wives in the late nineteenth century, resorted to counteract their relative deprivation and poverty (Zelizer 1989: 358, 1997).

> at the [proper] time, and have undertaken not to take any strange man into the house where my said wife is and whenever it shall be known and proved that I have taken a strange man into my house into the presence of my wife, or have beaten her without just cause, my said wife shall be free, if she chooses, to give me the writer of this agreement, one bill of separating herself.[91]

In this agreement, another husband of an affluent household promised to fulfil his obligation to pay his wife a regular cash allowance to run the household. This family did not live up to the ideal as presented by Maqsut Hajji, since the man was controlling the purse strings, but some women clearly did not refrain from exercising their legal rights to put pressure on their husbands to pay their allowance regularly.

4.3 *The Law of Hospitality*

Customary rules backed up by Islamic law ensured the maintenance and reproduction of the household by prescribing normative behaviour and modes of conflict resolution. But relatively few households were self-sufficient. Families did not live in isolation, and there was a need to extend and maintain community beyond the domestic unit. Some of the most important mechanisms involved in this process remained entirely outside the legal framework and were governed by customary rules. Significant among these mechanisms were two related forms of redistribution, namely charity and hospitality.

Cross-culturally, both charity and hospitality are perceived as positive values, often identified with whole groups of people. In her study of hospitality in early modern England, Felicity Heal has shown the common roots of hospitality and charity: the latter was formerly conceptualized as hospitality to the needy. As a result of economic and demographic changes, public relief for the poor gained prominence over personal charity. Although we lack the archival sources for Xinjiang, the embeddedness of acts of charity in life-cycle and religious rituals is conspicuous and resembles the earlier situation in England.[92]

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[91] Shaw 1878: 85.

[92] Heal 1990: 393. The discussion of social support for the poor in Chapter 3 suggests that in Xinjiang towards the late nineteenth and early twentieth century efforts were made to render charitable donations a public responsibility, but patterns of life-cycle and religious rituals suggest that households continued to retain their significance in this respect throughout the period discussed.

Essentially understood as a communal act, hospitality is an expression of human sociability. In some societies a higher value is placed on it than in others, and it may become a source of communal pride. As an important component of group identity, it is often incorporated into the communal 'base', or 'commons' This is certainly true for contemporary Xinjiang, where it is one of the first characteristics mentioned in Uyghur self-stereotyping. Urban and rural Uyghur, intellectuals and peasants alike, all tend to agree on this valorisation: hospitality represents an intrinsic value, which modern Uyghurs employ in the construction of ethnic identity. Hospitality (*mehmandarjiliq, mehmandostluq*) is typically conceived of as an altruistic act, but when placed and discussed within its social context, it is possible to recognize underlying assumptions of reciprocity.

In pre-socialist society, ritual action and the sharing of one's resources were inseparably linked. Altruistic sharing was part and parcel of daily practice; one could say that it was in the act of hospitality that the everyday was ritualized. Hospitality was governed by a number of binding rules. Julian Pitt-Rivers, in his attempt to outline a general law of hospitality, suggested that the entry of an outsider into a group constituted a challenge and had the character of both an "ordeal as a test of worthiness as well as an initiation rite".[93] In Eastern Turkestan, hospitality served several ends. It confirmed existing community on the domestic or neighbourhood/mosque community level, but because of its charitable aspects, hospitality also provided an opportunity to extend community. Major religious and life-cycle events provided occasions for sharing food on a larger scale; affluent households offered practically unrestricted hospitality to members of the mosque community, and sometimes even beyond. As we have seen in Chapter 3, attendance at such rituals by 'strangers', i.e., beggars and other outsiders, constituted an indispensable part of such events. In some ceremonies, they were assigned certain ritual tasks, and as recipients of charity, alms and hospitality in the forms of food and services, their presence ensured that the household sponsoring the event could act out deeds of meritorious altruism. Hospitality as an expression of generosity was a general expectation from all those who could afford it.

But there was a difference between the selective hospitality of the everyday (acted out when neighbours visited each other), which primarily aimed at maintaining and reinforcing community, and the extended

[93] Pitt-Rivers 1977: 96.

hospitality offered only at major rituals, which were also occasions for temporarily extending community. This difference was aptly illustrated by a piece of oral tradition about that beloved figure of Central Asian oral tradition Näsräddin Äpändi, who visited a strange town at the time of the Festival of Sacrifice. In each house he entered, he was entertained lavishly. After returning home, he told his wife that he found a town where good people offered visitors unlimited hospitality. The couple decided to move there permanently, but since the holiday was already over, they were turned out from every house and did not even get a cup of tea. Disappointed, they returned to their hometown.[94]

Just who was considered a stranger and how social relations with such persons were regulated was a complex issue, and the definitions did not stop at religious and ethnic boundaries. While in some cases religious, ethnic or ethno-religious boundaries played a role, there were many other instances in which boundaries of exclusion and inclusion were drawn elsewhere. Linguistic and cultural similarities were not always enough for individuals to be accepted as 'someone who belongs to us'. Strangers were typically referred to as 'guests' (*musapir*), which in itself carries connotations of both respect and social obligations. The term was also ambiguous, since it could also mean 'outsider', 'vagabond' or 'rover', and it is no wonder that guests were often regarded with some suspicion.[95]

Ritual hospitality was bound to the religious calendar and the domestic cycle, but there were additional, semi-institutionalized forms of hospitality which served the purpose of entertainment and sociability but also tested individuals' adherence to the unwritten laws, and therefore, their community membership.[96] In the previous chapter we have considered the role of rituals as occasions for charitable redistribution; here we shall consider the operation of the law of hospitality from the perspective of sharing.

4.3.1 *Rules of Commensality*

The notion of hospitality was intimately linked to the high value placed on food and drink. In pre-1949 society, where access to resources was

[94] Jarring 1948: 55–6.
[95] Hartmann 1902: 115, Skrine [1926] 1971: 74.
[96] That hospitality plays a similarly significant role in modern postsocialist Central Asia is shown by Doi 2002: 7–8.

concentrated in the hands of a few, basic nourishment was of primary concern to all people: for the poor, it was essential for survival; for the well-to-do and rich, access to a surplus meant the ability to redistribute food and, through this, to forge and perpetuate patron-client relationships.

Serving prestigious food at one's table was a means to display and flaunt one's wealth and thereby to reinforce one's social status. Commensality was an important means of maintaining, confirming and extending community, and there were numerous rules governing it. It was also inextricably linked to morality: in his exposition of hospitality, Nur Luke repeatedly made use of the concepts of *ayip* (shameful) and *namus* (honour), thus placing hospitality within the wider framework of moral rights and obligations.

In the late nineteenth century, foreigners visiting the country noted both the obligatory nature of hospitality and the social ranking implicit in its principles. The place (at the outer gate, in the courtyard or at the threshold) and the elaborateness of the ceremony with which a visitor was received varied according to his rank. After the mutual health enquiries, the tablecloth was spread. Tea, at least, was brought, and food was usually served as well. To omit either of these elements was a mark of disrespect. The food served varied according to the rank of the visitor and could be anything from as little as two or three trays of dried fruit and biscuits to as many as 300 dishes and an elegant and varied dinner.[97]

As part of daily routine, hospitality was usually restrictive in that typically only close kin, neighbours and invited visitors benefited from it. In the early 1930s, offering cooked food to one's immediate neighbour was considered an obligation, along with watching over the neighbour's house during his absence, refraining from criticising him, even if he committed a sin, and visiting in case of sickness. When a person became ill and was not visited for three days by his neighbour, he was entitled to feel upset and offended. On such occasions, some food—bread, at least—had to be taken as a gesture of good will.[98] The sharing of food within the framework of neighbourly relations had connotations of mutuality and social equality.

During ritualized commensality, guests had to be seated facing the direction of one of the four points of the compass. Equality was

[97] Forsyth 1875: 89.
[98] Prov. 464. 15V, 36R.

symbolically emphasized during communal eating by the use of shared bowls, from which food was taken with fingers and spoons. While in the late nineteenth century no chopsticks were used by the indigenous population, about thirty years later, chopsticks were commonly used for certain foods. By this time an elaborate system of politeness rules was in force, stipulating which dishes could be consumed from a shared bowl, how many people were allowed to share a bowl and which dishes had to be served individually. Eating was conceived of as a religious act: a meal had to start with reciting the *patihä* (Fatiha). Then the guests were provided with water and a towel for hand-washing before the tablecloth was spread out in front of them. Respect was also expressed in the careful use of language: when offering food to guests, the third person plural was used, since the second person plural was reserved for ordinary usage and the second person singular was considered impolite.[99] Both before and after the meal, plain black tea was served, and in the late nineteenth century even guests had to share the single communal teacup. The first cup of tea offered to a visitor was known as *sin çay* and carried special significance, because it signified the first act of extending community. The guest served moved from his sitting position and uttered the formula *bärkällä* (wishing abundance and prosperity) before drinking his tea. If many guests were present, each time a person was offered his first cup of tea he rose upon accepting it, and all other guests facing the same direction as him had to rise and sit back only after he had done so. Typically, pilaff or other cooked food was served, but as a minimal expression of hospitality, at least some bread had to be offered and ceremonially broken by the host. Offering hospitality in this way could take place during the month of Ramadan at the time of the breaking of the fast (*iftar*). Such occasions differed from ordinary hospitality in two respects: the guests were offered some water to drink and some bread to take away. After the meal was over, those present prayed and took their leave. The host was expected to accompany the guests to the outer entrance.[100]

Rules of everyday hospitality were so binding that, in the early twentieth century in Khotan, it was held that if the same person entered another person's house as many as ten times a day, the tablecloth had to be spread out for him on each occasion. If a visitor left a person's house without having been offered hospitality, it brought shame to the

[99] For commonly used politeness formulae see also Prov. 464. 24, 25, Prov. 464. 25V.
[100] Prov. 207. I.39; Prov. 212. 70, Grenard 1898a: 107, 142–3.

household. People from the highest social strata had a special guest room in their house. But to build a guest room outside one's own courtyard counted as bad manners, and was even disgraceful, perhaps because distancing the guest from one's own house ran against the principles of sharing. In other words, community assumed territorial propinquity. Well-to-do families were expected to offer generous hospitality to visitors. Those who owned stables had to be prepared to meet the needs of a visitor who arrived on horseback; at the time of harvest, rich peasants would put aside a certain amount of their maize and barley for the guests' horses.[101] When a person happened to enter another's house when a meal was cooking or at the time the food was dished out, he was inevitably invited to join in the meal.[102]

Although the rhetoric of hospitality implicit in the above statements suggests an ethic of equality, Molla Abdul Qadir implies that hospitality was socially 'graded': more deferential treatment was due to visitors of high social standing and wealth than was due to poor and less prestigious guests. A highly respected visitor was offered the place of honour (*tör*)—the place facing the entrance—while persons of lower prestige were seated farther away. A man of rank was offered a pitcher and a basin in which to wash his hands; a poor man was given a ewer. The respected visitor was offered all kinds of food, and upon leaving he was accompanied by his host for seven steps from the house, while the less respected guest was treated to a more modest meal and seen to the entrance.[103] The links between social standing and hospitality were explicitly stated in oral tradition, as evidenced in the following Taranchi proverb:

It is fitting to go to a wedding in a good caftan, and to the feast on horseback.

The native explanation is that when visiting during religious festivals, men who arrive on horseback amuse themselves more than those who arrive on foot. The guests wearing good clothes were invariably seated at the place of honour and entertained with respect, while guests wearing old clothes were disregarded.[104] Displaying rank and wealth at communal rituals was just as important in the south, as the following saying, recorded in Yarkand, confirms:

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[101] Prov. 212. 49–60.
[102] Prov. 464. 25R.
[103] Prov. 464. 35R.
[104] Pantusov 1909b: 71–2, 100.

Whoever wears a new gown, is [treated] *like a prince,*
Whoever wears an old gown is [treated] *like a thief jumping off a wall.*[105]

Hospitality was simultaneously conceptualized in terms of altruism and reciprocity. Just as hosts were expected to display at least minimal hospitality by offering tea and bread, guests were obliged to accept it. Refusal of tea and food by a visitor meant rejecting commensality and, by extension, community: it was interpreted as an offence to the honour of the household.[106] In modern Xinjiang, it is still customary that, when guests are departing and they thank their hosts, the hosts express gratitude to their visitors. This is explained by one author thus: "All that had been placed on the table-cloths was the property of the guests and all that was not eaten was a gift from them to the host. So the host had to thank them for it".[107] This implies that the concept of hospitality encapsulated a ritual inversion of everyday property relations: the host as owner of the food and drink offered transferred ownership of the goods spread out on the tablecloth to his guest. The guest consumed as much of the food as he liked and, in his temporary role as 'owner' of the food, exercised generosity by leaving, and thus donating, some to his host. Temporary role inversion thus emphasized the ritual nature of the communal meal. In late-nineteenth-century Khotan, once a guest had shared the bread of another person, he was not regarded as a stranger anymore but became incorporated into the household of his host. After the initial act of hospitality, in theory he was always welcome in the household; at each visit, he would be offered accommodation and food there, because he had shared the bread of the host. He also owed the same expressions of politeness and hospitality when his host visited him in his home.[108] Following a banquet, departing guests received a bowl of food and some bread to take back home. In the 1930s, perhaps as a result of the expanding money economy, food donations for guests of the more respected category were replaced by sums of money wrapped up in a piece of paper.[109]

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[105] *Kim çapanni yeñi kiysä, padişahniñ oğli şu, Kim çapanni köhnä kiysä, tamni tüşkän oğri şu* (Prov. 464. 25V).

[106] Prov. 212. 50–4.

[107] Jarring 1986a: 19.

[108] Grenard 1898a: 143.

[109] Jarring 1986a: 22. It is likely that during times of food and cash shortage such donations ceased; in the 1990s most guests received food donations.

Hospitality created and perpetuated prestige for the host; it was an important means to indicate and enhance social status. The principle of equality could rarely be perfectly maintained. Perhaps it was to counter this problem that the contributions expected from guests were clarified prior to some rituals. In the late nineteenth century, invited guests were told in advance what financial contribution they were expected to make. The poor could also participate and, if unable to contribute financially, they could cover their expenses in kind by carrying the dishes and crockery.[110] The practice whereby guests contribute to the expenses of hospitality at life-cycle rituals has persisted in southern Xinjiang to the present day. In such instances, in practising hospitality, the notion of altruism is sacrificed for the sake of reciprocity. This is also illustrated by the following example from pre-socialist Xinjiang. It was customary that, when a group of men wished to sample new melons, they took some sheep fat, meat and rice to a melon field, where they were offered melons by the proprietor. After eating the melons, they returned to his house, where a meal was cooked for them from the ingredients they had brought. After they had consumed the food, each visitor received a melon to take home, and each paid the melon planter one *sär*.[111]

Even if the visit was based on the principle of reciprocity between host and guest, the conflict potential was there. Several pieces of oral tradition are based on violation of the law of hospitality, as is illustrated by a 'true incident' about a religious teacher who, accompanied by his students, went to the countryside to sample melons. Complying with the rules of hospitality, the host conducted his guests to his field, but he gave them only bad melons. The religious teacher became offended and, while the owner of the melon field went home to fetch food for his guests, he wrote a verse about the greed and avarice of his host and left it on the melon field. The following day, other *mollas* visiting the field found the verse; they laughed and admonished the melon planter. Gossip went around, and when the melon planter visited the town, he was teased by children and the disciples of the offended *molla*. He was subjected to public ridicule, and the teasing only stopped when he took a sheep and a platter of bread and publicly apologized to the *molla*.[112]

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[110] Grenard 1898a: 141.
[111] Jarring 1951b: 41–4
[112] Raquette 1909: 6–7.

This case could never have been taken to court, since insufficient hospitality was not a legal offence in either state or in Islamic law, but it certainly violated customary law. In the popular imagination, violating the normative expectations of generosity could also be punished by supernatural forces, as happened to a *molla* who refused to give his ripe melons to a beggar. The beggar subsequently turned out to be none other than the Prophet Xizir.[113] As in Mediterranean societies and elsewhere in the Islamic world, in Eastern Turkestan, too, the stranger was very often a beggar; both represent categories of people to whom hospitality is due. That a supernatural being—God in Greek society or the Prophet Xizir in Eastern Turkestan—could take the place of stranger or beggar "ensured the enforcement of the moral duty of hospitality".[114]

Some types of hospitality were explicitly built on social difference. When a well-to-do person had a house built, he organized a big feast after construction had finished for the labourers and bricklayers, who also received presents of clothes. The occasion served to ensure the good will of the builders and, therefore, good luck for the new house. In what appears to have been a second celebration, the owner of the new house invited his friends and neighbours, who brought items of furniture, such as felt rugs, cups and various other objects for the house, as well as consumables such as tea and meat, to congratulate the owner and bless the occasion.[115] The staggered, two-stage nature of the celebration demonstrates that notions of hospitality differentiated between confirming existing ties of community based on mutuality and the temporary extension of community to social inferiors.

4.3.2 Mäjlis *and* Mäşräp

In the southern oases, one form of communal get-together (*mäjlis*) was preceded by the snow game, which marked the falling of the first snow. The decision to offer food and hospitality to kin and friends was made as a result of a challenge. The challenger and the challenged had to be social equals, in theory both capable of offering the same level of hospitality. The game started with a person visiting his friend when the first snow fell and hiding a verse explaining the necessity of organizing

[113] Ibid.: 10–2.
[114] Pitt-Rivers 1977: 99–100.
[115] Prov. 207. II.20.

a winter banquet in his house, and challenging him to catch him. If the person thus challenged found this note quickly enough to be able to catch the author of the note before he reached his own home, then the challenger 'lost'. As punishment, he was made up and dressed as a woman and paraded through the streets, and he was obliged to organize a banquet for his friends and acquaintances. But if the challenger could reach his home without being caught, the recipient of the poem had to organize the feast within a week. If the invitations did not arrive by the expected time, he was warned, and further delays could bring more calamities upon him, such as his door being blocked by a bier.[116]

In Qumul, the challenge was launched in a similar fashion. The challenger would hide, under the felt mats of his host, a piece of paper which had the following poem written on it:

God of Mercy has sent snow upon this place,
He has demonstrated us the abundance of his mercy.
My love, we have also brought you snow with this letter,
We have started this game with the joy of our hearts.
We have brandy in the teapot,
We have prepared sweets on the tray,
We have prepared and shared out nine geese and thirty sheep.
To make music we have a qalun and a sitar, bärbat and rabap,
If a singer is needed, we also have one.
Here it has snowed; it has turned the world white,
In the house our inside has also become hot, we have become crazy.
If you can catch the person who brought this letter,
You can blacken his eyebrows with osma and send him back made up.
If the person, who brought this letter, arrives back home without make-up,
Then this man [the challenged person] *has to give the sweets and must prepare* [the party] *quickly.*[117]

Before leaving, the challenger revealed the real purpose of his visit by saying, "May your house be spared from snow!" then running away. Having said, "This thief has brought the snow upon us!" the landlord set out to chase him. In the event described by Bosuq Niyaz in Qumul, the challenger was caught, and he then had to organize the party. He had to offer a dish cooked with hemp seeds, another with barley, one with wheat and one with beans. The number of participants could be as high as sixty, and although during the communal meal some spatial

[116] Jarring 1975: 14–5.
[117] Katanov 1976: 28–9.

segregation of the sexes was observed, the ensuing dance provided an opportunity for young men and women to mix.[118]

At the time of Chinese rule, the *mäjlis* was a widespread form of entertainment among the Taranchi youth in Ili. Here, too, the communal consumption of bread and tea was followed by mixed-sex games which served as occasions for courting.[119] This is confirmed by the text of a song sung on such occasions; it was a poetic duel between men and women, the two sides teasing each other about marriage.[120]

In late nineteenth-century Turfan, only three occasions in the annual ritual cycle were considered to be a *mäjlis*: New Year's Day, in the first month, and the Barat and Särä rituals. Such occasions also constituted ritualized communal games between the sexes.[121] In Qumul, the arrival of spring was celebrated with the *kök* (green) *mäjlis*. Preparations had to be done in the winter, when the inside of a pumpkin was filled with ashes and covered with soil. A handful of wheat seeds were planted, and the pumpkin was placed in a warm place by the oven or over the heated platform upon which the family slept. Seven days later, the seeds started sprouting, and its owner invited guests. The entertainment which followed and the accompanying songs were reminiscent of the *mäjlis* organized as part of the snow game. This communal feast also had to be preceded by a challenge: the challenger had to steal the plant from someone else's house, meet the challenge if caught and if not impose the obligation of hosting the *mäjlis* on the owner of the plant.[122] Not all *mäjlis* were season-bound. In his description of the snow game *mäjlis*, Bosuq Niyaz, evidently digressing from the original context, added that, in the summer, the recitation of poems, music and dancing continued until dawn and, in the winter, until the cock crowed.[123]

Another communal institution was the *mäşräp*, which was limited to male participation. In Yarkand, the host of a *mäşräp* invited 'rich people', a statement which suggests that the host invited his social equals or his social superiors. The guests were offered tea and various cooked dishes

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[118] Ibid.: 24–9.
[119] Pantusov 1907a: 6–7.
[120] Tenishev 1984: 15.
[121] Katanov 1936: 1,212–5.
[122] Ibid.: 28–31. *Maysa bayrimi* is also described briefly as being similar to the *kök mäşribi*. In the spring each family contributes some wheat from which a communal meal is prepared, known as *köjä eşi*. It is prayed upon and consumed communally to ensure a good harvest (Raxman u.a. 1996: 140).
[123] Katanov 1976: 28–9.

and entertained by musicians, who played the epics of *Göroğli*, *Şahsanam*, *Yusup Ahmad*, *Hurliqa* and others.[124]

Among the Taranchi in Ili, an invitation to *mäşräp* was based on status and wealth. Popular Islamic texts by Rabğūzī, Jāmī and Firdawsī, and the works of mystic authors, especially Yasawī, his disciple Sulaymān Baqirgan and Sūfī Allāyār, as well as stories about the various exploits of Muslim heroes descended from the Prophet ʿAlī, were recited.[125] The recital was typically followed by dancing to musical accompaniment, which contributed to the Sufi character of such meetings, since similar dances were commonly performed by members of some brotherhoods. This was followed by conversation about family and community matters, and finally food was produced. After the consumption of a communal meal, the participants dispersed.[126]

The male *mäşräp* as a social institution had multiple functions, the most important being the teaching to young men of the rules of communal behaviour. Rules of politeness and the principle of respecting their elders were communicated, often through games which stressed generational hierarchy. Communal affairs were discussed and praying and the recital of religious texts lent a religious legitimation to the event. The rotation of hosts emphasized equality and mutuality. In this respect, *mäşräp* also doubled as a means of perpetuating community by ensuring the institutionalized transmission of shared knowledge perceived as part of the commons. Another feature was the imitation of a traditional court. Although it is not clear if Islamic courts or simply the local courts of prestigious members of a community were intended here, the parallel with courts was made abundantly clear: some of those present acted as judge and executor, they tried suspects and meted out punishment to those participants who violated the basic laws of *mäşräp* by being late for the meeting or not obeying the orders of the master of ceremony to stand, sit, or change position. Novices were given special tasks such as bringing an item of food or imitating an animal. Failing to conform led to punishment. There are reports of such entertainments which also included the acting out of real-life

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[124] Prov. 464. 35R–V. For the importance of Sufi poetry in the *muqam*, see Light 1998. The texts have preserved their popularity in Central Asia; in modern Uzbekistan they form part of the repertoire of women who recite religious texts on ritual occasions (Kleinmichel 2000).

[125] Ibid.

[126] Pantusov 1907b: 10–2; 5–6.

situations. For example, the enactment of the Chinese Tribunal made fun of the Chinese but also criticised the interpreter, who abused his role as a go-between and translated things incorrectly in order to get money from both parties. Another such performance focused on the melon thief. The three characters—the thief, the proprietor and the judge—were played by a single ventriloquist.[127] The modern *mäşräp* also includes the enactment of mock court cases, crime, judgment and punishment.[128] The *mäşräp* represented the small-scale re-enactment of rules of sociality: the lesson that community mattered was transmitted to the younger generation using the institution of hospitality, which itself constituted a central tenet of communal living.

The term *mäşräp* was also used for other types of communal gatherings. In 1956, one person from Aqsu explained that he did not normally take part in healing rituals, which he called *piri mäşräp*.[129] Among the Dolan in the Aqsu region, the wedding party following the wedding ritual was also known as *mäşräp*.[130] When *mäşräp* was used synonymously with *bäzmä*, it could also be applied to the socialization of professional groups. The Swedish missionary-surgeon Gustaf Raquette defined the *mäşräp* as a 'banquet guild' organized on a neighbourhood basis, the members of which invited each other by turns. This suggests a pattern of regular, rotating hospitality among professionals. This uncertain definition of the term, which ranged from male socializing to religious assemblies including Sufi and healing rituals, suggests that all these forms of sociability shared a number of features and that the religious function did not necessarily dominate. The term was so versatile because it indicated communal occasions of all sorts which remained outside the realm of 'mainstream' life-cycle and religious celebrations.

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[127] Grenard 1898a: 140–1.

[128] Roberts 1998. For an ethnographic description of the *mäşräp* in the more restricted sense, as traditional male entertainment and an institution where custom and social knowledge could be passed down between generations of men, see the article on the *ottuz oğul mäşribi*, characteristic of Ili (Raxman u.a. 1996: 141–3).

[129] Tenishev 1984: 54–5.

[130] Ibid.: 33–4.

4.4 *Summary*

Managing social relations involved both formal institutions and informal devices. Conflict management took place within the framework of legal pluralism: in addition to Chinese magistrates and Islamic courts, local law was enforced using informal mechanisms. Even on the institutionalized level, there was a certain fuzziness of boundaries: *bägs* acted as judges when holding court and their judgment was likely to be as much informed by Islamic law as by customary law. Local people tried to manipulate the possibilities offered by legal pluralism, partly because judges were often corrupt.

Although customary law was not codified, it often had considerable force, superseding codified normative systems. Dispute was often settled informally when individuals and community elders resorted to the authority of customary law. In such cases, conflict settlement remained a community affair. The conflict potential in intra-household relationships was always considerable, and in this area the influence of customary law was significant. Intra-family conflicts were, to a large extent, embedded in gender relations informed and shaped by notions of honour and shame. Property relations, the division of labour, inheritance and budgeting were domains in which Islamic law was sometimes challenged by customary law and tensions between the dominant patriarchal ideology and underlying counter-currents became visible.

The law of hospitality seems to be one of the few domains exclusively controlled by local law, and the rules regulating it were no less binding. The binding force of uncodified customary law was demonstrated by the snow game, which put local people's generosity and hospitality to the test: those who failed to comply faced sanctions. This law was closely associated with religious and life-cycle rituals and other forms of socialization. The diverse patterns reveal some persistent features, such as commensality, entertainment and sanctions in case of disobedience. *Mäşräp*, sometimes used interchangeably with the terms *bäzmä* and *mäjlis*, was the institutionalized enactment of community itself; through the transmission of rules between generations young people were taught how to be social, and how to submit to the rules of community. Through imitating courts, the *mäşräp* made an even more explicit connection between hospitality and law. Community entertainments simultaneously represented the contrasting principles of reciprocity and altruism: hospitality was identified as an act of generosity, but direct reciprocity

could take the form of payments or other contributions. On such occasions, gender, generational and class divisions could be transcended. Boundaries which, in other ritual contexts (death ceremonies, for example) were strictly observed, were forgotten for the sake of achieving, even if only temporarily, a little bit more community. The force of custom also governed other rituals which marked the transition from one social status to another and were invariably accompanied by hospitality. These life-cycle rituals and the social institutions in which they were embedded form the main subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LIFE CYCLE

As in other predominantly agricultural societies, in Eastern Turkestan, too, everyday life was punctuated by events of the life cycle. These rituals were both important vehicles for making and maintaining community and occasions for reciprocal exchange.[1] They marked rites of passage from one stage of human existence to the next with the setting provided by the immediate kin group. Life-cycle rituals also involved individuals with whom kinship ties were loose or even non-existent. The neighbourhood, which typically centred on the mosque, often overlapped with kinship ties but could also cut across and extend beyond these; it was based on the principle of propinquity rather than that of blood.[2] Territorial concentration was one major organizing principle, and kinship provided an overlapping but not identical structure. It will be argued that the logic of reciprocity permeated most of these rituals. Through them, existing social ties were perpetuated and reinforced, but they were also occasions to probe the boundaries of community by temporarily extending it. In contrast to religious rituals, the timing of which was prescribed by the Islamic calendar, life-cycle rituals depended on the important events of human life: birth, marriage, death and initiation rituals. All joyful events were called *toy*, which distinguished them from death rituals.

5.1 *Entering the Human Community*

Humans entering the world became part of a household and a network of kinsmen, who from the very beginning were involved with the various stages of the reception and socialization of the newborn. During my fieldwork in the 1990s, one elderly woman compared a newborn baby

[1] In his doctoral dissertation on the 'Folklore and Identity of the modern Uyghur in northern Xinjiang' Jay Dautcher pointed out the tension between the competitive nature of gift exchange and the prevalence of reciprocal principles (1999: 127, 151–62).

[2] Cf. the notion of 'closeness' in Morocco as analysed by Eickelman 2002: 96.

to the growing wheat, which is always surrounded by similar plants, thereby emphasizing the inherently social and communal nature of humans: they are surrounded by relatives from the moment they are born. Ideas about kinship are closely connected to ideas about human procreation, which is where we start our discussion.

Folk ideas concerning human procreation have been the object of anthropological enquiry for quite some time; in the early 1990s, they were given new impetus by the work of Carol Delaney.[3] During fieldwork in a Central Anatolian village, she found that villagers attributed the primary, active role in the creation of children to men as 'seed-givers', while women were relegated to a secondary, passive role as 'fields'. Delaney then extended this hierarchically ordered monogenetic view of human procreation to interpret social organization generally. She claimed that this monogenetic view of procreation was linked to monotheistic religions, and she presented one large, tidy system of belief: "Paternity is embedded in an entire matrix of beliefs about the world and the way it is constructed... From the most intimate to ultimate contexts, from physical to metaphysical realities, an entire world is constructed and systematically interrelated" [4]

In Eastern Turkestan there is no elaborate metaphor comparable to that of 'seed and soil' in Anatolia. Although human procreation was typically mentioned within the framework of Islamic ontology, even mythical representations of the creation of humankind, relating God's creation of the Prophet Adam from clay and his union with Eve, were not entirely free of bodily imagery.[5] This was also the case with a story, dictated by a farmer and *molla* in 1935, which makes no use of metaphor and focuses on a miracle:

> The holy Adam—peace be upon him—and mother Eve were separated from each other for seven years. One day the holy Adam—peace be upon him—and mother Eve met each other on a glacier... They had coition [sic!] at this place. The seminal fluid flowed out on the glacier. The seminal fluid froze. From this the jade stone has its origin. That is the miracle of the holy Adam—peace be upon him. That women feel cold on their rump and men on their knees has remained from this time.[6]

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[3] Delaney 1986, 1991.
[4] Delaney 1986: 510.
[5] Katanov 1936: 1,206–7; Raxman et al.: 1996: 172; Häbibulla 1993: 389.
[6] Jarring 1951a: 64.

A similar biological emphasis characterizes an indigenous essay from the first years of the twentieth century which illustrates the power of God with the miracle of human procreation: humans "pass from the loins of the father to the womb of the mother. When at a certain period of time they receive a soul (*jan*), their mother's menstruation stops and [the baby] feeds on the mother's blood".[7] During fieldwork in the mid-1990s I found that contemporary informants had no explicit knowledge of a procreation metaphor comparable to the 'seed and soil' metaphor which Delaney found in Turkey. But language and some beliefs surrounding procreation point to an implicit familiarity with the 'seed and soil' beliefs. The generic word for 'relative' is *uruq-tuqqan*, the first element meaning 'seed', and the second a past participle derived from the verb *tuğ*: to give birth to, to lay eggs, to bear fruit. The term *uruq-tuqqan* refers to both matrilineal and patrilineal relatives. Another term, *qandaş*, is also used to denote a very close relationship between people related through blood. The term *qerindaş* (derived from *qarin*, meaning belly or stomach) is usually used in conjunction with *qandaş* in the form *qan-qerindaş*, meaning full siblings.[8] In the popular imagination, milk (*süt*) was equated with the female substance, while blood (*qan*) was identified as the male substance. The quotation above from Muhammad Ali Damolla indicates that during pregnancy the baby feeds on its mother's blood, and milk, the female substance, becomes prominent only after birth. But milk and the womb remain intimately connected: milk siblings (*emildaş*), though otherwise unrelated, are considered to be 'of the same womb' (*qerindaş*); in accordance with Koranic edicts, they are prohibited from marrying each other. *Qandaş* refers to all those sharing a father while *qerindaş* are children sharing a mother. Children of the same father are sometimes assumed to share the same blood group.

These distinctions are rooted in traditional assumptions, and they also make sense within the given social context. Over the last hundred years there has been a high incidence of divorce and remarriage among the sedentary populations of Xinjiang, which will be discussed in some detail later in this chapter. Among the Turkis, for a woman to leave her children with their biological father and to remarry was not considered shameful but accepted practice. 'Social ownership' of the child was

[7] Prov. 207. I.22.
[8] Ibid.: 627.

customarily assigned to the father's side, a practice still observed today. It was also the father's side which exercised the right to choose a name for the newborn. Distinguishing between siblings who shared a father but not a mother and those who shared a mother but not a father was important in determining rights over children and property.

Although the male and female principles were thus differentiated, no hierarchical ranking was made between patrilineal and matrilineal kin; instead, shared parenthood was emphasized. This is also implicit in the current kinship terminology which makes no distinction between the maternal and paternal uncles or maternal and paternal aunts. Thus, indigenous folk theory seems to indicate a binary, symmetrical model of procreation, i.e., that male and female contributions were considered of equal significance in the creation of human life. Utterances to this effect included, for example, statements to the effect that a child may look like his mother but usually inherits the father's disposition (*mjäz*). Most agree that the sex of the unborn child depended upon God's will, although several of my informants claimed that the sex of the child depended on the degree of affection between the parents at the time of conception: if the woman is more passionate, she will have a daughter; if her husband is more passionate, a son will be conceived. The local evaluation of barrenness points in the same direction. Barrenness is rarely blamed on the woman; more often it is acknowledged that either party can be at fault. A divorcee is not stigmatized; even if her previous marriage was childless, this is no impediment to her subsequent remarriage. The most common explanation for a couple's infertility is the partners' incompatibility. Some beliefs surrounding menstruation and childbearing attribute a positive outcome to the workings of the female body, such as the birth of a beautiful child, while negative outcomes may be blamed on male action. Both men and women can harm their babies through neglecting prescribed ritual purification. Both sexes are accountable for their conscious actions, but not because of some assumed 'natural' defect in their bodies.[9]

The ideology of male domination obscures more balanced undercurrents, which did not privilege either sex in the creation of human life. The enduring perseverance of a basically balanced view is supported by Qing accounts dating from the second half of the eighteenth

[9] This situation is very similar to what Maurice Bloch found among the Zafimaniry in Madagascar (Bloch 1998: 27–9).

century which noted that, among the Turkis, a man's children by various wives were considered of equal rank (apart from birth-order seniority), and a woman's children by different husbands were regarded as consanguineous.[10]

5.1.1 *Birth*

The location of delivery was governed by customary norms. It was widely held that young mothers were best looked after in their natal homes. While as a rule marriage was virilocal, customary law dictated that the first two children of a woman could be born in her mother's house, while subsequent births took place in the husband's home.[11]

In the first instance the girl's mother went to ask for her daughter approximately one month before the baby was due. Armed with a ceremonial tablecloth filled with bread and cooked food, she arrived at her son-in-law's home. The ceremony was known as 'asking for the girl' (*qiz soraş*), since the aim of the visit was to ask the son-in-law and his parents for permission to take the daughter home for the period of birth and the ensuing forty days.[12] The ceremony entailed commensality and gift-giving in exchange for the young mother. The ritual meal included tea, bread and specially prepared food, consumed together by representatives of the two sides.

Everything was cleaned in preparation; the pregnant woman washed and dressed in nice clothes. In various corners of the house, dried *adrasman*[13] and dried apple pieces were scattered. Cakes were fried in oil, and in the presence of the midwife and some other women, these were offered to visitors together with some sweetmeat and bread. One of the pregnant woman's dresses was presented to an orphan or a poor person.[14] Visiting the ancestors' graves, taking offerings of food

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[10] Millward 1998: 195.

[11] This practice seems to have persisted in rural areas, but it is also commonly observed by urban intellectuals. A university lecturer told me that although she gave birth to her baby in hospital, upon leaving the hospital she first went back to her mother's home, from where she was fetched by her husband forty days after the birth. Rural women express their preference for giving birth in their own natal home, saying that their own mothers are the best ones to take care of their daughters. Ideally, they would prefer to return home for each subsequent birth, but their husbands may not give their consent after the second occasion.

[12] Cf. Raxman 1996: 179.

[13] *Peganum hormole.*

[14] Häbibulla 1993: 290–1.

and praying there, organizing a healing ritual, visiting seven mills and circling the seven ducts which supplied them with water were steps that helped ensure easy delivery and a healthy child.[15]

It was very important to observe various prohibitions and precautions in the house where the delivery took place. Although pregnancy and birth were regarded as women's affairs, the prescriptions and prohibitions demanded cooperation from kin and neighbours, regardless of gender. During delivery, no one was supposed to leave the house unless some urgent business came up, and then the person departing had to leave some article of dress behind to prevent misfortune. In Kashgar, women of the neighbourhood came to help, and efforts were made to keep the birth a secret.[16] Only a few people were informed, and fathers monitored who approached and touched the child first. This was important because the child's nature and destiny could be affected by this encounter. For this reason members of the Swedish mission in Kashgar found it difficult to help women during their confinement: they were often called only when things had gone very wrong and it was too late to save the mother.[17]

An indigenous author from the early twentieth century builds his account of birth on religious premises but describes it as a communal event rooted in local practice. Through God's grace a child becomes manifest in a woman's womb. After ten lunar months, the woman is ready to give birth. She feels uncomfortable because of the increasing labour pains. At this point, the midwife heats up some bran in a pot and rubs it onto the woman's abdomen. A rope is fixed to the wooden ceiling, and the midwife pushes her knees against the waist of the woman sitting in labour and starts squeezing it. After the baby has fallen on the ground it is washed in warm water and its umbilical cord is cut. Then it is put in swaddling clothes and placed on the mother's breast.[18] Considering that delivery was a women's affair, Molla Abul Wahid was well informed about the details, which suggests that the separation of male and female worlds in practice was not so complete after all.[19]

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[15] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 315; Macartney 1931: 125–6.

[16] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 315.

[17] Macartney 1931: 125.

[18] Prov. 207. II.33. These arrangements with the rope fixed to the ceiling resemble the arrangements made for the healing ceremony. See Chapter 6 below.

[19] Modern folklorists point to continuities in these practices. They claim that throughout confinement women typically remain in a sitting position with the midwife sitting behind her and supporting her by the chest. When the baby's head appears, the midwife

The figure of the midwife is the subject of some uncertainty. During the 1870s visitors to Ya'qub Beg's court reported the absence of midwives in the country; all the necessary services were performed by the woman's mother or a female neighbour.[20] In Turfan in the late nineteenth century, the woman who cut the umbilical cord of a newborn baby became his or her 'umbilical mother' (*kindik anisi*). Forty days later she received a set of clothes for her services, and the child would address this woman as 'my umbilical mother' throughout his or her life and frequently enquired after her health.[21] In southern Xinjiang, in well-to-do families, several midwives helped during delivery. Cutting the umbilical cord was entrusted to a close female matrilateral relative or any other woman with a good disposition (*xuy*) and an impeccable moral reputation (*äxläq*), because her moral qualities were supposedly transferred to the baby.[22] In Kashgar, it was the midwife's job to cut the cord.[23]

Practices were not uniform, and there was a great deal of regional and even individual variation. Women who had given birth several times were often considered to be specialists in helping during delivery, but some were better suited to the job than others. The sources suggest a degree of specialization, at least in the southern oases. Only more affluent families could resort to the help of village midwives, while poorer women relied on the skills of close female relatives. Any woman could take upon herself the role of assisting another woman in labour. Her participation in delivery entailed both immediate and long-term exchange. This long-term reciprocity created solidarity ties between child and woman and, by extension, between the child's close kin and the woman. If she was a relative, existing kinship ties were reinforced; if she was not, kinship was extended to her. Thus, the midwife or 'umbilical mother' was a fictive kinswoman rather than a professional midwife in the Western sense. The important role ascribed to the midwife undermines the patriarchal model put forward by Delaney, which attributes a more significant role to men than women in human procreation and in influencing the qualities of the child.[24]

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goes to the front, receives the baby into her arms, cuts the umbilical cord, washes the baby and puts it into swaddling clothes (Häbibulla 1993: 249–50).

[20] Forsyth 1875: 86.

[21] Katanov 1936: 1,240–1.

[22] Prov. 212. 2–3.

[23] Prov. 207. II. 12:1.

[24] Delaney 1991. The special role ascribed to the woman who cuts the umbilical cord

5.1.2 *Child Care and Social Integration*

The integration of the child into human society was an ongoing, gradual process rather than a single event. After the child had been washed and dressed, it was symbolically fed tiny amounts of solid food. This could be done by the midwife and was known as "making [the baby] taste [human food]" (*eğizlanduruş*).[25] Ideally, this was a mixture of seven specified foods, which included items such as walnuts, sugar and bread.[26] This first consumption of solids stood for the baby's symbolic acceptance into the social world.

The rich usually employed a wet nurse to suckle the child, but breast feeding was the norm among ordinary people. My ethnographic materials suggest a patriarchal bias concerning the duration of breast feeding: rural women told me that baby boys should be breast-fed longer than girls; the optimum for the former was two years, for the latter, one year. Feeding a boy for an extended period ensured that he would grow up healthy and strong, but feeding a girl for longer could 'make her stupid'.

Mother and baby were regarded as both polluting and vulnerable to pollution and evil influences, and many elements of the rituals surrounding the newborn served as measures against these dangers. They were expected to remain in seclusion for forty days. Among the wealthy, this was more rigorously observed. During this period, women were not supposed to perform heavy work and to refrain from washing their body and hair. For most women, remaining in seclusion for forty days did not mean remaining in bed and being waited upon. Many were expected to get up and to resume their household chores. There must have been a great deal of variation in the extent to which seclusion and pollution prohibitions were observed. This variation should not be explained

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is convincingly explained by Van Gennep, who shows that a new baby is treated with the same defensive attitude that a group assumes towards a stranger. The baby has to be separated from its previous environment, which in this case is his mother. The major rite of separation is the cutting of the umbilical cord, and often the baby is put in the care of another woman for a few days following birth (Van Gennep 2000: 50).

[25] Schwarz 1992: 739; Häbibulla 1993: 250. For a description of similar practices in northern Xinjiang in the 1990s, see Dautcher 1999: 70–1. Dautcher's interview partners do not seem to know the generic term; their explanations for feeding tiny amounts of single substances such as honey or walnut to the newborn connected the practice to sympathetic magic. See also Forsyth 1875: 86–7.

[26] Jarring 1975: 23.

simply in terms of an urban-rural divide, neither should it be seen as a simple contrast between rich and poor, although undoubtedly well-to-do women were more likely to approximate prescribed ideals. Other factors such as the demands of the agricultural season, the mother's social status, and the developmental cycle of the household and the availability of others to undertake housework all played a part.

5.1.3 *Celebrations and Name-Giving*

Of the major life-cycle rituals in Islamic societies, birth is often given the least attention, and only wealthy Turkis marked the occasion. Foreign observers noted that the birth of a boy was celebrated more elaborately than the birth of a girl.[27] Upon the birth of a son in Khotan, visitors congratulated the father, saying, "May it be blessed" (*mubaräk bolsun*) twice, but only once if a girl was born.[28] This implies difference, but also indicates that daughters were not entirely unwelcome. Numerous circumstances determined the family's reaction to the sex of the child, such as the gender balance among existing children in the family and economic circumstances. Among the middle and lower social strata, girls were sometimes even preferred, "because there is always the chance of a girl bringing a wealthy husband into the family, whereas a boy does nothing for his parents after the age of fifteen or sixteen, when he marries and sets up house for himself".[29] This statement would have referred to the elder sons, but not to the youngest, who inherited the parental house but was also expected to care for his aging parents.

The celebration was sometimes called a *näzir*, which was the generic term for a ritual communal meal. It was understood as a selfless act, an offering or sacrifice with no returns expected. Such meals comprised one of the most persistent features of community rituals all over the region, combining hospitality and charity:

> On these occasions the host keeps open house for his friends and crowds of people enjoy his hospitality. Meanwhile the poor of the town congregate at his gate, waiting for the anticipated distribution of food. Each one who receives it is expected to call down the blessing of Allah on his benefactor. At Turfan there would often be hundreds of people gathered at such a *nazrä*, and every day a stream of men and women could be seen

[27] Forsyth 1875: 86; Grenard 1898a: 130.
[28] Prov. 212. 7–8.
[29] Skrine [1926] 1971: 194.

> coming away from some rich man's door, each carrying a large cake of bread with a slice of meat laid on it.[30]

In the south, a *näzir* was organized three days after a birth. For a baby boy two sheep or goats were slaughtered; for a girl, only one. As a neighbourly obligation, female relatives and neighbours visited mother and baby in the days following birth. The seclusion of forty days only applied to strangers and men (with the sole exception of the baby's father), although the definition of 'stranger' was subject to flexible interpretations. Women arrived bearing gifts such as a calf, a sheep, a goat, a kid, or at least a duck or a hen, depending on the economic position of the parties involved. Before the ritual sacrifice the animals had to be circled around the head of mother and baby (in case of larger animals this was done symbolically). This 'turned sacrifice' (*örämä qurbani*) was then slaughtered, cooked and communally consumed. Those unable to bring such a gift took eleven, seventeen or twenty pieces of flat round wheat bread which also had to be circled around the baby's head. Some were offered to the visitors, and the rest was consumed by members of the household sheltering mother and baby. The meat was then cooked and distributed among members of the neighbourhood, but the new mother was prohibited from consuming any of it; this was regarded as part of her soul's (*jan*) living sacrifice of gratitude (*şukrana qurban*).[31] Other presents included clothes. All gifts and visits were reciprocated with hospitality. Such visits made during the 'liminal period'[32] of forty days were the privilege as well as the social obligation of women.[33]

The ethnographic materials suggest that such visits simultaneously fulfilled several functions. Visitors kept the young mother company, since she was forbidden to leave the house. If it was her first child, she needed practical advice and help with taking care of the baby. If this was her second or third child, she might need help with her other children. On such occasions young, childless female visitors could also pick up information about birth, baby care and pollution prohibitions.

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[30] Cable & French 1942: 190.

[31] Prov. 212. 7–8.

[32] The term has been borrowed from Turner (1995).

[33] Prov. 212. 4–6. Today in villages near Kashgar, cooked food, bread and clothes are still presented to mother and baby. I was present when a young mother who had given birth to her first baby in her mother's house was visited by her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law. It was their second visit, and they brought a large quantity of dumplings in a tablecloth.

Another important stage of the customary rituals was name-giving (*at qoyuş*), although this was not always accompanied by large-scale celebrations. In the first half of the twentieth century in the south, the baby was given a ritual bath (*ğusl*) when only seven days old. Wrapped in pretty clothes, the baby was put into the hands of the *imam*, who turned his face towards the west, which in Eastern Turkestan marked the direction of Mecca. In this position he recited the *äzan*[34] into the baby's right ear, then the *täkbir*[35] into the baby's left ear, followed by his name.[36] The formula uttered by a *molla* from Khotan was as follows: "Angels in the sky and people on earth, we have given you the name of [so and so] *axun/xan*; [so and so] *axun/xan*; may you be blessed!"[37] Around 1930 the name-giving formula uttered after the *äzan* by a Yarkandi molla was similar: "The angels of heaven have determined that his name should be Qasim Axun; may Qasim Axun's name be blessed, may he be a good man!"[38] Wealthy families in Kashgar invited mosque functionaries and community elders as well as their neighbours, to celebrate.[39] In Turfan the ceremonial name-giving was concluded by participants' good wishes to the baby, such as "May you be good-natured!" and "May you be well-spoken!"[40] The ceremony symbolized the integration and acceptance of the child into the wider community of Islam.[41] In wealthy households the name-giving was also accompanied by a communal feast which involved animal sacrifice, commensality,

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[34] A prayer chanted by the *mäzin* to announce the time for prayer (Schwarz 1992: 1042).

[35] The pronouncing of the formula 'God is great' (Schwarz 1992: 1,041).

[36] Prov. 212. 10–1; Prov. 207. II.33.

[37] *asmandaki färiştälär yärdäki adamlar ätiñiz filan axun ya xan qoyduq, sizgä filan axun ya xan mubarak bolsun!* (Grenard 1898a: 130).

[38] Prov. 464. 24V.

[39] Skrine 1971: 194.

[40] Katanov 1936: 1,240–1.

[41] For a description of contemporary name-giving practices in northern Xinjiang, see Dautcher 1999: 73–92. Villagers under socialism maintain that custom grants the patriline the right to choose the baby's name, especially if he is a boy. Only first names were used and to distinguish people living in the same neighbourhood either a nickname or the person's patronymic was added. For both men and women the father's first name constitutes a person's family name, and women also retain this surname throughout life. Unlike in Soviet Central Asia, Xinjiang Muslims have never been obliged by state law to adopt a permanent surname, so each generation has a new surname. As far as women are concerned, this practice can be seen as another of the traditional countertrends undermining patriarchal values: it symbolically reinforces a woman's ties with her natal household.

music and dancing. At the end of the celebration, the new baby's name was announced to the guests.[42]

Different regions had different naming preferences at different periods. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the most common male names in Yarkand were Toxta Axun, Niyaz Axun, Musa Axun, Sadir Bay, Tursam Bay and Saber Bay, while among women Hajji Xan, Fatima Xan, Laili Xan, Jamsta Xan, Himyan Xan and Odi Xan were widespread.[43] The logic of name-giving followed a number of patterns. Some names were assumed to bring good luck to their bearers, ensuring the survival of babies and young children, who were considered particularly vulnerable to evil influences. Names such as Bäxtiyar (lucky, happy, fortunate), Barat (excellence, distinction, perfection, virtue) and Dölät (wealth) were supposed to grant both longevity and protection from evil spirits. A similar effect was attributed to names with religious connotations, such as Islam, Imam, Räsul and Sopi. As elsewhere in the Islamic world, here, too, the death of a firstborn child could prompt parents to give names to their children which meant 'Stay' or 'Strong' (e.g., Toxta, Toxtasun, Tursun or Mähkäm).[44] 'Steel', 'Iron', and 'Axe' were supposed to transfer the characteristics of the object to their bearers. 'Lion', 'Tiger' and 'Garlic' were protective names that would deter death from approaching the child.[45] A further name-giving strategy aimed at protecting parents by not giving the newborn either of the parents' names. It was feared that the evil intended for the child might befall the adult bearing the same name.[46] Protective names seem to have been the preserve of male children rather than girls, who typically received names implying beauty, kindness and other positive 'feminine' characteristics. Male children were generally regarded as more vulnerable; this may also have had to do with higher mortality rates among boys.

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[42] Prov. 212. 12. In their generalized accounts Uyghur ethnographers also confirm that whenever possible, name-giving had to be marked communally (Häbibulla 1993: 294–6).

[43] Dunmore 1993: 329.

[44] Grenard 1898a: 130.

[45] Jarring 1979: 15; Macartney 1931: 127; Jarring 1985: 47.

[46] Grenard 1898a: 130.

5.1.4 *The Cradle Ceremony*

Forty days after birth, the mother moved back to resume her daily chores in her husband's household. At this time the baby had to be ceremonially transferred into the cradle, although in practice this may have happened as early as a few days following birth.[47] While in Kucha this ritual was called the 'cradle ceremony' (*böşük toyi*), rural people in the Kashgar region called this *kizhik toyi*, or 'the ceremony of the fortieth [day]'[48] The cradle ceremony completed the baby's integration into the household and, through it, into society, a process which was symbolically started by the act of feeding it solid food and continued with the ritual bath and the name-giving. The baby's hair was cut, and she or he was again bathed. Among the ceremonies marking the lifting of the seclusion, several foreign observers mention the ritual which involved the shaving of the baby's first hair.[49] The cut hair was buried with the bones of the sacrificial sheep, taking care that they remained unbroken.[50] The washing and hair-cutting symbolized the ritual removal of pollution. They simultaneously represented control over nature, as well as control over the person by the community into which the baby was now incorporated.

Pieces of jewellery were added to the baby's bathwater, called the 'water of the fortieth' (*qirqi suyi*), to ensure that the child would grow up rich. Small children aged between four and six were invited. An old woman dipped her feet in the bowl of water and stretched them out, and the baby was laid on them. Standing around the baby, each child poured a spoonful of water over the baby's head, saying its name and wishing the baby some positive quality, such as strength, good temper, and intelligence. The children's good wishes and participation in the ritual were reciprocated with ceremonial food: before the well-wishing ceremony or upon leaving the house, each child received a small piece of bread specially baked for the occasion with a piece of sweet paste made out of flour and sheep fat on top. The baby was not put back into its swaddling clothes but was dressed in a shirt and a small hat. The ceremonial acquisition of human clothes, especially the

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[47] Raxman 1996: 61, 179.
[48] Prov. 207. I. 12:1. Häbibulla 1993: 297–230.
[49] Forsyth 1875: 87.
[50] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 315.

tiny embroidered skullcap, symbolized yet another step in the child's socialization: the baby's acceptance into the immediate group of the region or locality.[51]

The ceremony was essentially a women's celebration, as is testified by Mijit Axun's account from Turfan (late nineteenth century). Here the midwife prepared a special noodle soup (*boğursaq*), which was shared by seven respected women. After the communal consumption of the meal, six of the women sat by the two sides of the cradle, the seventh woman at its head, and the midwife at the foot of the cradle. The baby's mother stood up and prayed to God to keep her child alive. A bowl filled with soup was put above the child, and each of the six women took a handful and scattered bits of noodles over and underneath the cradle. Each female guest was rewarded with a suit of clothes for her participation.[52]

The cradle ceremony was an occasion for ceremonial gift-giving by the female relatives of the baby's father to the mother and her close female relatives. The baby was presented with items of bedding and clothes, while the mother received clothes and jewellery. These gifts served as recognition that the female side had taken good care of mother and baby. As explained above, mother and baby remained in her natal home for the prescribed forty days. It was only after the seclusion period was over that the husband and his relatives, commonly referred to as the 'man's side' (*är täräp*), visited the woman's natal house and formally asked for mother and baby. They arrived bearing gifts of food wrapped in a tablecloth (*dastixan*). Only after the communal consumption of food by the male and female sides could the man return to his house with wife and baby.[53] The cradle ceremony was thus conflated with the ritual transfer of mother and baby back to the husband's house. The encounter in her natal home parallels the ritual towards the end of her pregnancy (any time after the seventh month), when her mother

[51] Prov. 207. I.12, Prov. 207. II.33. The symbolism of Uyghur headgear is many-folded. In pre-revolutionary times its material, pattern and colour combination could indicate regional belonging, affiliation to sedentary rather than pastoralist communities, social class, the gender and even the age of the wearer. Although such meanings have undergone changes, the wearing of a *doppa* today continues to mark a person as a Muslim. Since Uyghur *doppas* are usually recognizably different from the skullcaps worn by Chinese Muslims and other groups, in contemporary society they also mark their wearers as members of an ethnic group.

[52] Katanov 1936: 1,240–3.

[53] Häbibulla 1993: 292.

and female relatives come to her husband's home and ask to take her back for the delivery. There is also symmetry in the gift-giving: when the pregnant woman was taken away from her home, her relatives brought food and other gifts to the male side in symbolic payment for the permission to take the woman. At the end of the forty days the male side had to 'woo' the female side with gifts to allow them to take the woman and her baby back. An alternative interpretation might be that the two ceremonies, one marking the beginning of a life-cycle ritual, and the other its end, should be considered as one ritual in which reciprocal exchange between the male and female side was delayed and took place in two stages.[54]

Apparent regional variation in the naming and timing of the ritual should not blind us to the underlying similarities in the basic structure: all rituals had a communal character and included the elements of visiting, gift-giving, ritual sacrifice and communal meal. Feeding the baby human food symbolized its acceptance into the social world, which was reinforced by the 'civilizing acts' of ritual washing and hair-cutting. The naming using Islamic formulae meant receiving the baby into the community of Muslims; the dressing of the baby into a shirt and *doppa* were signs of integrating the baby into the narrower locality (oasis, village, and neighbourhood); and with the cradle ceremony, the baby was formally welcomed into the community of small children, or its peer group. Taken in their entirety, the birth ceremonies imply the ritual acknowledgement of a person's multiple community ties, which accompany him or her throughout life.

5.1.5 *Adoption*

Biological and social parenthood did not always coincide. Babies were given in adoption under the following circumstances: when a person had a child but could not look after it; when a woman who had already given birth to many children had yet another baby; when the baby's father was absent or unknown. In such cases a silent appeal was made to the mosque community; the child was taken to the mosque and left

[54] Indigenous ethnographers report that as a rule only the firstborn child had a cradle ceremony, taking place in the woman's natal home. Such a view was also put forward by my interview partners, who suggested that, depending on the family's financial position, subsequent children could also have a cradle ceremony but this was not necessarily the case. Yet others claimed that the cradle ceremony was habitually organized for baby girls rather than boys (see Häbibulla 1993: 297–230).

at its entrance. From there it could be taken home by anyone who wanted to have a child, usually a childless family. Such a child was known as a 'mosque child' (*mäsjit balisi*), although in small, face-to-face communities it was generally clear whose biological child the baby was.[55] Lady Macartney, wife of the British representative in Kashgar, gives an account of an incident which ended somewhat unexpectedly. One of her childless servants found a three-month-old baby in front of the mosque. He and his wife gladly adopted the child, thinking that their prayers had finally been answered. However, a few days later the baby's mother turned up and reclaimed her child. It turned out that "in a fit of temper with her husband, she had left his baby in the Mosque to spite him, and would not tell him where it was. Her temper soon evaporated on thinking of her offspring and she ran back to get it, to find it had vanished, and she had to spend some miserable and anxious days hunting for it."[56] The case did not follow the normal course of events, since the baby was reclaimed by its mother. Informants' recollections of the pre-socialist period confirm that adoption in this period was common among close kin; sometimes rich, childless couples adopted a poor family's child; in the latter case the adoptive parents were expected to 'pay' the biological parents some compensation.[57]

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Swedish mission station in southern Xinjiang provided another opportunity for placing unwanted babies: Jacob Stephen, a native of Yarkand, was left in the mission's care by his mother "because she was not able to provide for him".[58] We have seen in Chapter 3 that informal adoption could straddle ethno-religious boundaries. My ethnographic materials suggest however, that the typical pattern was adoption among close relatives, especially between siblings, to counter childlessness; the adoption of grandchildren was also widespread.

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[55] Prov. 464. 36V.

[56] Macartney 1931: 128–9.

[57] Informal adoption today among close kin is not uncommon, and it has been given new forms by family planning policies.

[58] Hultvall 1981: 24.

5.2 *Circumcision*

Following birth the next major ritual in a boy's life was his circumcision, which constituted the necessary precondition for him to enter the legal phase of maturity. Circumcision also symbolized the reinforcement of his incorporation into the Muslim community, which began by the whispering of the *täkbir* into his right ear at the time of name-giving; but it brought no major change in the individual's social status.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a British observer reported that circumcision was locally considered to be one of the five pillars of Islam and that the event was celebrated with a feast, accompanied with music, dancing and games. Hospitality was combined with charitable distribution.[59]

In Turfan almost three decades later, circumcision was performed when the child was seven years old, accompanied by Koran recitations. Male guests were entertained with much food throughout the day, and female guests were invited the following day. After the person who was to perform the operation had been called, in the presence of many guests, some money was passed over the head of the boy and given to the circumciser. The boy was undressed and laid on a new felt rug spread on the table in the middle of the room. His arms and legs were held tight, and while the circumciser got his instruments ready, members of the mosque community stood around and recited the *täkbir* seven times. The man performing the operation grabbed the child's penis and repeated the formula 'God is great' three times; upon uttering it for the fourth time he performed the cut. The child was carried back to his bed and hot ashes of burnt cotton were put on the wound.[60] In both Kashgar and Yarkand, the boy was visited by neighbours who took presents of five to ten eggs and congratulated him by saying, '*Mubaräk bolsun!*' ('May it be blessed!').[61]

In Khotan, fifty hard-boiled eggs were given to the circumciser as payment. Turki circumcision celebrations were said to be more modest than those in Western Turkestan, but extravagant feasts were occasionally held. In the first half of the twentieth century, a rich Kashgari called

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[59] Forsyth 1875: 87. Given the wide variation in local understandings of Islam we cannot entirely dismiss the British report as based on a misunderstanding.

[60] Katanov 1936: 1,210–1.

[61] Prov. 464. 25R; Sykes & Sykes 1920: 316.

Mamudxan Bay Bäçä celebrated his son's circumcision by organizing a series of banquets for prestigious members of local society for thirty days. He also financed entertainments outside the city and provided food for the masses throughout this time. Some guests came from as far afield as Andijan, Tashkent, Samarkand and Kazan. He also distributed gifts, such as hundreds of caftans, and some government officials were given as many as ten harnessed horses.[62] Although this description refers to an exceptional event taking place among the elite, the most important elements of the celebrations appear to have been the same as in the scaled-down versions of the festival.[63] They included the display of hospitality and the distribution of presents of clothes and eggs, the latter symbolizing male fertility and sexuality. Acts of altruism were displayed towards members of the mosque community, confirming 'horizontal' relations based on residential propinquity and territorial belonging. Giving gifts to government officials and organizing banquets for respected members of local society represented efforts to establish or reinforce 'vertical' patron-client relations. Charitable food distribution among strangers 'outside the city' can be seen as an act of temporarily extending community. Through this ostensibly altruistic act, the host evidently hoped to increase his personal prestige and, therefore, his symbolic capital. Charity could also take on a specific form, when well-to-do parents, whose own son was to be circumcised, offered to host the circumcision of children of poorer families who lived in the neighbourhood. In such a case the host family also presented each child with a new set of clothes.[64]

How was circumcision related to the major stages of the male life cycle? *Är kişi* was the generic term for 'man'. Small boys were called *oğul* or *oğulbala* until they reached maturity, when they became *yaş bala* or *yiğit* and old men were referred to as *qeri* (old).[65] Throughout their adult life, most men were addressed by their name followed by the honorific title *axun*. This address was an acknowledgement of familiarity, while in contrast, reference to strangers was made using the terms

[62] Prov. 212. 14; Grenard 1898a: 130.

[63] These same elements recur in general descriptions by indigenous authors in the late twentieth century (Häbibulla 1993: 303–6; Raxman 1996: 127).

[64] Häbibulla 1993: 306.

[65] Modern ethnographers distinguish between three stages of childhood: *buwaq* until the end of first year, then *narsidä* at age six to seven, and *ösmür* between seven and twelve (Häbibulla 1993: 234). The sources do not make such clear distinctions.

adam (man) or *kişi* (person). It is likely that 'maturity' referred to social rather than actual biological maturity; custom fixed the age of majority at twelve for boys and ten for girls; at this age they were expected to get married, and even had the right to reject their parents' choice of spouse.[66] The age for circumcision was younger than the customarily agreed 'age of maturity'; while circumcision was an indispensable initiation ceremony for young boys, it was not the explicit marker of a new life stage because it did not involve status change.

5.3 *Marriage*

The next major event in the life cycle for both boys and girls was marriage (*turmuş quruş*). As in other Islamic societies, marriage in Eastern Turkestan was a communal concern and not just the private affair of individuals. In arranging and preparing marriages, not only close kin and neighbours but also mosque functionaries, community elders and local administrators could play a part. One native definition of a wedding (*toy*) composed by a learned *molla* began with the Koranic precedent of Adam and Eve, thus emphasizing the divine origins and sacred character of the institution of marriage. The author stated that "because God did not want the Prophet Adam to remain alone, he appointed Eve to be his wife. They had children and the human species multiplied in the world. From that time up to the present day when a boy and a girl marry, the event has been called a *toy*".[67]

The divine origins of marriage, its associations with the creation, the Prophets, Muslim martyrs and the famous lovers of Islamic literature, are all encapsulated in a wedding song dictated by Bosuq Niyaz in Qumul in 1892. It was supposed to have been sung for the first time by the angels in Paradise when God created Adam from earth and gave him a soul, and Bosuq Niyaz's contemporaries sang it to celebrate the bride's moving into her husband's house.[68] The song places marriage in a cosmological setting by connecting it to the creation of the world. It also states that marriage is the only desirable course of life and, therefore, an inevitable part of the human life cycle, comparable only

[66] Grenard 1898a: 117.
[67] Prov. 207. II.34.
[68] Katanov 1936: 1,206–9. The same song was published by Le Coq (1911) as 'Love song from Qaraxoja'.

to birth and death. Death is evoked by remembering the martyrdom of Hasan and Husayn, who in Eastern Turkestani popular tradition are symbols of Islam in general rather than of Shi'ism specifically. The song encapsulates references to basic forms of human sociability, ranging from the suffering of young unmarried men to the pain of the mother and father when the daughter leaves. The desirability of marriage was restated in specimens of oral tradition like the following, which is formulated from the female perspective:

> *A girl's place is with a husband;*
> *If she has no husband she should be in the ground.*[69]

For men, the necessity of taking a wife was sometimes formulated in religious terms, occasionally quoting the authority of a prophetic tradition. In one such example, the father of a young man belonging to the wealthy classes quoted the words of the Prophet after relating details of the marriage arrangements to him: "Next to the benefit of embracing Islam is the greatest gain of taking a Moslem wife who delights the eyes of a man, who yields to his wishes and who faithfully watches over his house and property when he is absent".[70] Practice followed moral precepts and, as far as foreigners could tell, everybody was married, even the soldiers. When a man died, his wife was given to another.[71]

5.3.1 *Choice of Partners*

Writing from a male-centred perspective, Molla Abdul Qadir explained how, ideally, a woman should be 'below' her husband in four respects: she should be shorter in stature, poorer, younger than him and below him in personal distinction.[72]

Molla Abdul Qadir's normative formulation reflects the ideal of hypergamy, when a low-status wife marries a husband of higher status. Nevertheless, the data suggests that social actors behaved pragmatically and that this was only one of a number of possible strategies which could be followed. Forsyth commented on the great flexibility in choosing a marriage partner of a different social standing: "There appears to be no difficulty attending marriage between men and women of

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[69] Pantusov 1909b: 44, 63.
[70] Jarring 1975: 24.
[71] Forsyth 1875: 219.
[72] Prov. 464. 14V.

different ranks in life; nor does a woman who has been the wife of a rich man, and has obtained a divorce, object to marriage with a man of small means."[73]

In the southern oases of the Tarim Basin, political factionalism between the Black Mountain and White Mountain groups rooted in the eighteenth century was still a factor in the 1920s, a sign of significant historical continuities over several centuries. The White Mountain faction was identified as anti-Chinese and had its power base in Kucha, while the Black Mountain faction was associated with pro-Chinese sentiments and based in Artush. The followers of these two groups were said not to intermarry.[74] This single reference in itself is insufficient to conclude that a politically inspired, faction-based endogamy was practised, but we may tentatively suggest that group endogamy based on kinship ties among the wealthier strata was not entirely unknown in the region. The Swedish missionary doctor Raquette noted that rich families often contracted cousin marriages or marriages among close kin "in order to keep their wealth within the family".[75] How important personal qualities were in the choice of marriage partners, we cannot say for sure, but many marriages were arranged, particularly first marriages contracted between inexperienced young people. However, the articulated ideal also included personal traits: from the husband's point of view, undesirable characteristics in a woman included an excessive propensity to cry, posing as a benefactor, using make-up and gossiping a lot.[76]

5.3.2 *Negotiations*

Girls and boys were married at a young age: girls between ten and fourteen and sometimes even sooner, and thus prior to the assumed age of sexual maturity.[77] In the case of first marriages, it was the parents' responsibility to arrange the marriage. Some parents started looking for

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[73] Forsyth 1875: 90. In contrast to these speculations, modern Uyghur ethnographers claim that, whenever it was at all possible, marriages were contracted between social equals (Häbibulla 1993: 247). The discrepancy may arise from our lack of sufficient data but it could also be rooted in the politics of national folklore writing under state socialism, which requires that local scholars idealize what they understand as 'Uyghur traditions'.

[74] Forbes 1986: 33.

[75] Jarring 1975: 12.

[76] Prov. 464. 14V.

[77] Prov. 212. 18.

a husband for their daughter when the girl was about eight years old, the idea being that the earlier she married, the better, since a fourteen- or sixteen-year-old girl was already considered to be 'overripe' and did not command as high a price.[78] Boys were married off somewhat later, around the age of fifteen or sixteen.[79] When parents put off the marriage of their children, they came under considerable pressure from members of the mosque community, who criticized them. Sometimes the young couple did not meet before their wedding, a practice vehemently condemned by the Christian convert Nur Luke: "It was not permitted that girls should marry according to their own wishes, marriages were arranged according to the wishes of parents and senior relatives".[80] Often, parents used the services of a self-appointed go-between (*dällal*) to find a suitable partner for their child. When the marriage partners were young, the go-between preserved a certain degree of moral influence over the young couple for some time following the marriage. In some locations, older, respected women played an important role in arranging marriages.[81] The services of a go-between were indispensable when the marriage was negotiated between members of different mosque communities.

Given the normative expectation that everyone should be married, arranging marriages was considered a meritorious act. Representatives of the religious establishment often acted as intermediaries, especially for people who were strangers to the region. Thus, a Punjabee soldier in Maralbashi was able to marry a Turki woman after the *molla* had found him a wife.[82]

Most accounts provide some insight into normative expectations, which were shaped to a large extent by elite practice: other social groups imitated them as best as they could. In the early twentieth century in Yarkand, etiquette demanded that, having gained sufficient information about a girl and her family, the young man's mother visited the girl's house to meet her and to obtain her approval. Provided that she consented, the mother then informed her son and encouraged him to go and see her himself. If the young man also found the girl acceptable,

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[78] Högberg 1912; Jarring 1975: 19.

[79] Prov. 212. 29. Very similar estimates for the age of marriage were given by Skrine (1971: 195).

[80] Prov. 212. 16.

[81] Högberg 1912; Grenard 1898a: 117.

[82] Forsyth 1875: 219.

he asked his mother to make the necessary arrangements and informed his father. The latter made preparations for the wedding, invited many guests and organized the wedding party.[83]

Another source explicitly states that in the marriage negotiations and decision-making of a rich young man, his female relatives, such as his stepmother and his maternal uncles' wives, played a key role and mediated his wishes to his male kin. The details of marriage gifts were also negotiated by women, in this case by the stepmother and sister.[84] This is consistent with another account about the marital history of the son of a rich man in the oasis of Guma, which also stressed women's decision-making power. Initially the young man's parents considered the daughter of a family of equal wealth and social standing. Since the girls' parents hesitated, the young man married a woman of bad reputation in haste. At this point, the young man's father reproached his wife for their son's bad behaviour.[85] The women's part in negotiations was generally far from negligible, although family strategies revealed diverse patterns. In Khotan, financial negotiations were often in the hands of a trusted man.[86] Individuals' participation in marriage negotiations also varied according to social class and the actual power relations and internal dynamics of the family.

In late nineteenth-century Turfan, the ceremonial marriage proposal ideally took place between the two sets of parents. The case described here involved marriage negotiations taking place between families which belonged to two separate mosque communities. The young man's parents addressed the girl's parents saying, "Our son has become a young man, your daughter has grown into a good girl. We have come to ask you if you accept our son as your child" The girl's parents replied, "Very good. If your son has grown up and you like our daughter, and fate would have it, then it is all right" If the latter disapproved of the marriage, they would suggest waiting another year. In the case of an encouraging answer, the young man's parents returned home and prepared a plate of steamed dumplings and nine pieces of bread to be taken to the girl's house. This was the first of a series of ritual gift exchanges between the two groups, and at this point members of the mosque community actively joined in the negotiations. On their next

[83] Prov. 464.14R.
[84] Jarring 1975: 24.
[85] Jarring 1951b: 110–3.
[86] Grenard 1898a: 116–7.

visit to the girl's home, the young man's parents were accompanied by local religious dignitaries, as well as by three or four men and three or four women from the community. They came bearing gifts, which included cooked food, as well as pieces of cloth for the girl's parents. The young man's party was offered hospitality in the girl's house, which was a way to reciprocate the visitors' gifts. The financial negotiations which followed were also joined by four or five people from the girl's neighbourhood, including the *mäzin* and the *imam*.[87] This negotiation took the form of representatives of both communities sharing tea and a meal and was known as the 'consultation tea' (*mäslihät çeyi*). Even when marriage was to be contracted between kin groups belonging to the same mosque community, community elders and religious functionaries were still invited to give advice and make sure that the ideals dictated by customary law were adhered to.

Wedding preparations followed a very similar structure in Kashgar: when a son had reached the right age, a woman was sent to the girl's house to negotiate the details of the marriage and to decide what items had to be bought. After the purchase of these, a small feast was organized, and these goods were shown to religious functionaries and community elders. The groom's side (*oğulluq*) had to pay two thirds of the wedding expenses, and the girl's side (*qizliq*) had to pay one third. This negotiation feast was known as a 'consultation meal' (*mäslihät äşi*), a term also current at the time in Khotan.[88]

The occasions when financial details and the seating order during the wedding were discussed were in some places euphemistically known as 'tea'. For affluent families, this actually meant offering lavish hospitality. For poorer families, minimal commensality consisting in the consumption of tea and bread by representatives of the negotiating sides was obligatory. The nature of the gifts exchanged during this stage was prescribed by custom and their precise quality and quantity were determined by community representatives.

The negotiations represented the phase of betrothal, locally known as *ağiz-bağlandi*.[89] The expression means 'the mouth has been tied'. There may have been a symbolic connection between this term and the

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[87] Katanov 1936: 1,192–5.

[88] Prov. 207. II.34; Prov. 212. 24–5. In contemporary Xinjiang the normative ideals of ceremonial exchanges preceding marriage reveal many structural similarities with pre-1949 patterns (Häbibulla 1993: 243–4; Raxman 1996: 129).

[89] Bellew: *Comparative vocabulary* in Forsyth 1875: 554–5.

unwritten rule that once marriage negotiations had started, the girl was supposed to stay indoors, an expectation which was often ignored by 'the spoilt daughters of rich families', who usually did as they liked.[90] Given the multiple responsibilities of a daughter of marriageable age in her natal household, it is likely that the prohibition was never taken too literally; it simply meant that the girl was expected to display more serious and modest behaviour.[91]

Marriage negotiations often went beyond financial contributions. Before drawing up a marriage contract, some women were able to negotiate additional terms which served their interests. During Ya'qub Beg's rule, in principle a woman could not be taken by her husband from one city to another without her consent. Mobility was conceived as a customary right, but at this time it had to be explicitly agreed upon by the bride's father and the groom. The husband could be made to promise not to chastise his wife without due cause, not to take another wife without her consent, and not to undertake a journey for six months after the marriage. If he later made a long journey, he had to provide her with a subsistence allowance for six months.[92]

In the 1910s, a woman could still stipulate terms: that the husband would not take her to another place to live without her consent, that he would not take another wife, and that he would assist her in fulfilling her religious aspirations—namely, taking her to the shrine of Häzrät Apaq when the apricots were ripe.[93] Rural wives were said to be in a better position than urban women because, since rural communities had a more stable membership and communal ties were more tight-knit, pressure to conform to communal norms could be more effectively exerted. Normative customary rights for women were not always translated into action. Rather, they comprised a set of potential resources which could be mobilized by the bride's side to influence marriage negotiations. Success depended on the actual power relations between the two sides before and after the marriage.

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[90] Högberg 1912.

[91] An alternative explanation could be the anticipation of a prohibition forbidding the daughter-in-law to utter her father-in-law's name. She could only address him by a substitute name which sounded similar to his. Alternatively, she was allowed to address her in-laws using kinship terms such as 'mother' and 'father', as did her husband when addressing her parents. After spending some time with her in-laws she was allowed to stop veiling herself in their presence.

[92] Forsyth 1875: 85.

[93] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 312.

5.3.3 *The Religious Ceremony*

The religious ceremony (*nika*) constituted the legal backbone of the wedding celebrations. Its central elements conformed to practices elsewhere in the Islamic world. In preparation, a stack of flat bread was placed on the tablecloth with a bowl of salt.[94] The *imam* performing the ceremony took a piece of bread, dipped it in salt and put a piece into the mouths of the groom and the bride. In Kashgar, "water and salt were produced, and the salt was dissolved in a small cup. The parents of the contracting parties then dipped the bread into the salty water".[95] In some locations, there was an element of competition between the representatives of the male and female side to be first to dip their bread into the cup.[96] Participation in the ceremony was expected of the male leaders of the mosque community, who had also been involved in the negotiations; their presence was reciprocated with gifts of money, handkerchiefs and other goods.[97]

In Guma and Kashgar, the religious ceremony took place in the evening. First, the groom's then the bride's father was asked for his approval. The witnesses were asked to specify the number of vows which should bind the young couple together, which could be as many as 27,000. After this, the groom's and the bride's consent to the marriage was asked. The latter stood fully veiled at the half-open door of a neighbouring room surrounded by women, and her answer would reach the *molla* through her female companions. Then the bread dipped into salt was halved and eaten by the groom and the bride.[98] The basic structure of the ceremony thus included symbolic commensality between the bride and the groom, Islamic prayers and the participation of elders, which ensured communal approval of the marriage.

5.3.4 *The Wedding*

Wedding celebrations (*toy*) following the religious ceremony took place principally in the bride's home, although hospitality was also offered to visitors in the groom's residence after the bride was taken there, in

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[94] Ibid.: 311. The same ceremony could also be performed to signify an engagement, at least among the upper classes (Cf. Jarring 1975: 24–5).
[95] Prov. 207. II.34.
[96] Forsyth 1875: 86.
[97] Prov. 207. II.34.
[98] Jarring 1951b: 115–6; Jarring 1975: 27. See also Dunmore 1993: 334.

accordance with the rule of virilocality. The organization of the *toy* was a communal responsibility. Guests came bearing gifts, and gender segregation was strict. The nature of the presents contributed was dictated by the guest's relationship to the family and his or her financial position. Close kinship and familiarity required the donation of a valuable gift, such as a fattened sheep or enough materials to make a suit of clothes. Female guests contributed a tray of bread or some other food; male guests contributed money, which was handed to the parents of the bride amid blessings. Some young men presented the couple with household items, such as a copper wash basin and jug. Upon departure, female guests were given pilaff, a tray of bread and other small presents to take home.[99] On both sides, members of the kin group and the mosque community contributed labour to the preparations. Ritual practices in Turfan point to the symbolic venting of tensions between patriarchal values and counter currents which also allowed for eventual female domination within the household: after arranging the nuptial bed, the representatives of the male and female sides engaged in a ritualized fight. If the bride's relatives won, the husband was expected to be dominated by his wife throughout the marriage, while their defeat was a sign that male hegemony would prevail.[100]

The bride's rite of passage involved a spatial passage. Her father received the bride-takers at the gate and, in a symbolic gesture of mutuality, offered them hospitality and placed a scarf around the groom's neck, an act symbolizing the transfer of paternal authority and, simultaneously, the release of the girl from her duties in her natal home.[101] When the bride left her parents' house, it was considered appropriate for her to weep. She was consoled by friends of her husband: "Don't cry, girl, don't cry; you'll be happy!" The bride's mother moaned:

O my black-eyed darling! Alas, my child, my child!
My sweet-voiced, soft-eyed darling!
My daughter leaves me,
and I remain in an empty house. Alas, my child, my child![102]

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[99] Prov. 207. II.34.
[100] Katanov 1936: 1,204–7.
[101] Grenard 1898a: 248–9.
[102] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 311; Grenard 1898a: 249–50. A longer version of the song is cited in a collection of folk songs gathered among Eastern Turkestani migrants in Russian Turkestan, published in 1925 (Änsari 1925: 172–3).

In Turfan, when the wedding guests led by the groom's parents arrived, the gate of the house was closed; it was opened only after the groom's side had made a substantial gift to the person guarding it.[103] The bride's parents offered hospitality to the groom's side, which was followed by a display of the groom's presents to the bride. The bride's parents presented the groom with a turban, hat, shirt, belt, an overcoat and some underwear. Towards the end of the day, the bride was taken on a cart to the groom's house.[104]

Reluctance to release the bride from her household and neighbourhood was expressed in acts to hinder her passage. Letting her go meant separation but also forging ties with another community, which had to be done through reciprocity; obstacles were removed only in response to gifts. The procession of the bride-takers was blocked by children and other members of the neighbourhood who put a rope across the road. They let the procession pass only after receipt of some symbolic payment.[105] In Kashgar, the bride's path was blocked by lighting a fire, and right of way was secured with gifts of handkerchiefs. The groom did not allow his bride to dismount from her horse upon arrival until he had received a gift.[106] According to elderly informants' reminiscences in the 1990s, when weddings were conducted within the same mosque community, obstructing the bride's passage and gift-giving were sources of much merriment. When marriage took place between kin groups which did not live in a face-to-face community, these episodes retained their symbolic and entertainment value, but the demanding of gifts could also be a serious business: here, community was not being reinforced but was 'in the making', since it involved strangers, it was an altogether more risky and serious affair.

In the late nineteenth century, the new bride was carried into the groom's home seated on a carpet. After this she was carried around a fire in a symbolic act of ritual purification. Care was taken to avoid touching the threshold as she entered the building.[107] In the 'white road' (*aq yolluq*) ceremony which followed, flour and cotton were set before

[103] Katanov 1936: 1 204–7.
[104] Ibid.: 1 204–7.
[105] Forsyth 1875: 86.
[106] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 311–2.
[107] Forsyth 1875: 86; Grenard 1898a: 248–51. The importance of the threshold in Uyghur ritual has been noted by Dautcher 1999: 13–6.

her. The symbolic meanings were multiple: the colour white stood for happiness; flour and cotton stood for fertility, and they also represented the most important female duties in the household, the processing of basic raw materials.[108]

On the day following the wedding, after he had received a gift of clothing from his wife's parents, the husband, with a male friend accompanying him, was expected to visit them. On the same day, the girl's family took some food to the groom's house, reciprocating his visit. The new bride was not allowed to visit her parents in her natal house for a period of a week or two following the wedding. This period of avoidance marked her liminal status between two life stages; it ended with her ceremonial visit home (*çillaq*).

In Turfan on the third day of the wedding two men and two women from the groom's side visited the bride's mother, who offered them small meat dumplings. Neighbours joined in bringing kerchiefs as a gift. This was followed by a further symbolic fight between the sexes: the female visitors grabbed the two men from the groom's side and tried to rub a handful of flour into their faces. Their success symbolized victory for the women, and the men returned to the groom's house taking some dumplings. Another post-nuptial ritual involved commensality organized for the young couple and the groom's acquaintances. The groom and his bride stood together in the middle, the bride holding a bowl and a spoon; in front of them a dish of dumplings was placed. The groom transferred some dumplings from the main dish to the bowl, from which the bride distributed them to the male visitors, putting a piece into the mouth of each of them. After most of them had been given to the groom's friends and four were left, the groom and bride fed one to each other; then the groom gave one piece to the bride's female helper, and the girl fed the last dumpling to a female relative of the groom. The meal symbolized the final stage of incorporating the bride into the groom's social group.[109]

Two accounts testify to the existence of a virginity test. One originates from Qumul where, after the wedding night, a small bundle with the girl's blood was presented to her parents.[110] In Turfan, if the bride turned out not to be a virgin, the groom beat her and sent her home

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[108] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 311–2.
[109] Katanov 1936: 1 192–203.
[110] Ibid.: 1 190–3.

with the people she had come with. When her parents asked what had happened, her companions told them that "the girl had been chewed by a mouse" A piece of flat bread with a hole cut in the middle was shown to the bride's parents. In such a case the girl could be severely beaten and interrogated by her angry parents.[111]

5.3.5 *Marriage Payments*: Toyluq

Foreign observers often presented a dramatic picture of the financial implications of the institution of marriage in Eastern Turkestan. A representative remark is: "Parents often sell their daughter to the highest bidder in the matrimonial market without allowing her any freedom of choice".[112] Such remarks overlook the complexities of actual and fictive marriage payments of Eastern Turkestani marriages which, as I shall argue, were informed by the general principles of mutuality.

The best-known marriage payment mentioned by most accounts was the *toyluq*. As is often the case with local terms, its translation into English is problematic. In Schwarz's Uyghur dictionary, it is translated as 'betrothal gift'. Nevertheless, in the expression *toyluq sal-*, the translation is 'to ask for a bride price'. In the same entry, the proverb *bärmäs qizniñ toyluği eğir* is rendered into English as: "He who does not want to marry off his daughter asks for a high bride price".[113] *Toyluq* in fact usually referred to gifts given by the groom's family to the new couple. In the early nineteenth century in Qumul, the *toyluq* presented to the bride comprised ten to twenty sheep and a great deal of cloth, which sometimes included expensive Chinese silk. Following the wedding, all personal items of the *toyluq* typically stayed with the bride.[114] In the 1870s, the most important items making up the *toyluq* of a wealthy bride included hats, beads, a string of pearls, earrings, bracelets, charms, boots, socks, pyjamas, a shawl, a chemise and an overcoat. The groom's party took all this to the bride's house along with some sheep, rice and sheep fat and remained there as guests for three days. The other expenses of the feast were met by the bride's family.[115] Such provisions could be expected only from rich families and were limited to the occasion of a girl's first wedding.

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[111] Ibid.: 1,204–7.
[112] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 64.
[113] Schwarz 1992: 209.
[114] Katanov 1936: 1,190–3.
[115] Forsyth 1875: 85.

In Turfan in the late nineteenth century, the *toyluq* was mentioned right at the outset of the negotiations, as the groom's side addressed the girl's parents: "A child was born to you, you have brought her up, and since you want to give her to us, you can ask for as much as you like without shame! First tell us about her *toyluq* and then we shall see. Then we shall speak" In a well-to-do family, the *toyluq* included a spring dress, a satin skullcap, a brocade dress for special occasions, materials for shirts, a pair of boots and overshoes, a fur hat, a simple dress, a silk dress, a shawl and some bedding Provisions for the wedding festivities comprised two milking cows, ten sheep, 200 kilos of wheat, fifty kilos of rice, brick tea and ten litres of sesame oil, as well as five loads of wood.[116] At around the same time in a village situated in the vicinity of Qumul, the *toyluq* comprised enough textiles to make six suits, one sack of flour, one cow, two sheep, one *jiñ* tea, ten *jiñ* brandy and some fruit.[117] In a gesture of reciprocity, the groom received a coat, shirt, a pair of boots, a belt and a cap from the bride's father. On the eve of the wedding, the bride's relatives brought a bed and bedding to the groom's house, and some furniture was provided by the groom's side.[118] In the southern oases, the groom's parents sent the bride's parents a large bag containing a quilt, a hat, a coat, trousers, a comb, mirror, a long coat and one piece of Chinese silk for the bride's dress. Ordinary smallholders' and poor families' contributions were less extravagant. As a rule, the basic food for the wedding feast, such as mutton and rice, had to be bought by the groom's parents, and their gifts to the bride included a cloak, a pair of cotton trousers, a hat, a pair of shoes and leather stockings.[119]

In the late 1920s and early 1930s in southern Xinjiang, the betrothal gifts to the bride marrying into an affluent family comprised a pair of golden earrings, two gold bracelets, two coral bracelets, one silver buckle, two pairs of shoes, two garments—one of them silk—a small cap, a large cap with otter-skin trimmings, many carpets, cushions and counterpanes.[120]

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[116] Katanov 1936: 1 194–7.
[117] Somewhat inaccurately the German version translates *toyluq* as 'Brautgeld'.
[118] Katanov 1936: 1 204–6.
[119] Dunmore 1993: 333–4. For the situation in Merket, see Hedin 2001.I.: 189.
[120] Jarring 1975: 24.

The wedding of the daughter of the ruler of Qumul to the hereditary governor of Lukchen was exceptionally extravagant. The bride's family received nine pairs of golden hats, nine pairs of higher hats, nine pairs of otter-fur hats, eighteen lengths of brocade imported from Aqsu for clothes, eighteen lengths of golden brocade, eighteen lengths of original gold brocade, nine pairs of golden earrings, eighteen lengths of brocade for bed linen, nine pairs of handkerchiefs, nine pairs of watering cans, nine pairs of golden washbasins with pitchers, nine pairs of golden hat ornaments, nine pairs of bottles containing rose oil, 2,000 sheep, 900 camels, 900 cattle, 200 horses, fifty sacks of wheat grain, fifty sacks of rice, 1,500 *jiñ* fat, 200 cartloads of wood, 100 blocks of brick tea, 100 *jiñ* brown tea, 100 *jiñ* green tea and 100 *jiñ* herbs. Ay Ağaçam, the bride, also received a similar assortment of luxurious presents from her father, (nine pairs of golden hats, nine pairs of hats decorated with pearls, nine pairs of golden earrings, nine pairs of brocade skirts, nine pairs of skirts made of a different type of brocade, nine pairs of red and green skirts, nine pairs of silk shirts, nine pairs of quilts and nine pairs of brocade bed covers). The ruler gave his future son-in-law a golden hat with a peacock feather decorated with a ruby ornament, clothing worth 1,000 *sär*, a belt, a knife and fire-making equipment, as well as some boots. Altogether, he reputedly spent 3,000 *sär* on the presents for his son-in-law, and to the groom's mother he gave additional presents worth 1,000 *sär*.[121]

In contrast to this aristocratic extravaganza in the east, the minimal requirements for a poor man at the time of a wedding in the southern oases were the provision of a basic meal and some clothing for the bride.[122] In this minimal definition, no mention is made of presents to the groom, an item often mentioned in other accounts,[123] but a basic reciprocal pattern remains discernible: in exchange for the new labour force gained by the male side, both contributions of food to communal hospitality and gifts to the female side had to be made. Better economic circumstances involved both more presents for the bride and more complex patterns of gift exchange and hospitality between the two parties, which reinforced their new communal ties.

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[121] Le Coq 1919: 104–5.
[122] Hedin 2001.I.: 189.
[123] See also Forsyth 1875: 85.

The element of mutuality was also implied by Forsyth, who described how, on the fourth day following the engagement, the girl's parents presented the groom with an entire suit of clothing, boots and some other items. The girl selected a *toyata*, or male representative, who then arranged the fixing of the *toyluq* with the *molla*. Provided that the conditions were agreeable to the groom, the marriage ceremony could be concluded. When, on account of the groom's financial position, more substantial demands were made by the bride, gifts and even cash could be paid to the bride's family, which rendered it similar to bridewealth. In addition to financial position, the quality and quantity of the wedding presents were also influenced by the age and personal history of the parties involved. Wedding arrangements were more elaborate, and demands made by the bride's family more substantial at a girl's first marriage, when she was expected to be a virgin. In subsequent marriages following divorce or widowhood, the wedding was inevitably a simpler affair and the amount of the *toyluq* had to be reduced; often the bride received only a suit of clothes and some ornaments.[124]

While reciprocal exchange formed the backbone of wedding prestations, the contributions of the two parties often followed an asymmetrical pattern. This was certainly true of the quantity of gifts given to the bride and the groom: where a Kashgar bride received clothes, jewellery and household utensils, the groom received only a coat and a pair of boots. A similar asymmetry characterized the total contributions to the wedding expenses. According to Skrine, at one wedding the groom's contribution was considered nominal when compared to the bride's side.[125] But this case was probably the exception rather than the rule. In Kashgar, in general, two-thirds of the expenses had to be met by the boy's family, with one-third met by the girl's family, which is also corroborated by my ethnographic materials.[126] This inequality in sharing the wedding expenses, especially in the case of a first marriage, may be partly explained in terms of a compensation to the bride's family for the loss of a young member of the labour force.

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[124] Forsyth 1875: 84.

[125] Skrine 1926: 195–6.

[126] Prov. 207. II.34. Although marrying one's social equal may have been the ideal, there was no social stigma attached to 'marrying up' or 'down' for either party. Following divorce or the death of a spouse, normative rules underwent pragmatic adjustment.

While pragmatic flexibility governed actual behaviour, the normative rules governing the exchange of at least nominal wedding gifts proved resilient. Emin Niyaz Abdulla, aged twenty-nine and resident in Turfan, described in 1956 the first wedding of Ayniyaz Xan, daughter of Tursun the shepherd, to Sait Niyaz some years earlier. The groom's side presented the bride with two or three suits and golden earrings, while her parents and closest relatives received one suit each; they also provided rice, three or five sheep, oil and wood for the wedding reception. In a symbolic gesture, the girl's side gave a kerchief and a *doppa* to the groom.[127] This source is particularly valuable because it shows that in the first years of socialism there were patterns of continuity despite the rapidly changing social conditions.[128]

Payment of *toyluq* was affected by marriage strategies, which could be consciously employed to minimize the amount paid or eliminate it altogether. Such strategies included close-kin marriage, whereby the proximity of the two parties substantially reduced or eliminated the *toyluq*, since the bride and the groom were already part of the same kin group, perhaps sharing part of the same household economy. Community did not need to be created in such cases, and the closer the proximity between the parties, the less need there was to reinforce it through ritual exchange.

The other institutionalized measure for avoiding the *toyluq* was marriage by elopement (*apqaşqan toy*).[129] This could also be resorted to when the girl's parents refused to agree to the marriage, in which case the elimination of the obligation of *toyluq* was an unintended consequence of the elopement; for the families involved it could mean the loss of or at least damage to the family's honour. Local assumptions about morality and social action associated such behaviour with certain localities, such as Qarakhoja. Elopement could also be planned by the young couple if the girl's parents arranged a marriage for her with someone else. After the elopement, the girl's 'official' fiancé went in search of the lovers carrying a knife. The girl's parents too searched for their daughter for three days. Custom dictated that if the young man found the lovers within

[127] Tenishev 1984: 7–8.

[128] The same continuity in patterns of wedding prestations is implied by modern Uyghur scholars, who habitually use the 'ethnographic present' in speaking about 'old traditions'. According to them a bride would get three to nine suits, a skullcap, a scarf, a pair of boots, a pair of gold or silver earrings, but rich families would give even more (Häbibulla 1993: 246).

[129] Katanov 1936: 1 204–7.

three days, he could marry the girl without paying the *toyluq*. However, if the girl's parents found the lovers, the seducer had to pay the fiancé the full amount of the *toyluq*. If the couple could not be found within three days, the seducer made full preparations for the wedding and, accompanied by his parents and members of his mosque community, he begged the girl's parents for forgiveness. The boy's parents stood in front of the girl's parents and, with their arms crossed, said, "Our son has done bad things. Since you have already decided to marry off your daughter, please forgive us" The girl's parents showed anger but eventually agreed to reconciliation. After this, preparations for the wedding proceeded as usual, with mutual visiting and ceremonial exchanges.[130] In this case, it is not clear whether the young man who eloped with the girl eventually paid the full *toyluq* to her parents or not; most likely only the minimal ceremonial exchanges were completed between the two parties and the *toyluq* could not be demanded. Corroborating the indigenous report, a European account states that it was quite common for young people who failed to get their parents' approval to elope. They stayed in another place for several months, after which time they returned to their native oasis, invited their parents to a communal meal and concluded the affair with reconciliation.[131]

Sources suggest that *toyluq* was a flexible, almost elastic concept. It referred primarily to the wedding prestations received by the bride and her family, but it sometimes seems to have included the gifts received by the groom from the girl's side and the other provisions made by both sides for the wedding feast. Although the latter constituted wedding expenses and it might seem natural to bundle them together with the betrothal gifts, some local sources refer to them separately as 'expenditure' (*xirajät*). In trying to understand the nature of *toyluq* it is perhaps advisable to discard the straitjacket of Western analytical categories, such as bridewealth, dowry, indirect dowry and the like, and understand *toyluq* as a local concept which was an important device in creating mutuality between groups of people. It simultaneously comprised notions of giving and taking, and it was therefore instrumental in making community between the bride's and the groom's side. In an extended sense, social action surrounding the *toyluq* assumed various forms of communal mobilization, such as the participation of community

[130] Ibid.: 1,202–5.
[131] Hedin 2001.I.: 189.

elders in negotiations, cooperation among households in preparing for the wedding and participation in communal entertainment, which also involved exchanges between hosts and guests. All these necessitated the mobilization of various networks realized in chains of reciprocal actions, which were either rooted in previously existing social ties or able to initiate new open-ended exchanges. When the participating families had not been connected through kinship or other forms of communal ties before, and when the marriage was successful and lasting, *toyluq* constituted only the first of a series of ceremonial exchanges between them following the births of children. Seen in this light, *toyluq* may be defined as a communal institution rooted in the principle of mutuality.

5.3.6 *Marriage Payments*: Mähr

There are indications that pre-1949 society also recognized another type of marriage payment in the form of the Islamic *mahr* (*mähr*). In Islamic law, the quantity of *mahr* had to be decided at the time of the marriage.[132] Included in Dr. Bellew's 'Comparative vocabulary' compiled in the second half of the nineteenth century, the term was translated as 'dowry'.[133] In the same publication, Forsyth mentioned that in the case of first marriages arranged for young people by their immediate families, the groom's parents fixed the 'dower or *mahr*' for the girl.[134]

A few decades later, Grenard specifically commented on the absence of *mähr* in Eastern Turkestan, in contrast to other Islamic lands. In his view this "deprived the woman of any guarantee against her husband's whims".[135] Skrine considered this statement 'correct so far as it goes' but added that *mähr* was nevertheless universally recognized 'if only as a legal fiction'. According to him, the *haqq-i mähr* was the 'only liability (and that merely a nominal one) incurred by the groom' and was not to be confused with the maintenance payable for 100 days by a husband to his wife if he divorced her against her will.[136] In the early twentieth century, its amount was verbally fixed, ideally in the presence of community elders. It was regarded as a debt which could theoreti-

[132] For a general introduction see Benedict 1974; Spies 1991; and Bakhtiar 1996: 438–44.
[133] Forsyth 1875: 554–5.
[134] Ibid.: 84.
[135] Grenard 1898a: 119.
[136] Skrine 1971: 194.

cally be claimed by the wife at any time throughout the marriage, but in practice such claims were hardly ever made if the marriage lasted. If it was claimed by the wife following divorce, it was typically waived since the husband could simply declare that his wife had let him off the *mähr* at the wedding. At this point the wife could challenge him to prove her point with witnesses. If no agreement could be reached, the case could be taken to the Islamic court.[137] But, since witnesses could be bribed, such disputes were usually decided by the financial position of the respective parties, and poor women were unlikely to win their cases.[138]

Around 1930, Molla Abdul Qadir specified the amount of *mähr* at ten *täñgä* and distinguished its two parts as the promptly paid (*mähr-i muajjele*) and the postponed (*mähr-i müäjjälä*); he did not explicitly state whether either of these sums was ever actually paid.[139] The concept of *mähr* was also known to Nur Luke, who explained that at a girl's first wedding the number of invited guests was expected to be higher and the *toyluq-mähr* considerably greater than at subsequent weddings. If one invited fifty households to the wedding of a woman who had been previously married and fixed her *toyluq-mähr* at 100 *sär* silver, then 100 households had to be invited to the first wedding of a young girl, and her *toyluq* and *mähr* should be worth 1,000 *sär*. If a girl was married off as a virgin but on her wedding night turned out not to be one, she had to appear in front of the invited guests on the second or third day of the wedding and half of the *toyluq-mähr* had to be returned to the groom.[140] Here, *toyluq* and *mähr* are repeatedly mentioned as a set formula signifying marriage payments in general, rather than two different types of payments. Compared to other sources, Nur Luke's description is relatively late, describing customary practices in the Republican era. It suggests that by the mid-twentieth century, *mähr* existed only in name and was treated as synonymous with *toyluq*. At the same time, the author mentions the possibility that the woman

[137] Having listened to the evidence, the *qazi* either passed judgment at once or ordered one of the adversaries to take an oath. Usually, the party ordered to take an oath refused to do so and thus lost his case. The reason for refusing was that it was considered a disgrace to swear on the Koran. The term *qäsämxor* (oath-eater, a frequent oath-maker) was a term of abuse, meaning a greedy and unscrupulous person (Cf. Skrine 1971: 196; Schwarz 1992: 633).

[138] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 189.

[139] Prov. 464. 15R, 24.V.

[140] Prov. 212. 34–6.

did not always receive all the marriage payments that had been fixed. The promise of further payments could perhaps be interpreted as a residue of *mähr*. A similar meaning was suggested by Mäqsut Hajji[141] from Guma, in a narrative dating from 1935:

> With nika: is meant that on the side of the girl three or four of the very important people and on the boy's side three or four people act as witnesses and having fixed the marriage portion [*mähr*] of the girl at four or five hundred sar he gives clothes to the amount of two or three hundred sar.[142]

The fact that the *mähr* was fixed by the witnesses at the time of the religious wedding suggests that it was a provisional agreement rather than an actual payment. But Mäqsut Hajji's subsequent reference to the gifts of clothes given by the boy's side to the girl raises the possibility that by this time the *mähr* and *toyluq* were inextricably merged: part of this general betrothal gift was paid to the girl and her immediate kin in the form of clothes, and another portion was verbally promised but not realized.

Although we have no conclusive evidence concerning *mähr* payment in Eastern Turkestan, the term was known locally and used to refer to a bridal gift payable by the groom's side. It is possible that the term was used in its original sense and referred to payment, part of which, or perhaps the whole of which, could be deferred and actually paid only in case of divorce. However, given the very high incidence of divorce in Eastern Turkestan, the rigorous observance of this payment would certainly have rendered divorce more expensive and therefore less desirable. The ease and frequency of divorce makes it likely that the term *mähr*, although adopted from the Islamic legal vocabulary, had by the early twentieth century come to merge with *toyluq*.

5.3.7 *Gendered Gifts and Social Prestige*

Wedding gifts were 'gendered' in the sense that certain types of presents could only be transferred by men or by women. Presenting food and items of clothing was a female prerogative. Money was usually given by male guests. Sheep were normally presented by men, while

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[141] Mäqsut Hajji was born in 1900. He earned his living as a farmer just outside the town of Guma. He was literate and spent some time studying in a local *mädräsä*. At the time he dictated the text, he was thirty-five years old (Jarring 1951a: Preface).

[142] Jarring 1951b: 115.

smaller animals, such as a chicken, could be given by women. This 'gendering' of wedding gifts mirrors the normative (but not necessarily actual) division of labour which allocated the processing of foodstuffs and clothing to women and animal husbandry and participation in the money economy to men.

The amount and nature of marriage payments and gifts were highly variable and depended on many factors, such as the financial position and social standing of the families involved, the position of the invited guests and the grandiosity of the wedding. Wedding gifts reflected and enhanced a family's prestige and served to strengthen existing communal ties.

At the same time, weddings were also occasions where social hierarchies were publicly demonstrated, confirmed and sometimes contested. To determine the seating order of the invited guests was part of the marriage negotiations and carried out in consultation with respected community elders. In the Republican period, the letters of invitation included this piece of information. If the invited guests accepted the suggested ranking, they came, while any dissatisfaction with the place accorded to them around the ceremonial tablecloth could prompt them to refuse the invitation. Tricky situations were ingeniously solved. For example, if two guests of the same high social standing were to be invited, they would be seated in two different rooms to give each one of them his due; alternatively, mattresses were spread out for the guests so that two seats of honour (*tör*), instead of the usual one, were made available. In the first half of the twentieth century in the south, the seating order at weddings carried so much weight that when A asked for B's daughter to marry his son, B's decision could depend on where A's place during the wedding feasts was, rather than how much money or property he possessed. Ranking was also closely observed during other types of ceremonial commensality, but it was most meticulously adhered to at weddings. The seating order in women's gatherings was determined by the position each woman's husband occupied in the male assembly.[143]

An elevated position in the community entailed not only privileges but also obligations. The money contribution of male guests followed a 'progressive' pattern. On the second day of the wedding, after the male guests had eaten, a respected man representing the mosque community

[143] Prov. 212. 26–8, 38.

went up to each guest and, in accordance with their position in the ceremonial seating order, fixed for each individual a certain amount of money to be paid as contribution to the wedding. For example, if he asked for twenty *sär* from the person occupying the seat of honour, then he charged the person sitting next to him nineteen *sär*. Those in the least prestigious places were asked to contribute the least. So if 100 households were represented, 500 or 600 *sär* were collected, and if members of fifty households were entertained, then it was 200 to 300 *sär*. This money was called *toy qutlughqi*, and the sum often amounted to twice as much as the total wedding expenses.[144]

5.3.8 *Close-kin Marriage*

Customary practice prescribing provisions for marriage allowed for the reduction of payments and the simplification of expensive rituals but also ensured that certain ground rules were generally observed. One of these was that marriages within the kin group respected Koranic incest prohibitions. Marriage between first cousins was generally justified by the argument that, since the contracting parties had known each other for a long time, there was no reason for mistrust; they both knew where they stood with each other.[145] My ethnographic data suggests that, in the vicinity of Kashgar, first-cousin marriage was traditionally considered a desirable type of marriage alliance. Like Thomas Hoppe, I also had the impression that there is no 'preference ranking' between different types of first cousin.[146] However, I disagree with Hoppe's focus on the institution of first-cousin marriage, since my findings suggest that people did not in practice distinguish between first-cousin and other types of close-kin marriage. Rather, the combination of kinship and propinquity generated the trust which underpinned the desirability of this type of marriage.

Trust based on familiarity must have played a similarly important role in the institution of levirate. Our sporadic references indicate that this was considered a widespread option, but it is impossible to attest its frequency. I assume that, as was the case in many other societies, it was an ideal but rarely realized solution to widowhood. A thirty-eight-

[144] Ibid.: 31–3.
[145] Grenard 1898a: 116. For a general discussion of cousin marriage in the Middle East, see Holy 1989.
[146] Hoppe 1998: 135–7.

year-old peasant named Abdul Qadir reported in 1956 from the Aqsu region that it was common for a man to marry his brother's widow: when Awu Ämät's elder brother died, he divorced his wife, Säyit Xan, and married his late brother's widow, Şawan Xan. Through the marriage, he also gained his brother's possessions which consisted of a house, five *mo* land, a cow and ten *jalliq* oil. A further example was related in the mid-1950s by Qasim-axun, a forty-year-old peasant. In 1948 in the oasis of Keriya, when a man called Süleyman died, his widow married his younger brother, Ismailjan, himself a widower. In 1956, the couple lived in the township of Qarluq in Jilğa village, and were members of the local cooperative. At the time, Ismailjan was about forty-five years old, and his wife, Rawi Xan, was thirty-five. The marriage took place one year after her first husband's death. The woman had one child from her first marriage, while Ismailjan brought three children into the new marriage. Ismailjan married his brother's widow because she was a good and fertile woman. He also justified the practice by adding that "the river flows from top to bottom, and the elder brother is the head/spring (*baş*), and the younger is the delta (*ayağ*) and therefore it is allowed for the younger brother to marry the elder brother's widow".[147]

Prior to 'Liberation', when a woman died it was said to be customary for the widower to marry his dead wife's sister or another close relative to prevent his children from remaining without a mother. The practice of sororate in some places survived the political upheavals. This example, told by an indigenous narrator, dates from the 1940s. Qadir Xan married Memet axun's elder daughter, and they had two children. When his wife, Ata Xan, died, Qadir Xan thought that to bring a stranger for a wife would have looked 'ugly', meaning that he would have met the disapproval of the community. Therefore, he married his wife's close relative Ay Xan.[148] The flexible interpretation of sororate suggests that one could also marry 'another close relative', which is also corroborated by my ethnographic materials. We either have to redefine our kinship categories to make them more flexible or discard them altogether, since local practices only approximate them. The concepts of sororate, levirate and cousin marriage, when applied

[147] Tenishev 1984: 105–6.
[148] Ibid.: 33–4.

to Eastern Turkestan, must be understood to refer loosely to a relatively broad range of matrilateral or patrilateral relatives.

5.3.9 *The Instability of Marriage*

The instability of the institution of marriage in pre-socialist Eastern Turkestan has been discussed in detail by Linda Benson, whose data was mostly derived from travelogues.[149]

Westerners' evaluations are often contradictory. Unstable marriages were seen by outsiders as both detrimental to women and as expressions of their emancipation, their greater degree of decision-making power and freedom of movement. A typical comment was that of George Hunter, a Scottish missionary, who spent almost forty years among the East Turkestanis in the first half of the twentieth century:

> Wives are divorced for little or no reason, and they are thus left homeless and friendless. The Turki people are also very poor, and are thus tempted to sell their daughters. For these and other reasons the country is filled with Turki prostitutes.[150]

This is contradicted by the Russian exile Nazaroff:

> The fair sex in Kashgar has been famous for ages for its frivolity and coquetry... the traveller is at once struck by the degree of emancipation of the women here, compared with those of Russian Turkestan. It is by no means rare to see a woman selling something in the bazaar, a thing that would be impossible in puritanical Samarkand or Bukhara, the very centre of Moslem learning and devotion. They say that it is only during the past few decades that the standard of morals has become stricter, relatively speaking of course, under the influence of mullahs from Russian Turkestan. Previously the ladies from Kashgar did not even veil their faces at all, and their moral standard was more free and easy than it is to-day. For the preservation of the standard of morals and the sanctity of the family hearth, during the reign of Yakub Beg (1865–1876) a law was promulgated by which every visitor who came to the country

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[149] Benson 1993. Warikoo also discusses some of the relevant literature (1985: 103–4).

[150] Hunter 1911: 6. The 'sale of daughters' could refer to a local form of adoption. One of my interview partners in the mid-1990s told me about adoption practices in pre-socialist times. It could take place between people who were familiar with each other, usually close kin, but also between strangers. The latter case typically involved a childless, well-to-do couple adopting a child from a poor family, which received material compensation for the child. This, however, implied a rise in the status of the adopted child, and does not explain the connection Hunter makes between the 'sale of daughters' and prostitution. For a summary of Hunter's work see Bellér-Hann 1994.

> without a wife was given three days in which to find one or leave. For the convenience of visitors, brides paraded in the bazaar every morning, selling milk. There was no lack of choice. To the present day, in the town of Yangi Hissar, forty-three miles to the south of Kashgar, a part of the bazaar is allotted to such brides. There is never any difficulty in finding a mullah in the nearest mosque to perform the ceremony. If such a marriage is concluded for a fixed short period, after the inevitable *palau* was consumed at the wedding feast, the mullah reads the ceremony of divorce in advance, to simplify matters.[151]

The passage makes overt and covert references to a number of contradictory themes: the laxity of morality and religious observation, the simultaneous emancipation and degradation of women, the increasing enforcement of religious morality under the influence of the *mollas* from Russian Turkestan and the persistence of frequent divorce.

Travellers overlooked the simple fact that, on the normative level, marriages were contracted with the expectation that they would last. In the wedding songs and rituals described above, there is nothing to suggest the contrary. At the same time, divorce and remarriage were also regarded as a normal part of human experience. My fieldwork observations also confirm that divorcees and widows are not stigmatized, as is encapsulated in a proverb:

> *The lord of the civil servant does not die,*
> *the husband of the juwan* [woman who has already had a child] *does not die.*

According to the indigenous explanation added to the proverb, when an official dies, his servant will work for another master in the same capacity. In the same way, when a woman's husband dies, she will inevitably remarry.[152] This was also the expected behaviour for men, as is suggested by the saying: "The child in the loins, the woman on the road" In other words, wherever a man goes he will take a wife and have children.[153] The explanations accompanying the proverbs collected in the early twentieth century suggest that locals viewed marriage as an enduring institution, which did not rely on particular individuals for its rationale; rather, it successfully survived shifts in 'personnel'.

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[151] Nazaroff 1935: 24–5. Several decades earlier Valikhanov mentioned the 'brides' bazaar' of Yarkand, which suggests that the phenomenon had persisted from the pre-Ya'qub Beg era (Valikhanov 1961: 349).

[152] Pantusov 1909b: 69, 97.

[153] Ibid.: 71–99.

Sources agree that the age of marriage for girls in Eastern Turkestan was excessively low and that child brides were less highly valued on the marriage market than widows and young divorcees. Some authors even suggest that occasionally a higher *toyluq* could be demanded by a previously married, childless divorcee or widow; the 'price' of a young woman with a child could be even higher. The advantages of such women were numerous: they were both better workers and more experienced sexual partners than adolescent girls. If a woman had already proved her ability to reproduce, this further enhanced her attraction.[154] The attractions of such women (*juwan*) in comparison to young girls were also encapsulated in the following proverb:

> *A girl has many extravagances,*
> *I play around with the juwan.*[155]

The higher valuation of previously married women as potential marriage partners was said to have sharply contrasted with the situation in Western Turkestan, where widows and divorcees were not valued so highly; the reason given was that girls were married off at a somewhat later age in the latter case.[156]

These reports seem to contradict the suggestion that a girl's first wedding was more expensive and a higher *toyluq* was demanded than at subsequent marriages. The apparent contradiction may be resolved if we consider that indigenous authors articulated normative expectations in their descriptions of weddings, where both parties were well-to-do and both bride and groom were healthy and very young. It seems clear that for the first wedding of a young man, it was not considered appropriate for him to marry a divorcee or a widow. In such cases, marriage negotiations were conducted by the young people's guardians, and the involvement of community elders meant that actors were under heightened pressure to adjust to normative expectations. The bride and the groom had equally limited say in the choice of partner and the negotiations of payments. This changed with subsequent marriages, partly because of the increased age and experience of the partners, and it was in such situations that men could express a preference for a divorcee or widow rather than a very young girl.

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[154] Dunmore 1993: 328–9; Grenard 1898a: 118.
[155] Änsari 1925: 8.
[156] Grenard 1898a: 117.

Differences between urban and rural practice suggested by foreigners were probably quantitative rather than qualitative. Rural marriages may have shown a higher level of stability than urban marriages, because in smaller, more isolated communities, tighter social control could be exercised over individuals, and spouses were under more pressure to observe customary ideals which held that marriages were contracted to last. Reconciliation mediated by community elders was more frequently initiated and concluded successfully. Rural households were also associated with a higher level of gender equality, although exceptions are not difficult to find: on one occasion, a Mr. Bohlin saw a man guiding a plough to which he had harnessed his wife and a donkey.[157] Nevertheless, from the appalled tone of the account we may deduce that it was an exceptional sight, contrary not only to Western but also to local standards.

5.4 *Divorce*

Although the normative ideal was the monogamous, lasting marriage, many people were unable to live up to this, and divorce and remarriage occurred often. But divorce was still regarded as a misfortune one would only wish on his enemy. It was considered an ugly insult to say to a man: "You who divorces a woman" (*sän xotun talaq*).[158] In southern Xinjiang, the saying: "Your wife should divorce you!" counted as a swearing formula among men.[159] This also implies that on occasion women could initiate divorce, which reflects the stance of the Hanafi legal school on the issue.[160] However, equal access to divorce was modified by customary practice, which treated men and women differently. Under Ya'qub Beg, the right to initiate divorce was with the husband: when he wanted to get rid of his wife, he simply turned her out of his house, although he had to pay her compensation.[161] The following proverb also interprets divorce as a male privilege:

If the cow disagrees, she will be tied up,
If the bull disagrees he can do whatever he likes.

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[157] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 65.
[158] Le Coq 1919: 77.
[159] Jarring 1951b.: 179.
[160] Bakhtiar 1996: 504–5.
[161] Forsyth 1875: 219.

This meant that if a woman was displeased with her husband, she could not leave his house, but when the husband found fault with his wife, he could immediately chase her away and divorce her.[162]

5.4.1 *Conditions*

Privileged male access to divorce reflected the legal provisions of the time. The husband could go to a judge and obtain a divorce certificate even if his wife was not present. After revocable divorce, he could remarry the same woman, but this was not permitted after irrevocable divorce. While a woman had to wait a certain period before contracting a new marriage, her ex-husband could take another wife immediately. He was also permitted to have as many as four wives simultaneously.[163] Women's legal opportunities were more limited. A woman could divorce her husband if she had visible signs of being beaten by him six times, if he took a second wife without her consent, if he failed to pay for her subsistence for six months, if he left their home for a place situated longer than a three-day walk from their residence without her consent, if he went crazy, or if he caught leprosy. The interpretation and application of the first and third conditions was particularly flexible, giving the woman leeway to manoeuvre and negotiate. Even under Ya'qub Beg, when Islamic law was most strictly enforced, she could either provoke her husband to utter the Islamic formula of divorce three times, or she could simply turn up "before the cazi weeping, and taking off the shoes (which come over the feet of her boots) to place them turned over before the cazi" This was interpreted by the Islamic court as a silent accusation by the wife against the husband that he had committed an unnatural offence against her, in which case she did not even have to provide evidence.[164] The subsequent restoration of Chinese rule did not affect the ease with which a woman could return to her natal home after collecting her belongings.[165] Even though Islamic law prescribed a

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[162] Pantusov 1909b: 84, 117–8.

[163] Skrine 1971: 200. See also Bakhtiar 1996: 507–8.

[164] Forsyth 1875: 90. For the ease of divorce in the mid-nineteenth century, see also Iskhakov 1975: 43.

[165] Dunmore 1993:337; Grenard 1898a: 118–9. We may compare this list to the list given by Schuyler for divorce provisions observed at the time in Tashkent. Here marriage could be dissolved if 1. Either of the parties abandoned Islam; 2. If the husband was absent from home for a certain period of time without any news coming from him; 3. If a minor, upon reaching majority, refused to continue the marriage; 4.

minimum of 100 days of waiting following divorce, custom required a three-month waiting period for her divorced husband's sake and another three months for her new husband.[166] However, such expectations were not strictly adhered to. Even the three-month waiting period could be avoided by a woman who chose to move to another district and could produce a previous letter of divorce.[167]

The 'cheapness' of Eastern Turkestani divorce did not mean that it could not have far-reaching economic consequences for both parties. In theory, the ex-husband had to hand over all the property that his wife brought with her into their marriage.[168] This rule applied if he initiated the divorce: the wife could take all moveable objects from their house, a practice which seems to have been sanctioned by custom. Moveable property typically took the form of carpets, felt mats and brass utensils. Wealthy men must have found it cheaper to take a second wife rather than divorce the first, because in theory she was in a position to ruin him financially. Some men managed to evade these regulations altogether, as is suggested by the statement that some divorcees found it difficult to support themselves during the obligatory waiting period following divorce.[169] In such cases the woman evidently did not receive her due upon divorce. The husband could also reduce the amount of maintenance for both the woman and his children.[170]

Occasionally, the woman induced the man to let her go by giving up her claim to her dowry. Some husbands were not content with this and went so far as to force their wives to pay for their agreement to divorce, even though this was considered illegal. Other male tactics included treating a wife poorly rather than asking for a divorce. In this way, a man could force his wife to ask for a divorce, which legally freed him from the obligation of restoring her dowry. For their part, some wives resorted to desertion in order to obtain their goal of divorce. Having left her husband, the woman waited for him to divorce her, in which case she could theoretically still claim her due.[171] In other words, there

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If madness or certain diseases became evident; 5. If it turned out that the marriage had not been properly solemnized (Schuyler 1966: 81).

[166] Prov. 464. 25V.

[167] Grenard 1898a: 119. Cf. Bakhtiar 1996: 518–29.

[168] Forsyth 1875: 90; Sykes & Sykes 1920: 64.

[169] Ibid.: 64.

[170] Just as he could waive the *mahr* (Skrine 1971: 200).

[171] Skrine [1926] 1971: 200; Sykes & Sykes 1920: 65.

was a tension between women's legal entitlement to their dowry in cases when the husband initiated divorce and men denying them this right in practice.

The exact details of a wife's legal entitlement upon divorce remain obscure. It may have included the *toyluq* she had received from her parents and her husband's family at the time of marriage, the *mähr* fixed at the time of marriage, and the value of the work she had invested in the household during the years of marriage. We have seen that in all likelihood the *mähr* existed only in name by the early twentieth century. The belongings a wife received from her natal family together with the gifts she received from her husband's side must have constituted the kernel of her claims. Her emptying the house probably referred to her claiming compensation for her labour invested into the household. The provision for compensation aimed at ensuring her minimal security, since she rarely inherited real estate (neither houses nor land); it follows that divorce could mean financial insecurity during the obligatory waiting period before remarriage. Although several sources mention that compensation was paid to the wife upon divorce, when it was paid at all, it could not have been very much, not even in local terms, since it was estimated that, for a man, if marriage was easy and cheap, divorce was even easier and cheaper.[172]

If the divorcing couple had children, the woman was expected to look after them until they reached the age of seven. If the children were older, then sons were supposed to stay with the father, and daughters with the mother.[173] But modern ethnographic data suggest a pragmatic approach: to enable her to remarry, a woman could leave her underaged children with their father; in practice they were cared for by their paternal grandmother or aunts.

5.4.2 *Causes*

As in other societies, a number of issues could be identified as grounds for divorce in Eastern Turkestan. Some authors put the blame on the excessively early age of marriage, which produced 'child marriages' Apparently, nine out of ten such marriages turned out to be failures and were soon dissolved.[174] The wife of a Swedish missionary reported

[172] Skrine 1971: 195; Dunmore 1993: 335.
[173] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 64.
[174] Skrine 1971: 200.

that following marriage, the exaggerated demands made by women for expensive headgear, jewellery and clothing were often the source of conjugal dispute, which could potentially lead to divorce.[175] A connection between conflict over financial demands and marital difficulties is illustrated by the legal documents quoted in Chapter 4. One of these examples demonstrates that domestic violence, the husband's failure to provide his wife with the necessary costs of maintenance, the wife neglecting her domestic duties or the violation of the prevailing morality code by either side could all be grounds for marital dispute and divorce.

Sometimes the interference of a third party—often the husband's family—could lead to legal separation. This is suggested by the explanation added to an anonymous poem collected in the early twentieth century and published under the title 'Libellous song', in which a woman laments her divorce:

> *I fainted* [and] *got well,*
> *I grew yellow* [and] *became* [like] *straw.*
> *Oh, my friend!*
> *Over the divorce I am amazed.*
> *My God, make* [me] *not desolate!*[176]

The refrain seems to have referred to a woman who had been married to a wealthy man, who divorced her at the instigation of his relatives.[177] Sometimes divorce and remarriage could have far-reaching negative consequences for the woman. The coachman Abdalla had two wives: one in Yarkand, the other in Kashgar. His wife in Yarkand had an ex-husband whom she had divorced. The first husband was so annoyed by her marriage to Abdalla that he slit her nose.[178]

Modern Uyghur ethnographers identify childlessness, lack of mutual affection, lack of loyalty, the interference of a third party, insults and the frequency of family rows as the most frequent causes for divorce.[179] It is possible that when lack of children alone was the problem, it could be solved by resorting to informal adoption from within the immediate kinship group. Regardless of the immediate cause, divorce did not

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[175] Högberg 1912.
[176] Raquette 1909: 15–6.
[177] Ibid.: 32.
[178] Skrine 1926: 200.
[179] Häbibulla 1993: 252.

diminish the woman's dignity and social standing.[180] Even childless women could remarry without difficulty, and a history of several marriages did not constitute an impediment to remarriage.

5.5 *Polygamy, Temporary Marriage, Adultery*

The frequency of divorce and remarriage suggests that serial monogamy was much more frequent than polygamy. Polygamy in its 'classical' form, when one husband lived under the same roof with several wives, was mostly limited to elite groups, but many rich men were content with one wife.[181] This form of polygamy was discouraged partly by economic considerations and partly by the *mollas*.[182]

Polygamy was considered primarily an urban phenomenon, and it was explained with the relative spatial mobility of town-dwellers. In contrast, among the rural population it was rare: rural marriages were characterized by a greater degree of stability and a general lack of sexual promiscuity.[183] In the cities, many persons had two wives. The usual pattern was that wives lived in different towns or in different quarters and often they did not even know of each other.[184]

Polygamy often assumed the form of temporary marriage: a man could marry a woman for a week or even a couple of days, "the mulla who performs the ceremony arranging for the divorce at the same time".[185] Although the Arabic term *mut'a* was not mentioned by the sources, the Turki concept of *waqitliq toy*, literally meaning 'temporary marriage', was widely used.[186] Temporary marriage was dubbed by some Westerners as *mariage de convenance*, and some went so far as to equate it with licensed prostitution. It was said to be particularly prevalent under Chinese rule prior to Ya'qub Beg's rebellion.[187] Some commentators contrasted the situation to Russian Turkestan, where such practices

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[180] Dunmore 1993: 335.
[181] Forsyth 1875: 90.
[182] Grenard 1898a: 120.
[183] Lansdell 1893: 409; Sykes & Sykes 1920: 189; Norins 1944: 80.
[184] Skrine 1971: 195.
[185] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 65; Macartney 1931: 129.
[186] Prov. 464. 13V. The term was also known to my interview partners in the 1990s.
[187] Forsyth 1875: 84. Laxity of morals in general and the high incidence of temporary marriages in particular were attributed by some directly to Chinese influence (Kuropatkin 1882: 38).

were not allowed,[188] while others insisted that women's motivation in such cases was mainly economic.[189] Temporary marriages were typically contracted between local women and Turki merchants from other oases, Muslim merchants from outside Altishahr who temporarily resided in an oasis centre, Chinese soldiers or merchants stationed or residing in an oasis, or Russians or other foreigners. Prior to the Ya'qub Beg interlude, such marriage alliances were less frequent east of Kucha because of the limited number of foreign men; they were more common in Yarkand, which boasted large foreign colonies.[190]

Following the restoration of Chinese rule in Yarkand, temporary marriages continued to be frequent, often conducted between Chinese soldiers or civilians and local women. Such alliances came about without resorting to the services of the clergy, and "when a Chinaman is called back to his own home in China proper, or a Chinese soldier has served his time in Turkestan and has to return to his native city of Pekin or Shanghai, he either leaves his temporary wife behind to shift for herself, or he sells her to a friend. If he has a family he takes the boys with him—if he can afford it—failing that, the sons are left alone and unprotected to fight the battle of life, while in the case of daughters, he sells them to one of his companions for a trifling sum."[191]

Temporary unions were often mediated by a go-between. In Yarkand, when a man was on a journey he was approached by a matchmaker (*dällal*) who asked him if he needed a wife. If the answer was yes, the matchmaker brought him three or four women to choose from. The man paid the woman money for her *toyluq*, and upon leaving she received compensation.[192] We cannot be certain how meticulously financial obligations stipulated in the marriage contract were observed, but it followed the pattern of marriages contracted on a permanent basis. Women who contracted temporary marriages were not much respected. A fifty-year-old Turki man cohabiting with his eighteen-year-old provisional wife in Yarkand in the early 1930s for a two-month period said: "A woman like this isn't worth more than a hundred *piodze*—about the same as a half-sack of flour".[193] But in other instances emotional attachment

[188] Schuyler reported that the institution of temporary marriage was not tolerated in Tashkent (1966: 80).
[189] Iskhakov 1975: 44.
[190] Valikhanov 1961: 349.
[191] Dunmore 1993: 328–9.
[192] Prov. 464. 13V.
[193] Maillart 1937: 243.

could also enter the relationship. The four pony-men in Colonel Schomberg's narrative contracted temporary marriages for ten days in Khotan. Upon leaving Khotan, "the farewells of the newly divorced ladies and their ephemeral spouses were quite touching".[194]

What started off as a temporary marriage could sometimes be transformed into a lasting partnership. Sarimsaq, from the city of Osh, had married a woman from Kashgar under Ya'qub Beg's rule and had several children with her. Then he moved to Aqsu, where he was living with his second wife, but he was hoping to take his first wife from Kashgar to join his new household in Aqsu. However, following Ya'qub Beg's fall, the Chinese tried to put a check on temporary marriages contracted by Andijanis and Russians with Kashgari women, which rendered it impossible for Sarimsaq to move his first family to Aqsu.[195] This incident also exemplifies how local authorities attempted to interfere in civilian life from time to time. In this case, the reason behind the regulation was to curtail the business activities of Andijanis and Russians, which were threatening Chinese interests in the region.

Polygamous marriages contracted on a temporary basis in an oasis away from one's own could prove problematic, as the case of Mämäsit (Mähämmäd Säyid), the *mirab* of Lukchen, in the Turfan region, also demonstrates. As the bearer of a high administrative office, he was commissioned to accompany one of the khojas' descendants on an alms-collecting tour to Kashgar. The *mirab* was therefore in an official capacity in Kashgar, and during his stay he married two young women. Both these marriages had been contracted on a temporary basis, and the *mirab* duly divorced the women before leaving Kashgar. However, news travelled fast between the distant oases, and when he arrived home he found that his first wife, Aynissa, had gotten wind of his temporary unions; in revenge she refused to let him enter his house, beat him with a whip and told him to go back to his wives in Kashgar. Eventually, peace was restored only after he had given Aynissa some silk and muslin, a red scarf and other nice presents.[196]

Temporary marriage was not always under the exclusive control of the spouses: a woman's natal family could be instrumental in both arranging and dissolving such marriages. A rich old Indian merchant

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[194] Schomberg 1996: 157.
[195] Lansdell 1893: II. 41.
[196] Le Coq 1926: 60; 1919: 63.

from Yarkand contracted a temporary marriage with a pretty young girl from Kashgar. When the time came to return to Yarkand, where he had a wife and children, he wanted to take his new wife with him, but the girl's father insisted that their marriage terms were only valid for Kashgar and took his daughter home. That night the husband attacked the father's house but was prevented by the interference of the Chinese and, eventually, the British authorities, under whose jurisdiction the husband belonged. Later on, the girl was successfully kidnapped and taken to Yarkand where she joined her husband and his family, although it is not clear if she did so willingly.[197] This case also illustrates that temporary marriage was by no means an exclusive 'ethnic marker' of Turkis. It also occurred frequently among the Tungans. In the words of the British missionaries, the Tungan man "arranges to keep a family in every town where he does business, that he may be sure of comfort wherever he goes. These different families are kept quite separate and seldom even know each other, but he is the centre around which all the homes revolve".[198]

The institution of temporary marriage regulated short-term sexual relationships. It was seen as preferable to men living without a woman. Social pressure was exerted on foreign male visitors to take a spouse, as happened to Ambolt's Russian assistant, Vorotnikoff. After he had been in Eastern Turkestan for two months without having chosen a wife, a solemn group of village elders appeared in his tent and offered their help.[199]

In its simplicity, the institution seems to have been in line with Shi'ite practice. As in Iran, it was mostly an urban phenomenon in Eastern Turkestan, associated with travel and long-distance trade. While a man was allowed to contract several marriages simultaneously, women were subject to strict monogamy, even within the institutional framework of temporary marriage. In the marriage contract, the duration of the marriage and the amount of money to be transferred had to be specified. The fixed duration of the marriage rendered a formal divorce superfluous: witnesses were not required for the marriage, while its registration was subject to local practice. Shi'ite doctrine distinguished between temporary and permanent marriage; the aim of the former

[197] Macartney 1931: 129–30.
[198] Cable and French 1942: 166.
[199] Ambolt 1939: 45.

was supposedly sexual enjoyment, while that of the latter was procreation. Nevertheless, the reasons of the individual actors must have been more wide-ranging than this: they included the need for companionship, protection and economic incentives; pressure from one's family or the community may have also played a part. In Iran, children born from temporary marriages were typically recognized as legitimate and were supposed to have equal status with children born from permanent wedlock, thus distinguishing this form of marriage from institutionalized prostitution; in fact Shi'ite law allowed the father leeway to decide whether to acknowledge such a child as legitimate or not.[200] Although we have no direct information about the legal status of such children in Eastern Turkestan, indirect indications in some of the above cases suggest that the fathers acknowledged children from such marriages as legitimate. But often the children born from temporary marriages were unwanted by both parents. At some point, the Swedish Mission Orphanage in Yarkand housed thirty-five children. Less than half of these were orphans in the usual sense, without either father or mother living. The others were "victims of the unfortunate temporary marriage system prevalent throughout Kashgaria—honorary orphans as it were".[201]

One line of argument could be that insisting on the formalities of marriage meant recognizing temporary alliances as inevitable and keeping them under control. In spite of their frequency, temporary marriages were never idealized; rather, they were regarded as deviations from the normative behaviour embodied in monogamous long-term relationships. At the same time, temporary marriage also constituted an attempt to uphold marriage as an ideal state of the human condition rather than to debase it. While most foreign accounts have concentrated on female promiscuity—(implicit also in Linda Benson's chosen title 'A Much-Married Woman: Marriage and Divorce in Xinjiang 1850–1950')[202]—some have redressed the balance by noting that the Eastern Turkestani was 'a much-married man'.[203] Shahla Haeri's interpretation of the institution of temporary marriage as both ambiguous and complex also holds for

[200] For practices in Iran, see Haeri 1989, Mir-Hosseini 1994.
[201] Skrine 1971: 126.
[202] Benson 1993.
[203] Ambolt 1939: 3; Skrine 1971: 200.

Eastern Turkestan; it was instrumental in both upholding and simultaneously evading normative marriage ideology.[204]

Given the social acceptance of remarriage for both men and women, as well as the institutionalized endorsement of temporary marriage, one might expect that there was little room left for adultery. But specimens of oral literature suggest that adultery flourished in Eastern Turkestan. It forms the starting point of several folk stories, such as the one noted by Jarring from Guma in which the conflict stems from the queen's affair with the stable boy. Adultery features prominently in another story in which the trickster 'scald head' (*Taz*) discovers that his master's wife gives the best bits of food to her lover.[205]

The punishment meted out to women caught committing adultery varied considerably. Women who engaged in open prostitution with Chinese troops were subject to strict social judgment, and some had their throats slit when Ya'qub Beg seized power in 1864. In 1892, rumours of a Muslim revolt in Khotan caused many of these women to flee and take refuge in the countryside, where they married good Muslim men: it seems that the latter had no moral objection to such unions, since in their view a new marriage erased all previous dishonourable activities.[206] Adulterers and professional prostitutes were often treated similarly, and the dividing lines between women who serially contracted numerous temporary marriages, adulterers and professional prostitutes were probably very thin. Mannerheim reported the following:

> There are, however, whole streets of light women who offer the travelling merchant the joy and consolation he may require during his sojourn, often of several weeks, in a strange town, between two long and arduous journeys. In Khotan a whole class of these consolers is said to be available for travellers under the name of 'merchants' wives.[207]

Mijit Axun suggested that, in Turfan, adultery was considered a serious crime and was equated with prostitution (*jallapliq*). The husband who caught his wife with a strange man could choose from a number of strategies. Acting according to local law, a decent husband meted out the lightest punishment: beating his wife and sending her back to her parents. However, he could also take more public action by taking his

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[204] Haeri 1989: 1–6.
[205] Jarring 1951a: 39–53; 65–75.
[206] Grenard 1898a: 122–3.
[207] Mannerheim 1969: 50.

wife and her lover to the mosque, where both were whipped forty-one times. After this, the woman was handed over to her husband and the man was verbally reprimanded. Even if the case was initially brought to the secular authorities, the sinners were handed over to the Islamic court, where the punishment was likely to be more severe and humiliating for both parties. Their faces were blackened and they were sat and tied on two separate donkeys: the woman facing the back of the donkey, the man sitting normally, so that the lovers had to face each other in this shameful position. With their hands tied behind their backs, they were paraded naked for a day or two through all the streets and the bazaar of the village or town, to be the butt of public abuse and humiliation. The procedure was completed by whipping the lovers fifty or 100 times.[208] Reports suggest the dogged persistence of such humiliating punishments for well over half a century.[209] Modern Xinjiang historians confirm that when a Muslim committed a lesser crime, his punishment entailed the ripping of his clothes and the blackening of his face. More serious crimes were punished with flogging. These authors consider adultery a major crime which could warrant the death penalty or lifelong forced labour.[210] It is probably fair to conclude that,

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[208] Katanov 1976: 40–1.

[209] Hedin 2001.I.: 189; Norins 1944: 80.

[210] Nurhaji-Goguang 1995: 353. Blackening the face as punishment meted out for unlawful acts or even intentions must have been known in the region for quite some time. Such an incident is related by a Moghul prince and historian in the late sixteenth century. The Moghul prince Dost Muhammad, described as an eccentric, unreasonable person whose mind was in an unbalanced state, fell in love with one of his late father's wives. He tried to obtain permission from the religious authorities to marry her. "At length the Khán came to Mauláná Muhammad Attár, reeling with drunkenness and with a sword in his hand, and said to him: 'I want to marry my own mother; is it lawful or not?' The Mauláná, who was one of the most learned of the dervishes and a most pious man, said to the Khán: 'For such a one as you it is lawful'. So the Khán immediately ordered preparations for the marriage to be made. But on the night of his nuptials he saw his father, in a dream, mounted on a black horse, who, coming up to him, said: 'Oh! Wretched one, in that after we have for one hundred years been Musulmáns, thou shouldst apostasise and become an infidel.' [His father] shot him below the ribs with an arrow, then dismounting, he rubbed his hand on the bottom of a kettle, and blackened the Khán's face, who thereupon awoke, in alarm. Breathless and penitent, he rushed out of the house of his mother and washed himself. He was seized with an acute pain in the side, which, in the morning, developed into fever..." The prince was later seized with pleurisy and died after six days' illness, in 1468–1469, at the age of forty (Haidar 1895: 90).

Mijit Axun mentioned another provision in customary law, which aimed at publicly humiliating the adulterous male lover rather than the woman. This was only adhered to "if the woman's husband was a bad man, he tied his rival up and did to him what he had done to his wife" (Katanov 1976: 40–1). Mijit Axun was elaborating norma-

as in other societies, adultery occurred but was strongly condemned in local moral discourse.

5.6 *Moral Evaluations*

Laxity of morals and the ease and frequency of marriage and divorce were themes discussed by many authors, and most descriptions are peppered with judgments rooted in Victorian values condemning local morality—or bemoaning its absence. In his pioneering study of nineteenth-century social and economic life in Eastern Turkestan, Warikoo summed up English-speaking travellers' accounts concerning prevailing marriage practices.[211] For him, the most important features of marriage were child betrothal, arranged marriages, "dowry" paid by the groom's family to the bride's parents and high divorce rates.

A revisiting of the sources, including some not quoted by Warikoo, reveals more subtle, and sometimes even contradictory, patterns in these evaluations. In Forsyth's view, women's relative well-being in Turki society had a clear historical explanation: prior to the conversion to Islam, women had held an elevated position in society and often exercised supreme authority in household affairs.[212] The pre-Islamic heritage was also seen by other authors as a source of female freedom. It was due to its lingering effect that strict Koranic practices were only superficially employed, even during Ya'qub Beg's Islamic theocracy. Kashgari and Khotanese women could accompany their husbands anywhere they wanted to, and they were free to leave their houses alone. When visiting together with her husband, it was normal for a woman to enter the house first, take the place of honour and be invited to smoke, drink and eat first. Women had considerable authority in marketing agricultural produce and in purchasing household items. It was reported that there were ten women to every man in the bazaar. Among women, absolute financial independence was said to characterize

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tive codes rather than actual practice. In the same passage he noted that the sexual act between two men was considered a major crime, as foul as the violation of the incest taboo. It is unlikely that this type of revenge was commonly adhered to. But the fact that in principle an adulterous male could potentially face humiliation of a much higher order than the woman implies that women's moral purity was not the sole responsibility of her male guardians.

[211] Warikoo: 1985.

[212] Forsyth 1875: 84.

many widows and divorcees.[213] Dr. Bellew, a member of the Forsyth mission, was of the opinion that under Chinese rule prior to Ya'qub Beg, sexual relations had been lax. Under Ya'qub Beg, prostitution was suppressed and women subjected to Islamic law, but they only started taking the new regulations seriously after sixteen women were executed in Aqsu on charges of immorality.[214] Warikoo has pointed out that even during the strict moral restrictions imposed upon the population by Ya'qub Beg, the divorce rate remained high. He also claimed that the practice of temporary marriage helped people to "evade the restrictions imposed... on both the institutions of chaucan and jallab".[215] Dr. Bellew indeed wrote that "there was the *chaucan* always ready to contract an alliance for a long or short period with the merchant or traveller visiting the country or with anybody else".[216] But Warikoo's reference to the *çokan* as an institution is mistaken and reflects a misunderstanding of local concepts and customary practice. The word *çokan* was used to refer to young married women with no children, a topic which will be discussed in the next section in more detail. In pre-revolutionary times, the term referred to one stage of a woman's life, and as such it could hardly have meant an institution akin to prostitution, as Warikoo implies. Dr. Bellew was simply referring to the availability of young divorced women for temporary marriage.

Vámbéry, who never himself visited the region and based his remarks on eyewitness accounts, speculated that the ratio of women to men in the region was two to one, which could only be attributed to the gentle treatment women were enjoying in the region.[217] Others preferred to explain the apparent 'discount' of women in southern Xinjiang at the end of the nineteenth century through economic factors, such as the large-scale migration of men away from the region.[218]

The advantageous outcome of divorce for women was frequently emphasized by Western accounts.[219] Vámbéry claimed that women's engagement in economic undertakings as independent agents was closely related to the ease of divorce, which automatically ended with

[213] Grenard 1898a: 124–5.
[214] Bellew 1875b: 384.
[215] Warikoo 1985: 104.
[216] Ibid.: 104.
[217] Vámbéry 1970: 340.
[218] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 64.
[219] Forsyth 1875: 84–5.

financial gain for the woman.[220] Skrine thought that only women with looks and wit above the average could profit greatly from the looseness of marriage ties.[221] He stressed that loose marriage ties were more likely to result in a weak and disadvantageous position for women.[222] Such generalizations are occasionally balanced out by authors who provide more insight by offering accounts of specific cases. A good example was the description by Lansdell, who depicted temporary marriage as an employment opportunity for 'cast-off' women; however, it earned them only a 'miserable pittance'.[223] His biography of a Turki female prisoner from Maralbashi contrasts sharply with the projection of the 'merry divorcee' or 'merry widow' of other, more frequently quoted authors and highlights the often tragic complexity of the situation. The protagonist's troubles began when she was only nine, when her father killed someone and was imprisoned. His daughter brought him food while he was in the Chinese prison in Kashgar. A prison officer offered to buy the daughter from the mother in exchange for the husband's release. The deal was concluded, and the girl was abused by the officer for six months. When the officer was transferred to Peking, the girl stayed. Soon after returning to her parents' home, she was married off to another Chinese officer, with whom she lived in Ush-Turfan for two years. After divorcing him, she returned to her native Kashgar. There, another marriage followed, this time to a local Muslim official. When he took another wife, however, quarrels became common, and she left him. She stayed alone for three months (the obligatory waiting period), after which another Muslim official took her as a second wife. This union too was short-lived: it was dissolved after only five months. At the age of thirteen she had had five husbands. After her mother's death her father lived on his daughter's earnings. During a subsequent marriage to a Chinese officer, the girl's husband quarrelled in her house with another man, as a result of which she was exiled to Aqsu: here again, two men quarrelled and fought in her lodgings, and she was imprisoned and eventually executed.[224]

The tragic life of this girl was perhaps representative of women who came from the lower social strata and became entangled in temporary

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[220] Vámbéry 1970: 340–1.
[221] Skrine 1971: 202.
[222] Ibid.: 201.
[223] Lansdell 1893: 409.
[224] Ibid.: 411.

marriages. Since the girl's sexual partners included Chinese men, she evidently belonged to those Muslim women who lived on the margins of society, whose status was no different from that of prostitutes. More typical for the middle classes was the situation documented in a petition composed in rhymes by Baqi, a local official from Kucha, on behalf of a woman who, having borne three children, was discarded and divorced by her husband:

A helpless woman has come to your door;
In the city of Kucha you are the leader's son.
Oh, lord, let me describe my request to you;
Listen to my petition, king of the world!
I am a poor unfortunate from a faraway village;
I have come to humiliation because I have little money.
I, the poor, have married a beggar from Kucha;
He made me a woman, I was bent like a willow branch.
We lived together for twenty-three years,
I had children: one son and two daughters.
When I was young I worked so much
That I had blisters on my hands,
The money which I earned was put in the sack.
Saying I was old he pushed me away and took a young woman;
I go begging, asking for food and bread.
I have neither father nor mother, I am a vagabond!
I have neither food to eat nor wood to make a fire.
I have nowhere to go; I feel dizzy.
My life is running away like the water of a river.
When I married this pauper I was young,
I was very beautiful with eyebrows which looked
As if they had been drawn with a pen.
I was like a piece of transparent ruby,
I was the first of all young women,
My brows were like cut reeds,
My husband has put me in this position:
He threw me out like an old piece of rag,
He threw me out naked like a peeled onion.
My breasts used to be round like a red apple,
He caressed them then threw them away like a sack.
Old age comes from heaven!
Does an old person lose her strength?
Have compassion for me, for the righteousness of God!
I am orphaned, I am abandoned, I am a helpless beggar!
Through the truth of the angels the throne is complete,
One should have compassion with an orphan![225]

[225] Le Coq 1919: 58–60.

Baqi also composed a counter-poem, this time relating the difficulties a man might encounter in marriage:

Lord Judge, you are the king of the world,
A thousand sorrows have fallen upon my head recently;
I have come to your presence with a petition!
For several years I was a widower sighing,
Early last year I remarried,
My first wife had lusted after boots and silkstuff.
She let me have six lengths of light silk,
As well as kerchiefs for my mother and father.
She put everything else into her pocket.
After our wedding I returned home,
I said to myself: I have got myself a wife!
My wife's inclination towards me
Did not make us resemble Leyla and Majnun,
My mother-in-law is worse than Azazil,
Compared to her Satan is ignorant.
Her mother has drummed it into my wife:
When your husband comes, do not even look at him!
You are pretty; your husband is quite nasty,
When your husband comes, take a whip and beat him!
Even if you are a king like Jamşid,
Who is as dignified in this world as you are?
When I was thirteen I had studied enough to reach the limits of my intellect,
When I was fourteen some angry craze befell me.
By the time I was fourteen I had no patience left,
No patience was left in my heart, no reason in my head and no peace in my soul.
With fifteen I married a young girl;
When someone marries such a girl his soul will suffer much!
Her glance was like that of a camel, her posture like that of a cow;
I have taken her into my house which proved to be a disaster.
This unpleasant wife is an old traitor,
She put peppermint in the tea and onions into the corn porridge
When she prepares this dish she slaughters a sheep for this meal,
This is why my soul burns in my body and my heart wails!
If I say 'get out!' she does not obey my order, she says 'I will not go!'
When she lies there sleeping, a young boy like me would not want to lie on her breast.
It is for this reason that my heart is distressed and tired,
[Following the divorce] she took 30 täñgä *for her upkeep.*[226]

Albert von Le Coq, the German archaeologist with a keen interest in contemporary oral tradition, found it difficult to transcribe some of

[226] Ibid.: 60–3.

the lines, because the text was dictated to him not by the poet but by his son, who was often uncertain about the wording. Therefore some details remain obscure. Nevertheless, the story of the jilted husband confirms a number of assumptions: men too had difficulties due to early marriage, such as satisfying the right of a woman to demand prestige objects from her husband; the interference of a third party (the mother-in-law); the freedom exercised by the wife to defy the husband's patriarchal authority; and even female domestic violence. Furthermore, the woman in the story also made use of her right to money for maintenance. The poetic renderings of marital histories by an indigenous author were closer to reality than the one-sided evaluations of foreigners; they confirm that local actors' strategies pursued within the framework of Islamic and customary legal provisions could prove equally damaging to both men and women.

Nur Luke strongly condemned traditional marriage customs, the excessively early age of marriage, arranged marriages and the practice of marrying very young girls to forty- or fifty-year-old men. For him these despicable practices were at the root of women's oppression. Furthermore, they also accounted for the inequality between man and wife and the great frequency of divorce and remarriage.[227] We have to bear in mind that Nur Luke was a Christian convert who had internalized the protestant ethic of Western missionaries.

Biased evaluations aside, foreign and indigenous sources reveal a great deal of diversity in marriage and divorce strategies. Marriage was regarded as a project aimed at making community, i.e., setting up a new, independent conjugal unit and, through it, allying kin groups. It was recognized that realizing this was a long-term project and that the relationship had to be continuously cemented from both sides. This was achieved through repeated ceremonial exchanges of payments, presents and hospitality. Temporary marriage also followed this basic pattern, at least symbolically. The birth of children contributed to the strengthening of the conjugal household, but a birth also provided an occasion for the ceremonial re-affirmation of communal ties between the male and female sides, a topic further elaborated in the next section.

[227] Prov. 212. 16, 18–9.

5.7 *Celebrating Female Fertility*

Both indigenous and foreign sources provide more detailed information about women's life stages than about male circumcision. In the south the first phase was that of the 'girl' or 'maiden' (*qiz*). The second stage was that of the *çokan*, or the young married woman who had not yet borne any children; an alternative term was *sekiläk*.[228] The third stage was that of the *juwan*, or a married woman with children. The categories of *çokan* and *juwan* comprised married women as well as widows and divorcees.[229] The final stage was that of the old woman.

In some of the southern oases, a big feast was held accompanied by music and entertainment to mark a woman's first pregnancy. Within the neighbourhood this ritual symbolized the transition of the young childless woman into a new stage of her life: motherhood. Guests brought the woman clothes, head scarves, money, sheep, ducks and hens.[230] Her change of status was marked by the braiding of her hair into two plaits, instead of the five or seven worn before. Furthermore, the bangs over the forehead had to be cut; these signs helped to distinguish a *çokan/sekiläk* from a *juwan*. A *juwan* was a woman with child, and this was the status women claimed throughout their fertile years.[231]

Native and foreign accounts corroborate each other and point to strong continuities over time. Lansdell, whose report preceded Nur Luke's descriptions by more than fifty years, also described the ceremony that followed the birth of the first baby. After the ceremony, the woman received the honorific title *juwan* (in Lansdell's text, *jewan*), and "ever after she wears upon the parts of her dress closing over the breast four short crossbars, of green or red whilst her husband is living, but these during widowhood are covered with black".[232] The straps thus served as a symbol of motherhood, but the 'colour code' also indicated marital status.[233] In Keriya in the 1920s, small details in the decoration of clothes consistently indicated a woman's social and marital status: unmarried girls buttoned their outer garment across the shoulder;

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[228] The term also means 'hair on a woman's temples'. See Schwarz 1992: 499.
[229] Prov. 212. 40–4; Dunmore 1993: 333.
[230] These gifts were known as *juwanliq şagumi*.
[231] Prov. 212. 40–4.
[232] Lansdell 1893: 205–6.
[233] Forsyth 1875: 91–2.

young married women wore a small patch of colour at the throat; and the *juwans* had green or red brands embroidered over the breast.[234] The straps were worn on an overcoat or a specially embroidered dress, which was the distinctive clothing of the *juwan*.[235] Among rich families, Indian gold cloth was used, which implied that the practice was emulated by families within the lower (at least medium) income brackets.[236]

This change in dress code was secondary to changes in hairstyle. In some locations the ritual was named either after the woman's newly acquired social status (*juwan toyi*) or after her changed hairstyle. In Kucha, elderly informants called a woman's life-cycle ritual *çaçwaq toyi*, and in Kashgar it was known as *çaç qoşaq toyi*. These designations stress the centrality of hair as a symbol: the former denoted the 'tying of the hair'; the latter, the parting of the hair into two plaits.[237] In local society, hair symbolism invariably indicated status.[238] Mijit Axun provided details of hair terminology: the hair of a girl was called *kökülä*; the hair of the young married *çokan* was called 'hyacinth hair' (*sumbul çaç*); and the hair of a woman with child was known as 'sideburns' (*yañğaq çaç*) or *sekilätk çaç*. In Turfan, girls normally wore their hair in seven plaits, but once they were married, the number of plaits was reduced to five to indicate their *çokan* status. After a woman had a child, she wore only two plaits, as befitted a *juwan*. While the changes in dress and the organization of a feast indicated a certain minimal level of economic security, manipulation of hair was not tied to income and was free and open to all. The symbolic force of hair was such that even if a woman had no child and no ritual was organized, if she nonetheless started wearing her hair in two plaits, she was awarded the title *juwan*.[239]

Women's life stages were similarly structured in various parts of the region, but there remains some uncertainty about the timing of the ceremony.[240] Some elderly women in Kashgar recalling their personal

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[234] Schomberg 1996: 235.

[235] Forsyth 1875: 91; Le Coq 1928: 89; Skrine 1926: 202. For reference to this garment, see also Muhammad Ali Damolla's text published by Jarring 1992: 17, 21.

[236] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 313–4.

[237] Most likely connected to *qoşaq*, which means 'harness ropes (tied together in pairs)' (Schwarz 1992: 638).

[238] Cf. Bellér-Hann 2004.

[239] Katanov 1936: 1 250–1.

[240] Modern Uyghur folklorists put the time of the ritual after the birth of the first or second, or perhaps third child (Häbibulla 1993: 302–3; Raxman et al.: 1996: 132).

experiences insisted that it could also be organized at advanced stages of the first or later pregnancies or soon after the birth of the first child or subsequent children. This vagueness is explicitly addressed by foreign authors, who claimed that in Kashgar the timing was neither fixed nor dependent upon the birth of a child.[241] Its only precondition was proven fertility. The woman's approximate age at the time of the ritual could be anywhere between sixteen and thirty.

Sources unanimously agree that the celebrations centred upon the woman rather than upon the child. In contrast to rituals surrounding birth, the sex of the child did not affect the celebrations in any way. Decorated appropriately, the woman was seated in the place of honour. Abul Wahid emphasized the elaborate make-up and clothes worn by the Kashgari girl and the festive atmosphere characterized by 'conspicuous consumption', which found expression in communal hospitality offered to both the woman's and the husband's guests, in the richly laid ceremonial tablecloth and in dancing and music. The presentation of gifts by both sides to the couple—but above all to the woman—followed the pattern of mutuality well known from other joyous life-cycle rituals (*toy*), and there are indications that, circumstances allowing, both sides' contribution was substantial:

> The guests, who have come from the girl's side, place some sheep, *toqaç* [bread prepared with fat in the dough], handkerchiefs, eggs and things necessary for eating, which they have brought in front of the girl who has become *çuban*. And the guests, who have come from the boy's side, place the gifts they have brought [like] sheep, cows, *toqaç*, in front of the boy. From the girl's side they serve *keba:b* to the guests. From the boy's side, they serve pilaff. In front of the boy, the girl's father puts a coat. In front of the girl, the boy's parents place material for a dress on a tray.[242]

The change in her status entailed not only new privileges but also new obligations. Women who had undergone the ceremony, or simply acquired the title by changing their hairstyle, were expected to display more modest and serious behaviour, as befitted a mature person.[243] But the status of the *juwan* was not free from underlying contradictions: she was endowed with increased social prestige, which also allowed her more boldness in public. In contrast to the *çokan*, the *juwan* was "worth

[241] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 313–4.
[242] Jarring 1992: 29–30.
[243] Le Coq 1928: 89.

more on the marriage market, for men do not like child brides who know nothing and may at any moment run away back to their parents, whereas they will actually spend several hundred tengas on *toiluk* (trousseau) for the privilege of marrying a good-looking *jawan*".[244]

In contrast to the wedding ceremony which could be repeated many times over, this ritual could be performed only once in a woman's lifetime. This rule applied even if all her children died, a real possibility in pre-socialist times, when child mortality was high. In this light, it is not surprising that the hair-braiding ceremony often surpassed the wedding in importance. The gifts bestowed upon the woman at this time were sometimes richer than those she received at marriage, and they became more fully her personal property, which inevitably enhanced her relative authority in her husband's household.[245]

It is significant that the ritual was organized in the woman's natal household. In late pregnancy, as noted earlier in this chapter, she was ceremonially taken home by her mother and matrilateral relatives, where she stayed forty days following the birth. Her extended stay with her natal family had several implications. The presence of her mother and possibly other female relatives of the domestic group and their help during the birth and in caring for mother and baby reinforced her attachment to her natal household. This attachment was further cemented by the customary practice of burying the placenta in the mud floor of the house where the birth took place. These ties continued to be reinforced through regular mutual visits. Given the instability of the institution of marriage, it was essential for a woman to maintain close ties with her natal household; in case of a divorce or the death of her husband, she typically returned to her parents, who would give her shelter and often take the initiative in arranging a new marriage for her.

Women's customary right to give birth to their first two babies in their mother's home is still widely observed in modern Xinjiang, and we have every reason to believe that the hair-tying ritual was closely connected to this enduring practice. The structure of events from the ritual taking of the pregnant woman away from her husband's family to her eventual return with the baby fits the general schema identified

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[244] Skrine 1971: 202–3; also quoted by Jarring 1992: 28.
[245] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 313; Jarring 1975: 29–30; 1992: 27.

by Van Gennep as separation, liminality and re-integration.[246] Separation was made necessary by the approaching birth, which rendered women simultaneously polluting and dangerous. Of all states of pollution affecting women (including menstruation and sexual intercourse), birth represented the most prolonged period of impurity. Unlike other forms of pollution, this one forced a woman to abandon temporarily the familiar structure of her daily routine. Her physical separation from normal life was heightened by her physical move to her natal home, where she spent the dangerous period. Her final return to her husband's family meant re-integration into the social structure of the everyday. The celebrations can be viewed as a temporary re-enactment of the wedding, at which the bride's side, the wife-givers, once again assumed an authoritative position and were able to dictate the rules of interaction. The male side occupied a subordinate position and had to accept the demands stipulated by the wife-givers.

The ceremonies surrounding the event also suggest that when a birth took place in the woman's natal house, the marriage of the young couple was not yet considered final. The separate contributions of male and female sides to the celebrations are reminiscent of wedding arrangements, and this was reflected in the vocabulary used to distinguish the girl's side (*qiz täräpi*) from the man's side (*är täräpi*). The separateness was emphasized by the various stages of the ceremonies which preceded and followed the birth. Regardless of whether the *juwan toyi* took place before or after the birth, in this context the two sides again met as competing and complementary parties. The male side brought substantial presents to the young woman and her family, as if courting her to return with them. The female side also lavished presents on their own daughter, and to maintain at least the illusion of reciprocal exchange, they also presented their son-in-law with a garment. Mutuality characterized the festive arrangements, since male and female sides both contributed. Following the ceremony, the two sides were no longer separate entities competing with each other as wife-givers and wife-takers; through the consolidation of the position of the bride the communal ties between the two sides became solidified.

The hair-tying ritual was not a fertility ritual; its purpose was not to induce or to engender fertility. Rather, it recognized and celebrated

[246] Van Gennep 2000.

a woman's ability to conceive and the couple's success in procreating. Simultaneously, it acknowledged the compatibility of the couple; it served to reinforce the young mother's ties with her native family, but it also cemented her subsequent re-integration into her husband's household.[247] Celebrating female fertility, the transfer of presents and increased social status for the woman all run counter to the patriarchal ideology generally associated with Muslim societies. In Turner's scheme, the liminal phase is identified as anti-structure, a ritual inversion of the structure of the everyday.[248] If structure in this case is identified with patriarchal ideology, then it is easy to see in the ritual the temporary, ritual subversion of the normal state of affairs. Simultaneously, the hair-braiding ceremony was also a strategy through which the newly linked community of the conjugal unit, and in an extended sense that of the male and female kin groups, was reaffirmed through the ritualized enactment of the marriage ceremony with its reciprocal exchange of hospitality and gift-giving.

5.8 *Death Rituals and the Afterlife*

As in most other human societies, in Eastern Turkestan rituals surrounding death followed elaborate patterns informed by religion and customary practice. Compared to other life-cycle rituals, death rituals have the closest associations with religious belief and practice. Simultaneously, they also have important underpinnings derived from local ideas of reciprocal exchange and altruism. Before considering the various stages and variations of death rituals, it is important to consider assumptions about what happens to body and soul before, during and after death. Understanding local eschatology is a precondition for making sense of the ritual behaviour of the living.

Molla Abdul Qadir, from Yarkand, gave the following description of the afterlife. After a dead man had been buried and the mourners had

[247] In Kashgar people tend to attribute the ritual to the pre-modern period (i.e., pre-1949), and claim that it became obsolete in the socialist decades. But in Kucha, at least in some families, the practice continued well into the socialist era. There is anecdotal evidence that in recent years the ritual is being revived in the oasis of Khotan. Disruption, continuity and revival of the ritual in various locations are no doubt responses to the changing political and economic conditions of the modern period and await further research. But the values underlying the *juwan toyi* continued to characterize ideas about marriage and fertility in the 1990s.

[248] Turner 1995.

left the cemetery, two angels, 'one beautiful, the other ugly' known as Munkir and Näkir respectively, entered the grave.[249] After their dreadful arrival, they interrogated the dead person in Arabic about his religious affiliation.[250] If he gave the right answer that he was a Muslim and belonged to the Hanafi legal school, they told him to sleep on and left him. But if he did not reply thus, they tortured him:

> Seven days later the spirit (*roh*) of the dead man came to visit the body. It looked at the body and said: 'Oh, body, have I not always been your companion? Why am I separated from you?', it said and cried. The *roh* came again eleven days later to visit the body. On seeing it, the *roh* said: 'Oh, body, I used to be together with you, you used to be fragrant, now, following our separation you smell bad. Such a fine figure that stinks'—it cried. The *roh* returned again to visit the body twenty days later, and when it saw it decomposing it wept sadly.[251]

A more detailed native description of ideas surrounding death is provided by an anonymous author in an essay composed or copied in the 1920s in Yarkand. In spite of the title 'Description of a Burial', the essay relates nothing about death rituals. Instead, it deals with the fate of the soul of the dead and the role of supernatural beings in governing the fate of humans. Rather than consider the title mistaken or misleading, it can be read as reflecting local attitudes towards the afterlife: human action in organizing death rituals was inextricably connected to the spiritual dimension of local understandings of death. This unique text may be summarized as follows:[252]

> The angel Äzra'il, who takes people's souls (*jan*), has numerous angels. The angels of mercy (*rähmät färiştä*) comprise the angels of the right-hand side and the front, and they are dressed in white light. The angels of the left-hand side and the back are clothed in black light and are known as the angels of revenge (*ğäzäb färiştä*). In front of Äzra'il stands the *tuba* tree, its leaves decorated with the images of the people of the world,

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[249] The two angels are an integral part of the Hanafi creed, although, in contrast to our source, normally they are both considered to be black with blue eyes, i.e., ugly (Wensinck and Tritton 1960). On the questioning of the dead in the grave, see Horten 1918: 282–2; Welch 1977: 193–4.

[250] In this section, whenever the dead person is referred to, I am using the pronoun *he* in order to keep the text simple. But, unless explicitly stated, the rituals make no difference between deceased men and women, so 'he' stands for both 'he' and 'she'.

[251] Prov. 464. 41. Jarring's summary accurately corresponds to the indigenous elaborations (Jarring 1979: 8).

[252] For the sake of a more readable English version I have sacrificed literal translation in favour of paraphrasing

as well as their names.[253] Each person has a leaf, and his colour on the representation corresponds to his colour in real life. When a person's destiny is about to be fulfilled, forty days prior to his death, his leaf turns yellow and falls in front of Äzra'il, who picks it up and dispatches his angels to take his soul. If the person is one of the spiritually elect, then the angels of mercy are chosen for the task. They come down the steps of the temple of Jerusalem, and the person who is about to die can see them coming.

For each person, four angels are appointed. One is responsible for a man's life, one for his food and provisions, one for his steps and one for his breathing. First, the angel of life comes, greets the person whose death is approaching and says, 'Your life has encompassed [so many years, months, days and hours]; now the days of your life have been completed. You must take the long road leading to the other world.' Having said this, the angel says goodbye and returns. The angel of provisions comes and says, 'Oh, [so and so], I was responsible for your provisions. Now I have patrolled the whole world but could not find any more provisions for you. My duties have come to an end. Be satisfied with me.' Having said this, the angel takes his leave. Then the angel of steps comes and says, 'Oh, [so and so], I was responsible for each step you took. Now the steps you may take have come to an end. Be satisfied with me!' Having said this, the angel returns. Finally, the angel of breath comes to say that the person has exhausted his or her allowance of breath. Later, the angels of Äzra'il come back to seal the person's tongue, so that he or she may no longer speak. If the person is spiritually elect, the angels of white light wrap the spirit in a blanket of light and take it to heaven. When it gets there, the angels bless it. If the person was a sinner, the angels of wrath wrap the spirit into a black, burning blanket and curse it. Each person has two spirits, a transient and a permanent one. The transient soul leaves the body with the *jan*, but the permanent one remains nearby. This is the *roh* which hovers over the grave and sometimes visits people's houses. It spends most of its time in and around the grave, either enjoying itself or suffering. Sometimes, the transient soul comes and sees that the body is disintegrating. Looking at the body, it weeps, remembering the times when it used to be alive, and then returns.[254]

There is a saying that whatever appearance a person has in this world, on the Day of Judgment he will be resurrected in the same shape. All people will assemble in front of the Throne of Judgment, and everybody will be judged in accordance with his deeds. After this, the bridge of *Pil-sirat* becomes visible; it connects the Throne of Judgment with the Gate of Paradise. It can be crossed in 3,000 years: for a thousand years one

[253] This is a tree in Paradise, "a branch of which will enter the mansion of each inhabitant, with flowers and ripe fruit of every imaginable kind" (Redhouse [1890] 1974: 1,248).

[254] For more views of death in Islam, see Horten 1918; Welch 1977.

> walks uphill; for a thousand years one walks on an even surface; and for a thousand years one walks downhill. Hell is situated under the bridge. To the spiritually elect, the bridge seems to be wide and beautiful, and they cross it as easily as birds fly. But for the sinner, it appears thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword. As soon as such people step on it, their feet are cut, and they inevitably fall into hell. Others might get as far as the middle of the bridge, while yet others cross most of the bridge before falling, yet others cross it the wrong way. Some people may cross the bridge of *Pilsirat* in one moment; others may take a few hours, a few days or a few years to complete this task; yet others may take as many as 30,000 years. Some of those who have fallen into hell will be set free after they had been duly punished for their sins, but others remain there to be tortured forever. One day in the other world corresponds to 50,000 years in this world.[255]

Ethnographic data suggest that, as in other Islamic societies, the general assumption was that Muslims, having paid for their sins by undergoing tortures in hell, will eventually be admitted to Paradise, a privilege not granted to the adherents of other religions.

5.8.1 *Burial Rites*

Like birth, death was also a communal concern: to attend a dead person's burial prayer (*jïnazä namazï*) was considered a religious duty (*pärz*) for every adult man belonging to the mosque community; not participating was considered sinful. Communal participation was expected to have a direct impact on the afterlife of the dead: the bigger the crowd during the burial prayer, the more sins of the deceased would be pardoned. The rituals reinforced community ties within the mosque community and beyond, since relatives and acquaintances were also invited from other neighbourhoods. Although strict adherence to Islamic practices demanded that burial should take place within a day of the death, in practice, concessions were often made: up to three days between death and burial could pass to allow distant relatives to attend the funeral, as was required by custom.[256] This may be seen as an example of how the principle of community could prevail over religious prescriptions.

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[255] Prov. 29 (copy made for a Swedish missionary in Yarkand, 1920s).

[256] This tradition has persisted into post-Maoist times. According to a modern ethnographic description, the ceremony in effect begins as soon as news of the death has arrived. If death occurs at night, news is immediately sent to relatives, and the burial takes place the following day (Häbibulla 1993: 320–1).

In Yarkand, the corpse was ritually washed by the mosque functionaries and was dressed in three layers of cloth. The body was wrapped in a prayer rug and placed on a bier, which was carried by four men to the mosque. Following the funeral prayer, the body was taken to the cemetery, accompanied by male relatives, neighbours and acquaintances. After 'seven hoes' of earth had been shifted, a *molla* recited a Koranic verse; this was followed by prayers. Then the mourners returned to the house of the deceased, where they participated in Koran recitals and communal prayers.[257]

During Republican times in the south the *täkbir* had to be recited into the left ear of the dead person, literally repeating the procedure of the name-giving ceremony. Nur Luke explicitly makes a connection between birth rituals and death rituals: at birth, the ritual of reciting the *äzan* signified that:

> Now after you have been born, you will have to die. For this reason today we have recited the *äzan* in your right ear so that you will always remember that death is nearby... When the *täkbir* is recited into the left ear [it means that] you have died... your prayer is ready and your life is completed; the length of your life is equivalent to the length of the distance between your right and left ears.[258]

Human life is explicitly compared to a ritual prayer which begins with the *äzan* and ends with the *täkbir*, declaring that God is great. When one's prayer is over, his life is completed. The symbolism of the right and left sides is fully in line with Islamic ritual practice, in which everything must be started with the right side and finished with the left. It is no coincidence either that the human head, which in local society was accorded greater respect than the lower parts of the body, stands as symbol for the human life span.

In Turfan, preparations for funerals followed a similar structure and reflected the financial positions of the households. Apart from praying by the graveyard, the *molla* also performed the important task of giving instructions to the dead as to how to reply when the angels of death come.[259] The advice aimed to help the dead in meeting the first challenges of the afterlife. The deceased was not left alone during this

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[257] Prov. 464. 27R–V.
[258] Prov. 212. 10–1; see also Prov. 207. II.35.
[259] Katanov 1936: 1,176–9.

last major rite of passage: community was extended to him through a number of rituals.

That the world of the dead was integrated into, rather than separated from, the world of the living was also demonstrated by the location of cemeteries. Graveyards were often situated near the village or town, and with the expansion of the settlement they could eventually become part of it. But they were generally enclosed and kept carefully separate from cultivated land, a pragmatic strategy in a country where cultivable land was scarce. Cemeteries were often located in the vicinity of a mosque or a dervish cloister and some contained one or more sacred shrines; all cemeteries were considered to be sacred ground.[260]

In the preparation of the tomb, Islamic practices merged with local traditions. The grave was dug in the same fashion as a pit used for storing grain and vegetables. In Yarkand, the burial chamber consisted of two parts: one internal and one external. The depth of the external part was one and a half to two arm spans. The length of the interior was one and a half arm spans. The corpse was placed in the inner part of the grave so that its head pointed north, its feet south and its face towards the *qiblä* (i.e., Mecca, the south-west).[261] The external part was filled with earth. Near the head, a stick was stuck to the mound of the tomb, ostensibly to prevent the sand from covering the tomb completely. But like many other customary practices, this, too, had several alternative explanations: some held that the holes made by the sticks enabled the dead to carry on breathing; others that the hole served to carry sacrificial nourishment to the mouth of the dead.[262] Such notions indicate widespread assumptions about life after death and the necessity to sustain it.

During death rituals, a strict sexual division of labour was observed. It was an exclusively male prerogative to take part in the funerary prayer in the mosque and then to follow the procession carrying the bier to the cemetery. Participation in the rites by the graveside was also restricted to men. Women were responsible for organizing the mourning in the house where the death occurred. For three days, each morning male members of the mosque community gathered at the grave of the deceased to pray; both men and women visited his house to participate

[260] Forsyth 1875: 94; Skrine 1971: 232.
[261] Prov. 464. 27.V; Prov. 207. II.35.
[262] Grenard 1898a: 244–6.

in communal prayers. During this time, no cooking could take place in this household, because death was considered polluting: all meals were provided by relatives and neighbours. The main funerary meal was attended by men in the morning and by women later in the day. Women's mourning chants followed established patterns, although there was doubtless room for improvisation to express one's personal grief and feelings. Upon the death of a parent, the following formulaic lines were recited:

> *Oh, my father, my young man of a father, my good father,*
> *Oh, my mother, my beautiful mother with black eyebrows,*
> *You have left us, we are left alone.*

Alternatively, the address could be "Oh, my flower, oh, my love".[263] When the deceased was one's father, the son would cry, "Oh, father, we have become orphans"; when a woman was mourning her husband, she would say; "I have become a widow"; and when a brother died, they said, "Our lineage has been broken" (*bälimiz sundi*).[264]

Female mourning behaviour was often very expressive: women continued their lamentations while pulling their hair, scratching their faces and striking their bosoms—practices disapproved of by some religious dignitaries but endorsed by customary practice.[265] Such mourning was just as essential a part of the death rites as the communal prayer at the grave. This was essentially a female domain, tied to the private or domestic sphere, i.e., the house. It nevertheless had a public or communal character, and in some cases it could even take place in public space. In Kashgar, women did not attend the ceremony at the graveside but mourned in a neighbouring mosque.[266] This was a striking inversion of customary daily practice, which did not allow women to attend the mosque.

In the early twentieth century in the southern oases, the dead person had to be kept and mourned in the house for one night, regardless of age, sex or economic and social standing. Distant and close relatives would come, the men wearing black caftans and a white belt, the women wearing black gowns and white head scarves, their braided hair tossed back. The dead person's good characteristics and deeds were

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[263] Ibid.: 244.
[264] Prov. 207. II.35.
[265] Forsyth 1875: 93.
[266] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 317.

remembered in songs and loud wailing. The mourners were joined by neighbours and friends, and the more visitors came to share the family's grief, the greater was the prestige of the household head. To enhance this prestige, mourners were hired for money in some places. The mourning might continue for two or three days, during which family and friends prepared food twice daily to feed the mourners. A rich household slaughtered three or four sheep, one or two cattle, or two or three camels and used forty to fifty *çarāk* rice for this purpose. The food provided by the 'owner of the dead' (*ölük igisi*) was called 'white food' (*aq aş*).[267]

In spite of the structural parallels and the basic Islamic underpinnings of the burial and the surrounding rites, each source adds its own curious details. Particularly instructive is the burial of a *molla* in Yengi Hisar, as witnessed by foreigners in the 1870s, which took place in the following manner:

> The dead left two women in his house, the one his wife and the other his sister, besides one daughter and two sons. At the funeral the two women preceded the corpse, wearing each a black robe down to the heels, with white kummerbunds; immediately behind the corpse came the two boys, and after them the daughter (who was about ten years of age), riding a pony and dressed in the patched garment of a Kullah Darvesh, to signify that owing to her father's death she had become a fakir. The following day two elderly females established themselves in the house for three days to console the bereaved. On the night of the funeral, and the following night, two mullahs remained at the cemetery reading the Koran. On the 7th day the women took off their black robes and placed a black cloth over the bars of their dresses, which implied their being 'Jewans.' On this day an ásh was distributed amongst the acquaintances of the deceased, and a large iron vessel, containing one dearak of ásh [pilaff], was conveyed to the cemetery, a mullah being in attendance to read a portion of the Koran. The mullah and the bereaved women partook at the grave, after which they returned home and the mourning was at an end; the women then having remained for seven days in the house were at liberty to move about. Mourning for father or mother on the part of a woman is indicated by covering the upper part of the head dress with a piece of white cloth.[268]

This description conveys important details of the rites. While the sons of the deceased wore the standard mourning outfit prescribed for men,

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[267] Prov. 212. 72–88.
[268] Forsyth 1875: 92.

the pre-pubertal daughter had the freedom to make a double ritual inversion: her dressing as a poor mendicant symbolized a reversal of both status and gender roles, not uncommon during rites of passage.[269] Close female relatives could accompany the funeral procession at least part of the way to the cemetery; in this case the women actually led the procession. The passage also emphasizes the centrality of the communal meal consumed by women and religious personnel *by the grave.* This latter act may have been intended to nourish the deceased with the smell of the ritual meal through the hole opened by the stick stuck in the mound by the head; it also contradicted the idea that death was polluting. We can conclude that local ideas did not constitute tidy systems, that were free of internal contradictions.

5.8.2 *Funerary Payments*

The purposes of rituals surrounding death were multiple: participants tried to ease the burden of the dead at the time of transition from this world to the world beyond, as well as to provide material and emotional support for the living. The idea that Muslims can get to Paradise only after the redemption of their sins permeated eschatological beliefs.[270] The burden of the dead could be substantially lightened by the living through praying and sacrifice.

This goal was also served by the ritual of *isqat* payment performed by the graveside. In the southern oases, this was calculated as follows: the first fourteen years were deducted from the dead person's age, since it was assumed that during this time he had lived innocently and could not have committed a sin. The implication of this calculation is that moral responsibility was equated with sexual maturity. For each remaining year, one or two *täñgäs* were disbursed to strangers by the graveside. The value of the sins of a single year was given to each person, defined in accordance with the financial position of the household. So if a man had lived up to the age of ninety-four, eighty *täñgäs* had to be distributed among eighty people:

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[269] Turner 1995: 172–177.

[270] Punishment meted out for worldly sins immediately after the funeral is illustrated in a short parable in which a young man died. During his funeral, as his tomb was being closed people heard the voice of a donkey coming out of the tomb. Further investigations revealed that during his lifetime he had once said to his mother that she screamed like a donkey. As a punishment, after his death his body screamed like a donkey from his grave (Raquette 1912: 160–1).

> After the corpse had been put into the grave, the money was collected and placed on its right hand side. The *molla* standing there took the amount representing one year [of the dead person's life] in his hands. A stranger came and stood on the left of the dead, stretching out his hand for the money. The person who was to give the money put a Koran or, alternatively, the reins of a horse in his hands and asked him: 'Oh, brother, or oh, person, as a matter of fact, know that the dead person lying here is burdened with many sins, because, although he had kept and realized some of God's commandments, being unable to keep some others he abandoned them. In gratitude for his fulfilment of many of his obligations and in shame for his neglected duties, holding the Koran or the reins of this horse, accepting the sins and ingratitude of this [dead] man, will you ask for forgiveness on his behalf?'... If the stranger agreed, then the person who had given him the Koran or the reins took this back and said: 'Now this Koran or horse has become yours, but are you willing to sell it to me for one or two *täñgäs*?' He handed one or two *täñgäs* to the stranger who said, 'I am willing to do this'. The same ceremony was repeated as many times as necessary, depending on the age of the dead person and the number of participants. These special alms constituted a sacrifice which served to eliminate the dead person's sins.[271]

Regardless of whether the deceased was a man or a woman, performing the *isqat* ritual was also an exclusively male obligation, since the communal prayer for the dead in the mosque and the funeral service in the cemetery could only be attended by men.[272] Abul Wahid reports that, in Kashgar, *isqat* was handed out immediately before the burial. A horse was brought along and its value was estimated, say to fifty or 100 *täñgä*. Each person held the reins of the horse one after the other and asked, "Have you accepted?" The question evidently referred to the symbolic acceptance of part of the dead person's sins in return for the payment made. The horse was then walked among the five or ten people paying the initial *isqat*, and money was collected from the rest of the people to make up the full price of the horse.[273]

The *isqat* ritual was based on an implicit definition of human life as an incessant series of give-and-take. If adult life is conceptualized in terms of complex, open-ended reciprocal relations, then whenever these are broken or even weakened, the individual is bound to have accumulated debts. A senior male of the household was in charge of the ritual. As close kin, he was responsible for accounting for the

[271] Prov. 212. 104–8.
[272] Prov. 212. 106–8.
[273] Prov. 207. II.35.

actions of the deceased. His responsibility was bi-directional: his conduct influenced the fate of the deceased in the world beyond, and, following the principle of reciprocity, the favourable or unfavourable responses of the deceased would affect the fate of the living and the well-being of the household to which he continued to belong.

The exchange itself consisted of a simple act: the sins of the dead were transferred to volunteers. However, by doing so they increased their own inventory of sins and therefore needed to be compensated. This exchange lacked the element of immediate mutuality, the simultaneous and parallel acts of giving and taking. Instead, an additional element was inserted, the symbolic handing over of the reins of a horse or a Koran to the person who was taking over the sins of the deceased. The 'owner of the dead' symbolically purchased back the horse or the Koran from this person. In this way, the ritual was made to resemble a market exchange. This interpretation is supported by the fact that *isqat* payment ideally had to involve 'strangers', i.e., people outside the communal boundary, who stood for impersonal market exchange. Sins are dangerous and had to be eliminated from one's immediate social world: from one's own kin group, neighbourhood and mosque community. They had to be transferred to outsiders, with whom communal reciprocal relations did not normally take place. With them, transfers of any sort had to take the form of market exchange, which therefore had to be symbolically enacted. Yet these strangers were invited to the most intimate of all communal events: for the liminal period of the burial, community was temporarily extended to them. As we have seen, ritual liminality often involves inversion, which allows strangers to become temporary intimates, only to be distanced again, together with the unwanted goods. The temporary extension of community reinforced its boundaries through a kind of ritual purification and reinvigoration. I have not found any emic explanation for the choice of the horse and the Koran as objects to be symbolically traded, but both may be interpreted as important elements of the 'commons': the Koran was part of the communal *sacra* of all Muslims; since few possessed it, a specific copy could also be the *sacra* of the local mosque community. The horse, perhaps a relic of the nomadic heritage, continued to retain its value as a symbol of social prestige among the sedentary oasis-dwellers. These objects, representing highly valued elements of the commons, were informally handed over to outsiders, only to be purchased back in exchange for the sins of the deceased.

Isqat was also an act of redistribution. Ultimately, it was the needy, defined as strangers, who benefited from the ritual, although the indigenous authors carefully avoided labelling these people 'beggars' We are not told if volunteers had to be poor as well as strangers, but it is a logical assumption that the two qualifications were complementary. In his analysis of the category of stranger in rural Andalusia, Julian Pitt-Rivers differentiated between professional beggars and strangers. The latter, although also dependent on charity, typically included seasonal migrants who left home to seek work. Their style of begging was different from that of professional beggars: 'They are not seen begging on street corners in the towns; they do not tug the sleeve of the passer-by; they do not cringe nor attempt to evoke pity and the techniques of moral blackmail practised by the beggars are denied them by their claim to shame. They tend on the contrary to adopt a gruff and manly style to differentiate themselves from the professional beggars, for they are strangers, not beggars, and they sacrifice their shame no further than the implied (but not stated) confession of indigence.... [They are identified] as persons who in better times at home would be prepared to reciprocate charity.'[274] These were often regarded as almost 'honourable poor' who, however, could not be incorporated permanently into the local community. This ambiguity of the outsider as poor stranger perhaps explains the complex nature of *isqat* as simultaneously an act of symbolic market exchange and one of charity. In local perception, the insider/outsider dichotomy here superseded the opposition between the haves and have-nots. Community members, regardless of their financial status, could not be required to accept the sins, not only because of the moral degradation which it involved but also because this would leave the polluting 'goods' within the community borders.

In the late nineteenth century, Nay-Xan differentiated the *isqat* payment from small gifts routinely distributed after a funeral. Children were given raisins and women received needles and cotton to cover any debt the deceased may have left unpaid. Among men, raisins and bread were distributed either on the day of death or at the funeral.[275] Thus the narrator distinguished between symbolic payment to ease the sins of

[274] Pitt-Rivers 1977: 103–4.
[275] Katanov 1936: 1184–5.

the dead and payment to eliminate any unpaid debts incurred during his or her lifetime. Following the death of a woman in Turfan, before the *namaz* was performed, the household head brought three packets of sewing needles and distributed them among the mourning women, giving two or three needles to each woman present. This was predicated on the assumption that during her lifetime the dead woman must have made ample use of sewing needles, which also symbolized women's work in general. These needles were distributed among the mourners, in case she had borrowed some and not been able to pay them back. The needles represented any other small debt which a woman could have incurred in the course of her social relations during her lifetime. If the dead person, male or female, came from a rich family, then men accompanying the dead to the cemetery were each given a length of material after the burial. When a poor person died, five to ten *jiñ* fruit were brought along and distributed by the handful to those present.[276] In such cases, the expenses had to be met by the community, and the *molla* performed the rites free of charge.[277]

While customary practice made the symbolic redemption of sins possible for poor and rich alike, the quantity of the *isqat* and other funerary payments and the remuneration of the *mollas*' services depended on the economic position of the household of the deceased. Reporting earlier burial practices from Qumul, the indigenous narrator Abdulla claimed that the death of an officeholder or a rich person was followed by the distribution of his clothes among his domestic servants, who also received a full set of mourning clothes. Cash donations were made to the religious dignitary performing the funerary prayers and other respected

[276] Katanov 1976: 1,178–81. Modern Uyghur ethnographers conflate *isqat* with paying off the dead person's debts. One author claims that *isqat* was paid in money or matches to male mourners, and with cotton, needle or a comb to female mourners (Häbibulla 1993: 323). Others make no mention of the payments made in kind for the assumed debts of the dead, nor do they elaborate on the gendered dimension of funerary payments. They also obscure the difference between paying off the dead person's material debts and redemption; nevertheless they confirm the persistence of such practices well into the socialist years. It is possible that in some regions in the course of time *isqat* payment did indeed become merged with the paying off of one's debt: the elaborate execution of the ritual payments assumed a certain level of economic capability. Such developments may have been further encouraged by the lack of cash and 'economic levelling' throughout the decades of Maoism (Raxman et al.: 1996: 134). The *isqat* ritual is apparently also known among the Kirghiz, where it is attributed to 'shamanic influences' (Capisani 2000: 237).

[277] Prov. 207. II.35.

members of the mosque community. Prior to the burial, a number of animals were slaughtered and their meat left at every corner on the way leading to the cemetery. This meat could be taken home by anyone for consumption; this sacrificial act was at the same time a means for ritual redistribution among the poor and the needy. Sometimes, regular distribution of fruit and food among commoners took place for a whole year following the death of an important person.[278]

Funerary payments were aimed at eliminating the sins and debts of the dead and were underpinned by the principle of exchange. All visitors who came to the dead person's house participated in easing the debts of the deceased. They prayed for him or her and also brought gifts. All these people were carefully registered in order to be invited to at least one of the commemoration feasts.[279] Ritual payments made away from the well-defined space of the cemetery could lose some of their mutual character and be merged with charitable donations. Like religious holidays, death and commemoration rituals were also occasions for the public redistribution of wealth, at least for well-to-do households. For example, in the Kashgar of the early twentieth century, on the day of death, alms in the form of some cash and a piece of soap were distributed among beggars.[280]

The merging of both aspects of redistribution, hospitality and charity meant that the celebrations were conceptualized as boundary markers: offering hospitality stressed communal membership in the mosque community, and acts of charity towards beggars, mendicants and strangers signified their temporary inclusion into this community, while confirming their long-term exclusion and communal boundaries.

5.8.3 *Commemoration Rites*

In addition to the mourning, the funeral prayer and the ceremony held in the graveyard, there were various other ways in which the burdens of the dead could be eased. For three days, Koranic verses were continuously recited, and on the third day a commemoration meal was held. Only close kin were invited to this meal, because only their offerings

[278] Katanov 1936: 1, 180–3.
[279] Jarring 1975: 22.
[280] Skrine 1971: 204; Forsyth 1875: 93–4. Acts of charity towards the local poor were considered a meritorious deed (Prov. 464. 41R).

were accepted by the dead. On the days following death, members of the kin group prayed at the cemetery and later in the dead man's home, and on the seventh day another sacrificial meal was held, this time for the mosque community.[281] Forty days later, yet another commemoration meal was organized, which signified the end of the mourning period. All commemoration feasts involved commensality and communal praying. During the forty days, rules of avoidance were observed: people refrained from laughing, playing music and taking part in any form of entertainment.[282]

The communal meals were called *näzirullah, näzir* or *näzir-çiraq*. The first one, held on the third day following death, was called the 'third of the dead' (*ölükniñ üçi*).[283] The memorial meal served on the seventh day was known as the 'seventh of the dead' (*ölükniñ yettinjisi*) and had an almost obligatory character for members of the mosque community. For this occasion, a sacrificial animal was slaughtered, and all those who had attended the funeral prayer were invited. For forty days following the death, the relatives in the dead man's house prayed every morning. On the fortieth day, another animal was sacrificed, and ritualized hospitality was offered to community members. A year later, members of the dead person's mosque community gathered, and another memorial meal was offered by the family.[284]

In the southern oases, such a feast could also be held on the twentieth day, but the biggest such ritual including the mosque community was that held on the fortieth day (*ölükniñ qirqi*), when hosts and guests engaged in symmetrical reciprocal exchanges. The latter were offered lavish hospitality, and in return each male participant donated two or three times the cost of the food he had consumed, handing it over to the organizer. This was the *qirq qutluğluq*, or 'congratulating the fortieth'. This money had to be contributed by all participants unable to recite ten to twenty verses from the Koran. Those who could recite the verses were able to 'pay' for the food they had consumed in kind, as it were.[285]

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[281] Prov. 464. 27R–V; Grenard 1898a: 246.

[282] Prov. 464. 27R–V.

[283] On the third day only a small meal was offered to the mourners at the time of the evening prayer. A big commemoration meal was prepared on the seventh day and on the fortieth day (Katanov 1936: 1 184–5).

[284] Katanov 1936: 1 178–9.

[285] Prov. 212. 84–8.

In Kashgar, for three days following a death the household was supplied with cooked meals by neighbours and relatives. On the third day, the taboo on cooking was lifted, and relatives were invited to a small commemoration meal. In a gesture of reciprocity, this household then provided a cooked meal every Friday for members of the mosque community throughout the mourning period of forty days. This first meal also marked the time when claims to inheritance (*miras*) could be made by the spouse, children and relatives of the dead.[286] The feast held on the fortieth day indicated the end of the mourning; this was marked by a communal hair-shaving ritual for men, while women washed and combed their hair in privacy, ending the ritual forty-day ban on hair care. Items of clothing symbolizing mourning were abandoned, and the prohibitions of marriage for a widower after his wife's death, and for sons and daughters following the death of a parent, were lifted.[287] Exceptionally wealthy families continued to hold such commemorative meals at each anniversary of the death, accompanied by ritual Koran recitals.[288]

The ritual meal and the recitation of the Koran within a communal setting were indispensable for the commemorative celebrations. But there were other ways and means to commemorate the dead. In the Tarim oases, when a middle-income or rich man died, a tent was erected near his tomb for forty days—sometimes for a whole year—and two or three people were engaged to recite the Koran day and night. At night, they continued doing this by the light of a lamp. On its way from Aqsu to Yarkand, Schomberg's caravan saw large wickerwork shelters in graveyards for protecting such *mollas* against the vicissitudes of the weather.[289] The purpose of the practice was to ensure that the dead person was not left on his own: the spirit of the deceased was assumed to retain its sociability in the world beyond. It was believed that, during these forty days, the spirit met up with the old spirits of the cemetery, following which he would not be lonely.

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[286] For descriptions of comparable rites in neighbouring Central Asia, see Privratsky 2001: 141–5 and Kleinmichel 2000: 87–101.

[287] Katanov 1936: 1,184–5. In some oases customary prohibitions of remarriage for widowers extended to four months. But custom also provided for cases when the surviving party wanted to remarry before prescribed dates, s/he had to take a jug of water to the cemetery and pour it over the grave of the deceased spouse (Katanov 1936: 1,178–81).

[288] Prov. 207. II.35.

[289] Schomberg 1996: 144.

The reciting of the Koran during this period was a meritorious deed (*sawap*) which helped the integration of the spirit into the social world of the dead.[290]

Another important element of the commemoration of the dead was the preparation of a food sacrifice, this will be described in greater detail in the section on 'The domestic cult' in Chapter 6.[291]

5.9 *Summary*

As in many pre-industrial peasant societies, the events of the life cycle in Eastern Turkestan were a communal concern. Most of our information dates from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the persistence of certain structural patterns into the late twentieth century is confirmed by other sources, as well as my ethnographic data.[292] All life-cycle rituals had a public, social character and served to maintain and extend community. Structurally, they all conform to van Gennep and Turner's model of rituals, which differentiate phases of separation, liminality and re-integration.[293] I suggest that this model is readily applicable to Eastern Turkestani conditions if we bear in mind that life-cycle rituals were complexes stretching over an extended period. They have a basically processual nature and display the tripartite structure more clearly when viewed in their entirety.

Life-cycle rituals do not reveal major changes over the examined period. This may partly be explained by the normative nature of the sources, partly by the fact that, as Maurice Bloch has shown for Madagascar, although the meaning of certain elements of a ritual may change regularly, the overall structure often remains constant.[294] Birth and death were both about integration into communal structures: following birth, the newborn had to be gradually integrated into the immediate kin group and wider social circles. The careful selection of the 'umbilical mother' from outside the immediate kin group aimed at firmly anchoring the child into human society. The deceased had to be 'socialized' into the community of the dead, but death rituals

[290] Prov. 212. 98–102.
[291] Häbibulla 1993: 333–4; Bellér-Hann 2001: 15; see also Katanoff 1900.
[292] Wu 1984: 217–8; Bellér-Hann 2001.
[293] Turner 1995, Van Gennep 2000.
[294] Bloch 1997.

also served to reconfigure communal ties between the living and the dead. This was a long and gradual process, and the elaborate nature and temporal extension of the rituals served as a means to meet this major challenge. The circumcision ritual was a major element in the integration process of men into the social world of adults, while marriage and the hair-braiding ritual focused on the creation and cementing of community between the male and female sides.

The sources reveal a great deal of diversity in marriage and divorce strategies and point to differences between town and countryside and among different social groups. A closer examination of marriage rituals and payments suggests that there were complex, and often contradictory, forces at play. The stated ideal was the lasting, monogamous marriage. As deviations from this pattern, polygamous marriages of the 'classical' type—in which co-wives shared space in the same household—were not encouraged, even if they were permitted by religion. In a major deviation from mainstream Sunnite legal provisions, polygamy often assumed the form of temporary marriage, which in this region was an instance of customary norms contradicting and superseding the dominant Islamic stream. The effect of unstable marriage ties on men and women depended on a number of factors, including social and economic background, the presence of children, the support of natal families, age and personal characteristics.

Redistribution characterized all life-cycle rituals, both as hospitality and as charity. Their simultaneous embeddedness in rituals is best explained by the hierarchical character of local communities. The materials presented in Chapter 3 suggest that economic inequality was characteristic of most communities. Each mosque community included people of various social and economic standing. Members were typically offered hospitality, but hospitality was selective: those who enjoyed higher or equal status with the host were treated with more deference than others. Those at the other end of the economic and social scale had to be included, but they were given alms rather than offered hospitality. The boundary between hospitality and charity was a rather uncertain one, but we may tentatively assume that hospitality was offered to all those who, in theory, were in a position to reciprocate at similar life-cycle events. Inability to reciprocate was probably the criterion which divided guests from the recipients of charity. The distinction between beggars and strangers was not clear either, even though both benefited from charitable redistributions; the sins of the dead could only be traded

with conceptual strangers. This was all the more necessary since beggars and mendicants were often familiar: each community had its fair share of poor and needy people. The distinction drew an imaginary boundary between insiders and outsiders: the ritual inclusion of outsiders reinforced their long-term exclusion and, therefore, the boundaries and the cohesion of the mosque community.

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGION, ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS AND DEALING WITH THE SUPERNATURAL

6.1 *Islam in Eastern Turkestan*

Prior to the arrival of Islam into the region, Eastern Turkestanis had encountered a number of diverse religions, including Manicheism, Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity.[1] Islam reached China soon after its revelation in the Middle East and took place via two main routes: the sea route to south-east China and the trade routes of the north-west which became subsumed under the generic name of the Silk Road.[2] Eastern Turkestan was both a target area for Islamic expansion and a transmitter of this world religion into China proper.[3] The spread of Islam within the region took place over several centuries and was intertwined with diverse linguistic, ethnic and cultural processes, including intermarriage, migration, trade, political alliances and violent conflict. The number of its adherents increased through forced and voluntary, mass and individual conversion, adoption, marriage and other forms of interpersonal contact.[4] Perhaps the assumption may be risked that, during the initial phase, military expansion was more typical, while later Sufism spread through missionary activities.[5]

Among the factors which advanced the process of Islamization, Foltz stresses those of political patronage, when a local ruler's change of religion entailed the mass conversion of his followers, economics i.e.,

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[1] For a recent overview see Foltz 1999. For more details see Sinor 1990, Golden 1992, Vásáry 1999.

[2] Scholars agree that Chinese Islam should not be considered as an entity separate from the rest of the Islamic world. Jo Fletcher emphatically argued against the concept of a 'sinicised' Islam assumed to be the 'corrupted' form of a 'pure', higher Islam isolated from the mainstream of the Middle East. He stressed that adaptations to local beliefs and practices took place everywhere where Islam gained a foothold, and China was no exception (Fletcher 1995. XI: 3).

[3] For a good survey of the literature concerning Islam in China, see Israeli 1994.

[4] Pillsbury 1981.

[5] Nur Haji and Guoguang (1995) also emphasize the many ways in which Islam appeared in the region. This is a more plausible view than Haussig's simple generalization that Islam was spread by means of the sword (Haussig 1992: 242).

increasing Muslim domination of trade, and assimilation following the intermarriage of Muslims with non-Muslims.[6] The first important political step towards the large-scale Islamization of Eastern Turkestan was the conversion of the Qarakhanid ruler Satuq Bughra (d. 955), and his subjects. With this mass conversion, Islam gained a substantial foothold among Turkic-speaking groups for the first time; there are, however, indications that some groups had been exposed to Islamic influences as early as the eighth century. Nur Haji and Goguang, who argue that Muslims entered the region as diplomats, merchants, soldiers and even as Shi'ite refugees, see the Qarakhanid conversion not as the first act in the Islamization of the region but as one of its later phases.[7]

The expansion of Islam probably slowed down during the ensuing periods of infidel rule; although even then the changing political circumstances induced fluctuations. Under the Buddhist Qara Khitay, Muslims lost their prominent position, and the levying of irregular taxes weighed heavily on them. Following the Mongol conquest, Islamic practices were discouraged, and the imposition of nomadic law brought restrictions: in Chaghatay's ulus, the ritual slaughtering of animals and ablution in running water were forbidden.[8] At the same time, the Mongols generally maintained good relations with the Muslims: arguably, the *pax mongolica* created favourable conditions for Muslim traders, which indirectly strengthened the position of Islam. A new wave of expansion took place under the successor states of the Mongols thanks to energetic missionary efforts. As early as the thirteenth century the Chaghatay ulus had split into two, and the nomads of Western Turkestan who were closely associated with the sedentary populations had converted to Islam. The fourteenth century witnessed the mass conversion of much of the population of Eastern Turkestan, not least as a result of the unification efforts of Tughluq Temür (r. 1347–1363). It was during this period that Sufism rose to prominence. Between the mid-fourteenth and the end of the seventeenth centuries, the region was characterized by the emergence and rivalry of local theocratic city-states. The Naqshbandi brotherhood acquired particular prominence, although a number of other orders also remained active well into the twentieth century.

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[6] Foltz 1999: 96–7.
[7] Nur Haji and Guoguang 1995: 28–41.
[8] Fletcher n.d.: 72.

During the centuries of *khoja* rule, Islam flourished. The *khojas* legitimated their religious and secular power through Islamic genealogies. Following the Manchu conquest in the mid-eighteenth century, alien rule in the north-west of the empire became increasingly restrictive, forbidding conversion to Islam, prohibiting Muslims from leaving their villages for prayer services, barring preachers from preaching outside their localities, banning the construction of new mosques and forbidding Muslims to adopt non-Muslim babies.[9] During the late nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries, religious sentiments and identifications became increasingly intertwined with emerging ethnic and national interests, as may be seen from the shifting focus of the two uprisings during the Republican period. The repeated clampdowns on religion in general and Islam in particular, and reactions to this repression throughout the socialist period, further demonstrate the complicated interplay between religion, ethnicity and politics.

It has become a scholarly commonplace that, as a world religion Islam transcends ethnic and cultural differences, while simultaneously it displays a great deal of flexibility in allowing for local diversity of practice and interpretation. Privratsky takes up this point when he remarks that popular religious practices among the Kazakh correspond to practices elsewhere in the Islamic world, including both neighbouring lands and the so-called central Islamic regions of the Middle East and North Africa.[10]

In Sami Zubaida's opinion, while congruencies on the level of the 'great tradition' may be explained by the shared text basis of intellectual discourse in philosophy, theology, mysticism and poetry, and the active participation of members of the elite in these discourses everywhere, congruencies on the popular level are both considerable and paradoxical. In his analysis of popular culture in the Middle East, Zubaida takes the concept of plural society as his starting point. Plural societies are said to be characterized by separation of the elements of cultural identities, languages and religious customs. While contending that the Middle East fully conforms to this pattern, Zubaida finds the similarities in popular religious practice over large areas particularly striking: "The degree of communality of culture would suggest a

[9] Fletcher 1995, XI.
[10] Privratsky 2001: 14–6.

society with a much greater density of interaction, a social division of labour and associated social relations cutting across communal boundaries".[11] He argues against a model of isolated communities: relative isolation could only be maintained at times of economic and social instability and decline. At times of prosperity and stability these boundaries became more fluid and acted as a connecting, rather than a dividing, force. Applying this thesis to Central Asia, it is conspicuous how beliefs underpinning religious action among the sedentary Turkic-speaking Muslims of Eastern Turkestan display remarkable similarities with contemporary 'Kazakh religion': such commonalities across vast regions render the 'ethnicization' of various forms of Islam in Central Asia very questionable, even if many members of a modern ethnic group may come to see their religion in this way.

Zubaida discusses popular religion in terms of instrumentality and solidarity. He argues that religion represents a set of resources mobilized to achieve objectives such as health, wealth and happiness. In another perspective, however, religion is the "sphere of social solidarities based on common belonging, with specific institutions and rituals of worship, which identifies the believers and separates them from the practitioners of other faiths".[12] He argues further that the polyglot and syncretistic popular culture of the Middle East is more deeply rooted in communal solidarities than in religious piety.[13] I suggest that in pre-socialist Xinjiang the two factors were almost indivisible: in the previous chapter we saw how life-cycle rituals had a local communal character, while making use of the symbols of the wider religious repertoire. In this chapter it will be shown that religious rituals were both expressions of belief and instrumental in making and maintaining community.

6.1.1 *Research Problems*

Recent research suggests that assumptions based on the study of Middle Eastern societies cannot be uncritically transferred and applied to Central Asia.[14] The constellation which developed after the consolidation of Islam reveals patterns with local colourings; the unifying force of Islam

[11] Zubaida 1993: 101.
[12] Ibid.: 107.
[13] Ibid.: 119.
[14] Gladney 1999.

as a world religion and the accommodations it has reached with local traditions should be neither underestimated nor overrated. The major problems concern research on pre-Islamic 'shamanic' traditions surviving in Central Asian Islam, the role of Sufism and Shi'ite influences.

Early travellers, linguists, folklorists and ethnographers of the region alluded repeatedly to 'shamanism' and shamanic practices, and the habit has persisted into modern scholarship.[15] This exaggerated fascination has been exposed and criticized by Devin DeWeese in his historical study of Central Asian religious beliefs and also by Bruce Privratsky in his research on contemporary Kazakh religion.[16] DeWeese demonstrates that the survivals of pre-Islamic features in Inner Asian Islam as discerned by ethnographers are part and parcel of normative religious practices of the community.[17] He notes that:

> In much of the scholarship dealing with Inner Asian religion, and indeed in most incidental surveys of Inner Asian religion by non-specialists, the role of the shaman has been emphasized to such an extent that it has become commonplace to refer to the religious life of Inner Asian peoples prior to their adoption of, say, Buddhism or Islam (and even after their 'conversion' as well) as 'shamanism,' as if the term could designate something akin to the other religious '-isms' that entered Inner Asia.[18]

This undue emphasis on the shaman obscures the importance of domestic rites, which are fundamental to the daily life of most people. The real focus of Inner Asian religious life is communality, expressed in the domestic cult of ancestors.[19] DeWeese's observations pertain to the Golden Horde, and his work is primarily a study of the historical and epic tradition; nevertheless, my sources and ethnographic field materials concerning Eastern Turkestan point to a similar conclusion.

Privratsky criticized earlier scholars for denigrating the religious faith of the Kazakhs, which they considered to be a superficial and marginal expression of Islam. Like DeWeese, he is also critical of the exaggerated role attributed to shamanism by other authors. His rejection of the model of a two-tiered system dominating much of conventional Central Asian scholarship—which views local forms of Islam as consisting of

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[15] For a recent study on Central Asian shamanism, see Baldick 2000.
[16] DeWeese 1994; Privratsky 2001: 7–19.
[17] DeWeese 1994: 54.
[18] Ibid.: 33.
[19] Ibid.: 32–50.

a shamanic 'substratum' and an Islamic 'superstratum', in which the shamanic residue remains discernible—is argued convincingly.[20] Healing rituals attracted much attention among European visitors who, fascinated by what they saw as simultaneously exotic and primitive, studied them independently of social context. As in the case of an earlier generation of scholars who focused on witchcraft and related ritual action in Africa, a bias towards the exotic obscured everyday manifestations of belief which, although less conspicuous, were no less significant.

As elsewhere in China and Central Asia, Islamic experience in Eastern Turkestan also had a mystical dimension. This was represented above all by the Sufi brotherhoods, among whom the dominant role had for centuries been appropriated by the Naqshbandi and its subgroups.[21] Although mystic brotherhoods in the Middle East are often presented as the counterparts of 'official Islam' or the scriptural tradition and identified as the carriers of the 'little tradition' or folk religion, this simple binary model is hardly applicable to Eastern Turkestan.[22] While simultaneous membership in several brotherhoods was probably rare, membership in Sufi brotherhoods did not exclude participation in mainstream religious life. *Mollas* who served the 'religious establishment' were often also members of a brotherhood. Moreover, from their early history on, the brotherhoods—although clearly informing and feeding into popular beliefs—had a strong organizational structure, a certain hierarchy and "a clear sense of who belonged into the group and who did not".[23] It is therefore incorrect simply to view them as the bearers of 'folk religion'. Recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that in Central Asia the mystical and the scriptural traditions became inextricably intertwined.[24]

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[20] Privratsky 2001: 11–9.

[21] For the emergence and early history of the Naqshbandi brotherhood, see Paul 1998. For its history in Eastern Turkestan, see Papas 2005.

[22] Redfield 1960. Although Privratsky makes a similar statement in connection with what he terms 'Kazak religion', his argument is different from the one I make here. He claims that the Kazakh themselves may insist on the dual, syncretic nature of their religious values, consisting of shamanism and Muslim values, to the best of my knowledge such views are not advanced in Xinjiang (2001: 10).

[23] Paul 1998: 3.

[24] Paul 1991: 30–1. See also Gross' discussion of polemics concerning 'official' and 'unofficial' Islam within the context of Soviet Central Asia (Gross 1999).

The evidence of the essays produced by Eastern Turkestani *mollas* is also instructive. Knowledgeable concerning both scriptural and mystic traditions, these authors occasionally make pronouncements about certain popular practices of which learned Muslim theologians would disapprove. The *mollas* appear to be noncommittal in their remarks; they always distance themselves both from the rank-and-file who indulge in 'folk' practices and from those learned scholars who adopt a more uncompromising stance. In sharply distinguishing between folk religion (little tradition) and official religion (great tradition), we impose categories which were not necessarily embraced by most of the local population; the opposition might not have made sense even to those who had studied abroad or visited other regions of the Muslim world.[25] Distinguishing various streams and their syncretism may be a useful historical project, but trying to understand ethnographic materials from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in such terms may be misleading.[26] I therefore propose to consider these materials without accentuating the boundaries between these categories, privileging instead local notions of classification, which reveal inconsistencies, heterogeneity and fuzziness of boundaries. I suggest that the various manifestations of local beliefs essentially drew on a shared symbolic vocabulary and that people made creative use of these. I am not arguing that all these elements constituted a neat system in which each part had a specific, identifiable function. Rather, I suggest that religious norms and practices had complex underpinnings drawn from a multiplicity of sources, in which pre-Islamic religions, animism, local and imported ideas of spirit possession, and various Islamic traditions, including the diverse mystical and text-based streams and other influences, all played a part. I shall also argue that religious ideas and practices were never compartmentalized but were structurally closely intertwined with life-cycle rituals and local assumptions about sociality. There was plenty of room for individual improvisation, local interpretations, and geographical diversity, as well as transformations over time. Over the examined period, many elements of this symbolic repertoire have displayed considerable persistence.

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[25] Although the scholarly distinction between the great and little traditions, i.e., the literate, intellectual level of the learned and the popular practices of the masses, itself has a respectable tradition, and although from a pragmatic point of view it can be easily justified, this distinction obscures the mutual and continuous interaction between the two. Our sources fail to make this distinction consistently in their treatment of diverse beliefs and practices.

[26] On the problem of syncretism, see Stewart and Shaw 1994.

What all these practices have in common is their essentially public, social character, permeated by reciprocal principles which governed the entire social landscape and community relations.

Finally, the impact of Shi'ism in Eastern Turkestan needs to be mentioned. Grenard published a number of local saintly legends and suggested that these oral traditions displayed a dual character. The first group, collected in the vicinity of Khotan, focuses on the imams, the direct descendants of 'Ali. These stories describe fights between Buddhists and Muslims and the final victory of the latter. Grenard dates the Khotanese tradition to the earliest wave of Islamic expansion into Eastern Turkestan, brought to the region by Shi'ite groups.[27] The second series of narratives from the northern part of Kashgaria has more of a historical character and concerns princes and learned men who improved the works of the previous era. The Xinjiang historians Nur Haji and Goguang also make references to the Khotanese legends, which they claim originate in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries and have survived until the present day in Xinjiang as oral tradition.[28]

Although the presence of Shi'ite groups in the region among Iranian speakers in the Pamirs, is well documented, and the learned *mollas* who authored some of the texts cited here made passing reference to them, the division appears to be of little importance. It seems more likely that the majority of the Sunni population attached no importance to the distinction between Shi'ism and Sunnism. While ideas typically associated with Shi'ism permeate rituals and oral tradition, in popular perception they were not recognized as such; rather, they were regarded as intrinsic features of the local religious tradition.[29] A very similar conclusion is reached in a recent publication by Karl Reichl, who analyzed some passages of Uyghur epic poetry in which features of the scriptural tradition mingle with elements of popular saint veneration as well as Shi'ite tendencies.[30]

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[27] Grenard 1898b: 1–11.

[28] Nur Haji and Guoguang 1995: 54–5.

[29] Shi'ite elements in popular religion may have owed more to the enormous role played by Sufism in the spread of Central Asian Islam, since many dervish orders derived their tradition from 'Ali (Fletcher n.d. 89).

[30] Reichl 2001. On the links between Sufism and Shi'ism in an earlier period in neighbouring Transoxania, see Paul 1991: 28–31.

6.1.2 *Evaluations of Religiosity*

It is well known that minimal, regionally specific definitions of who is a Muslim show a great deal of variation throughout the Islamic world. While the five tenets of Islam are universally acknowledged by Muslims with a religious education, in practice believers often cite only two or three requirements as sufficient to claim a Muslim identity.[31] Furthermore, the basic tenets of Islam have been subject to various interpretations. During my fieldwork in Xinjiang in the 1990s, male participation in public worship on Friday, praying once a day and fasting during the month of Ramadan were usually cited as the most important requirements. At times a mere confession of faith was thought to be sufficient to be considered a Muslim. Simultaneously, a number of other requirements not included in the five tenets played an important part in such definitions. They were internalized to such an extent that only the open breach of such rules led to their being verbalized. For the male population, circumcision was one such requirement, and the observation of the pork taboo was another.[32] Prescriptions such as these were important markers of identity; they were evidently so consistently observed and taken for granted by actors and observers alike that they were not considered worth mentioning.

No single source provides a comprehensive description of popular religious practices, but we have sufficient fragmentary information, when pieced together, to obtain at least a preliminary overview. At the same time most sources comment on aspects of belief, while outsiders constantly add their value judgments. For them it was not always easy to access information on issues of religious devotion. Chinese sources concerning Eastern Turkestan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as quoted by Saguchi Toru, do no more than scratch the surface. In the early twentieth century the German archaeologist Albert von Le Coq made repeated attempts to see religious specialists but failed; his guess was that locals kept many facets of their religious practices for internal consumption only.[33]

As we have seen in Chapter 5, the morality of the local population was often measured by European observers with particular reference

[31] Ellen 1983.
[32] Jarring 1986: 81–2; 115.
[33] Le Coq 1916: 5.

to the demonstration of female modesty. On this basis, the adherence of the local population to assumed 'Islamic' values was often called into question, and dismissive statements about the laxity of religious observance among the settled oasis-dwellers are numerous. British travellers in the late nineteenth century were generally convinced that the inhabitants of Chinese Turkestan were "lax and careless in observing the tenets of Islam".[34] The Russian Kuropatkin noted that fasts were kept irregularly and prayers said infrequently.[35] Aurel Stein mentioned the 'easy-going ways of Khotan local worship', which he illustrated with the observation that rank-and-file Muslims did not bother to take their shoes off upon approaching a sacred spot. Only the well-to-do who also possessed overshoes removed these.[36] These authors generally emphasized the syncretistic nature of religious practice, making frequent references to the presence of numerous 'non-Islamic' features and the popularity of pilgrimages to shrines.[37]

Religious laxity was sometimes evaluated in positive terms, i.e. by praising the absence of religious fanaticism, especially when comparisons were made with the excessive piety of the Muslims in the neighbouring Central Asian khanates.[38] Reporting in 1834, Wathen noted that the tenets of Islam were not strictly observed and the inhabitants were much more tolerant than their co-religionists in Khoqand and other parts of 'Tartary'.[39] More than 100 years later, Thompson characterized the Turkis as warm-hearted and hospitable, and not so "arrogant as most Moslems", who "present a field for missionary activity not too inaccessible by prejudice and religious intolerance" [40]

As this remark indicates, religion was a contested field during the period under discussion. Islam was challenged by a handful of evangelical missionaries from Europe. But far more significant was the role religion played in mobilizing the masses against infidel rule, which from the nineteenth century onward was increasingly assuming an ethnic colouring. Some attributed laxity in religious observance to infidel rule. Thus, paradoxically, Islam was presented both as a powerful political force vis-à-vis infidel rule and as its victim. One counter current was

[34] Warikoo 1985: 92.
[35] Kuropatkin 1882: 38.
[36] Stein 1904: 228.
[37] Warikoo 1985: 92–3.
[38] Iskhakov 1975: 45; Warikoo 1985: 92–4.
[39] Wathen 1835: 654.
[40] Thompson 1947: 15.

represented by Ya'qub Beg, who enforced Islamic law very strictly. Among other measures, he set out to restore about sixty shrines and mosques which had been badly neglected under Chinese rule.[41] But these policies created a very tense atmosphere felt even by the short-term visitor, as is illustrated by Robert Shaw's reaction when one of his Hindu servants jokingly claimed that he was a Muslim in front of two Turki officials:

> But I confess I felt very nervous for a time, as I knew the strictness of the fanatical Mussulmans of Central Asia, who hold that when a man has once acknowledged himself a Mussulman, even by repeating accidentally the profession of faith, or by so much as saying 'Yakhooda'... they will not allow such a man to relapse into idolatry, as they call it, but compel him to take his choice between Islam or death.[42]

Observers noted a relapse into religious laxity after the demise of Ya'qub Beg's power, and it continued to be blamed on the Chinese decades after the restoration of Qing power and during the ensuing warlord period. In the late 1920s, Schomberg explained the decline of alms donations to shrines in Yarkand by the indifference of the Chinese towards religion, which failed to enforce the observance of Islamic tenets.[43]

A stricter adherence to Islamic values was attributed to the higher echelons of local society and laxity associated with the masses, among whom ritual ablutions, praying, mosque attendance and paying the religious tax were frequently neglected. Some Turkis smoked tobacco and indulged in consuming hashish, getting drunk and gambling in the teahouses. Female piety was measured by their degree of veiling and the frequency of intermarriage with infidels. Thus, women's religiosity was described by some observers as lax since women went about unveiled and many were prepared to marry a Chinese.[44]

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[41] Shaw 1984: 465–6; Bellew 1875b: 324.

[42] Shaw 1984: 381. The politicization of religion by colonial rulers was not limited to Eastern Turkestan. According to the Soviet scholar Sukhareva, drastic measures were similarly implemented in the khanates, especially in Bukhara, to force people to the mosques. The morning prayer was especially kept under control: religious office holders went to the neighbourhood mosque in the morning and sent for those who were absent. Those without sufficient excuse were admonished and could also be whipped (Sukhareva 1960: 14–5).

[43] Schomberg 1996: 149.

[44] This also indicated complacency on the part of the *mollas* who, for a small fee, were prepared to perform the religious ceremony for anyone (Grenard 1898a: 238–9).

But opinions were far from uniform, and many authors stressed the persisting force of Islam in the post-Ya'qub Beg era. One Central Asian author considered Eastern Turkestani standards of religious observance comparable to those of Western Turkestan: "nobody can exaggerate in saying that Kashgar looks like a 'second Bukhara' if we consider the increase of its 'ulama and the progress of its trade" [45] Dr. and Mrs. Högberg from Sweden found the Sunnis of Chinese Turkestan to be more orthodox and 'priest-ridden' than the Shi'ites of Persia, with whom they were familiar from previous mission work.[46] Martin Hartmann found that Islam was well established in the cities,[47] and Sven Hedin's impressions of Merket were that Islamic prescriptions were strictly adhered to. A week before his visit, a man had been caught eating before sunset during the fasting period. He was badly beaten and paraded through the bazaar with his hands tied behind his back and led by a rope, while onlookers mocked him.[48] Hedin was also impressed by the religiosity of Muhammad Bay, an elderly shepherd who, although he had lived most of his life in relative isolation, meticulously performed his daily prayers. Muhammad Bay was convinced that if he had not done this, the wolves and wild pigs (which he considered as bad as the Chinese) would have eaten his flock long ago.[49] The force of Islam was even more explicitly stressed some decades later by British missionaries, who wrote about Islam in Eastern Turkestan in a condemnatory tone:

> It [Islam] was not a constructive force, but a disruptive one, which has always been a cause of revolt and bloodshed. Though not opposed to literacy, Islam in Eastern Turkestan has helped the development of neither art, literature nor ethics, but has rather proved destructive of the civilising influences of neighbourly intercourse, and has established the deplorable tradition of the periodic Moslem rebellions which take place every thirty years.[50]

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[45] Sayrami 1988.
[46] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 190.
[47] Hartmann 1908: 42.
[48] Hedin 2001.I.: 185.
[49] Ibid. II.: 97–8.
[50] Cable & French 1942: 206. Such denigratory statements by foreign visitors in the pre-modern period are frequently echoed by Soviet and Chinese scholars of the socialist period. For example, Sukhareva called Islam 'an aggressive ideology' which had a negative influence on women (Sukhareva 1960: 8).

Religious holidays were strictly observed, even though some observers attributed the enthusiasm to participate to the 'carnevalesque' character of these occasions, which combined piety with recreation, merrymaking and brusque business.[51] In his recollections of conditions in Kashgar in 1929, Jarring judged that "observance of orthodox Islamic religious laws was strict" and went so far as to say that, until the 1930s, Southern Xinjiang continued to remain the stronghold of Islam in Asia.[52] This view about the piety of Eastern Turkestani Muslims persisted well into the middle of the twentieth century: one author describing the pre-socialist era characterized the Turkis as 'very religious'; this was manifested in their performance of the morning and Friday prayers, as well as fasting.[53] This last statement indicates both the relativism inherent to these evaluations, as well as the difficulties involved in a full, consistent implementation of Islamic teachings. Everyday life was characterized by contradictions and inconsistencies, which is aptly illustrated by an incident, recorded in Ili between 1927 and 1929:

> The gambling quarter was close to the serai and, whenever I passed, I saw crowds of people squatting and gambling and, among them, police and soldiers, while hawkers of food and cigarettes wandered among the groups. I fancy it was pretty harmless. One old man was very indignant when I began to photograph him, and moved off saying it was against the Koran. The crowds were highly amused when Daulat [Colonel Schomberg's servant from Hunza], in his clear resonant voice, asked whether gambling was allowed by the holy book.[54]

Inconsistencies were observable even among religious dignitaries, as the story of a Khotanese *molla* illustrates. Hopelessly indebted, the *molla* went far out into the desert to commit suicide, which is prohibited by Islam. However, his story ended unusually: he found gold and silver in the desert and returned as a rich man.[55]

The dominance of Islam as the main source of social standing, respectability and integrity for individuals was never seriously broken throughout the pre-modern period. Continuity was also favoured by the fact that, after Chinese rule had been restored, the Chinese continued the imperial policy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

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[51] Grenard 1898a: 239.
[52] Jarring 1986: 184.
[53] Wu 1984: 85.
[54] Schomberg 1996: 172–3.
[55] Hedin 2001.I.: 172.

centuries; by and large they refrained from antagonizing the Muslims by interfering with religious institutions. A combination of habit and communal pressure ensured continuities even across confessional boundaries: some local people who expressed an interest in becoming Christians, or had even converted, continued with their old way of life, reciting Muslim prayers, visiting the graves of Muslim saints or sitting at the feet of Sufi leaders.[56]

6.2 *Islamic Institutions*

6.2.1 *Mosques and Pious Foundations*

Reports about mosques are fragmentary and often limited to mentioning their number in a particular town. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century there were forty-four mosques in the town of Khotan.[57] At the time the communists seized power in Xinjiang, Kashgar prefecture had 12,918 mosques, and the city's mosques employed 190 imams, 180 *mäzin*s, thirty-three *katip*s, twenty *qazi*s and numerous other lower-ranking office bearers such as sweepers and caretakers. In the 1940s, the central mosque in Kashgar had a prayer hall large enough to accommodate 5,000 people. It had eighteen personnel (*axun*) in charge of religious affairs and the management of the pious foundations attached to it.[58]

Mosques were classified into festival mosques, Friday mosques located in urban areas, small mosques scattered everywhere in urban and rural areas, mosques attached to saintly shrines and isolated mosques.[59] They could be built on inherited or purchased land. Alternatively, a person wishing to found a mosque could designate a piece of his land as a pious foundation for this purpose. The terms used in local mosque architecture fully conformed to standard Islamic usage. The direction of the west was called the *mehrap* and marked by a brick construction the size of a door, placed right in the middle of the western wall. The western wall in its total length, pointing in the direction of Mecca, was called *qiblä*. A wooden platform (*minbar*) was set up where the

[56] Hultvall 1981: 12.
[57] Grenard 1898a: 240.
[58] Wang n.d.:3.
[59] Ibid.: 2.

western and northern walls met, from which the Friday prayer (*xutbä*) was read.[60] Mosques were sacred sites: if one became dilapidated, no other building could be erected in its place until the Day of Judgment. If another edifice was mistakenly built on the site of a mosque, it had to be demolished.[61]

Mosques, colleges and shrines often formed part of a pious foundation (*waqf/wäxpä*) established by the donations of influential benefactors. The livelihood of the more prestigious groups of religious officeholders was largely dependent on income derived from these foundations. The complexities involved in the concept of *waqf* are alluded to only by Muhammad Ali Damolla.[62] The donation had to be formalized with the drawing up of a document which stipulated that the *waqf* was not to be sold, exchanged, donated or pawned. The letter made out for the trustee specified that the foundation was made for God's sake. Sealed by a legal authority, the document was then entrusted to one of the appointed officeholders. If the *waqf* was attached to a shrine, it was handed over to the guardian of the shrine. Some people abused the system by having these letters made out for ninety-nine years and selling the *waqf* property.[63]

Religious officeholders acquired the right to cultivate *waqf* land and benefit from the harvest; alternatively, they could rent it out and live off the proceeds. The appointed trustees (*mutiwälli*) collected the Islamic tithe from peasants in grain. In mosques which had no appointed trustee, the job was performed by the *mudarris axuns*. Often, artificial ponds (*köl*) were *waqf* property; they were made available to the public for drinking water only after the *qazi* had put his seal on the endowment.[64]

Waqf holdings were classified according to the designated use of their income. The income of the 'lamp *waqf*' had to be used for lamp oil

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[60] Prov. 207. I. 17.

[61] Prov. 464. 15R.

[62] Prov. 207. I. 17: 66.

[63] Prov. 207. I. 17: 66. Unfortunately our author talks about the *waqf* in general and remains too vague for us to draw conclusions about the precise nature of the institution. According to Murat Çızakça the document gives the impression that a considerably stricter version of *waqf* law was applied in Kashgar than in Ottoman lands. He also comments on the question of embezzlement, which could arise if the *waqf* was rented out. This would normally be applied if the buildings on the *waqf* land were dilapidated and needed urgent repairs. Long-term renting of *waqf* property without such emergencies would imply embezzlement because it diluted property rights (Murat Çızakça, personal communication).

[64] Prov. 464. 2r.

and other small expenses for the mosque. The income of foundations dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad was taken by pilgrims to Mecca to be distributed among the poor. If in a given year no local person undertook the Hajj, then it was the local clergy and the destitute who benefited. The profits of some foundations had to be used for purchasing Korans and, by extension, the propagation of Islam. Other small foundations served the purpose of buying and maintaining the big communal cauldron in which pilgrims prepared their sacrificial meal and for the charitable distribution of bread and rice.

Some *waqf* formed the property of the mosque community: the income from these could be used for repairing bridges, digging and maintaining public drinking ponds, building inns for travellers and building and repairing roads. Cemeteries also often constituted such *waqf*. A 'restricted' type of private ownership was represented by the *waqfiya-i awlad*, which served as an institutionalized device to protect private property. Land to be passed down within the family was placed under the mosque's supervision. Children could inherit their father's land but were obliged to pay a small contribution to the mosque for its trusteeship; in turn the mosque guaranteed that the property was neither divided nor sold. The income of the *waqfiya-i mutlaq* had to be used by the children of the deceased to organize the annual commemorations of his death.[65] Often the size of the *waqf* estates was considerable: prior to the first land reform in the early 1950s, the foundation attached to the central mosque in Kashgar controlled more than 3,000 *mo* arable land, as well as more than sixty premises, most of which were shops.[66] A great deal of *waqf* revenues was used to provide a livelihood for the religious personnel, who also benefited from the religious tithe, believers' *zakat* payments and remuneration and presents given for services performed during life-cycle rituals.

At the end of the nineteenth century, even after the restoration of Chinese hegemony and the limitations placed on the power of the Muslim religious officeholders, large landholdings were still held by some Muslim spiritual leaders. For example, one shrine possessed enough land to ensure the livelihood of as many as fifty *şäyx*s and their families.[67] Other, however, experienced losses. In the late 1920s, five *şäyx*s were

[65] Wang n.d.: 5–6.
[66] Ibid.: 2.
[67] Grenard 1898a: 233.

in charge of a big shrine situated near the oasis of Niya. People complained that, during the pilgrimage season in the autumn, the keepers did not provide anything for free and did not even feed the beggars, who had to depend on the charity of individual pilgrims. The *şäyx*s' excuse was that, in contrast to earlier times, when the revenues of Niya had benefited the shrine, they now had to live on charitable donations only. We can only assume that these revenues had been appropriated by the secular authorities. Although the shrine still owned 1,500 sheep and the income from this flock was lining the pockets of the *şäyx*s, they did not use any of it for the upkeep of the shrine. Some of the shepherds also made a profit by selling the animals privately, thus 'cheating' the saint and his custodians.[68]

A major change in the history of *waqf* came with the establishment of the Association for Promoting Uyghur Culture (APUC) in 1934, which took over most of the *waqf* land attached to shrines. Chinese sources claim that a large part of the income of such lands was used by corrupt individuals for personal gain: a document quoted from the archives of the party committee of South Xinjiang Region mentions the case of a certain Amin Bakr—hereditary *şäyx* of the Apaq Khoja shrine in Kashgar—who in the early 1940s was making his living as a peddler. After his younger sister had married the chief of the county police, Amin Bakr was duly appointed director of the county APUC and, therefore, controlled the management of most of the *waqf* land possessed by the local APUC. By 1946, he was a rich man in the possession of two large storehouses, with a net income of 200 tons of grain. He also purchased sixty *mo* farmland and appropriated 100 *mo waqf* land, built a luxurious compound, and opened four shops and two business offices in the Muslim quarter.[69]

Although a great many of these pious foundations were confiscated by Chinese overlords at various times, many members of the higher echelons of the Turki religious and secular hierarchy managed to retain some of their former wealth and prestige until the final confiscations in the 1950s.

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[68] Schomberg 1996: 240.
[69] Wang n.d.: 8.

6.2.2 *The Brotherhoods*

Aspects of Sufism (*sopilik*) in Eastern Turkestan have been explored by a number of scholars, but we still lack a systematic study of the subject.[70] Curiously, the indigenous sources, which tell much about everyday dimensions of religious and social practices, say relatively little about Sufi brotherhoods. This may be explained by the secrecy to which members were obliged to resort in the face of periodic persecutions. Another possibility is that some indigenous authors were themselves members of Sufi brotherhoods and therefore reluctant to reveal detailed information to outsiders.

Molla Abdul Qadir gave a brief description of how the first dervish convent was founded:

> In the olden times there used to be no dervish convent (*xaniqa*). A king went out hunting and saw two people. They met each other, cried together, shared some bread and then embraced. They both fell unconscious. After they came to they asked each other how the other felt. The king asked them what sort of people they were and they answered that they were the people of the 'path' (*tariqat*). 'Do you have a place where you can gather?' asked the king. 'No, we do not' was their answer. So he built them a convent and this is how the first dervish convent was founded.[71]

Of all the brotherhoods, the Naqshbandiyya emerged as a significant political force in Eastern Turkestan, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; they retained much of their importance throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, participating in the numerous Muslim uprisings which characterized centuries of foreign domination.[72] The earliest history of the Naqshbandi in the region dates back to the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, when traders belonging to the order of popular mystics entered from Western Turkestan. The Yasawiyya had been dominant in both regions, but in the fifteenth century they were supplanted by the Naqshbandi. By the mid-fifteenth century the Naqshbandi had gained great importance in Eastern Turkestan; they continued to maintain close ties with the Naqshbandi of Western Turkestan, where they sent their disciples to

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[70] Fletcher n.d., 1995; Hamada 1978, 1999; Togan 2001; Zarcone 1999, 2001, 2002.

[71] Prov. 464. 37R. On Central Asian convents see Paul 1998: 60–3; DeWeese 1999: 510–1.

[72] For a recent study of the history of the brotherhood in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the region, see Papas 2005.

study. Often equated with political separatism, the semi-clandestine nature of Naqshbandi political activism rendered them vulnerable to attacks and persecution. Yet, these same features also ensured their survival and influence. Their extended networks in and beyond Xinjiang provided support for travelling members; for example, Ya'qub Beg's ambassador made ample use of their services during missions to the Ottoman Empire and India.[73]

Besides the Naqshbandi, a number of other brotherhoods also persisted throughout the centuries. The Qadiriyya practised 'loud service'; in the Suhrawardiyya and Chistiyya cloisters, the remembrance was accompanied by musical instruments.[74] Subsuming them under the general label '*iṣan* groups', the Chinese listed, among others, the Naqshbandiyya, the 'Inaqiyya (who held their rituals at night), the Chistiyya, the Jahriyya and the Suhrawardiyya as still active in Kashgar in the middle of the twentieth century, when the region was incorporated into the People's Republic.[75]

Hamada has argued that, in pre-modern Xinjiang, it is difficult to find any tendency which opposed Sufism, a statement which he tentatively extends to the present era.[76] That such a statement must be qualified is suggested by Molla Abdul Qadir, who claimed that some of the *ulama* ('ulamā') did not tolerate dancing; the recital of mystic poetry and appearing with uncovered head in their presence were also prohibited.[77] The *molla*'s remarks suggest an ideological split between the two streams during the Republican period. Chinese sources state that as early as 1902 a religious movement emerged in southern Xinjiang which advocated a return to the fundamental tenets of Islam. Centred around the Takustaş mosque in one of the northern suburbs of Kashgar, the programme of this group included rigorous adherence to monotheism and interpretation of the Koran and the prophetic traditions according to their literal meaning. They were opposed to saint and shrine worship, and to the celebration of the popular religious festival of Barat and the first ten days of the month of *muhärräm*. They also disapproved of the communal commemoration of the dead. They were

[73] Zarcone 1998.
[74] Prov. 464. 22 R, 33R.
[75] Wang n.d.: 16. For a detailed introduction to the brotherhoods popular in India, see Rizvi 1992. For overviews of the Sufi organizations in Eastern Turkestan, see Fletcher 1995: 76–80 and Zarcone 2002.
[76] Hamada 1999.
[77] Prov. 464. 23.R–V.

in favour of female participation in communal prayers in the mosque and opposed the practice that *mollas* should be remunerated for Koran recitations.[78] These were, of course, recurrent points of discussion in anti-Sufi discourse.[79]

Indigenous and foreign authors alike single out the most conspicuous activities of Sufi ritual action, notably the recital of mystical poetry, dancing and meditating. In some groups the Koran was recited throughout the night, and members performed voluntary prayers: this was the case among the Naqshbandi groups described by Abdul Qadir.[80] While most sources concentrate on the rituals of those brotherhoods which performed 'loud remembrance', the Swedish missionary-surgeon Raquette explained the physiological details of the silent *zikr* which was performed with the eyes and mouth shut and which involved the silent pronouncing of the formula 'there is no God but God' by the dervish 5–10,000 times every twenty-four hours.[81]

Molla Abdul Qadir was particularly familiar with the daily recital routine of the Islamiyya brotherhood and their mystical practices, such as the habit of holding their breath while simultaneously sticking their tongue to their palates. This is a reference to the method of 'bonding the heart with the spiritual master', an exercise through which they made contact with their dead master (*pir*).[82] Their *pir* was considered God's friend, and many legends circulated about his miracles: how he had worshipped in the desert, mounted a tiger, made a whip from a snake and entered a city where he caused all the people to become pious. When two members of the brotherhood met, they first stared at each other's temples for four or five minutes before making contact. Upon visiting each other at home, they prayed, and upon leaving, the visitor took ten to fifteen steps backwards, staring at his host, and prayed again. An important tenet of their teaching was self-deprecation, which was summed up in the following verse: "Everyone is good; we are bad. Everyone is wheat; we are straw".[83] They warned their disciples

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[78] Wang n.d.: 15.

[79] See DeWeese 1999: 492–3.

[80] Prov. 464. 33V.

[81] Jarring 1987: 7.

[82] Cf. Paul 1998: 23; Meier 1994: 17–241. Regulating breathing was a well-known method of Sufi 'remembrance' (*zikr*), cf. Schimmel 1990: 190.

[83] *barçä yaxşi biz yaman, barçä buğday biz saman.* Self-deprecation was characteristic of the Malāmatiyya tradition which entered Central Asia through Naqshbandi mediation

not to stray and not to go to other dervish cloisters; they encouraged them to visit but warned them never to come empty-handed, which was summed up in the formula "Supplication to the *iṣan*, onion for the corn bread; don't come to me empty-handed!"[84] From this admonition we may deduce that it was not unusual for younger men to experiment with various mystic groups, and that there may have been some rivalry between the brotherhoods.[85]

In the beginning of the twentieth century the spiritual gatherings in the *xaniqa* were much frequented, both in urban and rural settlements,[86] which suggests that they constituted an important institution for communality. Brotherhood membership was only one of several communal networks available, but some members identified fully with the organization as 'full-time' dervishes and mendicants. These voluntary 'marginals' of local society took a vow of poverty and renounced the world. They made a living by begging, and their only other activity was to celebrate the power of God. It was not always easy to distinguish between true adapts who entered the brotherhood for spiritual reasons and those who adopted the costume, language and manners of the former to make a living.

Sporadic reports allow us a glimpse into the ceremonies of some groups. A visit to a male brotherhood was described by a Swedish missionary as follows:

> We enter the *Khaneka*, a mud hut without windows or ceiling. Here men of all ages gather. The *ishan* has a venerable position. His disciples (*murid*) present him with their offerings of food or money. After they have assembled they sing religious hymns, accompanied by stringed instruments, like the *dutar*, *sutar* and *kalon*. Thereafter follows the wild music of the *dap* (a kind of drum) and the clarinet (*surnai*). When the music has stopped there follows a dance of an indescribably wild nature... Many of them fall unconscious to the ground because of the exertion. In a circle around the dancers the other people sit rhythmically rocking their bodies and inhaling and exhaling with a noisy, sorting sound. This sound represents the words *ya-hu*. When the dance has stopped food is offered whereafter

(cf. Schimmel 1990: 177; Algar 1991). The motifs of wheat and straw can also be found in a collection of poetry attributed to Yasawi: "All are wheat, you are the straw that people did not harvest!" (Light 1998: 194).

[84] *iṣanğa niyaz, zağrağa piyaz, meniñ aldimğa quruq kälmänlär.*

[85] Prov. 464.22V–23R–V.

[86] Högberg 1912.

> they all lie down and sleep. Before sunrise they perform the morning prayers and they return to their homes.[87]

Some groups admitted women, even though during the rituals a certain degree of gender segregation was maintained. Often women had their own *xaniqa* where they gathered under the leadership of a female spiritual leader (*büwü/ayäm*). Once a woman had 'given her hand',[88] she became a disciple for life: upon her death it was the *ayäm* who washed and shrouded her dead body.[89] In some communities, women's initiation involved sitting in rows and holding the corners of the head scarves of those in front of them. Those in the front row held on to the *işan*'s turban, which was handed in through a window. The oral instructions warned all adapts to eliminate their desires, to get up early in the morning, to avoid gossip, to respect other people's property, to pray five times a day, not to submit to sorrow, not to harm others and not to accuse others falsely. In conformity with the overarching patriarchal ideology and the honour-and-shame code, women were also warned to avoid disobeying their husbands and visiting the bazaar. Initiates were also sworn to submit to and obey the *işan*, to take part in the communal activities of the group and to maintain secrecy.[90]

Female *xaniqa*s were often well attended. One such gathering in Yengi Hisar in the early twentieth century was attended by as many as eighty participants:

> The women ejaculated puffing and grunting sounds while rocking themselves to and fro with their heads... The *ayem* now distributed small, white stones to those present. While slipping these stones through their fingers or stroking their faces with them they repeated the formula *la ilaha ill'Allah* over and over again.

The rest of this ceremony included the recital of Koranic verses, the communal consumption of water which had been 'read upon' by a *molla*, the collection of money for the benefit of the religious leader and the performance of various bodily movements such as jumping, stamping, dancing, puffing, blowing and grunting, which could lead to

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[87] Jarring 1979: 18. On the *shaikh—murid* relationship in Central Asia Sufism, see Paul 1998: 53–60.

[88] Holding hands was a well-known symbol of pledging one's allegiance in acknowledgement of the other person as spiritual superior (Fletcher n.d.: 184).

[89] Jarring 1979: 18–9.

[90] Wang n.d.: 17.

ecstasy and even loss of consciousness. The ritual was concluded with the preparation and consumption of a communal meal.[91]

Muhammad Ali Damolla implies that there was a connection between the brotherhoods and craftsmen's gatherings by noting their overlapping terminology. According to him, anyone who had achieved perfection in a craft or trade was called a *pir, murşid* or *ustad*. Each profession (*käsp*) had a *pir*, who was the founder and the patron saint of the trade. For example, the *pir* of blacksmiths was Häzrät Davud. The dyers claimed Häzrät Isa as their patron saint. The tailors' patron saint was Häzrät Idris, and the belt-makers' was Häzrät Musa. The *pir* of shoemakers was Häzrät Salih, while that of the weavers was Häzrät Şiş. The patron saint of cooks was Häzrät Ibrahim, and bricklayers, cooks and fur-makers venerated Häzrät Ibrahim Xalil. The patron saint of carpenters was Häzrät Noah, and the bakers' was Häzrät Jabrail. The patron saint of butchers was Jamaladdin, and that of perfume merchants was Khoja Attar Wali. The sentinels' *pir* was Mir Kalal, and that of peasants was Khoja Abdullah.[92] In the summertime, craftsmen provided hospitality for fellow craftsmen in their gardens to honour the patron saint of their respective professions with a communal lantern feast (*çiraq*). It was held on Mondays, and may have been a rotating social event, hosted by each member in turn. Such groups had a fixed membership and in addition to commensality, they recited Koranic verses and the sacred texts of the profession. These were known as *risalä*. They comprised the code of conduct for practitioners of a particular craft. The *risalä* explained the sacred origins of the profession rooted in Islam, listed the names of its first practitioners, and provided the craftsman with moral and religious guidance necessary to achieve success and the highest perfection possible in his profession. The guests, all practitioners of the same profession, prayed together before departing.[93] The relationship of these 'craft guilds' to Sufi brotherhoods is not properly understood, but in addition to terminological affinities, there was a basic structural similarity in the rituals: as with Sufi rituals, the craftsmen's communal ceremony also comprised commensality and communal worship.

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[91] Jarring 1979: 18–20.

[92] Prov. 207. I.65.

[93] Prov. 464. 33R. Cf. Prov. 2.2; Prov. 406. The genre was also known in other parts of Central Asia, for example in the territories of modern Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. For a description of *risalä* in Afghanistan, see Centlivres-Demont 1997.

Sufi structures displayed very strong communal features. The rituals of those groups which allowed for women's full participation while maintaining spatial segregation seem to have followed the established pattern of life-cycle rituals. The social relations characteristic of the brotherhoods encapsulated the general tensions inherent in local society: the rites were of an egalitarian character, but, simultaneously, submission to the elder—also expressed through gifts and donations—replicated the hierarchy characteristic of the wider social organization.

6.2.3 *The Transmission of Knowledge*: Mäktäp

Membership in Sufi brotherhoods required the acquisition of special knowledge and skills taught by practice and imitation during ritual participation. Membership in 'craft guilds' also required special training and involved the transmission of local know-how which formed part of the communal 'base' Farmers' and craftsmen's children were typically 'socialized into' the trade from early childhood, although specialized knowledge of a craft could also be transmitted through apprenticeship. Master-apprentice relationships were formed when the transmission of knowledge took place away from the apprentice's own household. Apprenticeship had a prescribed ritual sequence, and its various stages were meticulously observed. This involved the ceremonial taking of food to the master at the beginning of the apprenticeship and inviting the master to a meal and presenting him with garments, fabric and sometimes even money at the end of the study period. For his part, to conclude the apprenticeship the master presented the apprentice with a set of the tools necessary for his trade, which constituted a symbolic recognition that the apprentice had fully acquired the necessary skills. It also conferred the blessings of the master upon his pupil, without which he could not successfully practise the trade. This spiritual aspect of the transmission of specialized occupational knowledge was also expressed in the verbal transmission of the names of the patron saint or saints of the craft and of certain formulae which craftsmen had to recite at various stages of production to ensure success. Often a copy of the *risalä* was presented by master to pupil.[94] The ritual aspects of the relationship thus included commensality and the delayed exchange of presents. Gestures initiating long-term reciprocity were instrumen-

[94] Habibulla 1993: 313–6.

tal in establishing ties of mutual dependence between the two parties when entering the relationship. Often the apprentice became fully incorporated into his master's household: the initial ritual marked the beginning of several years of working together, during which time the apprentice received full board.

While even the informal transmission of skills had strong religious connotations, formal education in pre-socialist times was almost exclusively under the control of the religious authorities. Attempts to secularize the system were made in the first half of the twentieth century, but their impact remained limited.

Foreigners' opinions about primary education were usually dismissive: "everybody knew the Fatiha, but nothing else".[95] The general opinion was that primary school teachers had little knowledge themselves and that members of the local elite were only marginally better educated than the common people. *Mäktäp*-educated men were at best semi-literate, their education comprising mainly the memorization of Koranic verses, the rules of prescribed ritual prayers, ritual ablution, fasting and some very basic literacy skills.[96] In Kashgar anyone able to read a bit was known as a *molla*, and he who could read a three-digit number counted as a great scholar.[97] Numerical skills left much to be desired even among teachers. Reportedly, few *mollas* were able to reckon time because of the relative complications of calendar computations.[98] Negative comments about the general state of primary education, and especially women's poor rates of literacy, were abound.[99] Nur Luke estimated that about 97–98 per cent of the population were illiterate.[100]

The age at which children were sent to school ranged from four to eight; starting school young was explained by the hope that "they will gradually pick up their letters".[101] Under Ya'qub Beg education was not compulsory, "but a certain coercion is exercised on the parents to

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[95] Grenard 1898a: 132.

[96] Ibid.: 132. Hunter 1920: 168; Le Coq 1928: 89; Sykes & Sykes 1920: 316; Prov. 212. 21–3.

[97] Hartmann 1908: 47.

[98] The beginning of the Ramadan feast in most places was therefore fixed in such a way that any person who had spotted the new moon reported it to the local religious authority, which then proclaimed this moment to be the beginning of the feast (Raquette 1912: 180).

[99] Högberg 1912; Grenard 1898a: 132; Prov. 212. 21–3.

[100] Ibid.: 21–3.

[101] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 316; Toxti 1986: 8–9; Forsyth 1875: 87–8; Högberg 1912.

make them send their children to school".[102] The general willingness to send children to primary education was explained by the religious orientation of the basic curriculum, which taught children the basic rules of religious morality and social skills. Classes included the Arabic alphabet, classical Persian and Chaghatay poetry, Koranic verses to be recited on ritual occasions and the rudiments of religious praxis. When the children were free to go home, their teachers reminded them not to fight, to greet people they met on their way, and their parents upon entering their home, and to be content regardless of whether they were given a small piece of bread or a whole loaf. Disobedient children were admonished, and physical punishment was practised: some were put on a bastinado, others were hung by their hands and those who tried to run away from school had fetters put on their feet.[103] Since the duration of study was not fixed, children could be withdrawn from education at any moment. Boys were sometimes allowed to continue until they were fifteen or sixteen, but girls were rarely permitted to attend beyond the age of ten or twelve, when they were regarded as marriageable.[104]

Primary schools were built and maintained by mosque communities, space often being provided by a rich patron. The classroom was near the mosque, but teaching could also take place in the teacher's house or, in the summer, in the open air. Before 1930 the number of such primary schools in the city of Kashgar alone was approximately between seventy and eighty. In a traditional *mäktäp* the teachers were exclusively male and were addressed as *xälpät* or *axun*. Each day children started school in the morning and continued until sunset, during which time they attended three periods of instruction. In Kashgar parents sent their children to school for the first time with the words "May the child's soul be [dedicated to] God and his body to the soil".[105] In Guma, when attending school for the first time, children were accompanied by a parent who took the teacher a bowl of food, or at least some bread, and perhaps a set of clothes. The teacher recited a prayer before sending the gifts to his inner quarters.[106] We have almost no information about special *mäktäp* set up for girls, though these were often mentioned by travellers in Russian Turkestan at the time. In these

[102] Forsyth 1875: 87–8.
[103] Prov. 464. 29R–V.
[104] Forsyth 1875: 87–8; Nur Haji and Guoguang 1995: 364; Toxti 1986: 8.
[105] Prov. 464. 29R–V.
[106] Jarring 1951b.: 117–22.

'ātūn-bībī schools, all the teaching was done by women who had some basic religious education; they often fulfilled various other functions at life-cycle and religious rituals, and some undertook spirit healing. Such schools in Russian Turkestan were mostly organized in private houses and attendance was limited to the urban elite.[107]

Since teachers had no regular salary, their livelihood depended entirely on the donations of pupils' parents.[108] By 1930, some schools were run on the basis of a progressive fee-paying system: in a Yarkand *mäktäp*, the children of rich families paid a sum of eight *pul* on Thursdays and four *pul* on Mondays, while the children of the poor had to pay four *pul* on Thursdays and two *pul* on Mondays. At lunch break, poor children were given a piece of bread. When they finished reading a book and started a second one, they took a tray of bread or some cash to their teacher. This was repeated on each occasion that the child began studying a new book.[109] During the winter, children were expected to bring willow branches or contribute to heating expenses. The ritual frame of primary education thus followed the pattern of apprenticeship rituals. Even where fee-paying was introduced, the initial donation of food and clothing for accepting the pupil and the ritual giving of bread and money at the conclusion of a book suggest that the institutionalized transmission of knowledge was informed by notions of reciprocity.

6.2.4 *The Transmission of Knowledge*: Mädräsä

Male pupils who wished to further their education proceeded to an Islamic college (*mädräsä*). In each oasis centre there were several such colleges. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the city of Yarkand alone boasted fifty or sixty of them, each of which instructed about 100 students (*talip*).[110] At about the same time, Kashgar had seventeen colleges.[111] The number of colleges was not the only criterion for establishing a reputation as a centre of learning. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Aqsu was an important centre of scholarship; it had two *mädräsä*s, but several of their *molla*s had spent five to ten

[107] Krämer 2002: 42–5.
[108] Toxti 1986: 5.
[109] Prov. 464. 29R–V.
[110] Shaw 1984: 465.
[111] Valikhanov 1865: 150. These figures correspond to the figures of Toxti, who names all the seventeen Kashgar colleges (1986: 10–1).

years studying in Bukhara;[112] however, by the early twentieth century the trend for Eastern Turkestanis to study in Bukhara was regressing.[113] In 1902, Martin Hartmann recorded that the eighteen *mädräsä*s in Kashgar had 2,000 students in the winter and 700 in the summer. The most famous of these colleges were the Qazançä and Xanliq, the latter alone teaching more than 300 pupils.[114]

The lectures of certain professors in Kashgar attracted non-local students, some of whom came from as far afield as Kucha, Aqsu, Khotan, Yarkand, Ili and Turfan, but rarely from regions outside Xinjiang. Studying away from one's home oasis was common practice, because it was held that students studying in their hometown could be hindered in their studies by the proximity of their families and various distractions in the familial environment.[115]

The denigrating tone of foreigners' reports on the state of higher education echoed their criticism of primary school practice. The major difference between Ya'qub Beg's time and later decades was the dramatic decline in student numbers. College education merely taught students to read and write, to recite the Koran and sometimes to understand its meaning.[116] Some acquired the rudiments of Islamic law and were able to discuss Persian books. Colleges often had more teachers than students; some held them to be no more than refectories, where the central role was played not by the library but by the cooking pot, the size and contents of which determined the reputation of the college.[117] In Hartmann's opinion, about 50 per cent of all students were idling their time away, and some remained ignorant even after years of studying. This was the case of Sirajäddin Axun, who by 1902 had already spent seventeen years at a Kashgar college without learning anything. Apparently, such people hoped that simply by virtue of sleeping in the college throughout half their life they might acquire the 'hidden knowledge'.[118] The native Nur Luke also had a negative opinion about *mädräsä*

[112] Hartmann 1902: 115–6.

[113] A similar decline of the influence of Bukhara took place among the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region in the middle of the nineteenth century (Kemper 1998: 430, 471).

[114] Hartmann 1902: 116. Toxti 1986: 10–1.

[115] Prov. 207. I.32.

[116] Shaw 1984: 465.

[117] Ibid.; Grenard 1898a: 235–6.

[118] Hartmann 1908: 47.

education.[119] However, we must bear in mind that Martin Hartmann was well-known for his anti-Muslim sentiments, while Nur Luke was brought up by Christian missionaries. Their negative evaluations of Islamic education should therefore be taken with caution.

In Yarkand the colleges were described as being empty for the most part or being used as shelter by the urban poor. In 1895 the total number of students was about 200. Of the three professors, only a certain Säfär axun was active, since the other two were busy practising their other professions as Islamic legal specialists, which must have been more profitable. Säfär axun hailed from Bukhara and at the age of seventy-eight was still teaching logic and dogma. He claimed that most of the other learned men active in Eastern Turkestan at this period had been his students. By 1902, he had only five or six permanent, and a few temporary, students. In his opinion the level of college teaching and student interest compared unfavourably with Bukhara, where professors' lectures were accompanied by heated discussions and questions from the students.[120] When comparing levels of educational attainments in Western and Eastern Turkestan, the sources are contradictory. Valikhanov's comparison, pre-dating the Ya'qub Beg era, was favourable for Eastern Turkestan, although his praise of Eastern Turkestani education may have been largely motivated by the wish of this propagator of Russian culture to denigrate the attainments of the Muslims of Western Turkestan. Towards the end of Qing rule, the number of colleges declined, with twenty-nine recorded in Yarkand and fifteen in Kashgar.[121] This general decline can be illustrated with the tragic fate of one of the best known of the Kashgar professors, whose popularity declined after he started smoking opium around the age of forty, which caused violent outbursts.[122] In spite of the general decline, there was no fundamental change in organizational structure or in the curriculum.

The traditional college curriculum comprised three branches of science, namely Islamic law, syntax and logic, the teaching of which seems to have followed some seasonal variation.[123] In the winter, students studied law and grammar, subjects considered to be difficult, while during the summer easy readings such as Persian poetry were the order

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[119] Prov. 212: 22–3.
[120] Hartmann 1908: 45–51.
[121] Nur Haji and Guoguang 1995: 365–72.
[122] Hartmann 1908: 45–6.
[123] Prov. 207. I.32.

of the day. Elementary grammatical tracts lithographed in Kashgar, Lahore, Istanbul and Bombay were the basis of all further studies.[124] Elsewhere, the college curriculum included Koran explanations, the traditions, Islamic history, astronomy, geography and medicine.[125]

The colleges were charitable foundations attached to shrines and mosques and were supported by rent-free land managed by appointed trustees (*mutiwälli*).[126] A teacher's income derived from the foundation and was augmented by presents provided by the families of rich students, usually at the time of religious festivals. These comprised a good caftan or a sheep, perhaps some money, and the occasional invitation to the parents' homes.[127] Students were normally boarders and were looked after by older students. Felt rugs, a mattress and bedding, as well as kitchen utensils, ideally had to be provided by the student's family. Students who chose to stay during the summer months as boarders qualified for a residence allowance (*xandanliq*) from the pious foundation, although this was not necessarily provided. Poor students were definitely eligible for support, but even they tried to take symbolic presents such as sugar to their teachers. Those unable to do so paid for their education in kind by serving the schoolmaster.[128]

Four or five students shared a cell and meals. After the *mudärris* had given a lesson, they withdrew into their cells and repeated what they had just been taught. The usual methods of learning were repetition and memorisation.[129] Some students studied on their own, while others worked together in groups of five to twenty or thirty students.[130]

The length of study in the college was not fixed. Those who had studied for more than twenty years attained the title *damolla*. Studying in a college was the surest way for a Muslim to enter the local bureaucracy, and *waqf* support for poor students in theory ensured a certain degree of social mobility. In spite of the egalitarian principles, practice

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[124] Hartmann 1908: 45–9.
[125] Nur Haji and Guoguang 1995: 365; Forsyth 1875: 88.
[126] Ibid.: 88; Prov. 207. I.32.
[127] Prov. 464. 29V–30R; Jarring 1951b: 123–6.
[128] Prov. 464. 29V–30R.
[129] Prov. 207. I.32; Toxti 1986: 11–2.
[130] Traditional teaching was based on individual rather than collective teaching, even when pupils gathered in the same classroom. Collective teaching of pupils organized in classes according to age and level of knowledge first began in Kashgar in the 1880s (Toxti 1986: 17–8).

favoured the children of the elite: poor families expected their children to perform unpaid family labour or earn money as day labourers. The limitations and lack of transparency in their distribution of *waqf* funds encouraged an elite bias.

Many college graduates became mosque functionaries and Islamic legal experts. In some places such as Yarkand, the office of college teacher was hereditary, provided that the son also acquired the right qualifications. If this condition was not met, then a successor had to be appointed, and the appointment had to be approved by the Chinese governor.[131] Thus, although the organization of Islamic education remained in local hands, the Chinese overlords retained a degree of control over the appointment of the personnel.

6.2.5 *Reform Attempts*

The early twentieth century saw the first attempts at reform. These did not constitute a radical break with traditional practices; rather, they were sometimes timid, sometimes more courageous departures from prevailing norms inspired by pragmatic as well as moral considerations.

Measures introduced by the Qing during the final years of the dynasty included making education in Xinjiang compulsory and adding Chinese language and physical drills to the religious curriculum. This experiment failed. These schools were closed in the early days of the Republic, ostensibly for financial reasons, although it was most likely due to under-subscription and Muslim opposition.[132]

The first successful efforts to reform the traditional Muslim education system were initiated by members of the indigenous elite. Some had travelled abroad as merchants and were impressed by the examples of the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Influences coming from Russia were inspired by the Muslim reformist movement.[133] Initial efforts mainly aimed at reforming teaching methods, while the contents of the fundamentally religious curriculum were not questioned. In the late nineteenth century, there were several attempts to establish so-called scientific (*pänni*) schools in Kashgar. Despite their name these did not stand in structural opposition to the traditional *mäktäp*. The curriculum of the

[131] Prov. 464. 42R.
[132] Mackerras 1995: 43; Hunter 1920: 169.
[133] On Jadidism, see Khalid 1998.

pänni schools was a modified version of the *mäktäp* curriculum, adding some scientific subjects, physical education and Russian to conventional subjects with a basic Islamic orientation. Mother-tongue education was also high on the agenda. These schools, however, invited the opposition of both conservative religious forces and the Chinese authorities.

Characteristic of the progressive forces advocating change was Hossain Bay Baça, a millionaire merchant from Artush who had travelled extensively in Europe. Impressed with the ideas of the Young Turks, he set up a charity to build schools and libraries for the education of both boys and girls in his native town, sponsored some young men to study abroad and set up the Artush Trade Company.[134] He was critical of the Chinese educational reforms on moral grounds, claiming that the Chinese methods made boys disrespectful to their elders, dismissive of their faith, and more likely to turn to gambling.[135]

One of the first progressive primary schools in southern Xinjiang was established in the village of Ekisaq in Üstün Artush, not far from Kashgar. In 1914 or 1915 the first teacher training college was founded in Kashgar with Häbiboğli Ähmäd Kamal as director. Kamal had studied in Istanbul and was probably an Ottoman subject. He based his curriculum on the Ottoman model and taught his pupils to recognize the sultan as their spiritual leader. The modern teaching methods imported from the Muslim West provoked bitter reactions from some *mollas*, who declared the school unlawful and those who studied there unbelievers. Teachers at the school were even briefly imprisoned. Later the school was reopened on condition that all symbols of allegiance to the Ottoman Empire were removed and that Chinese language and military drill were added to the curriculum.[136] Financial support to the Ekisaq School was provided by a progressive merchant named Bawudun Musabay. There are some indications that, in this case at least, behind the ideological façade of conservative opposition to the modernization of education lurked economic rivalry between Musabay and another rich merchant, although the impact of ideology was not negligible either. During the annual examination of Kamal's training

[134] L/P & S/20. A 98, Macartney's notes from 1909. Curiously, no mention is made of Hossain Bay Baça in Toxti's detailed history of the history of education in the Kashgar area (Skrine & Nightingale 1973: 157).

[135] Ibid.: 162; Forbes 1986: 18.

[136] Jarring 1975: 8–9; Forbes 1986: 18; Toxti, 1986: 22–3; Mackerras 1995: 44.

college, in the presence of all the important townspeople, a group of progressive students proclaimed:

> As long as you remain ignorant, you have no business with the motherland [*wätän*], with the people [*hälq*], with the nation [*millät*]! Are you passing through this world as an animal which only cares about filling his belly? How will you answer in front of God tomorrow? If you continue like this, you will be trailing on the ground like a snake, and will never in your life escape humiliation![137]

The proclamation angered the conservatives so much that they filed a complaint with the Kashgar *taotai*, claiming that Bawudun Musabay had opened a new school without the permission of the Chinese authorities and that he had thereby violated local law. It was also alleged that the students' education resembled military training and that they were confused by strange subjects such as natural science and geography. This petition startled the Chinese *taotai*. Although at first Bawudun Musabay was briefly imprisoned, he eventually succeeded in persuading the governor to open another school in Kashgar which taught in Chinese.

While demands for educational improvement were for the first time in local history being connected to nationalist slogans, modernist initiatives did not mean a complete break with traditions. When a modern school's expenses were not fully met by a private sponsor, villagers' religious tax was used for supporting progressive schools.[138] Teachers in progressive schools could simultaneously be employed in religious establishments. For example, one Tursun Äpändi taught at the famous Ekisaq School, at the Xanliq *mädräsä* in Kashgar, and at the Kashgar Teachers Training College.[139] A similar background must have characterized Qasim Hajim, whose school, founded in the 1910s, trained a number of students who later became schoolteachers in villages surrounding Kashgar. He recognized the need for full literacy which required the simultaneous teaching of reading and writing skills.[140]

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[137] Toxti 1986: 24.

[138] Ibid.: 24–6. Further archival research is needed to find out if there were precedents for local authorities' trying to tap into *waqf* resources, as was the case elsewhere in Central Asia (McChesney 1991: 294–315).

[139] Toxti 1986.: 31.

[140] Ibid.: 35.

Modern influences also reached the region through other channels. Some rich Turkis started sending their children to be educated in the countries of the Muslim West. In the first half of the twentieth century, modernist ideas were penetrating the north due to increasing Soviet influence. For a while these were disseminated through a library in Ghulja set up after an agreement had been concluded between Governor Yang Zengxin and the Soviets. It advocated a modernized form of Islam, communism and women's emancipation. Such initiatives proved short-lived: Yang had the library closed down, banned Turkic publications and allowed only traditional Islamic schools to function.[141] Nevertheless, Soviet secular propaganda continued to exert some influence in the north. This was further encouraged by Governor Sheng Shicai's Soviet-oriented policies, which were to have important repercussions for the education system. During this period in the north, primary, secondary and professional schools teaching agriculture, animal husbandry, veterinary surgery, accounting, banking etc. were set up according to the Soviet model, and many professionals were trained in the Soviet Union.

The 1930s also saw significant progress in Kashgar's education. The most famous 'scientific' schools at this time were the schools of Norbeşi and Gülbağ. In Artush, Mämtili Ependi launched a wide-ranging educational reform campaign.[142] During this period, increased use of the *waqf* income of religious establishments for progressive educational purposes was made, and even *mädräsä* education saw some tentative reforms. In contrast to previous practice, *mädräsä* teachers now had to take a qualifying examination, and those hired were granted a regular salary. The financial and organizational management of local education were taken over by the Association for Promoting Uyghur Culture from its predecessor, the Association for Reforming Kashgar Colleges and Mosques.[143] Crash courses were organized for teachers to prepare them for teaching the new curriculum. Between 1935 and 1949, 3,457 teachers were trained by the Kashgar college. From 1934 onward, other minorities in Xinjiang started setting up equivalent Associations. In villages near Kashgar, branch associations were formed, with each

[141] Ibid.: 18–9.
[142] For this information I am indebted to Mr. Ömär Küräş.
[143] This change of name also indicated the emerging nationalist trends.

branch overseeing four to fifteen schools financed from the religious tithe.[144]

The size of educational payment was fixed after representatives of the branch associations personally inspected the yield immediately following the harvest. The amount to be collected equalled one tenth of the harvest; this was written on a coupon which had to be produced upon payment. The county association's income derived from the *waqf* foundations of the most popular shrines, from the annual *zakat* payment comprising 10,000 livestock and from peasants' donations of the intestines and hide of sacrificial animals slaughtered for the Festival of Sacrifice. Schools were supplied with textbooks in the local language, many of them printed in the Soviet Union. The construction of new schools was accomplished with peasants' labour contributions. To ensure the financial management of the associations, accountants were trained; literacy campaigns were organized to promote adult education. Many of those who acquired literacy during this time became local- and higher-level cadres under socialism. The associations also built people's clubs (*xälq kulubi*) in which films were shown, theatre programmes staged and courses for musicians organized.[145]

Although most of the above discussion refers to the Kashgar region, the rest of the province presumably saw comparable developments. In 1935, Xinjiang had a total of three ordinary middle schools with 425 students. By 1943, there were seven such schools with 2,590 students. The number of primary schools increased from 215 in 1937 to 556 by 1942. Colin Mackerras credits Sheng Shicai with the expansion of local schools, although he also notes the drawbacks of Sheng's education policies, characterized by a great deal of inflexibility and a slavish imitation of the Stalinist model.[146] Toxti, a local historian, attributes educational development in the Kashgar region primarily to local efforts and the work of the association. He considers Sheng's rule to have been detrimental for education and emphasizes the primacy of local initiatives, including the redeployment of religious taxes, voluntary donations and the labour contribution of various sections of the population.[147]

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[144] Toxti 1986: 51–2.
[145] Ibid.: 52–7.
[146] Mackerras 1995: 44–5.
[147] For a detailed discussion of the differences between the two evaluations, see Bellér-Hann 2000: 63–6.

The new-style 'scientific' schools did not replace traditional *mäktäp* education, which was closely identified with religion. They relied on the same financial resources as the old schools, and the new curriculum remained a modified extension of the *mäktäp* curriculum for a long time. Change was gradual, and innovation largely consisted of the introduction of additional subjects, rather than the abolition of religious classes. Many of the teachers were members of the religious elite and taught in both modern and old-style schools. Teaching style and expectations changed only slowly. Initially, new-style schools continued to focus on reading, and recognition of the importance of writing skills only followed later. Gradual innovations in the education system did not put an end to the parallel functioning of religious schools, which were themselves subject to minor structural changes. From all this we may tentatively conclude that religious influence over education was less dramatically weakened during the first half of the century than has been suggested.[148] At the same time, the reformed schools contributed to the formation and emergence of a new elite and to the spread of nationalist sentiments.

6.3 *Manifestations of Faith*

Religious knowledge was also transmitted informally outside the organized structures. Faith and submission to God's will were among the minimal requirements of being a Muslim. Since this was regarded as obvious, our texts mention the theme only sporadically. We find indirect references to the subject in the form of cautionary tales, which may have been used in formal and informal religious instruction. In 1886, Hemer Waki, a Taranchi from northern Xinjiang, illustrated absolute submission to God and acceptance of His will with the example of the hunter. If he goes out hunting with God in his mind and is successful, he should not say that he has killed a deer, fox or wolf but, rather, that God has given him the animal in question. To think that his hunting success was his own doing would be a grave sin. Similarly, when a fisherman catches a fish in the river, he should not say that he has caught the fish himself but that God has given him the fish.[149]

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[148] Mackerras 1995: 133.
[149] Radloff 1886: 5.

In another popular text, probably transmitted orally, the great God's government was explained with the following parable. The peasant's child sees that the millet sown by his father is eaten by the sparrows; the sparrows are dead, and the last one alive is taken by a kite; the kite gets caught in a tree and dies; and then the tree withers away. The child is upset by this series of events, but his father admonishes him, saying:

> O my child, the great God's government is such. This is the great God's justice. Over the great God's kingdom there is no other God or king, who may say 'Do this (work)! Do not this (work)!' The great God is such a king, as makes that which is non-existent to be, and that which is, to be non-existent. Of the real (or true) regency is the great God worthy and deserving.[150]

Another indigenous parable focuses on female piety. The story is about a woman who made fire in her oven to bake bread. As the bread was baking, the time for prayer arrived. She sat her child on top of the oven and started to pray. The child fell into the oven, but the mother did not spoil her prayer. The woman continued praying, and her child was playing in the hot oven. Her husband came and saw what was happening. He told the Prophet Jesus what happened and was advised to ask his wife to explain the events. To her husband's question, she replied, "First I said in my heart that God Almighty himself had given the child and he knows what he is doing. Second, I succeeded not to spoil my prayer. Third, I accepted the accident with resignation. Fourth, whatever belongs to the realm of eternity, clashes with earthly concerns. I abandoned the earthly concerns and held on to the things belonging to the realm of eternity" The Prophet Jesus said, "Had this woman been born a man, she would be a prophet".[151] This is a typical *tawakkul* story, *tawakkul* being a key concept in Sufism meaning complete devotion to God.[152]

The subject matter of this tale is faith in its entirety, comprising both external manifestations of religion (*din*) and internal faith (*iman*). The learned *molla* Abul Wahid defined *iman* as a complex notion including faith in the only and one God and in His omnipotence. It also meant entrusting every aspect of one's fate to God, loving Him affectionately with a pure heart, fearing His wrath and asking for His help in the face

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[150] Raquette 1909: 13.
[151] Jarring 1933: 48–9.
[152] Cf. Reinert 1968; Schimmel 1990: 182.

of Satan's temptations. A second element of *iman* was faith in the angels, God's immaculate bodyguards, created out of light. The circumstances of their creation explain why they require neither food, nor clothes, nor any other worldly necessities. The third component of faith was the acceptance of the holy books containing God's commands, which were sent by God to His servants through the mediation of the prophets. The fourth component of faith was constituted by belief in the prophets, who were selected by God as His friends and sent to His subjects as His messengers, which is why one must have faith in them.[153]

Muhammad Ali Damolla described the power of God as manifest in the intelligence of both humans and animals, which makes it possible for the newborn baby or lamb to know how to feed from the mother's breast. Further illustrations include references to the life cycle of hibernating animals, which lie as if they were dead throughout the winter but wake up when the time comes, and to ants, which store the grains they find. God's power is also capable of resurrecting the dead through the mediation of prophets. This same power is also able to create something out of nothing, which proves that God's grace supersedes any other form of grace. If a sinner prays to God with a pure heart, begging for forgiveness, God will certainly pardon him. His mercy is universal; He saves the righteous with His justice and the sinners by His mercy. It is God's mercy which, during the Flood, separated Noah and his family from the sinners and rescued them by sending them an ark, while the unrighteous were destroyed. In the same way Lot and his daughters were saved, while the unrighteous perished. The Damolla further claimed that some people never offend anyone and would not even hurt worms and insects. Some people are so merciful that they always try to help the needy, even if they have nothing left for themselves; they give away their own food to others.[154]

Local knowledge was also shaped by popular stories, circulating 'on the ground', which were only indirectly informed by the literate tradition. An example is the following story told by shepherds living by the River Keriya. God sent an angel to earth in the shape of a dervish and ordered him to ask the Prophet Abraham for domestic animals. For twenty years, the Prophet Abraham gave the poor dervish 1,000 animals each day, sheep on the first day, goats on the second, then

[153] Prov. 207. II.30.
[154] Ibid. I.22–3.

yaks, horses, camels etc. God then asked the dervish if the Prophet Abraham had fulfilled his request. The dervish replied that he had indeed, so much so that now he himself had become poor. Upon this God ordered the dervish to give the Prophet his animals back, but the Prophet declined the offer, saying that he could not take back things he had given away as presents. When the dervish told God about this, He ordered the animals to go stray and live in the world without a home and without owners, so that anyone could by law catch them and kill them if they wished. This is how the various wild species came into existence.[155] Although expressions of rather different traditions, these two expositions, in illustrating God's power, both make use of notions of unbounded altruism and generosity as an ideal.

For Hemer Waki in the Ili valley, God's power was manifested in His caring for all creatures, in providing people and all living things with food and drink, in His creation of great rivers, in providing men with pretty women to run the household, with horses to ride, with camels to work and with sheep to eat. He concluded with the following statement based on the reciprocal notion of giving and receiving: "There are many goods which God has given to people and all those who recognize this serve God day and night".[156]

Molla Abdul Qadir defined Islam by the main principles *häqiqät* (truth, divine reality), *şäri'ät* (Islamic law), *tariqat* (the path) and *märipät* (knowledge, experience). *Häqiqät* was explained as the truth which purifies the heart; *şäri'ät*, or Islamic law, as the sum of God's commands; *tariqat* as closeness to God; and *märipät* as knowing God.[157] From this we may tentatively conclude that Abdul Qadir had close connections to Sufism, since his thesis constituted the basic teaching of Islamic mysticism, which considers *häqiqät* to be the profound reality—the way to which can be opened only by union with God—and *tariqat* to be the way which guides man from the mere manifestation of law (*şäri'ät*) to divine reality (*häqiqät*), that is, to God himself.

While this elaboration comes from a learned *molla*, a representative of the educated religious classes, the essence of religion was summarized by a lay contemporary, Maqsut Hajji, as follows:

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[155] Hedin 2001.II. 105.
[156] Radloff 1886: 6.
[157] Prov. 464. 20R–V.

> If we ask a Moslem of another school, 'Which is your school? In whose *millät* is your *millät*? Which is your religion?' we Moslems reply, 'My religion is the Quran. My school is the Great Imam. My *millät* is Abraham—the Friend of God—and my God is Allah!' we reply. But the Moslems are [divided into] seventy-two sects. On the sound right road there are four schools. Those who keep to the Great Imam, those who keep to Imam Shafi'i, those who keep to Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal and those who keep to Imam Malik—the mercy of God be upon them. The Moslems of the seventy-two sects say that God is one. But they do not act according to the meaning of the Qoran and the Hadith. Certain Tadjiks who are living on the Gilgit road keep to another road [i.e., sect]. All the Moslems of the Six Cities belong to the Sunni School. In the city of Yarkand there are also a few Shias who have come from India, Badakhshan and other countries. All the Moslems of the Six Cities belong to the school of the Great Imam. True pirs and true ishans are descendants of the Holy Prophet—peace be upon him. Every one will respect them. And we all pay attention to our ishans and pirs, calling them our Khodjas. These are men who lead the people on the road of the *Shariat*. Our ishans and pirs are very few. Some people claim that they are ishans. Nobody acts according to their talk. What our true pirs and ishans and learned men say is always correct. What false ishans and certain would-be mullahs tell is never right. If somebody acts and worships according to the words of good learned men and perfect pirs, he will be saved from the tortures of the last judgement. Only if the true ishans and learned men belong to the Six Cities the people will act according to their words. The people will not act according to the words of ishans and learned men who have come from other countries.[158]

Maqsut Hajji had received some rudimentary education in a Koran school, and he elaborated on the subject of the Islamic community as he knew it. The passage reveals his awareness of the other monotheistic religions, of the existing diversity within Islam and the relative religious homogeneity of the Six Cities, but he was also aware of the Ismailis' presence. He emphasized the centrality of the Koran and the importance of Islamic law in local life, as well as the authority of the *işan* and *pir*. He also warned that a distinction had to be made between true and false religious teachers, and he attributed exclusive authenticity to local *işan*s and *pir*s, as opposed to outsiders. Maqsut's knowledge was more representative of lower levels of religious learning; his views were expressions of a localized Muslim identity, suspicious of outside influences.

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[158] Jarring 1951b: 160–2.

Both Maqsut Hajji and Abul Wahid stressed the centrality of the Koran in religious belief and, by extension, of holy texts in general. It was not the mere acquisition of reading skills but knowledge and awareness of sacred texts that rendered these Muslims a people of the book.[159] As one Taranchi informant expressed it, "Whoever reads and copies out the book left by the Prophet, his mind will be cheered and purified, and this is why it is good for everyone to copy and read this book with reverence".[160]

6.3.1 *Praying*

Praying was conceived as a religious obligation (*pärz*). Molla Abdul Qadir recorded how Muslims should ideally perform the *namaz* five times a day: *bamdat* (the first prayer, performed before daybreak), consisting of four units (*räkät*); *peşin* (noon prayer), consisting of ten *räkät*; *äsir* (late afternoon or early evening prayer), consisting of four *räkät*; *şam* (evening prayer), consisting of five *räkät*; and *xuptän* (the evening prayer about two hours after sunset), consisting of nine *räkät*.[161] The following piece of oral tradition also emphasizes the quality rather than quantity of prayer, using agriculture as its point of reference.

> *A man grows with prayer,*
> *the land turns green with rain.*[162]

While popular oral tradition exhorted men to a minimal participation in public, communal prayer, the learned *mollas* claimed that some people performed additional prayers.[163] Muhammad Ali Damolla described the rules governing the performance of each daily prayer. Preceding the *namaz*, the six obligations (*wajib*) were: knowing the exact time for *namaz*; having a pure intention; wearing clean clothes; making the ritual ablution with water or earth; finding the direction of *qibla*; and pronouncing the *täkbir*.[164]

Indigenous authors often describe normative ideals; in practice, local Muslims stressed the importance of the first morning prayer, rather

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[159] Bellér-Hann 2000.
[160] Radloff 1886: 5.
[161] Prov. 464. 28R–V.
[162] *Du'a birlä är kökürür/Yamğur birlä yär* (Pantusov 1909b: 62–3, 87).
[163] Prov. 464. 31.V–32R.
[164] Prov. 207. I.77.

than the fulfilment of the five *namaz* per day.[165] In 1892, after the restoration of Qing power, Abdulla from Qumul reported on how hard it was to enforce even minimal participation in communal praying. Every morning it was noted who was absent from the communal prayer in the mosque, and it was the *mäzin*'s job to visit these persons' homes to remind them of their duty. If the following morning the person did not heed the warning, the *mäzin* reminded him that this could lead to a severing of relations with his mosque community, and he was also threatened with a good beating. If on the third day he still did not participate, he was taken to the mosque by force and, regardless of the season, was undressed, and cold water was poured over his head while the 'Prayer of Those Who Neglect to Pray' was recited. After this he was given thirty-nine lashes and asked, "Will you attend the prayer?" If he answered in the affirmative, he was released, but if he answered in the negative, he was expelled from his house, an act tantamount to excommunication, since he had to leave the neighbourhood. If he refused to leave, his house entrance was walled up. If he still continued to show reluctance to comply, the next step was to refer the case to a representative of the religious establishment, a 'big *axun*', who examined him in his religious knowledge and punished him with ninety-nine lashes. The last and most serious sanction followed when the *axun* ordered the community *imam* and *mäzin* to make a public announcement to the effect that, when the man died, he should not be buried as a Muslim, and no one should attend his funerary rituals and commemoration.[166] Although we have no specific references to such an event, this account indicates that, well after Ya'qub Beg's fall from power, male participation in communal worship was still enforced by sanctions. It also confirms primacy of the morning prayer as the most important expression of membership for men in the mosque community.

Also in the late nineteenth century, Hajji Taxir from Qumul reported how the governor issued an order demanding that a police officer and four minor officials visit the mosque communities in the capacity of school inspector and religious supervisor. The delegation was to visit schools and check children's progress in Koran reading. It also visited neighbourhood mosques in order to find out who failed to attend the

[165] Wu 1944: 85.
[166] Katanov 1976: 56–7.

morning prayer. These persons were duly arrested and beaten while the verses concerning the man who refuses to worship were recited. If he died during the beating, the official was not held responsible for this death. If the person recovered from the beatings, he was expected to pay the official 4.8–6 kilograms of wheat.[167]

Hajji Taxir also recited the verses about the man who neglects his prayers (*binamaz*).[168] Although we have no knowledge of how often the poem was recited as an accompaniment to corporal punishment, it was certainly transmitted as oral tradition; it may have gained currency during Ya'qub Beg's time, although it was remembered decades later. It is likely that it served as a deterrent and, as such, strengthened normative communal expectations. To the earthly punishments, otherworldly punishments were also added: the *binamaz* was reminded of the Day of the Last Judgment. The poem underlines the importance of all five prescribed prayers, reflecting normative ideals.[169]

Nay Xan's account, recorded in the same year, of conditions in Turfan corroborates the prevalence of these rules but adds important details concerning attempts at reconciliation between the various stages. After the *binamaz* had been beaten and cold water had been poured on his head, a communal reconciliation ceremony followed, during which all men belonging to the mosque community gathered in his house to drink tea with him. If he missed the communal prayer for a second time, he was taken to the governor's residence, given twenty-five lashes and sentenced to two to three months imprisonment; but he could be released upon the request of his mosque community. If he did not attend the prayer a third time, he was badly beaten while Koranic verses were recited.[170]

The texts encapsulate the principles of reciprocity inherent in community itself; participation in prayers is rewarded with the benefits community membership brings to the individual and his household: solidarity expressed through loans, providing help in cases of need and sickness and participating in commemoration rites for the dead. Denial

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[167] Ibid.: 58–9.

[168] Ibid.: 58–63.

[169] In his analysis of the Persian *Panj Ganj* and *Kulliyāt*, important sources of popular Islamic knowledge in Afghanistan and Turkestan, Shahrani notes that these texts emphasized performing prayers daily, and adds, that "many instances suggest that to neglect prayers may lead to loss of faith, which leads to hell" (Shahrani 1991: 174).

[170] Katanov 1976: 56–9.

of participation in communal worship entails excommunication. Strictly speaking, such obligations and sanctions only concerned grown men, since women prayed either alone or in small groups in the privacy of their homes.[171] At the same time, membership in the mosque community was understood in an extended sense; men represented their households. As was the case elsewhere in the Islamic world, a number of duties were interpreted as communal rather than individual obligations. It sufficed that a certain number of people performed a duty for the benefit to be extended to all.[172]

6.3.2 *Pilgrimage*

The obligation to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca constitutes one of the five 'pillars' of Islam. In agreement with the scriptural tradition, Turkis took the pragmatic view that performing the pilgrimage was an obligation dependent on one's financial means. Given the expenses involved, the pilgrimage had no mass character; participation was unproblematic only for the very rich, but some people from the middle range also undertook the journey, working along the way. For some the pilgrimage was also a business venture, while others combined it with visits to relatives living abroad.

During the Qing period, pilgrims setting out from Eastern Turkestan had to allow three years for the pilgrimage, from departure to return. By the 1940s the journey to Mecca had been reduced thanks to technological advances. Äbäydullah Hajji set out on horseback from Kashgar and arrived in Kashmir forty days later. From there he travelled by car to Rawalpindi, which took two days; from Rawalpindi to Karachi was a three-day train journey. He completed the last leg of his journey in twelve days, taking a steamboat from Karachi to Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia.[173]

The pilgrimage was one of the most obvious external manifestations of affiliation with Islam and to the wider Islamic community, and this visibility rendered the institution vulnerable to political interference. In the first half of the twentieth century, governor Yang Zengxin paid lip service to supporting the Hajj but in fact controlled it very carefully. He used World War I as an excuse to withhold passports; those who

[171] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 189.
[172] Cf. Dilger 1990: 62.
[173] Wei-yin 2002: 152.

were issued a passport had to pay a high fee (Yang claimed that the revenue would be used to promote mosque construction and Islamic education).[174] The administration of Governor Jin Shuren antagonized its Muslim subjects by introducing two regulations. One was the levying of a tax on butchering animals, the other the prohibition on Muslims performing the Hajj.[175] Sometimes interference was motivated by political considerations which had little to do with religious policy. Towards the end of the 1920s the Kashgar Taoyin made efforts to curb Soviet influence in the region and implemented corresponding measures, one of which was the imposition of a heavy tax on Muslims from Southern Xinjiang who decided to travel through the Soviet Union on their way to Mecca.[176] A different political situation emerged in the early 1930s, when the people of Kashgar became so demoralized, there were fears that, given the opportunity, they would simply emigrate en masse. To prevent this, the local authorities again refused to issue passports to prospective Hajjis.[177]

During Sheng Shicai's repressive period, one of the four richest people of Kashgar, Abdurehim Hajji, took his whole family on the Hajj and settled in Saudi Arabia permanently, prompted by political motivations. In the 1940s the oil boom in the Middle East was an attraction for emigrants. Yasin Hajji from the Lop region left Xinjiang in 1947 with a party of more than seventy people, only fifteen of whom returned.[178]

There were many other cases of permanent migration, but not all were premeditated. Often illness, death and economic hardship encountered on the way or upon arrival in Saudi Arabia hindered the return or rendered it unrealistic. In 1934 Abdurehim Qari accompanied his mother on the Hajj. She died on the way, and her son remained where she was buried; he set up a small bakery and got married there. A similar fate befell Sayit Hajji who set out with his mother in 1948. The mother became sick in Karachi, and they stayed there until her death, six months later. Sayit continued his journey to Mecca but arrived well

[174] Ibid.: 149–50.
[175] Forbes 1986: 42.
[176] Ibid.: 66.
[177] Ibid.: 96.
[178] Wei-yin 2002: 154–5.

before the pilgrimage; he started working as a tailor, and eventually settled there, never to return to his homeland.[179]

The pilgrimage was a communal act in more than one way. The journey itself was always undertaken in the company of other pilgrims. Family members travelled together and tried to join larger groups for protection. Care was taken that women were always accompanied by close male kin. In 1920, pilgrims from the villages of Azaq and Suntağ in Artush county organized a small party of six married couples, five mothers with a child each, two fathers with children, and one brother and sister. Pilgrims' parties in the pre-socialist periods were typically self-organized. If no such caravan could be found locally, other pilgrim groups were sought in the nearest large market centre. In 1907, Xojiniyaz and his mother heard that a man called Hoşur Mäñlik from the village of Yilanliq in Toqsun county was also preparing for the journey. Although they were complete strangers, they went to join him. The three then went to Kashgar to join a larger party.[180]

The pilgrimage also had special meaning for those left behind. Their staying behind made the traveller's departure possible, and they also indirectly benefited from the blessings brought back by the pilgrims. The departure of the pilgrims was marked with communal celebrations. In the south, people showed their respect to the departing pilgrims with the following song:

> *I became restless and without strength to stay here.*
> *But I do not have the means for travelling on this road.*
> *Be generous to your slave!*
> *Oh conqueror* [opener] *of doors!*[181]

This was sung by those staying at home to voice their longing to accomplish the sacred journey and their sadness over their inability to do so. Just as when they departed, the reception of the returning pilgrims was also occasion for celebrations. Maqsut Hajji explained how his party was met upon their return home to Guma. For some days afterwards the ceremonial tablecloth was spread for all who came to see him. For relatives and friends, he brought back souvenirs of dates, *zämzäm* water, knives, locks, cloth and other small presents. These presents were used

[179] Ibid.: 153–4.
[180] Ibid.: 152.
[181] Jarring 1985: 61.

as objects of a sacred quality and added to the 'communal sacra'. For example, rosaries could be made from the stones of dates brought back by pilgrims.[182] Afterwards he returned the visits of his relatives, friends and brothers and read the *Patihä* in their homes.[183] Celebrations marking the departure and the return of the pilgrims underlined the character of the pilgrimage as a rite of passage.[184]

Pilgrims were representatives of their home mosque communities, who ritually prepared them for the journey and greeted them afterwards. The rituals connected to the pilgrimage had a bonding effect within the mosque community, which was further strengthened by the presents distributed by the returning pilgrims. The stories pilgrims told about their journey also became communal property, and they served the integration of the pilgrim's community into the wider community of Islam. This was further enhanced by the fact that pilgrims also visited other Islamic lands on their way. Their route included major centres of the Islamic world: for most Central Asians the Hajj would have been incomplete without visiting and staying in Istanbul, because this was where the Sultan and Caliph lived. Returning pilgrims also told about modern ideas, reforms and new ideologies, such as pan-Turkism.

Through integrating local Muslims into the Islamic community the pilgrimage had an equalizing or levelling effect but simultaneously it also reaffirmed internal social hierarchies; after the successful completion of the journey, the pilgrims became *Hajjis* and enjoyed special respect and deference in their community.

While making the pilgrimage to Mecca was out of reach for most local actors, visiting local shrines was not. Easy access to shrines suggests that shrine-visiting was perhaps more democratic and, in the contrast to the Hajj, had a 'levelling-out' function. However, the extent to which it is justified to regard visits to shrines as the cheap local alternative to the Hajj is questionable. Although European observers have typically lumped these together, local forms of shrine-visiting constituted an integral part of numerous popular practices rather than a scaled-down imitation of the Hajj; this is why shrine-visiting is not discussed here under a separate heading, since it is repeatedly mentioned as a practice accompanying other religious acts. In popular perception, however, the

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[182] Cable & French 1942: 198.
[183] Jarring 1951b: 107.
[184] As has been argued by Turner and Turner (1978).

yardstick for measuring the merit gained through shrine-visiting was often the Hajj. For example, two visits to the famous shrine of Tuyok near Qarakhoja were said to equal one journey to Mecca.[185]

The cult of saints was part and parcel of many ritual occasions, and while seasonal celebrations were organized around some shrines, most were visited year-round, especially on the weekly market days. Some Muslim shrines were also frequented by the Chinese.[186] The cult of saints was closely connected to the veneration of the dead, to be described below, and could also fulfil political functions.[187] At saintly shrines, assistance was sought to make women, land and animals fertile, to prevent or cure sickness, to ward off pests and storms and to bring good luck. This last function also explains why the festivals organized around shrines had a carnevalesque character and included matchmaking. Belief in the efficacy of saints was based on notions of a debt relationship; the supplicant made a vow to thank the saint if his or her wish would be fulfilled; if the vow was not fulfilled, the saint could also take revenge.[188]

6.3.3 *Religious Festivals*

Taking place during *muhärräm*, the month of the pilgrimage to Mecca, the Festival of Sacrifice (*qurban heyti*) was regarded as the most important religious holiday.[189] Popular knowledge of its meaning was presumably just as uneven as it is today.[190] During the Ya'qub Beg era, indigenous understandings centred around God's testing Abraham's religiosity. The Prophet Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his own son, but his knife refused to cut, so he struck it against a stone which was cut to pieces. Abraham concluded, "I am commanded by Allah not to cut my son's throat" Then the angel Gabriel appeared with a sheep to be offered

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[185] Schomberg 1996: 66. For comparison with other parts of the Islamic world, see Kriss & Kriss-Heinrich 1960, and Penkala-Gawecka 1992.

[186] Pantusov 1909a: 436.

[187] See for example the case of Alp Ata in Turfan (Kim 1996).

[188] See Wilson 1983.

[189] For a general description see Schimmel 2001: 113–37.

[190] Many people whom I asked in the 1990s were uncertain about it. But some, including religious specialists as well as ordinary peasants and schoolteachers, gave a detailed account about how God was testing Abraham's devotion and loyalty to him through ordering him to sacrifice his son. To reward Abraham for his devotion God replaced the son with a sheep and it is this sacrifice that believers re-enact during the Festival of Sacrifice.

instead.[191] The same interpretation was testified by a *molla* in Qumul in the early 1930s.[192] But popular religious images are rarely homogenous, and Muhammad Ali Damolla provided an alternative interpretation, presenting the holiday as the outcome of the enmity between Adam's two sons, which led to one of them killing the other, using the pretext of sacrifice. The Damolla defined the sacrifice as a gift unconditionally offered by humans to God. The author emphasized that the custom had been practised since the time of the first prophets and was performed by everyone who had the necessary financial means. For the sacrifice, a faultless animal (a cow, camel or sheep) had to be selected; its meat was then cooked and distributed. The communal character of the distribution and consumption was stressed by the obligatory visits and commensality accompanied by the well-wishing formula: "May your holiday be blessed!"[193]

In Kashgar, local lore attributed special significance to the eve of the Festival of Sacrifice, which commemorated "the meeting of Adam and Eve, who lost each other when expelled from paradise, and after wandering in search for many years, found each other again on the 'hill of meeting' at Mecca".[194] People in Yarkand emphasized the 'use value' of the ritual in the other world: "If we perform this sacrifice in this world, at the time of the Last Judgement it will be easy for us to cross the bridge of *firsirat*".[195] A sacrifice was expected only from those whose financial position permitted it. Those who could afford to make a sacrifice but failed to do so were forbidden to join the festival prayer.[196] Indigenous authors stressed the principle of voluntariness. The holiday required the participation of both men and women. A sheep was sacrificed by a single individual, while a calf or a camel could be sacrificed by as many as seven people. The sacrificial meat had to be distributed among guests, neighbours and one's own family.[197]

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[191] Shaw 1984: 333.

[192] Cable, French & French 1934: 129.

[193] *ayyam şäriflärigä yani uluğ künlarigä mubarräk bolsun*! Prov. 207. I.3.

[194] Shaw 1984: 333.

[195] This was a widespread belief that upon knifing the sacrificial animal the soul of the person performing the sacrifice can more easily cross the mythical bridge Sirat leading to Paradise (Sukhareva 1960: 22).

[196] Prov. 464. 45R.

[197] Ibid. In these descriptions there is no mention of the information provided by modern Uyghur ethnographers, according to whom on the third day of the festival a public entertainment was held in some locations (Häbibulla 1993: 367).

The Festival of the Breaking of the Fast (*rozä heyti*) concluded the annual thirty-day fast during the month of Ramadan.[198] After the last day of fasting people donned new clothes, recited prayers and started eating, saying, "We shall open the mouth" (*ağiz açamiz*). Some broke the fast first and then silently recited their prayers. The leader of the devotions set the pace for the various motions of the prayers, uttering the name of God aloud at intervals, and thereby prompting the participants to prostrate themselves with their foreheads touching the ground. The prayers concluded, "The fast was ceremoniously broken by eating a piece of bread dipped in salt" The ritual, usually performed by one of the community elders, preceded the communal meal.[199]

Ceremonial commensality was followed by visiting tombs[200] and shrines where people prayed. Upon returning home, people recited verses from the Koran. During the three days of the festival, nobody worked, shops remained closed and people greeted each other with the formula "May your holiday be blessed" (*ayyämläriğa mubaräk bolsun*). In some localities, festive visiting was extended, and the ceremonial tablecloth remained spread for eight days in many houses.[201] This was also a time for communal entertainments, dancing and socializing, which ranged from children playing games to adults gambling.[202]

Fasting during the month of Ramadan was not the sole occasion for exercising self-discipline. Pious persons fasted for eleven, twenty-one or forty-one additional days, giving up animal products and remaining in seclusion.[203] Some Muslims fasted on the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth days of each month, which was known as voluntary fast; others fasted for one day each month.[204] But not all showed the same

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[198] For a general description, see Schimmel 2001: 95–111.

[199] Shaw 1984: 214, 250.

[200] Evidently what is meant here is the graves of dead relatives (Häbibulla 1993: 365).

[201] Grenard 1898a: 239.

[202] Prov. 207. I.4.

[203] Prov. 464. 31R.

[204] Prov. 464. 31V. Fasting was also used as a means to effect ecstatic experience, inducing visions and miracles, which could become the basis for legends about sacred spots. The following story was related by the British missionaries, Cable and French, from the Turfan region, where they saw caves carved in a cliff behind a row of Muslim tombs. "One of these was of special interest, for it was used as a shelter for holy men wishing to observe a forty days' feast. Each year someone was expected to volunteer for the ordeal, and when he entered the cave it was blocked and sealed, leaving only a small opening through which one pitcher of water was passed at sunset. The cell held a mud *kang* and had a floor of beaten earth, and in the ceiling was a small cir-

degree of spiritual devotion through fasting, as is implied by the following piece of oral tradition:

I fast in Ramadan to save my soul,
I wake at night to keep my belly full,
I fear to say 'I am not going to fast',
For there is a rod that waits in Hell for me.[205]

While such verses convey the difficulties of fasting, most Ramadan songs recorded during this period were in effect begging songs. The following Ramadan song was recorded in 1914 in Khotan:

The top half of the pole of Mecca is black!
May God give you a son with black eyebrows!
I have come to your threshold to praise Ramadan.
Of all rich men's houses this house seems to be the best.
There is green lucerne behind your house,
Feed it to your lamb.
The person who has commanded us Ramadan was Häzrät Ali
And from him it has come to us,
We glorify him.[206]

Beggars and mendicants went around reciting verses and asking for alms during both religious festivals following the conclusion of the holiday prayers. While some songs were specifically sung at Ramadan, others could be recited during both festivals, such as the following lines:

When shall we meet
So that I can see your beauty?
I shall be like Mansur,
And organize a meeting at the gallows.
If a glimpse reaches it at that time [the glimpse of God or the Prophet]

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cular opening. For forty long days the only occupation of the fasting man was to say his ritual prayers and to enumerate the ninety-nine attributes of Allah. In the centre of the cell lay a little heap of ninety-nine dark grey Gobi stones, left by the last man who had occupied it... the story is told of one holy man who fasted forty days but waited in vain for release, as the *Imam* forgot him and never came to break down the mud plaster which sealed the door. By virtue of his merit the faster was able to raise his body from the earth and escape through a small aperture in the ceiling to a second cave, from which he reached the open. He then walked across the plain and sat down to meditate upon the strange fate which had sent him, a man from Arabia, to wander in the terrible Gobi Desert. Resting his head on his hand he was given a vision of Mecca, and rising, he immediately collected suitable stones and with them built a model of the Prophet's tomb" (Cable & French 1942: 262).

[205] Skrine 1971: 184.

[206] Malov 1961: 41.

Then the buds of a thousand flowers open.
Body and soul break into pieces
I die sacrificing myself.
Without sacrificing one's life nothing is completed,
If one does not make an effort, passion will not die.
Empty claims do not bring any profit.
Should I give a false heart?
The lying tongues are countless.
The body without love has no soul.
There is no cure for those who have no pain,
Should I ask my doctor?
My doctor, heal,
Satisfy my needs!
Summon me with your valour,
So that I can take steps where there is no path.
The slave Solomon has uttered these words
As he was searching for the path for truth.
He searched for God's approval,
It is necessary for me to see God's face![207]

The alms donated in response to songs like this, exemplificatory of the mystical poetry of Central Asia, usually took the form of clothes or food handed out by women. Almsgiving by men often took the form of distributing money when they were leaving the mosque after the holiday prayers. Thus, the gendered dimension of charity followed the pattern of ritual gift-giving, whereby women were responsible for giving presents of food and clothes and men contributed money. In the Ramadan songs the following main themes can be identified: praise of God and the holiday, crediting Islamic figures with bringing Ramadan to the people, condemning those who did not fast, begging from rich households, asking the saints or God to bless charitable households and wishing that a son should be born to such families. Ramadan songs continued to be sung by migrants in Russian Turkestan and preserved the same central motives.[208]

The two major religious festivals displayed similar structural features, many of which signified a new beginning. In houses, major cleaning was undertaken, and, financial circumstances allowing, new clothes were made for members of the household. The preparation of special food and the spreading of the festive tablecloth were of central importance in mutual visiting among members of the mosque community. Com-

[207] Pantusov 1890: 70; 152–3.
[208] Änsari 1925: 135–8.

munal praying on this occasion in the mosque was obligatory for men, and visiting dead relatives' graves and saintly shrines was observed by both men and women. Piety was also manifested in organizing Koran recitals in private houses.

The Islamic festivals were important markers of communal and individual identity and served as a means of integrating Eastern Turkestani Muslims into the wider Islamic community. While almsgiving constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam, in local society generosity went beyond a compartmentalised understanding of religious obligations: it permeated local notions of integrity and constituted an important source of prestige for the household. Generosity could be interpreted as a means to accumulate merit, which on an individual's personal balance sheet would appear on the credit side, or as paying off one's accumulated moral debts. This is why almsgiving was advisable in quite different circumstances. Regardless of whether a person had a bad or good dream, he was advised to give alms: in the case of a good dream the donation was regarded as alms (*sädiqä*); in the case of a bad dream the donation was expiation (*kaparät*).[209] Charity was a common concern, dividing people into givers and recipients.

6.3.4 Barat

Barat was the most important 'unofficial' religious festival observed in the region. The month of Barat of the Turki lunar calendar, also known as 'the month of prayers', corresponded to the eighth month of the Islamic calendar, Shaʿbān.[210] In the early Arabian solar year, Shaʿbān fell in the summer. The weeks preceding and following the summer solstice must have had a religious significance, which gave rise to propitiatory rites such as fasting. Following conversion to Islam, the middle of the month continued to retain its New Year's Day character in many regions. Legends connected to this day focus on the boundary between the old and the new, the ending and the beginning. According to popular belief in the Middle East, in the night preceding the fifteenth of this month, the tree of life is shaken. On each of its leaves the name of a living person is written: each person has just one such leaf. Persons whose names are written on the falling leaves are going to die in the

[209] Katanov 1976: 102–3.
[210] Schwarz 1992: 1074.

coming year. In addition to life and death, other important events of the forthcoming twelve months are also written on the leaves.[211]

The night of the fourteenth of Sha'bān has long been regarded as a venerable day in many parts of the Muslim world. In Turkey it is known under the name *Berat kandili*, although it does not carry the same significance in popular practice as in Eastern Turkestan. In Pakistan and India on this night, people pray for their dead, distribute food among the poor, eat sweetmeats, prepare illuminations and organize fireworks. Its various names translate as 'Night of Forgiveness', and the celebrations focus on the full-moon period. In Iran, the middle of the month has another significance: it is considered to be the birthday of the Twelfth Imam.[212]

Chinese sources dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, generally reticent about details of many other popular practices among the Turki, make special mention of the observance of the Night of Forgiveness. On this night, oil lanterns were placed on the roofs of houses and shrines.[213] In Lansdell's words, on this night 'there is a revision of the lists in heaven, and the angels strike out the names of those who have died during that year. The feast is observed through the night in dancing, games and festivities'.[214] While such shorthand accounts are numerous, we get a much clearer sense of the meaning of the festival from indigenous authors.

In the early twentieth century in Kashgar, the night of the fifteenth of Barat was held in high esteem. During this night people recited a voluntary prayer asking for God's forgiveness (*mäğpirät*), and Muslims feared the horrors of hell and were hoping for Paradise. It was held that on the shoulders of each individual sit the scribe angels, the one on the right recording the person's good deeds, the one on the left writing down his bad actions. A good deed would be recorded within an hour, bad ones, however, took three days to record, the delay giving an opportunity for the wrongdoer to repent, in which case no record was made. On the Night of Forgiveness, just before dawn, the scribe angels looked at the book of each individual and, based upon it, increased

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[211] Horten 1918: 277, Wensinck 1997. Schimmel 2001: 92. A hand-written Turki manuscript, copied for a Swedish missionary in Yarkand in the 1920s, describes the tree of life in very similar terms, although it does not connect it directly to the Barat (Prov. 29).

[212] *Sha'bān* 1974, Wensinck 1997.

[213] Saguchi 1963: 549.

[214] Lansdell 1893 II: 205–6.

the provisions of those who had done much good over the past year and decreased the provisions of the wrongdoers. Many people feared that their future might be jeopardised: 'If we do not repent our sins, our provisions will be decreased'.[215]

Khotanese and Kashgari women took bread and ceremonial cakes (*poşkal, qoymaq*) to the cemetery and placed them on the tombs of their dead relatives. They themselves did not touch these, because they were intended as nourishment for the dead, but it was common knowledge that the *mollas*, children or beggars benefited from them. Having presented their offerings, women lamented, and after returning home they burnt a candle for their dead relatives. Alternatively, torches were prepared for the same purpose by wrapping pieces of cotton soaked in vegetable oil around a wooden stick. A vigil was held until dawn, and people spent this time reciting prayers and Koranic verses. Young people took to the streets carrying torches and reciting Koranic verses. In each house cooked food was shared and people danced and played music. They filled flasks with oil and burnt them 'to satisfy the souls of the dead', saying, 'We please the spirits' (*ärwahni xoşlaymiz*)'. They chanted this verse:

The month of Barat has come, have not you heard?
Have you offered us cakes?
The month of Barat is a noble month.
Those who stay awake will find a place in Paradise.[216]

In the late nineteenth century in Turfan, the celebrations began on the twelfth night of the month, when different dishes were prepared and women performed the Barat prayer accompanied by seventeen *räkäts* before midnight. After midnight they visited saintly shrines, where they had the Koran recited and prayed for divine assistance. Men also performed a prayer before midnight, accompanied by twenty-seven *räkäts*. They too went to the cemeteries and recited the Koran until dawn, praying that things would work out well. On this night young people and children went around in groups of fifteen, carrying homemade lanterns and singing:

The month of Barat has come,
Have you prepared cakes for me?[217]

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[215] Prov. 207. I.56.
[216] Grenard 1898a: 247.
[217] Katanov 1936: 1,212–3.

The inhabitants of Yarkand held vigil on the night of the fourteenth, prepared ritual cakes and paid their respects at the graves of their dead. Some sprinkled water on the graves and lit torches; some wept and prayed; others talked to the dead soothingly, reassuring them, 'It is only me who has come, do not be afraid, lie still'.[218]

The vigil on the fifteenth of Barat was also observed among the Taranchi in northern Xinjiang. Men and women, boys and girls stayed awake, praying until dawn, and ceremonial cakes (*çälpäk*) were taken to the dead. In contrast to the south, where women were typically excluded from entering the mosque, girls went to the mosque at dawn to pray as follows:

Mother of Good Luck, Mother of Good Luck, give me blessing and good luck!
If you are not giving me blessing and good luck, then give me patience!
Mother of Good Luck, Mother of Good Luck, give me blessing and good luck!
If you are not giving me blessing and good luck, then give me good honour!
Mother of Good Luck, Mother of Good Luck, blessing and good luck!
If you are not giving me blessing and good luck, give me happiness![219]

The profane element was not lacking from the solemn atmosphere. While the girls lamented and prayed, some cheeky young men mocked them with the following verse:

Mother of Good Luck, Mother of Good Luck, give me blessing and good luck!
If you are not giving me blessing and good luck, give me a thick neck![220]

People put oil in gourds fastened to poles, lit them and carried them around, singing the following couplets:

Barat has come, have you heard?
Have you put pancakes out for us?
The month of Barat is a great month.
For those keeping vigil there is a place in Paradise.
Repent the good and the bad [deeds].
These will be entered by the angels in the book.
Today they change your book,
The angels like your good name!
Repent to the only God,
Reach out to the guide!
Today give up your rebellion!

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[218] Prov. 464. 32V.

[219] The Uyghur text brings together characteristics associated with both this world and Paradise.

[220] Pantusov 1890: 63; 145–6, quoted in Änsari 1925: 142.

Ask God [to meet] *your needs!*
May all your needs be satisfied!
May the poor become rich!
May sorrows be dealt with!
May there be a cure for all your pain!
May all rich people be made benevolent!
May all difficult things be made easy!
Poor people, submit to God!
God will give you happiness.
This night is blessed,
Pass the night alert.
May God be your guide,
He does not render his servants weak.
Oh, God, give us Paradise,
Deliver us from hardship![221]

Häbibulla, an Uyghur ethnographer, stresses the 'carnevalesque' character of the event, with young people singing and dancing until midnight. Another element lacking in the earlier local descriptions concerns the ritual burning of old headscarves and hats on poles. According to Häbibulla, the Barat was widely observed until the mid-1940s, but nowadays only devout individuals remember it at home by frying the cakes but without holding a vigil.[222]

The authors of another modern Uyghur ethnographic account treat the Night of Barat (*Barat keçisi*) as separate from the Night of Vigil (*tünäk keçisi*). According to them the Barat was held on the night of the fourteenth of *şä'ban* and its essence was visiting the dead spirits (*ärwahlarni yoqlaş-*). Barat was divided into two parts: praying to and for the spirits of relatives who had died in previous years was known as 'old Barat' (*kona Barat*), while praying for the souls of those who had died that year was known as 'new Barat' (*yeñi Barat*). The Night of Vigil, on the other hand, was the night of the fifteenth of Barat, when Muhammad received his prophetic revelation. In commemoration of this event, an all-night prayer vigil was held.[223] This distinction is not supported by my sources and may have been inspired by modernist efforts to separate 'Islamic' from 'non-Islamic' analytically.[224]

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[221] Pantusov 1890: 67–8, 149–150.
[222] Häbibulla 1993: 346–7.
[223] Räxman u.a. 1996: 183–184.
[224] At the same time modern usage does not entirely conflate the notions of Barat and vigil. Barat was celebrated with a vigil, but a vigil could be held on other ritual occasions as well.

The ritual division of labour ran along generational and gender lines. It was mostly unmarried young men who walked the streets carrying torches, sang, danced and knocked on doors, asking for presents of ceremonial cakes. Those who stayed at home, and perhaps at some point visited the cemeteries, were the adults, who as full moral persons were by definition burdened with sins. In their prayers both the previous generation (mostly dead) and the young generation were included. The ceremonies therefore explicitly addressed three or four generations at the most.

The ritual mostly unfolded in the domestic sphere but it was not confined to one particular space: it simultaneously took place in private houses and in the public spaces of the cemetery and the streets. Only in one source is it mentioned that praying could take place in the mosque, but then it was done not by grown men, as one would expect, but by young girls. This, at least in the Turfan oasis, indicates a certain subversion of normative gender relations, which prevented women from attending the mosque. This subversive element was accentuated all over the region by women's ritual visiting of graves and shrines. Although men, too, visited the graves of their dead relatives and had the Koran recited, women's participation was considered more important, because preparing and carrying the food sacrifice was their ritual task. This expectation was contrary to normative rules, which forbade women to attend cemeteries during funerals.

Women's participation was given further emphasis through the type of sacrifice offered during the Barat. Financial circumstances permitting, the major Islamic holidays required animal sacrifice and the communal consumption and partial distribution of the cooked meat. Sacrificial animals had to be butchered according to certain ritual prescriptions, and pollution prohibitions forbade women to shed blood. Slaughtering animals was an exclusively male prerogative; in contrast, the Barat required a grain-based food sacrifice.

The Barat also had a very important spiritual dimension rooted in local definitions of the moral person and in notions of sin and punishment, meritorious deed and reward. These were perceived to be decisive from the point of view of the availability of basic provisions for the following year. It was assumed that when the annual moral balance sheet for each individual was drawn, this could still be influenced by the intervention of the dead. Community between the dead and the living was conceptualised in reciprocal terms: the spirits had to be appeased, remembered and prayed for; in return, they would intervene on behalf

of the living, ensuring their necessary provisions for the following year, as well as good luck, health and prosperity.

While the official Islamic festivals reinforced membership of Turki Muslims in the wider Islamic community, the Barat celebrations served primarily to strengthen local community ties. They merged individual responsibility with communal accountability, by simultaneously focusing on both the individual and his or her immediate social surroundings, kin and neighbourhood groups. Communal bonds were reinforced not only among members of the household but also between the living and the dead, who were tied to each other with bonds of kinship. This community of the living and the dead was also expressed in the emphasis on the economic aspect: rituals were concerned with ensuring that, in the coming year, sufficient provisions would be granted to the household. Members had to take part in the ritual as a corporate group aided by their dead, but at the same time the dead also benefited from the exchange. Only if the household achieved a certain level of economic prosperity, which meant that a minimal surplus could be spared after subsistence needs were satisfied, could its members direct some of their resources to venerate the dead through nourishing them.

The various accounts of the Barat ritual quoted above confirm that in Eastern Turkestan it was the most important religious holiday outside the two 'official' Islamic holidays. This contrasts with popular practices in Russian Turkestan, where this role was attributed to the celebration of the Prophet's Birthday (Mavlud).[225] The ritual elements of the Barat are similar to those of the official Islamic holidays: its cyclical, annual character, sacrifice, commensality, hospitality and charity, communal praying at saintly shrines and relatives' tombs and the merging of the sacred and the profane. Both the Ramadan and Barat celebrations were occasions for public singing: songs of a religious character with an admixture of profanities were common, which is all the more remarkable, since performing music was generally condemned as sinful and lacked social prestige.[226] Ramadan and Qurban required communal prayer in the mosque; they were structured primarily around male ritual action, although household-visiting was also important. In contrast, the Barat had the house as its main focus, but it also spilled out into public spaces; the streets and cemeteries required ritual participation

[225] Sukhareva 1960: 23.
[226] Pantusov 1890: xviii.

from both sexes, with more emphasis on women's contribution: as the recognized controllers of food, preparing and taking ceremonial cakes to the graves of the dead were primarily women's responsibilities. Of the three, the Barat was the only ritual which explicitly required plant-based sacrifice rather than animal sacrifice. Although such a comparison does not result in a neat set of oppositions between the popular, unofficial Barat ritual, on the one hand, and the celebrations of the official Islamic holidays, on the other, the Barat appears to have had a heightened communal character; it allowed for the ritual inclusion of women and the dead and for shifting the focus of worship from the mosque to the household, from a ritual structured by male activity to a ritual governed by female activity.[227]

6.3.5 *The Domestic Cult*

If we accept that the funerary and commemorative rites following death were responsible for creating community with the dead, then the Barat celebrations provided a ritualised framework for perpetuating it. The ideas underlying these, as well as other everyday forms of ritual action, may be summed up under the more general label of 'domestic cult', which occupied a central position in local beliefs. But one should not overestimate the pull of localism at the expense of the universal force of Islam, since many of the ideas and images integrated into these practices were informed by Islamic teachings, in particular the underlying idea of the dual soul.

Using indigenous sources, these ideas can be summed up as follows. The spiritual substance of a living human being is the soul, or *jan*, which leaves the body upon death. In addition to *jan*, each person is endowed with a spirit called *roh*, which is of two types: one is permanent, fixed, stable (*muqim*) and the other is moving, flowing (*rawan*). The former remains in the body of the sleeping person, but the latter gets out and secretly enjoys itself and sees all the useful and disastrous things which may befall a person.[228] This mobile *roh* leaves the body of the sleeping person at night and enters another world, where he may

[227] For examples of the centrality of women's religious activities elsewhere in Central Asia see Baldauf 1989, Kleinmichel 2000, Krämer 2002. My own ethnographic enquiries confirm that in the late 20th and early 21st centuries the Barat is still being performed, mostly in the privacy of houses, although it has retained some of its communal character.

[228] Prov. 207. I. 14, Prov. 464. 41.V.

well meet up with the *roh* of other people. When this person wakes up in the morning he will remember that in his dream he saw such and such a person.[229]

In local belief the *roh* was a result of God's command, and it remained invisible to the human eye. The 'old believers' held that the *roh* wandered from body to body, an idea that possibly derived from the domination of Buddhism in the region in pre-Islamic times. This is also manifested in local interpretations of the appearance of the green fly. When it was noticed in a house, people said, 'The *roh* of my father and mother has come'; this belief was ascribed especially to women.[230] A popular verse recited by boys to girls, contained another brief allusion to the spirit-fly:

> *In the expectation to see you I have no patience left;*
> *Like the spirit-fly, I am turning yellow, and I have no strength left for flying.*
> *If a man was a spirit-fly and flew, he would let down his wings.*
> *Tell me with truthful words: shall I go and lose all hope?*[231]

In the late nineteenth century, the Kirghiz along with the Turkis and the Taranchi held that at the moment of death the spirit of the dead left the body through the mouth in the shape of a fly. Such flies were notoriously very weak.[232] Local eschatology held that death affected the person's body and *jan*, but the *roh* remained alive. It was the *roh* which stayed in or near the tomb until the Day of Judgment, when all the dead will rise. Throughout this time, but especially during the first days of its separation from the body, it was in need of nourishment.[233] Between death and the Day of Judgment, the spirits of the dead continued to actively maintain community with the living: once or twice each week, on Thursdays and Fridays—as well as on the eve of Barat and at other major religious festivals—the dead man's spirit visited his home. If his family was living appropriately, as prescribed by local moral tenets, which included the ritual remembering of the dead, the spirit was happy, praised God and asked Him to bless his family. But if he found that his family and relatives were not living peacefully, he became sad or angry and expressed his dissatisfaction by crying or

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[229] According to some dream was the nourishment of sleep and each person has different dreams which require different interpretations. (Prov. 464. 22R.)

[230] Prov. 207. I.64. In Western Turkestan too, there was a belief that the spirit of the dead visited his relatives in the shape of grandmother or fly (Sukhareva 1960: 31).

[231] Pantusov 1907a: 15, 10.

[232] Ibid.: 15.

[233] Prov. 207. I.22, Jarring 1979: 8.

cursing them. With his blessing the family developed and prospered; with his curse the family declined.[234] Therefore, remembering the dead was instrumental in upholding the household's moral integrity.

As has been discussed in Chapter 5, Islamic values prescribed a limited period for mourning. This period, like other transitional periods between two life stages, was regarded as dangerous: death itself was considered polluting. The liminal period between separation and re-integration was regulated by special rules, such as the prohibition to cook in the house of the dead for three days. Social standing and wealth greatly influenced the forms and the duration of the ritual commemoration: the higher a person's social standing during his life, the more elaborate were the commemorative rituals when he died, often stretching over a longer period. In Khotan prior to 1949, following the death of a well-to-do person, a tent or other white construction was erected by his tomb for up to a year. During this time, the *mollas* stayed in this tent day and night, lighting a lamp to continue their reading of the Koran. The purpose of the practice was to ensure that the dead person was not left on his own: the spirit of the dead was expected to meet up with the old spirits of the cemetery, after which he was not so lonely. Engaging *mollas* to keep vigil by the graveside was supposed to ease the integration of the spirit into the social world of the dead. The reciting of the Koran during this period counted as a meritorious deed that would be credited to the spirit of the dead person.[235] The expression *çiraq yanduruş*, or the burning of the lamp, could also refer to the burning of a light in the house of the dead person at night, normally observed for either three or seven nights. These were sacrifices which only the well-off could afford, since one had to pay for the lamp oil as well as the recitation. While the official mourning period ended after forty days, according to Molla Abdul Qadir the full mourning period lasted for seven years. It was observed by the close relatives of the dead, but it was also extended to his or her possessions, including animals, ornaments and land, which therefore were not supposed to be divided for seven years.[236]

Concern that the dead person might feel lonely, even years later, lay behind the scattering of grains, wheat or maize on the graves—to

[234] Prov. 212. 116–118.
[235] Ibid.: 98–102.
[236] Prov. 464. 19R.

attract birds to keep the dead company—as I observed in oases such as Yarkand and Kucha. Further ways to please the *roh* were to plant flowers on the graves or water them. These represented positive action directly aimed at taking care of, pacifying, humouring and pleasing the dead. Negative measures included prohibitions introduced into the daily routine to avoid offending the *roh*: houses were not to be swept at sunset, and in the evenings no sewage could be spilled outside the door, because it was feared that the *roh* might be hovering there.[237] The spirit, a permanently liminal being between the worlds of the living and the dead, was conceived as simultaneously vulnerable and dangerous, especially around thresholds and boundaries.

The backbone of the commemoration of the dead was the nourishing of the spirits with the smell of fried food, which was then communally consumed. On ritual occasions, this took the form of preparing wheat cakes known by a variety of names: *quymaq, poşkal, çälpäk*. But the preparation of any food counted as sacrifice: when the oil was hot, fragrant spices were added, and the resulting scent pleased the spirit. The procedure known as making the oil fragrant (*yağ puratiş*) was also employed at the time of the Barat and the official Islamic festivals, and on further 'special days of sadness and joy', which included events in the life cycle and other ritual occasions.[238] This ubiquitous recourse to grain-based food sacrifice implies that spirits had to be commemorated beyond the ritual commemorations. Embedded in daily life, the oil sacrifice could be performed on any occasion when the spirits' help was particularly needed. It could be done before a family member set out on a long journey or whenever somebody had a bad dream. After the first two to three *poşkal* had been fried, people said, 'In the name of God, may it reach the souls of my grandfathers and grandmothers!' or 'May it help the souls of my grandfathers and grandmothers!'[239] My ethnographic data from southern Xinjiang suggest both the persistence of these practices and their 'routinization' Women claimed that it was enough to consciously remember the dead during the cooking of an ordinary meal and recite the short formula 'May this reach the spirit of my ancestors' Although this could be done on any day, it was most commonly done on Thursdays, because it was on this day

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[237] Prov. 207. I.64.

[238] Prov. 212. 114–122.

[239] *Ya, bismillah! Bowilirim, momilirimniñ rohiğa tägsün!; Bowilirim, momilirimniñ rohi mädät qilğay!* (Häbibulla 1993: 398).

that the spirits flew to Mecca, to return only on Saturday. The smell of hot oil invigorated the spirits and made them strong, so they could complete the journey more quickly. Neglected spirits sometimes had to remind the living of their needs, that they should be remembered, honoured and nourished. When one's dead parents or close relatives appeared in a dream, it was commonly interpreted in just such terms: the spirit had become weak because he had been neglected and was now in need of assistance. This need could be met by burning oil and praying simultaneously.[240]

The frequent return of the spirit to the house and his favourable intercession on behalf of the living could also be ensured by the use of incense and burning oil lamps. The connection to food sacrifice is implied by the term *näzir-çiraq*, used for the ritual commemoration of the dead. Local explanations define *näzir* as 'a meal offered for no returns', thus expressing the altruistic, sacrificial nature of the occasion, while *çiraq*, means 'lamp'. This name supports Nur Luke's assumption, according to which the ceremonial burning of oil lamps (*yidd çiraq qiliş*), incense-burning (*xoşbuy köydürüş*) and cooking in oil (*yağ puratiş*) accompanied by prayers were all important means of commemorating the dead.[241]

Molla Abdul Qadir reported on the weekly gathering of craftsmen belonging to the same profession in Yarkand, at which the burning of oil lamps played an important role. As noted above, craftsmen took turns to invite fellow craftsmen to their gardens to commemorate the patron saint of their profession. They lit lamps, recited ritual texts and prayed together every Monday. This weekly ritual was known as *çiraq*, or 'lamp'.[242] It can hardly be a coincidence that the author inserted this immediately after his elaboration of the Barat ritual. Commemorating the spirits of dead relatives did not, in essence, differ from paying respect to dead patron saints.

Although it is tempting to sum up food sacrifice and lamp-burning under the umbrella term 'oil sacrifice', this would be inadequate for some other related practices. In Eastern Turkestan, summer fruit which had fallen off trees was eaten fresh, but when it became unsuitable for immediate consumption, it was collected and sun-dried. Dried apples

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[240] Räxman u.a. 1996: 184.
[241] Prov. 212. 114.
[242] Prov. 464. 33R.

and quince were placed in the four corners of a house. Local explanations of the practice were not uniform: one version had it that the aim was to ensure that angels entered the house, but some claimed that this was done to please the spirits of deceased ancestors visiting their houses and families. Dried fruit could also be burnt as incense on the graves of deceased parents and relatives, some people would leave it at saintly tombs or under large trees, on the grounds that such a tree was comparable to a holy shrine. Local healers also created a pleasant scent with dried fruit in their houses to prevent evil spirits from entering. Sandalwood (*Santalum album*), juniper (*Juniperus*) and bran were mixed with sheep fat to make incense; other types of wood, as well as dried fruit, could also be added. In some houses, incense-burning took place on a daily basis; some burnt it both in the morning and in the evening. Others said that burning incense supported them in their business. To ensure good luck in the marketplace, some persons jumped over burning incense before setting out for the market.[243]

Incense-burning was an easy and cheap way of communicating with the world beyond. It is possible that incense-burning offered the poor a ready, more easily affordable means of communicating with the spirit world than food sacrifice. Wood and summer fruit were available free of charge; Molla Abdul Qadir described how local custom demanded that mulberry trees be planted outside private gardens on common land. In this way, nobody could be angry when people ate the fruit, and both rich and poor had equal access to it.[244]

Sacrifice assumed a number of forms, but appeasing the spirits through nourishment remained central. This incorporation of the ritual into everyday life should not be interpreted simply as the persistence of non-Islamic practices. In the early twentieth century, practices combining food sacrifice with the veneration of the dead were performed at the official Islamic holidays, as well as on other special days. Often, the element of charity was added: the food was left at the grave for any man who prayed before consuming it.[245] Since cemeteries were the favourite haunt of the destitute, the food sacrifice taken to the cemetery

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[243] Prov. 46R–V.

[244] Prov. 1R. The written source was also supported by my interview partners in southern Xinjiang who, when making reference to the serious food shortages during the late 1950 and early 1960s, recalled that poverty was so great that some people started selling the fruit of trees regarded as common property, to which all, including the poor, had free access.

[245] Le Coq 1928: 100–101.

typically benefited such persons. This means in effect that the food took on a double function: it was both sacrifice for the appeasement of the spirits of the dead and charitable donation to the needy. Although at first sight both functions appear to be voluntary, altruistic acts, it is possible to view them within the wider framework of reciprocal exchange, from which the donor benefits doubly: the sacrifice helps to ensure the benevolence of the dead spirit, while charity adds to the religious merit of the living.

Ethnographic materials suggest that the spirits of the dead were closely associated with both the cemetery and the dwelling of the family and its immediate surroundings. Typically, such a place could be a large tree in the courtyard, the surroundings of which were frequently swept and kept clean; short prayers were uttered within the privacy of the household.[246] On account of their ubiquity and integration into both Islamic rituals and everyday routine, I suggest that the beliefs and practices which focus on the veneration of the dead should be subsumed under the general heading of 'domestic cult.' The Barat, described above, is an integral part of this cult.[247]

Several references attest to parallel phenomena among the Muslims of Western Turkestan, where it was similarly held that the dead man's spirit visited the house from Thursday afternoon until Friday noon. During this time a hot meal had to be prepared with oil, the smell of which was believed to ascend to the dead spirits. The case of the Turkmen features further local elaborations absent from the Xinjiang materials, according to which this nourishment had to be provided before sunset to prevent the spirits from being attacked in the dark by 'robber spirits' upon their return to the other world. These 'robbers' were assumed to be the spirits of those deceased who had been neglected by their own relatives and were in need of the nourishment of the others.[248]

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[246] Saguchi 1963: 542.

[247] I have carefully avoided using the expression 'ancestor cult' for two reasons. First, 'ancestor cult' suggests the veneration of members of a lineage, while my ethnographic materials imply the veneration of only those dead relatives whom one knew and remembered. Second, the use of the term 'ancestor cult' might lead to confusion and misunderstanding, since in English it is used to denote ritual practices among the Chinese which, however, differ considerably from the beliefs depicted above.

[248] Basilov 1970: 135.

Bruce Privratsky found that commemorating the ancestors through 'emitting the aroma' is also central to Kazakh popular practices. Together with reciting Koranic verses, this is at the heart of Kazakh funerary rites and the 'Thursday rite of Quran and oil'. In this respect we see important overlappings between Kazakh and Turki domestic practices.[249] But the latter appear to place a significantly greater emphasis on honouring the spirits at the graveside during the Barat ritual, and even as part of other rituals, such as birth and healing ceremonies and practices connected to the official Islamic holidays.

We have no reason to assume that there was ever any uniformity of religious practice over such a large geographical area. In the Kazakh case, Privratsky makes the connection between ancestor veneration and lineages: among the Turkis in the late nineteenth century, lineages were of little or no meaning.[250] My own ethnographic fieldwork among the Uyghur in Xinjiang and Kazakhstan suggests that it is not the unknown ancestors of a distant past who are venerated but the dead of the past two or three generations, who were personal acquaintances of the living. There is also a sense that the spirits of all dead people whom one knew are feared, and that food sacrifice should be performed for all. This suggests the priority of real social ties in space over real or imagined blood ties over time. By drawing attention to some of the shared characteristics of popular religious practice over large areas which do not correspond to ethnic and national territories, I am not advocating the introduction of new, overarching territorial categories. My materials suggest that the domestic cult constituted an integral part of popular practices in both Imperial and Republican times. But the ethnographic parallels from regions outside Xinjiang warn us against identifying the Xinjiang materials as 'Uyghur religion', just as it would be equally misleading to talk about a 'Kazakh' religion.

Privratsky considers food sacrifice to be an 'acceptable substitute for the ideal of Kazak hospitality', in which meat occupied a central place, and explains it with reference to the dietary traditions of the pastoral nomadic heritage, which valued meat but necessitated long periods of

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[249] Privratsky points out that Kazakh ancestor veneration is unlike Chinese practices, because '... the Kazaks do not have clan temples, nor wall hangings representing the ancestors, nor gold plates of ancestral names, nor candles burning before them, nor the Chinese custom of prostration before images of the ancestors.' (2001: 139).

[250] Privratsky 2001: 115–7.

abstinence from it. Mono-causal explanations are rarely convincing. The persistence of food sacrifice among the Turkis, who have been sedentary farmers for centuries, calls the validity of the nomadic heritage explanation into question, (even if we know that nomadic groups played a part in their complex ethnogenesis). Besides, as we have seen in Chapter 3, for sedentary oasis farmers meat carried as much prestige as it did among the pastoralists. In the Xinjiang context, alternative interpretations could be put forward—for example, that the grain-based sacrifice of the domestic cult was rooted in the importance of cereal farming. This could be supported by local assumptions about the gendered division of work, which forbade women to shed blood. I suggest that privileging any one interpretation over the others would be tantamount to denying that religious symbols are capable of simultaneously encapsulating a number of parallel meanings.

Instead, I suggest considering the social implications of the domestic cult. The techniques employed were relatively inexpensive and accessible to most social groups, and in this respect the domestic cult may be seen as having strong egalitarian aspects. It also emphasized women's ritual participation. It was commonly held that sons were responsible for praying at the graves of dead parents, which was the main reason for the preference expressed for having a son. According to the dominant patriarchal ideology, women were ostensibly excluded from performing this 'filial duty' However, indigenous reports confirm that the preparation of grain sacrifice, central in the domestic cult, was primarily in women's hands. Food and cooking were female domains in the mental model of the gendered division of labour; they stood in structural opposition to animal sacrifice, which was a male responsibility.

Performing animal sacrifice at the major Islamic festivals and at life-cycle rituals assumed a certain level of wealth. It almost automatically divided people of the same community into almsgivers and alms recipients, thus emphasizing hierarchical structures. Almsgiving on such occasions was done directly. In the domestic cult, ceremonial food sacrifice incorporated distribution to the poor and needy, who were not in a position to make such a sacrifice; distribution took an indirect form when donations were left at the graves, ostensibly for the spirits; and the recipients prayed for the dead. Here, reciprocity and, through it, community were foregrounded. The domestic cult allowed space for the inclusion of marginalized groups, not merely as takers in an unequal relationship but simultaneously as givers and takers.

6.3.6 *New Beginnings*

The domestic cult and its related rituals marked the boundaries between the living and the dead, the end and the beginning. A number of other rituals signalled the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one. While the end of the year was celebrated by lighting a fire in seven or eight places and jumping over it,[251] the arrival of spring was marked by the Noruz (Nawrūz), a holiday rooted in the Iranian tradition. Celebrated in many other parts of the Islamic world, its date was fixed by the spring equinox. In many regions, about two weeks prior to the holiday, women planted wheat, barley or lentil seeds in a deep bowl, and the young green plant was then used during the celebrations.[252] In Xinjiang the festivities were also known as *noruz toyi*, which points to its basically joyous, happy, anticipatory character.

In Yarkand the event was celebrated in villages and towns alike by women and children playing on swings, a practice limited to that day only. Celebrated in both rural and urban areas alike, an animal sacrifice was performed and prayers were recited. If their financial position allowed, people sacrificed animals and distributed the cooked food in their community.[253] The *noruz* festival in Yarkand coincided with the *Jahan Bağ* fair each March, which was held on the big common to the northeast of the Muslim city and lasted for three or four weeks. There were no religious observances, and the people gave themselves up to feasting; a European observer added that, 'as might be expected', a good deal of immorality took place. For this reason, in the early twentieth century the celebrations gave occasion for some Muslim dignitaries to vent their dissatisfaction with local practices and do their best to persuade the Chinese authorities to forbid the fair. But they were opposed by all those who financially profited from the festival, such as the bakers, sweetmeat merchants, acrobats, pimps, storytellers and others; they petitioned the Chinese *amban* to allow the fair to be held and were prepared to oil the necessary palms. The police also supported the *Jahan Bağ* festival, for they, too, made heavy profits, mostly by blackmailing unmarried women.[254]

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[251] Prov. 464. 6R.
[252] Schimmel 2001: 139.
[253] Prov. 464. 7R.40R.
[254] Skrine 1971: 183–4.

In Turfan, to mark a new beginning, people dressed up in new clothes. In the houses of the rich, music was played, and even ordinary people consumed meat dumplings. Young men, young married women and small girls played communal games. Officials visited the fields, symbolically sowed some seeds and exclaimed, 'Another year has turned'. After they returned, the New Year's prayer was recited, and people prayed.[255] The *särä* ritual may have been a variation of this; it took place each year on the sixteenth day of the third month, 'when the leaves of the trees were the size of a mouse's ear' On this day, people put on good clothes. Early in the morning, adults prepared a dish consisting of nine ingredients, namely wheat, maize, peas, barley, millet, meat, carrots, onions and rice. This meal was consumed collectively by relatives. Since this ritual was celebrated outdoors, all household furniture and implements, including bedding and kitchen utensils, had to be taken outside, and no fire was lit in the house all day.[256]

In Khotan the festivities began in early February. Women decorated their hair with paper flowers, and animals were allowed to wander freely without anyone touching them. In Kucha, sheep, horse and camel fights were held on the first day of the year, and based on the outcome predictions were made regarding whether or not the coming year would bring a good crop.[257] The celebrations involved the collection of seven different edible substances, such as yellow garlic, *oleaster* fruit, apple, the head of a sheep, pies, vinegar and the shoulder blade of a sheep. These were soaked together in water at night and the drink called the *heft salam suyi*, or 'the water of the seven greetings', was drunk on the following day.[258] In the north, teachers in Koran schools gave their pupils pieces of paper with some verses celebrating the solar New Year scribbled on them. Each child took this paper (together with some small change) and recited the verses on their way home:

> *The beginning of the year is the day of New Year when the world becomes a flower garden.*
> *When the water of good will rains from heaven on the earth.*
> *Each lad who works should please his master.*
> *This lad will receive from God true pleasure in the two worlds.*

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[255] Katanov 1936: 1,210–1.
[256] Ibid.: 1,212–3.
[257] Grenard 1898a: 253–4.
[258] This corresponds to the consumption of 'the seven items beginning with the letter *s*' in Iran (Donaldson 1973: 120–3).

When New Year comes, the world turns into a flower garden—this is God's order.
From the water of good will the world blossom—it is God's creation.
The lad who works should satisfy his master, day and night.
Such a person will not be scorned in either of the two worlds- this is a gift from God.[259]

6.3.7 *Special Days*

The ritual calendar contained a number of other days to which special significance was attributed. As the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar, *muhärräm*, also known as *aşur ay*, was considered sacred.[260] The first of *muhärräm* marked the beginning of the lunar New Year; it was regarded as a good or bad omen if this day fell on a particular day of the week. Predictions were made for the weather and crops for the coming year.[261]

During this month, the guardians of shrines went to visit each other and said, 'We are setting up the spirit flags' (*tuğ soqaşturamiz*). Shrine-visiting during this month was considered to be particularly effective. 'Urban and rural people and the nomads from the pastures, men and women with children went to the shrines taking spirit flags (*tuğ-äläm*) which they set up by the entrance and tied pieces of cloth on them. They also took votive gifts such as money, cattle, a horse, a sheep or a hen to the shrine, and after they had the guardians recite prayers everything was distributed among strangers.'[262]

The tenth of this month was particularly favoured for such pilgrimages. On this day, public celebrations were held at the Ordam Padşah shrine in the desert, east of Yengi Hisar.[263] The number of participants varied according to the season: in winter an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 pilgrims attended, while in the summer their number fell to 5,000, on account of the extreme heat and scarcity of water, which rendered such a journey much harder. One traveller observed a group of pilgrims of about forty-five men, women and children on their way to the shrine. Fifteen men were carrying the large sticks decorated with white and

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[259] Pantusov 1890: 69; 151–2. For an alternative New Year verse see Pantusov 1890: 69; 152, also quoted by Änsari 1925: 142–144.

[260] The martyrdom of Imam Husayn, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad occurred during this month at Karbala. Sunnites and Shi'ites alike recognize it, but it has heightened significance for the latter.

[261] Katanov 1976: 84–5.

[262] Prov. 464. 47R.

[263] Skrine 1971: 184.

coloured spirit flags. In the front, a person played a flute, and two others were playing drums. The pilgrims shouted the name of God in unison, keeping regular pauses in between. Next to the shrine there was a small village with twenty-five households, but only four families lived here on a permanent basis, looking after the shrine; the others came at the time of the festival to perform various services. The main guardian was simultaneously responsible for a number of other shrines, and he spent much of his time travelling between them. In addition, the shrine also had an imam who recited prayers, a caretaker who managed the properties of the shrine and twenty servants. The livelihood of all these persons depended on the pilgrims' donations. Individual contributions varied according to the financial resources and generosity of the pilgrim. All smaller donations were collected in a large copper cauldron.[264] Rituals acted out on this day were reminiscent of the Barat celebrations: some people held vigil all night and prayed until dawn, weeping and wailing; some asked for the pardoning of their debts; the childless made supplications for a child. Keeping vigil and praying all day and night of the tenth of the *aşur* month was thought to ensure an abundance of provisions in the year to come. Some *mollas* condemned this as a Shi'ite practice and labelled those indulging in it heretics (this although they approved of shrine-visiting at other times).[265] After presenting the multiplicity of opinions, the indigenous author Molla Abdul Qadir pragmatically advised 'to choose the things that are necessary for us. If we do not do so we are not doing ourselves any good.'[266]

Some learned *mollas* advised people to avoid visiting saintly tombs on the eleventh day of the *aşur* month, cautioning them to stay at home with their family, cook and eat good food and take care to ensure that their provisions would be plentiful. If a person did not eat good food on this day and behaved in a shameless way, his provisions were bound to decrease from day to day.[267]

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[264] Hedin 2001.I.: 178–9.

[265] *Qizilbaş* or Rafidites was the term used here as a pejorative reference to Shi'ites. Cf Halm 1988: 49.

[266] Prov. 464. 17R, 2V. 47V. Although better known as the day of mourning among the Shi'ites, it was popularly thought that it was on this day that Abraham was supposed to sacrifice his son. In Sunnite regions many important events are attributed to this day, such as the creation of Adam, the reunion of Adam and Eve after their expulsion from Eden, and the day when Noah left the ark.

[267] Prov. 464.17V, R.

The overlapping elements of the Barat and the tenth of *aşur* were shrine-visiting, communal praying and Koran recitations, the distribution of alms and the belief that spending the whole night supplicating dead spirits would guarantee abundant provisions for the following year.[268] Conversely, vigil, asking for a good food supply and the fulfilment of other wishes were recurring themes of shrine visits. Although pilgrimage to shrines was not the exclusive prerogative of women, descriptions tend to foreground female piety, perhaps because of the associations of many shrines with fertility, many women prayed for a husband or a child. According to an indigenous account in Yarkand, 'every Sunday a number of women go to that shrine [saying] "Oh, ghodja of the shrine! Give me a husband who can take care of his house! Give me a man who can put a ladle into the kettle!"... thus they pray crying.'[269] This description from the 1920s corresponds closely to another indigenous account, dating from 1956, suggesting continuities in patterns of formulaic oral tradition and ritual action: 'Unmarried women made a cooking pot out of two pieces of clay, put two more pieces of clay, firewood and some bran in it. This meant that they asked "we have put up a pot, we have put a ladle in it—we wish for a good husband, lord of the shrine" '[270] Both references concern the shrine of the female saint known as *Süt Padşahim*, or 'Lady Milk'.[271] As elsewhere, milk was considered to be the female substance *par excellence*. Foreigners' rendering of women's prayers corroborate indigenous accounts and evoke the pot-and-ladle metaphor: 'Girls, when they reach a marriageable age, visit one of the shrines and pray as follows: "O Allah, O Lord of the Shrine, grant me a house with a kettle ready placed on the stove, and a spoon in the kettle. May it be a house with its four sides decorated with cloth, with carpets and druggets [sic] ready spread, and with towels hanging from their pegs. Grant me a husband whose father and mother are dead; and may he have no other wife!" '[272] Women's supplications made use of the metaphor of cooking pot and

[268] Connecting this day to the provisions of the year to come was also known in Fez and Tanger, where on this day it was forbidden to sweep the house (or to sell brooms), for fear that one might sweep out the supplies needed for the following year by mistake. (Schimmel 2001: 39).

[269] Jarring 1951b: 174.

[270] Tenishev 1984: 65–66.

[271] Cf. Baldick 1993: 191–192.

[272] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 310. The metaphorical use of pot to refer to sexuality was also noted in northern Xinjiang in the mid-1990s (Dautcher 1999: 148).

ladle, which simultaneously alluded to the complementary roles of males and females in biological reproduction and the division of labour in social reproduction, to the centrality of the family as the smallest unit of human sociability, and to the symbolic role of commensality in establishing and maintaining this unit.

Often, communal celebrations at shrines were governed by the seasons. As season-bound rituals unconnected to the Islamic calendar, it is tempting to dismiss them as 'local practice' which had little to do with Islamic traditions. It was in this spirit that Skrine distinguished between Muslim and pagan festivals on the basis of time-reckoning:

> Many of the religious festivals, for that matter, are more pagan than Mussulman, especially those which are seasonal and therefore unconnected with the Muhammadan (lunar) calendar: they are merely popular gatherings for the purpose of feasting and enjoyment, and probably date back thousands of years. At the end of August, for example, greedy pilgrims from all over the province congregate at the fair of "Hazrat Sultanim", Sadiq Boghra Khan, to feast on the luscious figs of Astin Artush. The same applies to summer Saturdays at the beautiful shrine of Hidayatulla Khoja, known as "Hazrat Apak", most famous of the priest-kings, or "khojas" from Samarqand, who misruled Kashgar from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards. Hazrat Apaq is really a kind of country club for Kashgar; the *tawwuf* or "circling" of the shrines is supposed to be performed by every visitor, but the famous apricots and melons of Besh Karim are the attraction rather than the exhortations of the mullas.'[273]

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such a distinction between pre-Islamic and Islamic traditions had little relevance for locals.

Agricultural rituals followed seasonal changes and the rhythm of production. In the first half of the twentieth century in the southern oases when wheat was first sown, a big pot of pilaff was prepared and offered to the day labourers. Significantly, the offering of the communal meal was called *näzir qiliş*, which implies that it was considered an altruistic offering with no expectations of return. At the time of the meal, prayers were addressed to the Prophet Adam, the originator of farming. First, the cattle were fed, then some wheat bran was smeared

[273] Skrine 1971: 183–4. For a recent attempt to summarise the history of the shrine and the pilgrimage to it during *muhärräm* see Sawada 2001. Sawada quotes Skrine as well, but ignores the passage quoted above, presumably because it does not quite tally with his unequivocal equation of shrines with sanctity and holiness, leaving no room for profanity.

on the iron part of a plough, the bran and some grass were put in an iron cauldron and the mixture was lit so that its smoke reached all the agricultural implements. Its remains were then scattered on the earth. This practice supposedly ensured abundance for agricultural production and helped avert natural disasters. Another ritual followed the threshing. Wheat or other cereal crops were spread out on the threshing floor for two to three days, or sometimes as long as ten to fifteen days, because one had to wait for the moon to enter an auspicious phase. Wheat bran mixed with mutton fat was placed at the four corners of the threshed grain, which was placed in a vessel. Some grass was put on its top and lit. The steam of the hot sacrifice was used to bless the threshing. This was known as spreading bran or making incense (*kipäk salmaq, buy salmaq*).[274] Then twenty-five to thirty kilograms of grain were taken, one part of which was distributed among strangers as 'the thanksgiving alms of the new crop' (*yäñiliqniñ şükranä sadaqasi*), also known as *käpsän*;[275] the rest was taken home by the participants. From the new grain, bread was baked or a meal was cooked and shared with people of high social standing, especially representatives of the religious establishment, who prayed over it to ensure blessings. The offering of new bread to others was known as *şükranä näzrisi*, and the blessing of the new bread was called the 'opening of the mouth of renewal' (*yäñiliq ağız açqusi*). Similar thanksgiving ceremonies accompanied the harvest of various fruits.[276]

In the early twentieth century in Guma the new bread had to be blessed by *mollas*:

> When the threshing is finished they gather the wheat in a pile on one or two gilams [carpets]. Some people say "we will fill it into sacks when it has got cool!" and when it has got cool they sit in the middle of the threshing-place and having found a mullah they make a *chagh*-bread [a special kind of bread baked in a pot or a kettle] and put it before the mullah. Having made him read prayers they then pour the [threshed] grain into sacks. The mullah will read the following prayers: "May your crop be blessed! May much food come out of it! May it exceed the old [crop] and remain to the next crop!" Thus he prays. If our crop is a little blessed it will be sufficient for a long time, they think.[277]

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[274] It is problematic to translate *salmaq*, since it has a multiplicity of meanings.

[275] Cf. Schwarz's definition: 'alms food given to the poor after a harvest' (1992: 684). See also p. 155 above.

[276] Prov. 212. 130–7.

[277] Jarring 1951b.: 35–36.

6.3.8 *Blessing and Misfortune*

In the late nineteenth century the significance of praying for good luck during the month of *säpär* was explained by Mijit Axun. Men and women prayed for good luck on the 'three sevenths' (*üç yättä*) of the month, i.e., on the seventh, seventeenth and twenty-seventh. On the night of the seventh, a 'good luck meal' consisting of seventeen types of food was prepared and arranged in a nicely furnished room. A *molla* recited the 'Book of Good Fortune' (*bäxtnamä*) by candlelight. When it was quite late, the people who had prepared the meal performed their ablutions and spent the night in the room repenting their sins and asking for good luck. If, before sunrise, no one had encountered the good-luck spirits, the host placed the spoon on the food with the convex side up; if they came, the spoon was placed the other way around. People rejoiced and said, 'Tonight the good-luck spirits are coming into our house. We should pray and consume this food together with members of the mosque community.' Encountering the spirits—Fortune, Richness, Honour and Dignity—could take the form of a dream or a vision. The spirits of Good Fortune were believed to have come from the mythical mountain of *Kuh-i Qap*; upon meeting a person, they made him richer from day to day. Even if people did not encounter them on any of the 'sevens', they would be blessed with good fortune, if they prepared the ceremonial meal. But those who failed to make these preparations annually, according to their financial circumstances, were believed to lose their good luck.[278]

This ritual, which has no equivalent in the Islamic calendar,[279] shares a number of elements with the Barat. The participants included men and women who kept vigil, repented their sins and asked for good luck. A ceremonial text was recited and the meal was consumed communally. A further link between this ritual and the Barat was the public praying of Taranchi girls to the Mother of Good Luck on the night of Barat.

As in many other parts of the world, in Eastern Turkestan too efforts were made to influence climatic conditions, especially bad weather, which jeopardised the crops and, therefore, communal survival. In contrast to other magical practices, which could be carried out privately

[278] Katanov 1976: 62–5.
[279] Schimmel 2001: 63.

or with the participation of close family members, weather magic was, by definition, a communal enterprise, since bad weather conditions affected all farmers at the same time. In Kashgar, to avert bad weather, people gathered and recited the call for prayer.[280]

Magical intervention was also urgently needed at times of severe drought. The ritual was ideally preceded by the long retreat of the rainmaker into some solitary place or to a shrine, where he would recite prayers. Then 'The rain-maker brings a stone which has been found in the intestines of some animal and puts it into a vessel filled with the blood of some quadruped which has recently been slaughtered. This blood is stirred with the help of a whisk made of willow twigs. Meanwhile the rain-maker recites incantations. The time for the arrival of rain can be indicated, but usually the rain-maker reserves for himself two days of grace. If rain does not appear during this period he asks for a respite of eight days, during which time he prays day and night. If rain does not appear even then it means that the enemies of the rain-maker are working against him.'[281]

Prayers for rain were undertaken fairly often in winters when there was little snowfall on the mountains, and consequently a shortage of water in the rivers could be expected in the summer. Communal prayers for rain were also conducted in the mosques. As soon as a shortage of snow on the mountains was observed, people sent a deputation to the Chinese official, who gave orders to the *mollas* to pray for rain and snow. Interethnic cooperation was occasionally employed to ensure the efficacy of the rituals; Islamic prayers could be accompanied by the recital of Chinese prayers. Rainmaking rituals could sometimes go wrong, as happened in Kashgar in the early twentieth century: 'Once in the early spring, after a dry winter when very little snow had fallen on the mountains, instructions were given to the mullahs to make special prayers. In their excess of zeal the mullahs overdid it. Black clouds overhung the mountains for a long time and a tropical downpour crashed down upon the city, breaking down walls and destroying houses, when a good many people were crushed to death. The terrified population, in fear of further disasters, rushed to the Taotai with complaints against the mullahs for their excess. The Governor, ever mindful of the needs

[280] Prov. 464. 6 R.V.

[281] Jarring 1979: 13–4. On weather magic in Inner Asia see Molnár 1994.

of his beloved people, summoned the guilty mullahs and threatened to give them each a sound flogging if the rain did not stop at once. Such wisdom on the part of the energetic Governor was crowned with brilliant results. The prayers of the mullahs immediately stopped the excessive precipitation of atmospheric moisture and averted a further catastrophe.'[282] Magic could also be employed against cold wind. A *molla* from Yarkand could, for payment of a certain fee, write charms for the members of a caravan, which they then had to carry with them throughout their journey.[283]

Weather magic was only one of the many ways in which people attempted to control supernatural forces. Control was facilitated by classifying and naming both good spirits and angels and evil creatures. The *mollas* from Kashgar and Yarkand provide examples of emic classifications and perceptions of good and evil that by and large complement each other. The angels (*päriştä*), often mentioned in connection with life-cycle rituals, were created out of light and their souls were sacred. They were always obedient and worshipped God. Unlike humans and jinn, they were not divided into male and female, were unable to procreate, eat or drink and were considered immortal.[284] Angels were prominent in beliefs surrounding death and the dualistic concept of the soul as elaborated above. To the Angels Munkir and Näkir, eschatological significance was attributed: after a dead person had been put in his grave and seven spades of earth had been thrown on top of him, a member of the mosque community recited verses from the Koran. The grave was then entered from the direction of the *qiblä* by these two angels carrying fiery maces. They questioned the deceased in Arabic, but there was no communication problem, since 'God's messengers speak in all languages because all human languages are God's creation'.[285]

In contrast, the jinn and its various subspecies had a decidedly anthropomorphic character. It was due to fear of the jinn that on Wednesday nights people in Yarkand consciously avoided sleeping outdoors, since this was considered to be the time when potentially harmful supernatural beings, including *div, pärі, jin, albasti* and *şaytan*, came out of their dwellings, situated on the mythical mountain of *Kuh-i*

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[282] Nazaroff 1935: 34–5.
[283] Shaw 1984: 377.
[284] Prov. 207.I.64.
[285] Prov. 207.I.60.

Qap.[286] If they passed over someone's head, this person was bound to become ill.[287] The jinn, dangerous beings ubiquitous in Islamic popular beliefs whose existence is also confirmed by the Koran, were classified according to their dwelling: those which haunted cemeteries, those which entered people's houses and those which lived on the hooves of draught animals. Jinn living in cemeteries were considered harmless to humans. Those dwelling in people's houses were in the habit of licking any food which was left around in open containers; if humans consumed this food, they became ill. Some were not content with simply eating the leftovers, they also penetrated into the abdomen of the negligent housewife, causing harm to her and her foetus.[288] Domestic animals such as horses, donkeys, sheep and goats were also vulnerable, especially if left outside on a Wednesday night. Not only could they be eaten by jinn; they could be replaced with other, weaker or and inferior animals, usually as revenge.[289] Their staple was human bones, while their animals fed on the excrement of draught animals belonging to humans.[290] Created from the smoke of fire, the jinn could appear in any shape they chose. An alternative local classification divided them into white spirits (*aq roh*), who were harmless to humans, and black spirits (*qara roh*), who were hostile to humans. The jinn were capable of procreating and, like humans, were mortal.

A subspecies of the jinn, the 'mother of small children' (*uşaq balilar anisi, umul-sibyan*), lived in draught animals' feet in the stables. She could harm people when they went out to relieve themselves. She also attacked women in the course of childbirth, as well as pregnant women, causing miscarriages. She harmed newborn babies by suckling them, especially if these were left on their own, in the house or outside: they could be kidnapped and replaced with another, without anyone noticing. The changeling then underwent rapid weight loss and died. She could also harm a baby by licking its head and causing its hair to fall out. Pregnant women and young mothers had prayers recited for their protection. Contact with this creature could cause sterility in both men and women.[291]

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[286] In some regions some of these were conceptualised in more positive terms: for example, among the Uzbeks the *päri* has been described as a helping spirit (Basilov 1988: 117).

[287] Prov. 464. 7R–7V.

[288] Prov. 464. 15R.

[289] Prov. 464. 18R.

[290] Prov. 207.I.63.

[291] Prov. 464. 7V–8V., Prov. 207.I.63.

The *albasti* was sometimes classified as a male jinn. Some visualised it as a gnome capable of assuming different shapes, often that of hairy, tousled old women with sagging breasts. In Khotan, it was known as *alwasku* and was believed to be capable of assuming twelve different shapes: most often it appeared as a human, but it could transform itself into a dog, a donkey, a sheep, a goat or a lion. If it chose to remain invisible, one could still smell its breath or hear its voice or footsteps. It was in the habit of frightening lonely travellers or tormenting people in their dreams.[292] Mämät Ğazi, from Turfan, considered the *albasti* more dangerous than the jinn; he did not regard it a subspecies of the latter. In his view trees in mountainous forests were the favourite habitat of the *albasti*. The male *albasti*'s face was that of a man, but it walked around naked and had very long hair. Its female partner had huge breasts which she threw across her shoulders when fighting. Her backside was wide-open, and she could only be caught when she was picking it; at any other time she was considered invincible.[293] Dangerous whirlwinds were also regarded as manifestations of the activities of the *albasti-şaytan* or some other jinn, against which only spitting and uttering God's name helped. If no such precaution was taken, people risked even greater calamities.[294]

Modern ethnographic descriptions conflate the figure of the *albasti* with that of the *umul-sibyan*, blaming both for difficulties during delivery, overdue babies, difficulties in expelling the afterbirth or stillborn babies.[295]

6.3.9 *The Evil Eye*

My sources are just as informative about another potential source of calamity, the evil eye, also widespread all over the Islamic world and beyond. The most common expression for the evil eye among Turkis was *yaman köz*, a literal equivalent of the English, but it was frequently referred to in a verbal compound: when a child was afflicted, it was said that 'an eye has touched the child' (*baliğa köz tägdi*).

It was held that 'people afflicted with the evil eye have the capacity of "eating" other people', and therefore it was considered very

[292] Grenard 1898a: 254. Malov 1961: 54.
[293] Katanov 1976: 76–7.
[294] Ibid.: 74–5.
[295] Häbibulla 1993: 251.

important when choosing a wife 'to ascertain that she is not afflicted with the evil eye'.[296] Women were more likely to be afflicted. Although local classification of evil influences differentiated between the evil eye and evil spirits, the remedies recommended against them sometimes overlapped considerably. They were often based on the idea of deception or secrecy, although fumigation, the use of objects with assumed medicinal qualities, magic formulae, charms and other methods were also popular.

One allegedly effective method of cheating evil spirits was to address children with unpleasant names, such as 'thief', for protection. People took care not to show a newborn baby to a stranger, in order to protect the child against possible affliction. The same end was served by keeping the baby's precise age a secret.[297] Small children's faces were often blackened to make them look ugly and thus divert the attention of the evil eye and the jinn, as happened in the following case: 'As long as Bakhta remained a small child she was very seldom washed.... But it was not through negligence or lack of thoughtful care that her mother let Bakhta remain dirty. On the contrary, it was attention and love that was behind her behaving like this. If Bakhta was dirty and went around in dirty clothes her beauty was not so pronounced and thus she was much better protected against the evil eye.'[298]

Children could be endangered if addressed or spoken to in the wrong way. This could be countered by taking a handful of soil from the threshold of the house or rubbish from the main cardinal points and a piece of cotton-wool from visitors' clothes: all these things then had to be burnt and the smoke collected in an old cap, which thereafter was thrown among those present. All this was accompanied by the recital of magical formulae. Alternative remedies such as using the sun-dried blood of a rat or the marrow of a goat could also be employed.[299] If someone visited another person in his house and cast an envious eye on his child, his animals, or any other valuable possessions, the debris that had fallen off his shoes had to be stamped on after he left, and the following formula recited:

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[296] Jarring 1979: 9.
[297] Grenard 1898a: 254; Raxman 1996: 125.
[298] Jarring 1979: 10. Cf. also Raxman 1996: 125.
[299] Jarring 1979: 9.

His eye was an evil eye,
His mouth an evil mouth.[300]

The house then had to be fumigated to avert the harmful effects of the evil eye. In southern Xinjiang, when a child was believed to have been influenced by the evil eye, an old woman recited, 'Allah is sublime. Praise be to Allah! There is no God but Allah. If thou art an evil eye depart, as this place is not for thee. Go to a deserted water mill; go to a deserted house; go to a grave; go to the house of the Kazi. These are the commands of Allah, of Solomon and of the Saint.'[301] Baby girls were protected from the evil eye with a mirror, baby boys with a knife placed near the baby's head, since both mirrors and steel were greatly feared by evil spirits.[302]

Charms (*tumar*) also offered protection. A charm consisted of a small, triangular leather bag worn on a string around one's neck or sewn into the cap of the person to be protected. It contained a piece of paper with Koranic quotations, usually written by a specialist (*duaxon/daxan.*)[303] It could also take on figurative forms, as we read in the following description. 'As long as Bakhta lay in her cradle there was also an amulet fastened to the piece of wood which served as the handle of the cradle. When she began walking, she was dressed up in a small frock onto which some strange figures were sewn. Their purpose was that the evil eye should look at these figures and thus forget to harm the little child.'[304]

In Yarkand, when a horse fell sick, this was usually attributed to the evil eye. The specialist *duaxon* was summoned to recite prayers, the explanation being that horses were so close to humans that remedies meant for the latter were also considered effective for them. Alternatively, a sick horse could be taken to the cemetery and be made to circle a lonely grave. Crops were also potentially vulnerable to evil influences. For crop protection, the skull of a cow was placed among them, and these words were recited: 'May they be protected from the evil eye, from mishap and from weeds'.[305] Some people utilized objects which

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[300] *közi yamanniñ közidin ağzi yamanniñ ağzidin.* (Prov. 464.9R.)
[301] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 319.
[302] Raxman 1996: 180.
[303] Le Coq 1916: 4. Jarring 1979: 9–10.
[304] Jarring 1979: 10.
[305] *köz tägmäydür, al tüşmäydür wä pañ bolmaydur.* (Prov. 464.9R–V.)

served the double purpose of protecting the wearer from evil influences and endowing him or her with specific characteristics. For example, a wolf's tooth ensured that the wearer was to be greatly honoured, its claws protected children against evil spirits and its bones were effective against enemies. An amulet made out of a hare's heart protected its bearer against bullets and arrows.[306]

Magical practices were recommended for practically all areas of biological and social reproduction. Given the high levels of infant mortality, protection of babies, small children and women in childbirth was a primary concern. Protecting property such as domestic animals and crops was also important. But measures were also recommended to ensure success in business. When a person wanted to enter the house of a man who was just about to go to the bazaar to sell something, he was not admitted, because this would prevent good business on the market. When such a person left the house, any mud which had fallen off his shoes had to be stamped upon, the room fumigated and the goods to be marketed circled, accompanied again by the chant 'His eye was an evil eye, his mouth an evil mouth'.[307] Before doing business in the bazaar, some men took good care that the threshold and the trees around their homes were thoroughly cleaned, to ensure the help of the spirits of the dead, to whom the trees were devoted, and other protector spirits who lurked around thresholds and boundaries.[308]

While the evil eye could be the result of unintentional envy, harm could also be caused by deliberately casting a spell (*oquş*) or exercising black magic (*qasdjilik*). This was done by having a magic formula read upon sugar, tea or eggs which the target of the black magic would consume inadvertently. A piece of material which had been 'read upon' could be used to have a dress or suit made for the person to be affected. In this way, love and hatred between men and women could also be manipulated. Black magic was also performed by sticking needles into a doll forming an effigy of the person to be affected.[309]

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[306] Jarring 1979: 9–10.

[307] Prov. 464. 18V. See also note 306 above.

[308] Ibid.

[309] Häbibulla 1993: 400–1. Skrine mentioned *jarrakashi* for these practices. It referred to the casting of a spell in order to induce love or to sow enmity between people by third parties, who expected to profit thereby (Skrine 1926: 187).

6.3.10 *Pollution*

Illness and misfortune could also be brought about by ignoring pollution prohibitions. Corresponding to pollution definitions elsewhere in the Islamic world, in Eastern Turkestan pollution was defined with the opposing pair of clean/lawful (*halal*) and unclean/unlawful (*haram*). The term *haram* had long been used in a negative sense: *haramzadä* referred to an 'unclean offspring, bastard, and was widely used as a term of abuse'.[310] We cannot be sure to what extent the term has undergone modifications in its connotations over the centuries. Its basic pejorative meaning remained unchanged, although according to a sixteenth-century source, when a Moghul ruler chose to use abusive language, 'he never went beyond calling any one "unclean" or "carrion", which were therefore considered relatively mild terms of disapproval'.[311]

The religious connotations of the terms *haram* and *halal* are explained by a Taranchi in the late nineteenth century. He regarded the consumption of *haram* food as a great sin but stressed the social origin of the goods consumed rather than their inherent nature. Thus, *haram* included the consumption of pork, but also utilization of stolen goods, or of goods which legally belonged to orphans, the appropriation of goods which had been entrusted to the consumer for safekeeping, the consumption of goods obtained by deceiving one's wife and the consumption of goods obtained through lying. Apart from the consumption of pork, all the other items mentioned here refer to goods appropriated unlawfully. Unlawful appropriation of goods and their consumption are here used in a broad sense, which points beyond the act of eating and drinking. *Haram* is understood as 'unlawful', i.e., as incompatible with Islamic law. The indigenous informant considers the circumstances of acquisition to be as sinful as the physical consumption of pork and adds that persons guilty of committing these sins cannot escape God's punishment.[312] This definition of *haram* encapsulated local notions of a moral economy which had direct implications for social relations: law was implicitly understood as responsible for holding the community together, and the violation of these rules was tantamount to attacking or even destroying it.

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[310] Raquette 1909: 28.
[311] Haidar 1895: 448.
[312] Radloff 1886: 6.

The consumption of food and drink was regulated by Islamic law, though local elaborations concerning the nature of prohibited and permitted food reveal some variation. 'God has given humans many things to eat and water to drink. This is why people should recognize God's gift and thank him. If one fails to thank God for his gifts, if one eats impure food instead of pure food, drinks brandy instead of water, then he is a sinner before God. Wicked people prefer brandy to water. All these people will be damned by God and his Prophet and will not receive blessings.'[313]

The breaking of food taboos and especially the consumption of non-*halal* meat was regarded as a very serious offence. Muhammad Ali Damolla devoted a whole passage to the subject, explaining the categories of *halal* and *haram* meat and drinks. The meat of all ruminating animals was regarded as *halal*, and there was no need for Muslims to further rank or classify them. Mutton, beef, camel, wild camel, yak, wild yak and goat all fell in this category, while the meat of non-ruminating animals was considered *haram*. In this respect he noted internal divisions among Muslims, since some common people consumed horse and rabbit. Among birds, the meat of those which killed their victim by trampling it with their feet and tearing it with their beaks was *haram*. These birds of prey, also recognizable from their hooked beaks, included the rabbit hawk and the peregrine falcon. In contrast, the flesh of birds with a straight beak was regarded as *halal*; these included chickens, pheasants, geese, sparrows and partridges. The consumption of all liquids was allowed, but intoxicating liquids were considered *haram*.[314]

The popularity of certain non-*halal* meats was acknowledged by Muhammad Ali Damolla somewhat apologetically as the practice of common people, who were more ignorant in matters of religious proscriptions than the higher echelons of local society. Breaches of the prohibition rules were also confirmed by a Western observer, who mentioned them not as an exception but as common practice: 'They ride stallions in Turkestan. No one of any standing in Turkestan would ride a mare, which is regarded as a beast of burden, and used only

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[313] Ibid.

[314] Prov. 207. I.72. Definitions of the concept of *haram* are also provided in a modern, late twentieth century Uyghur ethnography. According to this, if no blood flows when the animal to be eaten is killed, its flesh is considered *haram* (*haram bolup qaldi*). (Häbibulla 1993: 90)

for breeding, drawing carts or butchering. Horse meat is more highly esteemed here than beef or mutton.'[315] Other outsiders, however, understood the matter somewhat differently. A Hindu told Robert Shaw *apropos* of mules, 'that none are bred in this country, since the departure of the Chinese. It seems that the strict Mussulman rules prohibit it, because horses are 'halâl' (or clean, that is, fit for food), while donkeys are unclean, or 'harâm'....he says no horses are kept expressly for eating, but when one has broken a leg, or otherwise got disabled, he is fed up and fattened...'.[316]

Pollution offences were not limited solely to the intake of foods and drinks declared unlawful in local interpretations of Islamic law. The concepts of lawful/permitted and unlawful/forbidden were sometimes applied in a broader sense. In the early twentieth century, an Armenian brought an oil extractor to Kashgar that the *mollas* promptly declared to be unclean. As a result, no one dared buy the oil, and the entrepreneur was ruined.[317] Around the same time, in 1915, a new school was established in Kashgar, introducing new ideas and practices. Upset by these first attempts to modernize the local education system, the *mollas* again resorted to the same vocabulary, declaring the school unlawful, i.e., *haram*.[318]

Another source of pollution was bodily emission in sacred places or in the presence of holy persons. This could be committed inadvertently—for example, misfortune could befall a person who relieved himself along a road where the Prophet Xizir was passing.[319] It was considered abominable (*mäkruh*)[320] to spit or urinate when facing the direction of Mecca or when turning one's back to it; this was aptly summed up in local oral tradition:

> *People who open the parts of their body* [which modesty requires to be concealed]
> *Toward the moon and the sun*
> *Will be deprived of the happiness of both worlds.*[321]

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[315] Filippi 1932: 472.
[316] Shaw 1984: 396.
[317] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 1730.
[318] Jarring 1975: 8–9. (See section 6.2.5 above)
[319] Häbibulla 1993: 402.
[320] The term designates an abominable, disgusting act: 'any action not forbidden by God but looked upon with horror and disgust by Muslim teachers' (Redhouse 1974: 1956).
[321] Prov. 464. 39R.

The parts of the body which modesty required to be concealed (*awrat*) included, for men, the parts between the navel and the knees and, for women, most of the body, from the top of the head down to the heels. If one fourth of this area was uncovered while praying, the ritual prayer was spoilt and unacceptable.[322] For men, it was forbidden to enter the toilet wearing a white turban; it had to be replaced with some other headgear. Wearing a turban of a different colour was considered acceptable.[323]

The emission of blood was widely regarded as polluting and therefore dangerous. Menstruating and postpartum women were therefore polluting. The degree of pollution was calibrated in the diverse vocabulary used to describe the blood lost by a woman after giving birth. The blood lost immediately following birth, which was expunged in the course of three to ten days, was called *häyiz*. This was followed by *näfas*, expunged in the course of the next ten to forty days. If bleeding continued beyond forty days, it was called *xun istihaz*.[324] Sometimes the potential of female pollution was interpreted in a very broad sense, as is implied by the words of a young Turki woman who said: 'I have a small child, my dress is not clean, and the Ahung will not allow a woman to even pray when she has small children, for the cleansings are impossible to her.'[325] Here we can surmise that breast feeding and the permanently unclean state of small children before they were toilet-trained were regarded as potentially polluting.

Pollution rules governed the discarding of cut nails and hair, which, being the extensions of the body, were also considered polluting. Cut nails and hair had to be buried in the ground under a tree or near water. To throw hair or nails on the ground was considered inauspicious. Cutting one's nails in another person's house was considered offensive and could mean that blessing (*bäräkät*) would leave the house. The knife which a person had used to cut his nails was considered unclean. To cleanse it, the words of the *Temjid*[326] had to be recited over it three times. It also had to be shaken and used to cut a piece of wood seven

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[322] Prov. 464. 23R.
[323] Prov. 464. 39V.
[324] Prov. 464. 28R.
[325] Cable, French & French 1934: 234.
[326] This is 'a canticle sung from the minarets at night about an hour after the last service of worship, during the months of Rejeb, Shaban and Ramadan; it consists of an ascription of praise and an expression of amazement that any loving servant of God can sleep while God is awake and keeping watch'. (Redhouse 1974: 592).

times before it could be considered clean, though according to others a knife was always clean.[327]

A whole set of pollution rules surrounded drinking water. If a water tank (*köl*) had sides measuring at least seven metres,[328] the water of this tank was considered the equivalent of running water. If a person, a donkey, a dog or other animal fell or drowned in the pond, the water was still considered suitable for drinking. But if each side measured less than seven metres, such an accident rendered the water unsuitable for human consumption. The water of a pond with three wide sides and one very narrow one was considered unfit for human consumption. If a dirty object fell into a big water tank, the water could still be drunk. If a dirty object fell into the water of an irrigation canal or any other natural stream, after it had 'rolled' seven times, the water was considered clean. If it was not obvious whether the water was still or flowing, a piece of straw had to be thrown in to test the current. If nothing flowed, the water was considered unsuitable for drinking. When a sparrow, a pigeon or a turtledove fell into a well, water had to be drawn twenty to forty times; if a chicken or a crow drowned in it, water had to be drawn forty to sixty times before the water was considered drinkable again. If a donkey drowned in salt water, the salt was still considered edible.[329]

Pollution of water is at issue in the following proverb:

> *The molla knows everything:*
> *He stands up and urinates in the water.*

This proverb was apparently based on a true incident, although this may have been constructed to render an older piece of oral tradition intelligible. Whatever the case, this story provides interesting evidence for the creative (re-)production of oral tradition and an insight into ideas concerning pollution. Early one morning, a *molla* was standing near a drinking pond and witnessed a young girl throwing her newborn baby into the water, then fleeing. Soon afterwards villagers appeared by the other side of the pond ready to fetch water. Unable or unwilling to communicate what he had witnessed, to prevent them from contaminating their vessels with the water, which had been polluted by the baby's corpse, the *molla* quickly stood up and urinated in the

[327] Prov. 464. 16V, 38V.
[328] 10 *gäz*. Cf. Schwarz 1992: 1080.
[329] Prov. 464. 3V.

pond, thereby rendering the water unambiguously polluted.[330] The story features the element of pollution through death and the prevention of its harmful effects for the living through a second act of pollution by the *molla*. The *molla*'s action as encapsulated in the proverb may have been a source of humour, but the 'hidden transscript' of the proverb is made visible in the accompanying story: pollution, when recognized, must be counteracted. The first act of pollution was committed by a weak, vulnerable person: she was very young, a woman immediately after childbirth, probably in an unbalanced psychological state; her act may therefore be regarded as an involuntary act of pollution. In contrast to her stands an adult male, a representative of the local mosque community, who committed the second act deliberately to prevent the violation of the pollution taboo.

In the above instances notions of clean and unclean, pure and impure, permitted and forbidden played a central role, but the notions of *haram* and *halal* were not universally employed. Sexual prohibitions based on the incest taboo were typically expressed by saying, 'It is not done' (*bolmaydu*). One tentative explanation for the restrained terminology could be as follows. Food prohibitions primarily derived from Islamic law were expressed with an Islamic vocabulary. The *mollas*' dissatisfaction with specific new developments in the early twentieth century, which they regarded as threatening to the prevailing social order, was voiced through reference to Islamic law. In contrast, prohibitions that were supported by the force of customary practice did not need the explicit verbal backing of Islam; the expression 'It is not done' carried sufficient weight.

However, oral tradition defies our preference for tidy categories, since it may merge various types of pollution derived from breaking sexual, alimentary or other taboos. Short expositions concerning the origins of various animals had a common underlying theme. These animals had been humans until they committed a sin and fell from the higher, human status to the lower, animal status. These stories address the very nature of sin. Several concern pollution prohibitions and incest taboos, while others concentrate on other forms of inappropriate behaviour. For example, the story of the monkey who used to be a woman relates how she failed to keep herself clean during menstruation; as punishment God changed her appearance. The swallow used to be the daughter-

[330] Le Coq 1911: 14–5.

in-law of a butcher. After the slaughtering of a sheep she was holding her blood-covered hands under her chin when her father-in-law tried to kiss her. She asked God to give her the shape of a swallow so that she could escape. Even today the swallow has a red mark under its beak. The incest taboo was broken by a man who poked his mother's anus, for which crime he was turned into a fox. The food taboo was broken in two of the stories. The wolf used to be a butcher who sold the meat of a sheep which had died a natural death (it was not slaughtered according to ritual prescription). At the Festival of Sacrifice, a man offered the meat of a sheep which had died a natural death, and was therefore unclean, to his guests. His punishment was to be turned into a pig.[331]

While the didactic message is clear in the above stories, other examples testify that the breaking of taboos and pollution could also double as a source of humour; or conversely, the didactic message could assume humorous forms: Saut was in the habit of arriving in the cemetery early, well before any other person; having prayed over the graves, he would then take the food put there, to which he was entitled. Radil the famous scoundrel, became angry about this, and one morning he went to the cemetery disguised as a woman. He took a tablecloth in which he had put some donkey dung wrapped in an old pair of female trousers and placed on a tray. When Saut arrived, Radil waved to him, indicating an intention to have prayers recited by a grave in exchange for food. Saut prayed for a long time over the food, but as soon as he opened the tablecloth, Radil ran away. Saut realised that the 'woman' was none other than Radil and that he had been shamed. He caught Radil and threatened to kill him if he told anyone about the incident. He also promised to stop frequenting the cemetery and taking all the food for himself. Radil, however, related the story to the *bäg* official administering Qarakhoja. When Saut visited him a few days later, the official asked him if it was true that he had recited prayers over a piece of donkey dung. The angry and shamed Saut went to find Radil to kill him. He found him praying with other men, and beat him, but with this he spoilt the prayers of the others, who then threw Saut out.[332]

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[331] Katanov 1976: 70–5.
[332] Le Coq 1928: 101–2.

The story can be understood in the context of the domestic cult. Pollution took place through acts of ritual reversal: the ceremonial tablecloth contained donkey dung wrapped in a pair of female trousers. Control over preparing food and using it in ceremonial exchange was an exclusively female domain, but Radil, disguised as a woman, took over this role. The scoundrel causing pollution was eventually saved from retribution by the force of customary law, which supported the sanctity of communal prayer. To conclude that the principle of community always triumphed over breaches of the pollution taboo would be simplistic. I have merely tried to show that oral tradition reflected the complexities of local moral values governing social relations; this story illustrates how the forces of custom could conflict—and even contradict each other.

Although we need more specific ethnographic and historical evidence concerning retribution when taboos are broken and pollution occurs, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to assume that the breaking of pollution taboos in local society could end in sanctions; their observance was a vital precondition of community membership. In the perpetuation of knowledge of such taboos, oral tradition played an important role. The examples above demonstrate how oral tradition could merge the humorous with the didactic, thus obscuring the dividing line between the sacred and the profane and contributing to transmitting and perpetuating community values.[333]

6.3.11 *The Significance of Days and Dreams*

Although submission to God and predestination are central to Islam, the popular religious imagination found ways to manipulate fate, or at least to predict it. To retain some control over communal and individual fate was a major concern. Life-cycle, religious and seasonal rituals all aimed to achieve this. The manipulation and interpretation of signs and symbols created a type of time-reckoning, which is found all over the Islamic world and beyond.[334] Time was divided into auspicious and inauspicious periods, knowledge of which could help people to

[333] Lack of space prevents me from quoting further examples here. Let it suffice to mention the stories still very popular in Xinjiang concerning the figure of the 'scald-head' or Taz, whom I have classified as one of the many Trickster figures of Central Asia (Bellér-Hann 2004).

[334] Cf. Westermarck 1926. I. 217, 245, 301, 329, 333f, 498f); See Schlee & Shongolo forthcoming

influence their own or their community's life by the careful timing of certain actions. Handwritten books circulating in late-nineteenth-century Xinjiang listed the lucky and unlucky character of the years of the twelve-year calendar used by the Turkic and Mongolian peoples, as well as the disposition of people born in a particular year.[335]

Such a book was acquired in northern Xinjiang and eventually published by the Russian Orientalist Pantusov. Entitled 'Book of Stars' or 'The book of Astrology', it consisted of two parts.[336] The first part included general climatic, economic and political predictions for individual years. It predicted the weather, especially the expected severity of winter; climatic conditions, with special attention to rain and snowfall; natural catastrophes such as floods, drought and epidemics among the livestock, the cereal harvest and the fruit harvest, famine or other fluctuations in the availability of resources and changes in the standard of living. Occasionally unusually high mortality among the most vulnerable groups, the older or younger generations, was predicted. Cautious forecasts were made in politics, mostly with pessimistic forecasts of conflict and warfare. While this first part included information relevant for communities, the second half was oriented towards the individual, containing a description of the character of people born in a particular year, their external appearance, disposition, life span, fertility, wealth and relationship to kinsmen, spouses and children. We can compare this with the information gained from a second text, dictated in January 1892 by Tömür Xan, in Qumul. The narrative was based on a manuscript authored by Mollah Hämzä in A.H. 1280/A.D. 1860 and was entitled 'The collection of wise sayings'.[337]

Tömür Xan's narrative contains the same type of information as Pantusov's text. Here the predictions concerning the general state of the world are merged with forecasts of the individual human condition. The two texts agree on many points, but there are also some discrepancies between them. In some respects, Pantusov's text is more detailed about individual fortunes. Here, predestination definitely runs along gender lines, an aspect completely lacking from Tömür Xan's text. At the same time, Tömür Xan differentiates the characteristics of those born at different times of the year.[338]

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[335] For a list of the years of the animal cycle see Schwarz 1992: 1073.
[336] Pantusov 1901a.
[337] Katanov 1976: 84–89.
[338] Further differences may be noticed in some of the designations of the years; the

The similarities and discrepancies indicate that such texts circulated in the region in several versions and, when committed to writing, were adjusted to local dialects. Some of this knowledge remained directly accessible only to those who could read, but we may assume that illiterate religious specialists, diviners and others memorised substantial parts of such works and transmitted these to their clients. In this complex system, special qualities were attributed to the days of the month numbered one to thirty, the days of the week from Sunday to Saturday and the falling of certain holidays on particular days of the week. Special attention was paid to certain days in the course of the year that were supposed to be particularly inauspicious.

In contrast to the meanings attributed to the years of the animal cycle, which emphasized divine predestination and the limited power of people over things, the magical significance of specific days allowed more space for individuals to manoeuvre, avoid misfortune or bring about good luck by manipulating the timing of their activities. Failing to observe these rules sometimes provided retrospective explanations for the experience of misfortune.

Divine origins were attributed to lucky and unlucky days, which lent these calculations an Islamic character. This is most evident in a third work, the 'Book of hours', from northern Xinjiang and dating from 1897, in which we read that the revelation was brought by Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad that whenever the Prophet 'Ali was sent to war one had to reckon with good and bad days. God's words are quoted in this connection: 'I have created the lucky and unlucky days—act with circumspection.'[339] From this codified text with astrological and religious explanations for the nature of the days, let us quote the basic information concerning Friday. Protected by Venus, Friday was considered auspicious for getting married and going to war. Shaving one's head was recommended, and the cutting of nails could bring high esteem and attention. The buzzing of the ears during the daytime indicated sadness, but the same sign at night promised that hard things would become easier. An improvement could be expected after taking a full

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Year of the Ox (*uy*) in Pantusov is mentioned as the year of the Cow (*kala*); the Year of the Monkey in Pantusov's version is given as Maymun, in Tömür Xan's both as *hämdonä yili* and *maymun yili*; the year of the Hen is called simply *tawuq yili* in Pantusov, while Tömür Xan gives *toxo yili* as well as *murği yili*; the Year of the Dog is called *it yili* in Pantusov, while Tömür Xan gives *säk yili*. Further linguistic differences are also numerous. Pantusov 1901a: 19.

[339] Pantusov 1897: 8; 18.

bath. Similarly, the cutting and wearing of a new dress were also auspicious. However, moving house on this day was supposed to result in enmity between relatives.[340]

Molla Abdul Qadir suggests that this kind of information also had a wide circulation in the south. His account implies that few days were considered simply lucky or unlucky; rather, the nature of the day was defined in relation to specific activities. While it was considered good to perform some things on a certain day, other activities on the same day could bring bad luck. For example, it was considered lucky to give birth on a Sunday, Friday, Saturday or Wednesday: babies born on such days were expected to grow up happy. To give birth on a Tuesday was not regarded as a good omen, and the same was considered to be true of giving birth at the end of the year.[341] In such cases knowledge of the magical significance of time served as an explanation for something predetermined, rather than as a guide for the future. Most other activities could be manipulated according to the advice of diviners, their books and orally transmitted local knowledge which functioned as guidance for organizing one's daily work and activities. The prohibitions and prescriptions surrounding Friday are again examples. Prayers recited on a Friday counted as particularly meritorious. Lending a small amount of money to a person on this day earned more merit than lending someone a larger sum on any other day. This day was auspicious for almsgiving, for visiting sick people, for organizing commemoration feasts for the dead, for women to comb their hair, for visiting their natal family, for cutting clothes and shoes, for washing laundry and for baking bread. Friday was also auspicious for harvesting, but other jobs were not supposed to be performed on this day: peasants were advised to avoid sowing, irrigation and loading threshed grain, because it could spoil the crop.[342] Molla Abdul Qadir's text reflects knowledge passed down or circulated orally among the population, which must have been inspired by the type of written text quoted above.

The above descriptions by and large follow popular classifications of the days of the week elsewhere in the Islamic world, although details vary considerably. Friday, the day of communal worship, was the auspicious day *par excellence*; nevertheless, certain activities performed

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[340] Ibid.
[341] Prov. 464. 13R.
[342] Prov. 464. 4V, 5R.

on that day could bring misfortune. Wednesday was in popular belief considered inauspicious in general, but the local calendar found some actions which could be performed on this day with success.[343]

The significance of time was manifold, and the propitious nature of a day often depended on the combination of the calendar day with a specific day of the week. We have seen how the first day of *muhärräm* had special significance for much of the local population. When the first of *muhärräm* fell on a Sunday, it meant that in that year there would be lots of rain, many people would die and the community would experience calamities. Towards the end of the year, food was expected to become expensive. When the first of *muhärräm* fell on a Monday, it indicated that during this year unpleasant conditions would prevail and the standard of living would drop. When it fell on a Wednesday, an abundant wheat crop could be expected.[344]

Certain days of the year were considered so inauspicious that they were called *'ajuz ayyam*, or 'incapable days': these fell mainly in spring, when people would stop working for seven or eleven days to prevent major calamities. Men avoided shaving their head, because this could cause their head to tremble. Combing their hair on these days could have the same effect on women, and cutting one's fingernails risked the possibility that one's hands would shake forever. Donning new clothes and shoes or doing any work were to be avoided. On such days people were advised not to go out by themselves, lest an empty cart identified as a bier might come by. On all these days men advised their families not to go out after the evening prayer.[345]

There existed another type of reckoning, when not the timing but the events or activities themselves constituted the classificatory categories. Special significance was attributed to unusual natural phenomena, such as the eclipse of the sun, the eclipse of the moon and earthquakes; all could serve as the basis for speculating about the success of the harvest and other important events influencing community life.[346]

While the actions described above were preventive and aimed to avoid calamities and bring about good luck, divination was a means to find out what has been preordained. Diviners and their clients attributed great importance to dreams. Dream interpretations were transmitted

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[343] On the character of the days in popular Islam in general see Schimmel 2001.
[344] Katanov 1976: 84–5.
[345] Prov. 464. 5V–6R.
[346] Katanov 1976: 92–5.

orally, as well as in writing: in August 1891, Mijit Axun dictated his repertoire of dream interpretations from memory.[347] In 1892, Nay-Xan dictated a more concise collection of dream interpretations, in which he gives advice on how to deal with dreams, especially bad ones.

Dreams are subject to rules of inversion, and when a person tells his dream to another, the meaning of the dream may change. It is good to tell one's dream to one's enemy, in the hope that the outcome of the dream should be good. But for the same reason, one should not divulge dreams to his parents, wife or children. When a person has a bad dream, he can either seek an individual or a communal solution. He should tell it to a brick and then throw it to the top of the house. Then he should recite Koranic verses three times while looking over his left shoulder, after which he should say quietly, 'My God, you have given me sleep; you have shown me this dream. No matter whether this dream was good or bad, please turn it into a good one.' Having said these words, the person spat on the ground three times; this was supposed to have beneficial effects. Alternatively, he could organize a meal for the community and have some knowledgeable *axun*s recite prayers, or he might give alms to the poor and pray for redemption. After this he did not need to be afraid of the effects of his bad dream.[348] While giving alms was supposed to neutralise a bad dream, receiving anything from one's father, mother or any other relative, living or deceased, in one's dream was interpreted as bringing good luck and gains.[349] This data from the south is corroborated by a collection of dream interpretations from the north; if a person in his dream received anything from the spirits of the dead, he would see profit. Conversely, if he dreamt that the spirit of the dead asked him for something, it meant calamity.[350]

Dream interpretations were organized around classificatory themes, such as dreaming about religious figures, rulers, clothes, four-legged animals, birds, other animals or insects, human activities, trees or plants. They make numerous references to specifically Islamic themes such as the Prophets, reciting the call for prayer or the Koran and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, but they also show many local specificities.[351]

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[347] Ibid.: 102–5.
[348] Ibid.: 104–107.
[349] Prov. 464. 19R.
[350] Pantusov 1901c: 21.
[351] Katanov 1976: 120–121.

Belief in the supernatural was not all-encompassing, and there was much room for doubt and suspicion as to the validity of such beliefs. Often, locals appreciated the psychological insight of the diviners, a point aptly illustrated by a paragraph in the second chapter of the 'Dream Interpretations', as recited by Tömür-Xan: 'A man asked a great person: "In my dream I recited the call for prayer." The great person answered: "You will go on the Hajj." The prediction came true sometime later. The same person later asked the great one again: "[In my dream] I recited the call for prayer." He answered: "Be careful with your secret. You will be slandered." What he said came true. The man came again and asked him: "You have given me two interpretations for the same dream and both times you were right. How can this be explained?" The great man said: "On the first occasion I saw on you the sign of submission, this is why I gave you a positive explanation. On the second occasion I saw on you the signs of badness and sin, and for this reason I gave the negative explanation" '[352]

Dream interpretations have a long tradition in Islamic societies, although, as Burkhard Schnepel has recently demonstrated, they are not at all limited to the 'great traditions' and to literate cultures.[353] The Xinjiang materials display many specifically local elements, such as references to the Chinese or to the domestic cult. A preoccupation with the cereal harvest and with the availability or scarcity of provisions also corresponds closely to local conditions. At the same time references to Islamic buildings and social institutions and sad, happy or angry Muslim saints lend the texts a decidedly Islamic character.[354]

Dream interpretation was one of several resources which could potentially be resorted to by anyone, sometimes through the mediation of a diviner, at other times through access to orally and informally transmitted shared knowledge. The latter was the product of an essentially localised Islamic worldview, which simultaneously displayed the hallmarks of the Turko-Persian traditions of Central Asian Islam and a locally accepted value system.

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[352] Ibid.: 106–9.
[353] Schnepel 2001. See also Schimmel 1998.
[354] Pantusov 1901c.

6.4 *Healing*

Submitting to the doctrine of divine predestination was reconcilable with attempts to retain some measure of control over the everyday. We have seen how the conceptualisation of time informed ritual and everyday action that aimed at accumulating religious merit, ensuring good luck or preventing misfortune. When preventive measures did not work and illness and other misfortune struck, specialists of various kinds were called in to help to restore order. This could be physical or psychological illness, since the local classificatory system cannot be forced into the straitjacket of modern Western medical categories. To understand the underlying logic of healing rituals, it is important to stress the holistic nature of local understanding and interpretion of ailments which we today classify as physical or psychological disorders or as social problems and pathologies.

6.4.1 *Divination*

When a diagnosis had to be established, this was done by means of divination. Male and female specialists were known by a variety of names; the concepts behind these labels were not fixed, and they masked overlapping techniques and methods.

Among such terms, *rämçi, rommal* and *palçi* were the most common; all could refer to both male and female practitioners. An elderly female diviner was sometimes also called *rämçi mama* or *kämpir*.[355] Like other professionals, they had a patron saint in the person of the Prophet Daniel. The diviners' help was sought when the future—such as the outcome of a planned journey or marriage—was to be predicted, the cause of an illness diagnosed, the whereabouts of lost objects investigated, or the behaviour of a spouse explained.[356] A favoured method was divination using the Koran. The client was asked to close his eyes, and the Koran was put into his hands. To open the book a needle or a knife was used. Starting on the page where it was opened, seven pages were turned, and on the seventh page the seventh line was found.[357] From this line the diviner would make predictions—for example, that

[355] Further variants included *rämmal/rambal.* (Grenard 1898a: 257; Katanov 1936: 1254–5).
[356] Jarring 1979: 12.
[357] Le Coq 1916: 5.

the lost property could not be found today but would turn up on the following day or at a later date. The performance was followed by prayer recitations. Guidelines to divination with the Koran were fixed in writing and handed down from generation to generation. In Turfan, Molla Nay-Xan inherited a copy of 'The Book of Divination' (*Falnamä*) from his father, Memet-Maksut, who was born in 1827.

Specific meanings were attached to each letter of the Arabic alphabet and connected to the authority of Islamic Prophets. For example, the letter *älip* was the oracle of the Prophet Adam and was interpreted as a good omen. A person whose oracle it was would enjoy the kindness of rulers, could have a future as an official, his journeys would be successful, his enemies would become his slaves and whatever he lost would be found quickly. The letter *bä* was considered the Prophet Job's oracle, and it meant that the person would become wealthy and favoured by the powerful. Although most letters were auspicious, some deviated from this pattern. *Xa* stood for fear and apprehension, and the advice given was to ask for forgiveness and organize a free meal for the mosque community (*näzir*). The letter *ğayn* indicated that some of the person's undertakings would not turn out well, although his travels were expected to be auspicious. *Mim* prophesied permanent distress, and repentance and patience were prescribed.[358]

Another method used by the diviner was to put seven pieces of cotton in a bowl of water. The diviner blew on these and said, 'Your fate looks good. If four of these cotton pieces touch one another, the thief [who stole your property] will be caught.' After this he drank some of the water, and the rest was poured into the salt container. Another way of performing magic was to use the half-burnt shoulder blade of a sheep. When the diviner held up the bone in the wind, it split the shoulder blade into small pieces. Then the diviner announced that things were looking good because the thief had not been able to get far with the stolen goods and it would be possible to find the culprit. It was believed that the shoulder blade never lied, and its use for divination was attributed by local tradition to none other than Plato.[359]

Soothsaying could also be done with a candle, as a report from Aqsu from 1915 testifies. Some water was poured into a teacup, and a

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[358] Katanoff 1894.

[359] Katanov 1936: 1250–3. Grenard mistakenly attributed divination with the shoulder-blade exclusively to the Kazakh and Kirghiz, and claimed that the Turki used only stones, pebbles and books for this purpose (Grenard 1898a: 256–7).

mirror was placed next to it. The candle was lit, and apricot and peach stones were burnt in the fire. The burnt kernels were smeared on the face, fingernails and eyes of a seven-year-old child. The child could be either a girl or a boy; the important thing was that it was healthy. The child had to look into the water, into which a needle, a ring, three raisins and pieces of cotton were thrown. Some prayers were recited, and the soothsayer blew on the water and stared at the light.[360] When fortune-telling with a candle, the names of Gabriel and some saints had to be evoked.[361]

Plant incense was another favoured method. In the early twentieth century an elderly woman used to help the Kashgaris to find criminals, stolen property and other lost goods. 'When she prognosticated she sat on a low stool over a brazier with glowing charcoal and poured on to it seeds of a plant, *Peganum hormole*, which is a very important ingredient in all ceremonies of cleansing, preservation against the evil eye and so on, in Central Asia. The smoke of the burning seeds has an intoxicating effect and the prophetess falls into a trance, muttering words and phrases.'[362]

Although divination could be done by men and women, there was a tendency towards a certain gendered division of labour: only men could use the Koran for divination, while women monopolised divination with cotton pieces. Divination by a sheep's shoulder blade could be performed by both men and women.[363]

Diviners' services were often used, but clients' attitude towards their efficacy was ambiguous. Their dubious reputation was further weakened by their expectation of a generous remuneration, hence the well-known proverb 'The first [bit of money] was taken by the thief, the rest by the soothsayer'.[364] Similarly dismissive was Mijit Axun, who noted scornfully that if diviners' clients still had anything left after being robbed, it would surely be taken by the diviners, whom he condemned as rascals.[365]

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[360] Malov 1961: 55–6, Le Coq 1916: 5.
[361] Malov 1961: 13.
[362] Nazaroff 1935: 35–6.
[363] Katanov 1936: 1254–5.
[364] *bar pulimni oğri aldi qalğinini rämçi*. Le Coq 1911: 28–9; Schwarz 1992. 542.
[365] Katanov 1936: 1252–1253.

6.4.2 *The Healing Ritual: Description*

Healing is perhaps the one domain of pre-socialist social practices in Central Asia which has been discussed at considerable length by several authors, including the late Vladimir Basilov, and more recently Patrick Garrone.[366] Since these authors have also dealt with healing in Eastern Turkestan, I shall confine this discussion to highlighting a few important points only, introducing some indigenous manuscripts which so far have not been cited in the literature. Some other indigenous works not readily accessible in English will be quoted to characterize the range of regional diversity. The main aim of the section is to 'demystify' healing rituals, which have been reified and exoticized in the scholarly literature, and to demonstrate their embeddedness in other ritual and everyday activities. It will be shown that illness and healing were communal concerns and that here too ritual played a role in perpetuating communal ties.

Healing practices often combined various methods to exorcise evil spirits from the sick body, a ritual conducted by religious specialists known as *baxşi* or *perixun*. In the first half of the twentieth century these two terms could be used synonymously, but they had to be distinguished from the *duaxan* or *daxan*.[367]

Sources say much about the various healing methods and incantations, but they remain surprisingly reticent about the figure of the healer. Tair Molla, from Aqsu, describing healing practices in 1915, gave the following brief autobiographical detail: 'When learning these things I was stolen by a jinn and I came home after forty-one days, after which I became apprenticed to a master *pärixun*. He taught me this profession in the course of three months.'[368] Tömür axun, a healer from Kucha interviewed in 1956, explained that he started his career as a drummer and was regularly playing at exorcism ceremonies when he was sixteen, in 1899.[369] Healing abilities could be inherited, although they often became manifest through 'being stolen by the jinn'; indeed, the

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[366] For a bibliography of Basilov's publications see Basilow 1995: 337–339; Garrone 2000.

[367] In some locations the form *päri-baxşi* was also used (Hedin 2001.I.: 186); an alternative term was *arwaxçi*, which meant a person dealing with spirits (Tenishev 1984: 19–23).

[368] Malov 1961: 55–6.

[369] Tenishev 1984: 19.

precondition of becoming a healer was to experience an unexpected, severe illness, either of the body or the mind. But not everyone involved in the healing business went through the initiation ritual: in Pichan in the early years of the twentieth century, Malov observed a healing ceremony where the healer's wife assisted him, holding a second sword, with which she lightly touched the aching parts of the sick person. Participation in the ceremony as the healer's helper did not require formal training or inherited abilities.[370]

Scholarly analysis of Central Asian healing rituals tends to focus on the healer's activities. It gives the impression that, in the hierarchical pecking order, the healer occupied a higher status than the diviner. This was not always the case. In the early years of the twentieth century, the typical patient in Kashgar first went to see the diviner, who, in Muhammad Ali Damolla's words, was the healer's great master (*murşid*). This is remarkable not only because of the hierarchical ranking of the practitioners but also because of the Sufi terminology employed, which casts doubt on the image of the lonely healer, whose closest relationship is to his own helping spirits, and instead places him in the framework of hierarchically ordered relations governed by cooperation. The indigenous author emphasized the social and performative character of the event: like life-cycle and religious rituals, preparations for this ceremony required communal effort. For setting the stage, a rope (*tuğ*) was fixed, the apprentices took up their drums and the healer took a bowed instrument. Music was necessary to summon the spirits. Meanwhile, the healer recited some verses, evoking the names of God, the angels, the prophets, the saints and his helping spirits. During the recital, the sick person held on to the rope tightly and circled it. Having finished the chanting, the healer took a dagger or a knife. To its handle was attached a thin piece of iron, which gave a hollow sound each time it was moved. The knife was not sharp, and the sick person's clothes were only symbolically stabbed while the healer said, 'I exorcise the jinn'. The patient kept holding on to the rope, circling it faster and faster, while repeating the following: 'I have had a *päri*, the *päri* is being squeezed, I am being cured'. The healer stabbed him frequently with the dagger, taking care that it did not touch the sick person, only his overcoat. After this, the patient was led away from the rope, music

[370] Malov 1918: 7–8.

was played and a song was sung, followed by a prayer. Then food was distributed, after which all those present took their leave.[371]

An anonymous manuscript of curing practices, dating from around 1930 from Yarkand, confirms the long-term persistence of many elements of the healing ritual.[372]

> 'Special attention was paid to the transfer of the spirits, which could be used as a first attempt to get rid of evil spirits without requiring the help of specialists. On Tuesday night, at sunset, some reed or weed[373] was placed and lit in a bowl to be circled above the patient's head. This had to be repeated seven times with the patient sitting in seven different places. After this, he had to spit into the fire and return to his house without looking back. The fire was placed by the road, at the base of a wall. It was held that at this point the spirits causing the illness left his body, bringing about the patient's rapid recovery. For three or four days, people passing the spot where the burning incense had been extinguished spat repeatedly, making sure that the bad spirits did not rise. If the patient did not get better, it was time to visit the diviner, who announced that the culprit was a Muslim or Jewish spirit. A 'white' spirit could be exorcised with white magic, but black magic was recommended against black spirits. A cheap alternative was for the patient to perform the ritual ablution in a place with horse manure, or by a lake, and recite special prayers. Then the person looking after the patient had to collect seven pieces of wool or rags cut off old clothes, each of which was to be circled above the patient's head. On the day fixed by the diviner, the healer was summoned. In the village, word was sent around that a healing ritual (*pirdä*) was about to be held. Most villagers came to the sick person's house towards evening. Gongs and drums were circled above the patient's head and later hung on a pole by a grave. The healer stood by the gate of the house, beating his or her drums, which was the public announcement of the event (*çişnä*).[374] In the house, the following objects were placed in front of the healer: the branch of an apple tree, a woollen rag, two coins, a needle, a pinch of bran, a pinch of ashes, some spice and seven pieces of unleavened bread with candles stuck in them.[375] The patient was seated by the rope, and a prayer was recited. The healer recited a Koranic verse and tied the rags to the apple branch. While the healer was busy doing this, his apprentices decorated the *tuğ*. A cauldron (*çalxa qazan*) was placed on adobe bricks, and incense was prepared from juniper wood, pine tree gum,

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[371] Prov. 207. I.57.

[372] Although my translation closely follows the original text, for the sake of a more readable English version I have sacrificed literal translation for paraphrasing. Some parts have been abbreviated.

[373] *buya, sophora alopecuroides* (Schwarz 1992: 87).

[374] For the public announcement of the ritual see also Hedin 2001.I.: 186–7.

[375] *bir häft çiraq nän.*

dried apples, a bit of bran and some sheep fat. The patient seated by the *tuğ* had to hold the cauldron between his or her feet. The drums were also placed nearby, and prayers were recited. To the sound of music, the healer recited incantations to summon the spirits: 'Black horsemen, the ones with whips, the ones in golden carriages, those with pearl-like teeth, coral eyes, black-haired ones, those flying from mountain to mountain, those who have been to the rivers, come, come, come, come with the order of Sulayman (peace be upon him), and Asif ibn Birxaya, wherever you are, come here and cure this sick person.'[376] The healer ordered that no person should go up to the roof of the house during the summoning of the spirits, because it could adversely affect the ceremony. He then stood up, playing his stringed instrument and reciting prayers while circling the rope with the patient. This lasted for two to twelve minutes, after which they sat down. Having prayed for five minutes with his apprentices, the healer got up again and, with the patient, began circling the *tuğ* once again. This was repeated seven times. Each session of circling and sitting down was called an *oyam*. After seven *oyam* had been completed, the healer made the patient lie down in another room. Following the diviner's instructions, the healer took a white hen to drive out a white spirit, or a black hen to exorcise a black spirit, tied its feet together, and placed it in front of the sick person. In a bowl, seven types of dried fruits, including dried apricots, oleaster, raisins and walnuts, were placed. The healer took small amounts of the fruit in his hands and, praying and blowing on the patient, touched various parts of the patient's body with them, starting at the head and finishing at the feet. Then he transferred the fruit into another bowl. When the fruit was all used up this way, the healer recited prayers over a dagger and, having blown over it, started touching the patient's various body parts with it. Then he started rubbing the dagger against the chicken to transfer the patient's illness and continued until the prayer was over.[377] After this, the spectators amused themselves, dancing and reciting poetry. By the time the ritual was finished, dawn was breaking. Early in the morning, people said, 'We have scattered the *päri*',[378] and preparations were made for the completion of the ritual. Two dolls, male and female, were made, and a bowl was filled with sweet things, usually the squeezed juice of the oleaster fruit, which was called fresh sherbet. Using a chipped spoon, it was ladled into the bowl containing the dried

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[376] *qara arğumaqliqlar bilän qamçiliqlar altun muhafaliqlar yönjä tişliqlar, merjan közlüklär, qara saçliqlar, tağdin tağqa uççanlar, deryalarni kizgänlär, käliñilär, käliñilär, käliñilär, sulayman alläyhüssalamniñ höküm yarliqi, asif ibn birxayaniñ höküm yarliqi här yärdä bolsañlar... hazir boluñlar! oşbu kesälgä şifa bäriñlär!*

[377] In 1915 Memeta baxşi from Aqsu explained how the demons that caused various diseases could be expelled. As new locations for the disease-causing demons, hens were used. If the illness was caused by a Christian *päri*, a black hen was used and tied to the sick person. For a Jewish *päri*, a yellow hen had to be used, and for infidel *päri* a red hen was needed (Malov 1961: 55–56).

[378] *pärini tarqattuq.*

fruit, over which prayers had been recited. This was taken to a junction of three roads with incense and a handful of reed, and upon arrival the reed was lit. The pot was held in front of the patient, who had to promise not to commit sins. He had to answer questions such as 'Will you commit a sin?', 'Will you look at *namähräm*?' and 'Will you look at other people with an evil eye?' All these had to be answered in the negative, which was tantamount to repentance. Then the incense was turned around his head, and he was made to spit into the fire, which was then discarded by a wall or a tree. The dolls were placed next to it, the dried fruit was scattered and the sherbet was spilled on the same spot. The bowl and the spoon used for the ritual were also left there. Following this ceremony of 'scattering the spirits', care was taken that for three days the patient should not return to the house where the exorcism ceremony had been conducted; instead he was looked after in another house. In accordance with the healer's instructions, the patient had to follow a strict diet, which involved refraining from the consumption of salty food, onions and red chilli. Although this complex ceremony was performed in severe cases of spirit possession, elements of the ceremony were used to cure other minor ailments, the causes of which were considered to be bad spirits. For example, if someone's arms or legs showed a tendency to frequently go to sleep, it was recommended that on a Wednesday a small piece of cotton be pressed against the affected part; then the cotton had to be burnt and the ashes blown, during which time prayers were recited. It was believed that the illness was thus expelled.[379]

The second half of the manuscript, clearly separated from this first half, discusses another healing ritual.

On the day specified by the diviner, the healer had to be called. Seven pieces of bread with candles stuck into the top one, seven pinches of ashes, seven pinches of bran and a needle had to be turned around the patient's head, as did the healer's drums. In the countryside, many people attended the exorcism ceremony, consumed a communal meal, talked, prepared the rope and had Koranic verses recited. The patient was thoroughly washed and dressed in new clothes. He or she was then made to lie down by the *tuğ*. In a cauldron, incense was prepared from juniper wood, bran, sheep fat, coriander and pine gum. The mixture was turned above the sick person's head and then placed by the rope. The patient was made to lie on his or her stomach, and the back was covered with a white blanket, on top of which forty-one small round loaves of bread were placed. On each loaf, a small amount of dough was put, and in the dough, a homemade candle[380] was placed. The candles were lit. The *baxşi* put a piece of black string around his own neck and stood

[379] Prov. 28: 1–3.
[380] A rag wound around a stick and soaked in oil.

> there bareheaded. Holding a dagger in one hand and a whip in the other, he recited prayers while blowing on the dagger and striking the patient with it. He took turns beating the patient and himself with the whip or the forty-one willow twigs and moved around the patient while praying incessantly. One of the healer's apprentices held a black or white chicken and some wool in one hand. When the healer got to the patient's head, the apprentice was at the foot, and they kept on circling the sick person and praying. When the prayers were completed, the healer put the dough and the bread into his bag, circled the patient and the rope once more and left. In the cauldron, incense and blood sherbet were prepared.[381] In a bowl, a spoonful of milk was mixed with a spoonful of salt and the blood of a chicken slaughtered for the sacrificial meal. Another bowl was filled with wool, twigs and some weed, which was taken and scattered in a place specified by the fortune-teller, e.g., the junction of three roads, near a saintly tomb, a cemetery or a riverbank. The following spell was recited: 'I have brought you blood sherbet. You walk in places where it is impossible to walk, you stand in places where it is impossible to stand, you capture humans. Today I have performed your ceremony upon the order of Sulayman, peace be upon him. Leave this body, go away. For the head there has come [another] head, for the body has come [another] body. Now separate from this body!' After this, the sick person repented, and the ritual was over.[382]

In Turfan in the end of the nineteenth century, exorcism was known as 'making the spirits dance' (*päri oynatiş*) and comprised the same structural elements as the rituals documented for Kashgar and Yarkand. Additional details included the preparation of a plant incense which the healer used to summon his helping spirits, whom he addressed by the collective name 'Abdurraxman Xan'. The healer's song recited during circling the rope had the property that, if sung at any time other than a healing ritual, it could have the opposite effect and cause spirit possession in a healthy person. The ceremony had to be repeated five times daily for several days. In the evening of the fifth day, the *pänixun* made the patient lie down by the *tuğ* and, sticking the tip of a sword close to his or her eyes, asked, 'Which demons have possessed you? What are their names?' If the patient was in a state to answer, he or she replied,

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[381] *buy bilän qan şärbät qilduq.*

[382] *qan şärbätiñni kältürdüm, mañmas yärdä mañipsän, turmas yärdä turupsän, adäm ferzändiğä äsir qilipsän, bugün märikäñni qildim, sulayman aläyhussalam höküm yarliğ bu tändin çiqğil, mañil, kätgil, başqa baş käldi tängä tän käldi hazir bu tändin juda bolursän* (Prov. 28: 4–4a).

giving names such as Gul *päri* or Ay *päri*. The healer then asked for the patient's formal agreement to take the bad demons from him.[383]

Transferring the troublemaking spirits was also important in healing ceremonies in northern Xinjiang. The ceremony was conducted by a *molla* who, having performed divination, concluded that the patient had been possessed by a Muslim spirit and ordered that a black-faced white hen should be brought along, as well as forty oily and forty dry ceremonial cakes. The patient was made to lie down, facing westward, i.e., the direction of Mecca. Recitations of Koranic verses and other prayers were accompanied by repeatedly blowing upon the patient. Further attempts to exorcise the spirits could include making the patient sweat or using water magic, which comprised the sprinkling of some water—taken from seven springs, seven wells, seven lakes, seven mills and seven stretches of a river—on seven parts of the Koran. If this ritual proved ineffective, then the 'meal for the spirits' (*arwah aşi*), a mixture of meat and noodles, had to be prepared. The dough was shaped into the form of snakes, frogs and lizards. The meal had to be shared with 'good people'. Some of the food was dished into a bowl, covered with a new head scarf and taken to a crossroads. Whoever found it could take it.[384]

Transferring the illness to another location constituted the focus in the Khotanese Memet Axun's account. Bad spirits causing headaches had to be relocated in a two-year-old goat or an egg.[385]

A lengthy article by Malov is devoted exclusively to the study of 'shamanism' in Eastern Turkestan, based on his personal observations between 1913 and 1915.[386] He observed a ceremony in October 1914 in the Lop Nor region. The healer was a woman, and the sick person was a man. Her techniques included recitation, music, incense-burning, and the circling of the rope. The concluding part of the ceremony consisted in transferring the bad spirits. In Aqsu, the hen used for transferring the illness was, for a short time, buried in the earth around the rope; after people had danced over it, it was taken out unharmed. In Khotan the healer ripped off the skin of the hen from its neck while it was still

[383] Katanov 1936: 1254–9.
[384] Pantusov 1909b: 184–190; 135–139.
[385] Malov 1961: 11–3.
[386] Malov's article was used by Basilov; a detailed German rendering has also been published (Malov 1918. Findeisen 1951, Basilow 1995).

alive, and, holding it on his knife, he circled the *tuğ*. Later, he took the knife out of the hen and blew on it.[387] According to one observer, the healer's actions were not directed exclusively towards the patient: he had the power to purify the souls of those offering the sacrifice.[388] This directly links the ceremony to the domestic cult and suggests similarities even with the Barat ritual, inasmuch as ritual action was expected to benefit all participants.[389]

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[387] Malov 1918.

[388] Grenard 1898a: 254–6.

[389] We also have access to a detailed description of the healing séance from as recently as the mid-1990s, but this time by a Chinese author, whose article was based on personal observation and on Chinese source materials only (Du 1995). It offers a detailed description, but at the same time some of the author's remarks reveal what I consider typical condescending attitudes of Chinese intellectuals towards 'traditional' practices. This last point is illustrated in the author's opening remark in which the healing ceremony is classified simply as 'shamanism' and condemned dismissively as a 'childish religion'. It is nevertheless exotic enough, even if the author does not say this in so many words, to warrant a long, detailed description in a scholarly journal.

The author states that adepts of shamanism firmly believe that the healer is the embodiment of spirits who can control evil forces. Further misconceptions most likely originate from the fact that the author did not conduct a wide ranging survey of healing practices in the region, and remained content to observe one single ceremony in great detail. He claims that shamanism has all but disappeared in cities, but lives on in isolated villages. The uncritical characterization of urban spaces as modern and progressive, and villages as loci of tradition and backwardness is matched by unsubstantiated assumptions, concerning the acquisition of the healing technique. Du simply states that initially knowledge of how to communicate with the supernatural had been transmitted from father to son, and later it became subject to formal transmission within the framework of a master—disciple relationship. Du considers shamanism among the Uyghur of modern Xinjiang as an independent, recognized religion, constituting a system in its own right, independent of its wider social context. While 'essentializing' the healing ceremony under the umbrella of 'shamanism', he also reveals some facets of Chinese perceptions of Uyghur social institutions and provides a contemporary ethnographic description of the healing ceremony. He makes a distinction between the *baxşi* and the *daxan*, characterizing the former as a seer, who prays to heaven to have problems resolved, fights illnesses and exorcises bad spirits.

He reveals that the Chinese considered the *daxan* to be religious specialists 'who recite black incantations.' Chinese sources also knew about a collection of incantations known as the *Kirk kaf*, named after the characteristic that each of the forty poems begin with the letter *kaf* of the Arabic alphabet. These incantations were often recited over charms which were supposed to protect especially women and children from the evil eye and from harmful spirits. The *daxan* habitually also specialized in love magic, and was prepared to cause trouble to one's enemies. The Chinese author attributes spirit possession typically to young women or girls. His description also implies that, in contrast to the public exorcism ceremonies of the pre-socialist reports, in the 1990s they were usually organized in smaller circles. This suggests that, although the ceremony has retained some of its communal character, it has lost its largely public character and, like some other religious ceremonies, undergone a measure of 'domestication'. This may also help to explain the lack of reference to any ritual of transfer in this article.

Evidently, not all ceremonies included every detail; in some performances certain elements played a somewhat different role than in others. Bosuq Niyaz, a contemporary of Mijit Axun from Qumul, emphasized the healing powers of the hot hoe, which was pressed on a patient's body. For the ceremony, conducted by a *molla*, seven spades had to be prepared, over which the following prayer was recited:

Qul Qazaq! Qul Qazaq! My päris should come here!
With a big army. Xizir Ilyas should come here!
And David and Sulayman, and Järjis and Zikriya,
Äysa , the son of Maryam, may God's blessing be upon him!
The fire is the basic source, breath is its fan.

After this, the seven hoes were heated up. When they were red-hot, the *molla* took one of them and pressed it against the aching spots of the patient's body, using his bare feet to press down upon it. When the hoe cooled down, it was put back in the fire and another one was taken and used in the same way. All seven hoes were used in this way; each was pressed down eleven times on average (forty-one times in serious cases and only seven times in case of light pain).[390]

In contrast to the *perixun* or *baxşi*, the *daxan* relied primarily on reciting prayers over the sick person. The prayers recited were the *'azayim arbaq*, the *yättä da'wat*, and the *çümkäş* prayer. The preparations for this ritual also needed communal effort: forty-one willow branches had to be collected and forty-one pieces of wool had to be obtained from forty-one houses. The wool was tied on the willow-branches, representing stylised dolls. Further preparations required the baking of forty-one pieces of bread decorated with candles, and an additional seven pairs of candles. When all was ready, reciting the formula 'If you are made of fire, transfer; if you are one of the jinn, move; if you are a *diw*, move and settle in an old mud cottage or by a lonely tree', the bad spirits were transferred to the dolls.[391] Recovery from illness could also be sought by inviting several *mollas* to recite prayers. The prayers were accompanied by the burning of incense prepared from juniper wood, dried apples and bran. This occasion had an overtly communal character: a meal

[390] Katanov 1936: 1260–3.

[391] *otdin bolsañ mu köç, jindin bolsañ mu köç, diwdin bolsañ mu köç, köhnä tamliqqa bar yalğuz düräxqä bar!* (Prov. 464. 37.R–V., cf. also Prov. 464. 6V.

was served using the coat of the sick person as a tablecloth and shared among the people who took part in the recital.[392]

In the southern oasis of Guma, the summoning of the demons was known as *jïnkäş*, from which the healer also got his or her name, *jïnkäş-axun*. After summoning the demons, the *jïnkäş-axun* prepared a cup of water and sat a child beside it to stare into the cup. The demons were expected to show themselves to the child, inside the cup. The *jïnkäş-axun* asked the demons, 'Why did you make that man ill? Why did you oppress him?' To this, they replied, 'I was sitting in a place suckling my child. [Somebody] trod on the foot of my child. For this [reason] I made this man ill.' Only the child staring into the water was supposed to hear the demons' reply. It was the child who repeated the demons' words to the *jïnkäş-axun* and the audience.[393]

Some sources distinguish between the *baxşi/pärixun* and the *daxan* on the basis of differences in the method of healing: the former 'made the *päri* dance', and the latter primarily used prayers and exorcism formulae. However, both specialists aimed at dislocating harmful spirits by summoning benevolent supernatural beings for help, tapping the same 'symbolic tool kit; this did not escape some observers, who chose to ignore the methodological difference and use the terms almost synonymously.

Elements of the healing ritual and other practices connected to the domestic cult were often combined and mobilized as alternative methods to effect a cure. The *çiraq nan*, prepared by sticking several lighted candles into a loaf, was often used during exorcism, but it could also be used without the elaborate ceremony: it was placed on the patient's stomach to treat abdominal complaints.[394]

Another method combining food sacrifice with shrine-visiting was used by a Kashgar female healer. The ritual was known as *çaçratqu*, or "bursting of a ball of kneaded flour" The healer kneaded the flour into a ball and recited some verses over it, mentioning the names of the archangels and Solomon. Then she buried the ball under the fire, reciting the names of all the holy men who had been buried in the neighbourhood. Whichever saint was being mentioned when the ball burst, had to be propitiated. Oil was taken to his shrine and boiled;

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[392] Prov. 464. 21R.
[393] Jarring 1951b: 166–7.
[394] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 318.

the steam was inhaled by the patient, after which it was mixed with food, part of which was distributed to the poor and part of which was consumed for seven days by the sufferer.[395]

The application of herbal remedies or food was not entirely unconnected to exorcism ceremonies. Herbs, dried fruit and incense were all considered remedies for humans, as well as nourishment for spirits. It is therefore instructive not to limit our attention exclusively to the spectacular healing ceremony but also to consider descriptions which at first sight appear to be remedies of the 'folk medicine' category. Admittedly, in some instances there are no apparent 'spiritual' aspects to the remedy suggested, such as the recipe recommending the use of a camel's lung to cure chest diseases and a sheep's tail to clear up a bad cough. On the other hand, the treatment of malaria required magical ways: 'After having made a pot out of a piece of clay, the patient invites the ague [malaria] to make a trip to a cemetery. There he makes a fire with the help of a knife. The pot is placed over the fireplace and a few sticks are put under the pot. The ague is invited to light the fire and remain there while the patient goes away to fetch flour and water.'[396]

Alternative methods were also available for curing rheumatism. These included a ceremony of burying the patient in hot sand or wrapping him or her in the skin of a recently killed sheep. Yet another possibility was to visit a saintly tomb, such as the *mazar* of a relative of Ali Arslan. In front of its windows, there stood an ancient willow tree, which had to be circled 'in a believing spirit' seven times by the person afflicted with rheumatism, 'bending nearly double in order to rub his back against the bark'.[397]

Bread and meat collected from seven bakers and butchers were used to prepare a meal to be taken, together with a doll, to a saintly grave. Some of the food was consumed by the supplicant, and presumably his or her companions, friends or relatives; the rest was distributed among the poor.[398] Although the doll's presence is not explained, we may assume that, similar to the healing ritual, it had the function of accommodating the illness-causing spirit. A saintly tomb was also considered a suitable location for helping children start to walk. When a child did not stand

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[395] Ibid.: 318–9.
[396] Jarring 1979: 4.
[397] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 95.
[398] Ibid.: 319.

up, it was taken to a saintly tomb, where a supplication was made and a supplication sacrifice (*näzirä-niyaz*) presented to the saint.[399]

Fumigation with lighted straw was also considered an effective remedy in its own right. The patient's head was covered up, and another person walked around him or her, carrying the burning straw. For some ailments, especially in the case of children, copper pieces were begged from seven men named Muhammad; further pieces were added by the sick child's parents, and from these a charm was prepared to be hung around the child's neck.[400]

6.4.3 *The Healing Ritual: Structure and Interpretation*

The specialists who dabbled with the supernatural world represented a large and diverse group who did not fit neatly into the two opposing categories of spirit healer/shaman and Muslim *molla*. They were pragmatic actors who made use of the vast repertoire of methods informed both by scriptural traditions and local orthopraxis.

The methods attributed to different specialists often overlapped, and some elements of the healing ceremony could be performed by people not classified as healers at all. All healers claimed Islamic credentials; they were often referred to as *molla*, a term with undisputed Islamic connotations; conversely, *mollas* were often credited with healing powers. Individual improvization dependent on the healer's personal style and abilities, as well as regional variation, played a role. In spite of the diversity, the descriptions available to us suggest the persistence of basic elements and structure.

Exorcism ceremonies had a tripartite structure. The diagnosis constituted the first part: it usually assumed the form of soothsaying in the privacy of the healer's home. The second part, which also took place in the patient's house, had an overtly communal character. Exorcizing the spirits was done through 'exercising' them, which is why the ritual was also dubbed 'making the spirits dance'. The healer had to summon his helping spirits. Pressing hot iron, sweating, massage, beating and chasing the patient were the associated bodily actions. Accompanying elements included the use of a spirit flag and rags, incense, candles, ceremonial bread and cakes, animal sacrifice, willow branches or reed, music, rotatory movement, incantations and the recitation of Koranic

[399] Prov. 464. 38V.
[400] Sykes & Sykes 1920: 320.

verses and exorcism formulae. In this performance, the main protagonist was the patient, and the central act was the struggle taking place between the evil spirits, the patient's body and the healer, helped by his protector spirits. Exorcism simultaneously included threatening behaviour and violence alongside positive forms of human interaction. In effect, techniques and weapons employed were the same that locals used against any type of authority, secular or supernatural: deceit, violence or cajoling. The third part, the transfer of the evil spirits, was also a communal event, but this took place away from the house.

While Basilov's structural analysis of the healing ritual in Eastern Turkestan is fully supported by the new materials introduced here, a few additional remarks are necessary.[401] Healing rituals shared a number of structural features with other communal events. Healers made creative use of a wide range of symbols which also played an important role in other forms of social relations. First of all, reciprocity informed the healer-patient relationship.[402] The healer also entered a reciprocal exchange with the spirits. The spirits were asked or ordered to leave the sick body, but they first had to be appeased and offered an alternative, since it would have been unreasonable to abandon what was in their possession for nothing. The healer and his community therefore offered a deal to the spirits: they would leave, and be compensated with a new abode. This idea is underpinned by an almost Marxist notion of the nature of matter: it does not evaporate or disappear but remains in the material universe. When dangerous elements are set free, they must be kept under control. Trouble-causing spirits had to be accommodated after their expulsion from the patient's body. They could not be left to settle at random, thus posing further threats to the community. They had to be deposited away from human settlements, near a cemetery, at junctions, at an abandoned mill or ruins, i.e., on or beyond community boundaries. Similar to market exchange, this exchange too was informed by a calculating rationality.

Ambiguity was an important accompaniment of the ritual in more than one way. It subverted normative ideas of hierarchical gender relations. Space was shared by men and women perhaps more intimately than on other ritual occasions, and male and female symbols were used in combination: the hoe and animal sacrifice, essentially male

[401] Basilow 1995: 214–5.
[402] Cf. Garrone 2000.

symbols, were just as important as ritual cakes and bread, symbols of women's work.

Basilov describes how the healer ordered one of the onlookers to dance a hundred dances 'to appease the spirit which had settled in the patient's body'.[403] He makes it sound like a solemn occasion, adding that no one would dare to disobey, because they feared that in such a person spirits would settle. In contrast, Malov emphasized the dual character of the ritual, which integrated elements of the sacred and the profane. According to Malov, local people had an ambivalent attitude towards the ceremony. During the ceremony there was no 'religious mood' among the audience, and no effort was made to maintain even the appearance of order. Those present laughed, talked to each other, left and came back again. Many spectators interrupted the performance, addressing the healer with humorous remarks and even using rude words. People only became silent and paid full attention when prayers and Koranic verses were recited in Arabic.[404] While some incantations had a definite Islamic character, evoking the names of Islamic patron saints, other songs addressing the spirits could double as love songs, and some could even include vulgar lyrics.[405] This is illustrated by a verse collected in Guma in the first half of the twentieth century: 'Oh, demon! If you go, go! If you don't go I shall roll a reed-matting into your rump and put fire to it!'[406] The curious overlapping of love songs and the incantations of the exorcist did not escape the attention of Le Coq, who noted similarities between the incantations of a female healer in the Lop Nor area and a love song collected in Qarakhoja which went as follows:

Oh, I go, oh, I stay,
The thought [of her] *is my own!*
Oh, dance, my king päri!

Also if I get eighty strokes,
My love is my own!
Oh, dance, my king päri!

Oh, you, who resemble the bud of the red rose,
Bend and dance!
Oh, dance, my king päri!

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[403] N.N. 1899 quoted by Basilow 1995: 208.
[404] Malov 1918: 2.
[405] Du 1995: 47–8.
[406] Jarring 1951b.: 163–5.

Should I ask about you
From those who come and go?
Oh, dance, my king päri!

Or should I go myself to you and
Ask how you are?
Oh, dance, my king päri![407]

The simultaneous presence of solemnity and party mood reflects the ambiguity inherent in the reception of such performances. There is no reason to assume universal belief in the efficacy of such performances, and even the same person could maintain a permanently ambivalent attitude towards healers and other practitioners.[408]

If Malov's report is anything to go by, then by the early twentieth century the healer's credibility rested mostly on his ability to invoke Islam. The utilization of Islamic symbols by healers and other practitioners also implied the authority of literacy. Not necessarily literate themselves, they relied on the prestige of the Koran and other texts to enhance their prestige. This corresponded to Muslims' self-identification as the people of the Book, the beneficiaries of a revealed tradition. This reliance on the written word also found expression in the fact that many healers possessed a handbook called *pärixun risaläsi*, which contained important information concerning the origins of the healing ceremony and, therefore, the origins of the healing profession. Most such booklets attributed the beginnings of healing to God's sending the Archangel Gabriel to teach people this profession. The booklet gave instructions as to which prayers were to be recited at various stages of the healing ceremony. Healers also had recourse to other texts to be used by rainmakers and diviners.[409]

Basilov stressed the connections between shamanism and mystical currents, the practices characteristic of the influential Sufi brotherhoods in Islamic Inner Asia, which rendered them particularly suitable to 'absorb' shamanic practices.[410] Quoting other examples to prove that a similar situation prevailed in Russian Turkestan, he argued that it was not so much ideological differences but, rather, jealousy of rivals which motivated the Muslim clergy to criticize and undermine shamanic

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[407] Le Coq 1911: 50–1. For similar comments see also Tenishev 1984: 19–23.

[408] Cf. the characteristics of what Victor Turner has defined as anti-structure or *communitas* (Turner 1995).

[409] Malov 1918: 16.

[410] Pantusov 1907: 60, quoted in Basilov 1995: 301.

practices; at the same time, he also stated that the two groups lived and worked side by side and even cooperated with each other, sending each other patients, etc.[411] In Basilov's view, an accommodation between shamanism and Islam was made possible by overlapping elements such as the *baxşi*'s invocations to Muslim saints, his use of the Islamic formula *bismillah* to introduce the prayers and the inclusion of Islamic texts, rosaries and prayer rugs into his ritual paraphernalia. For many people, shamans represented the very model of a Muslim lifestyle.[412] Basilov illustrates the fusion of shamanism with Sufism and the cult of Islamic saints by pointing out that Muslim saints were regarded as the shaman's protector or helping spirit, e.g., Xizir, from whom they often obtained the blessing necessary to start practising as a healer. Sometimes saints were credited with recommending to a person possessed by spirits that he or she could find relief by practising as a shaman. Basilov also allows for the fact that Sufism was understood by many people in a greatly simplified form, a Sufi was a mediator between God and the people; he was therefore in a position to receive divine revelations in a state of trance and to work miracles. This view enabled a 'fusion' between Sufism and shamanism.[413]

Basilov's comparative article exploring the factors behind the compatibility of Islamic brotherhoods with popular or 'folk' tradition is important and informative. Nevertheless, he reduces 'folk tradition' to 'shamanism' and considers Sufism, (much as he does shamanism), to be a well-definable and static essence; this Sufism then had a 'corruptive' influence over shamanism. For Eastern Turkestan, treating shamanism and Sufism as the two pillars of religious life fails to take into account the social context and accommodate a wide range of emic understandings.

The healing ceremony and related practices were rooted in the same complex intermingling of ideas about the spirit world which also underpinned the Barat and related rituals, including the commemoration of the dead. All these were informed by notions of reciprocity and altruism expressed as sacrifice. Cereal-based food and torches were sacrificial offerings for supernatural beings, but they were also commonly offered on other ritual occasions to appease the spirits of the dead. Ritual dolls

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[411] Basilow 1995: 302–3.
[412] Ibid.: 307.
[413] Ibid.: 309.

were used with the aim of transferring the spirits into these shapes or, alternatively, for keeping dislocated spirits company in the abandoned places to which they had been transferred.[414] Such dolls could also be associated with the spirits of the dead: in Kashgar, many Muslim tombs were decorated with stylised dolls, their face only indicated with a few lines. They were called jinn, and they were given all kinds of food on plates and in bowls, especially at the time of festivals. These dishes could not be used later. This information was provided by Le Coq, who explained the practice as a kind of 'reconciliation sacrifice' When he asked his servants about it, they were embarrassed and pleaded ignorance.[415] This may be another indication of ambiguity concerning the efficacy of magic. Some suggest that effigies were used when children were possessed. Three such dolls were placed at three different roads, each with a bowl of food. In essence, the food was there to divert the evil spirits' attention from the child and to incite them to settle in that place.[416] One possible interpretation of the 'spirits' meal' is that it served to extend community to the spirit world. Symbolic commensality was achieved when part of the dough was consumed by humans and the rest left for the spirits.

Further evidence of the direct connection between healing rituals and the domestic cult was that cemeteries and shrines were also used as healing sites. In Qarghalik in 1905, Mannerheim witnessed in a Muslim cemetery an effort to exorcise evil spirits from a young patient paralysed in both legs. 'A small fire was lighted in front of the patient and the old man was trying, by waving some bits of wood round the head and body of the sick man, to drive out the evil spirit, after which he started reading from the Koran in a loud voice.'[417]

The binary classification of helping and harmful spirits does not always do justice to complex ideas about the supernatural world. Clearly uncomfortable with this dichotomy, on the basis of Tajik materials, Sukhareva came up with a threefold typology, consisting of protector spirits, hostile spirits and spirits with whom people could enter into a sexual relationship.[418] Basilov found this tripartite typology too simple;

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[414] Basilow 1995: 212.
[415] Le Coq 1916: 3.
[416] Jarring 1979: 11.
[417] Mannerheim 1969: 79. My own ethnographic materials from modern Kazakhstan confirm that Muslim shrines are considered to be particularly suitable places for healing ceremonies.
[418] Basilow 1995: 254.

to get away from it, he argued that protector spirits could also cause damage.[419] I suggest that the contradictions inherent in the ambiguous character of spirits could be at least partially resolved by connecting the healing ritual to ideas concerning the domestic cult. Dead spirits' benevolence could be ensured by remembering and nourishing them with the smell of burnt oil and cooked food and prayers, but they turned angry and hostile when neglected and starved of sacrifice. Descriptions of healing rituals usually distinguish between evil and good spirits; nevertheless, this binary opposition was not entirely fixed and immutable. Rather, there was a continuum, with Islamic saints at the extreme of the definitively good and evil spirits such as the *albasti* or the jinn at the other pole. It is perhaps this ambiguity inherent in the nature of the spirits which prompted Uzbek healers to prepare the spirits' food (*arwoch oschi*) for the benefit of both the helping and the evil spirits.[420] The generic word *arwah*, meaning the spirit of the dead, was sometimes used to denote people who suffered from the inflictions of evil spirits. In Kashgar, the term *arbaq* was also used for children believed to have been possessed.[421]

There were further links between the healing ceremony and the domestic cult. According to modern ethnographic descriptions, fruit, especially apple, was effective against the bad spirits, which is why an apple twig was placed by the *tuğ*. The *pärixun* might also hold an apple twig in his hands, and he or she sometimes burnt dried apple or apple peel, saying, 'May it reach the souls of the dead spirits!'[422] The formula recited by the healer while burning the apple peel echoes that of the veneration of the dead. The additional explanation that the evil spirits were afraid of the smell of apple merged with the idea that invigorating the helping spirits could enable them to defeat harmful forces.

6.5 *Summary*

In regions where Muslims are a minority, or a politically subordinate majority, their most visible public manifestations of faith are liable to be attacked, restricted or prohibited. This was the pattern in Eastern

[419] Basilow 1995: 255.
[420] Ibid.: 251.
[421] Jarring 1979: 10–1.
[422] Raxman 1996: 175.

Turkestan following the Qing conquest. The reformist wave, which swept through much of Central Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was also felt in Eastern Turkestan.[423] It had some limited impact, especially in urban centres, but it remains questionable to what extent it affected the countryside.[424] In his unpublished PhD dissertation, Edmund Waite argues that in the rural areas of Kashgar the mosque community has persisted as the single authority of Islamic praxis well into the socialist period, because it has never been seriously challenged by reformist ideas. This situation has come about as a result of pre-socialist and socialist policies, which impeded the spread of Jadidism and public debates about Islamic practice.[425] This relative stagnation may partly explain the persistence of so many popular practices; but the key factor was the non-interference of the state into local practices in the pre-socialist era.

Participating in religious festivals and rituals was considered to be part of the ordered life of Eastern Turkestani Muslims. Through it, one submitted to the divine order; one could expect blessings and good luck, and avert misfortune and calamity. Deviation from social expectations and departure from assumed normality could take on many forms: disease, theft, adultery, accident, misfortune, barrenness, child mortality, the birth of sick or deformed children, earthquake, drought, a particularly bad harvest, war. All these called for explanations and solutions.[426] To provide these, as in other parts of the world, in Xinjiang also a number of traditions jostled alongside each other, simultaneously showing tendencies to compete and converge. The mystic tradition, itself far from homogenous, no doubt exerted an influence upon the popular stream, which fundamentally comprised the domestic cult, with the veneration of the dead as its focal point. Central to these ideas concerning the supernatural was the belief in the potential influence of the spirit of the dead on the life and fate of the living.

Privratsky argues that it was continuities between the nomadic past and socialist experiences which facilitated the persistence of Kazakh religion, with the domestic cult at its core, since 'both contexts deprived the Kazaks of immediate access to the mosque and the theological

[423] For Jadidism see Khalid 1998, for Eastern Turkestan see Zarcone 2001: 158–160.
[424] Fletcher n.d. 8.
[425] Waite 2002.
[426] Lewis 1994: 574–5.

tradition of "normative Islam", thus requiring them to live out their religious experience primarily in the household'.[427] The comparable, well documented significance of the domestic cult among the Turkis in pre-socialist times significantly weakens this argument: it demonstrates that the domestic cult persisted in the oasis settlements among people with a long sedentary history, without the pressures posed either by a nomadic way of life or repressive socialist religious policies. Privratsky's formulation suggests that the centrality of the domestic cult in contemporary 'Kazak religion' is due to these pressures, and in this respect one gets the impression that he argues for a residual definition of the domestic cult, assuming that without mobile pastoralism and socialist repression, 'Kazak religion' would have developed a more mosque- and/or scripture-centred focus. The Xinjiang materials dating from before 1949 refute this implication of 'residuality'; instead, they suggest that notions of a thoroughly Islamicised domestic cult were informing a wider range of practices in the oases than Privratsky's reading of the contemporary Kazakh materials indicates.

In pre-socialist Xinjiang restrictions on Islamic practice were only ephimerally imposed by provincial authorities, and they were usually limited to one or two visible manifestations of religiosity. State policies from the late nineteenth century impeded the spread of multiple voices of reform and renewal. Only with the onset of socialism did interference in more intimate areas of religious practice become systematic.

[427] Privratsky 2001: 239.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This work has dealt with community, with what Stephen Gudeman terms the 'commons', with reciprocity and social relations among the people previously described by Europeans as Turki (following the locals' designation of their language) and nowadays known as the modern Uyghur. In a sense, it is a study of Uyghur 'culture', but I have avoided this term for a number of reasons. In spite of many attempts to deconstruct and reconstruct it, the term 'culture' still implies to many a bounded, homogenized and unchanging entity. It is particularly problematic within the context of a strong multi-ethnic state which defines its minority nationals as a cultural entity. There is a danger that, if we insist on the term 'Uyghur culture', we implicitly assume that 'Uyghurness' takes priority over other sources of identity, whether religious, local, regional, familial, occupational, generational, or gender-based. The term 'culture' emphasizes boundary-drawing vis-à-vis other groups, with whom forms of exchange have taken place in many spheres of daily life over centuries. Like differences, whether imagined or real, commonalities are also multi-stranded and complex, sometimes denied or downplayed and, at other times, more or less reluctantly or readily acknowledged. For example, linguistic borrowings from Chinese and Russian are readily recognized by intellectuals, but sharing religion with the Chinese Muslims is seldom stressed. Similarly, foreign influence on changing fashion may be acclaimed, while inter-group borrowings in ritual action are likely to be contested in local discourse. Intermarriage with Han Chinese and Chinese Muslims may be categorically denied, even though some evidence may suggest the contrary. Imposing a straitjacket of cultural homogeneity on the Xinjiang Uyghur is also misleading, because any number of sub-groups might well choose to be identified otherwise.[1] For these reasons, I have avoided speaking of Uyghur culture and instead consistently emphasized the 'social'.

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[1] Hoppe 1998: 69–80. For a discussion of the problems concerning the term 'culture' see Bellér-Hann and Hann 2000.

The present volume limits itself to the investigation of social conditions in pre-socialist Xinjiang, continuities in social practice have persisted into the twenty-first century, yet 1949 represented a watershed in the sense that, for the first time, a strong centralizing state began a dramatic, unprecedented intrusion into the daily lives of local people. This affected both the Han Chinese and the minorities. As Stevan Harrell put it, the 'peripheral peoples... were particularly targeted by China's civilising project' This project unfolded within the framework of a particular form of inequality based on the centre's conviction of its own moral superiority over the periphery and its peoples.[2] Harrell argues that peripheral peoples' consciousness of being an ethnic group is heightened through participating in this project, and even partial participation may result in a certain internalization of its valorizations.

The history of socialism in Xinjiang may be understood as the history of masterminding and implementing this civilizing project. As far as collective identities are concerned, two contrasting trends could be observed. On the one hand, the Chinese state defined the Uyghur as a minority and created the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, thus foregrounding their territorial rootedness and, through it, their collective identity. On the other hand, collectivization and other measures introduced in the various phases of socialism that culminated in the Cultural Revolution rendered Uyghur communities basically insecure: their commons was not destroyed, but it did come under repeated attack.

Throughout the Maoist period, the ideal of equality was enacted under central control. Far from encouraging a heightened sense of community, interference in the economy, social organization and intimate areas of life had adverse effects. Political measures made it increasingly hard for locals to perform voluntary acts of sharing and reciprocity. Ideological threats included campaigns, such as that against the Four Olds, while physical interventions ranged from atrocities committed against individuals to the confiscation of basic utensils from peasant kitchens and the destruction or degradation of mosques. The entire era was contradictory: territorial rootedness, an integral part of the commons, was reinforced through regional administrative and minority policies, while at the same time the engineers of socialism undermined

[2] Harrell 1994.

the foundations of traditional communities. In effect, different community models came into conflict. The enforced communality of the communes transformed places of belonging into places where it would be recalled that atrocities had been committed, where one's neighbour could become one's traitor. Opposition, or even being born into the wrong family, could entail drastic measures. Places where settled farmers had for centuries enjoyed a measure of security were suddenly rendered unsafe. Yet, however paradoxically, even these painful memories and the new vocabulary introduced during socialism were eventually absorbed into the commons, and the insecurity experienced in some domains promoted new forms and levels of identification in others. The chief novelty was the recognition of the Uyghur as a minority group, which strengthened the process of ethnogenesis that had its roots in pre-socialist times. The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region—or, as many think of it, Eastern Turkestan—is today generally recognized as the traditional homeland of the Uyghur people. Claims are made to a symbolic space defined and circumscribed by foreign occupation. This new identification of ethnic nationalism creates a potent site for resistance, reshaping all older forms of community.

The reform period since 1979, characterized by de-collectivization and the expansion of the free market, could not restore the older forms of the commons, though some attempts were made in this direction. Helen Siu has written, in the context of Southern China, of "cultural fragments recycled under new circumstances".[3] Although this formulation does not do full justice to the processual nature of social existence, Siu is right to interpret much of her ethnographic data as reworked or partially recycled combinations of the novel and the traditional. The same applies to what Dru Gladney calls 'ethnic custom'.[4] In modern state discourse, such customs belong to the category of 'authentic' cultural traditions and are therefore relegated to a space outside the 'progress versus backwardness' continuum. Other traits relevant to the official shaping and definition of ethnic groups include religion, 'folk customs', and 'ancient things and practices'.[5] These are all concepts which retain a certain ambiguity, since their various elements may be rejected as backward or, alternatively, may become incorporated in the

[3] Siu 1989a: 134.
[4] Gladney 2000: 247.
[5] White 1998: 15.

modern ethnic discourse if it suits the needs of particular powerful interest groups. In my understanding, the commons includes all of these ambiguous categories and more, and it is not reducible to a monolithic block of definable 'customs' Rather, it is made up of entangled webs of social relations, and these are the sources of multiple identities. Since individuals are always simultaneously tied to communities of different types, it follows that their loyalties may often come into conflict with each other.

* * *

In search of the possible sources of the various modern constructions of 'tradition' or 'Uyghur identity', I have gone back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and drawn on both indigenous and European sources, augmented by specimens of oral tradition. When viewed critically in the light of their undoubted Orientalist bias, European travelogues can serve as valuable sources of social history, especially when taken in conjunction with indigenous documents and narratives. In this respect, I see them as little different from modern foreign ethnographers' accounts which, in spite of the researchers' conscious effort to be objective, are inevitably shaped and influenced by the researcher's personal background and experiences. This historical material—which, with a few translated exceptions, is regrettably lacking the Chinese point of view—has been complemented by my own observations, made during fieldwork mostly carried out in the 1990s.

I started my discussion in the late nineteenth century because European sources abound from that period and because most of my indigenous 'core texts' also date from around this time. I have made only occasional references to the earlier, pre-Ya'qub Beg period of the nineteenth century, and therefore I have not been able to tease out the possible changes of social institutions on the micro-level as a result of the more restrictive Qing policy which followed the restoration of imperial rule. What were the main features of the 'commons' before 1949? Local oasis society was characterized by multiple communal identities and a relatively slow rate of social change. Among the sedentary Turkic-speaking Muslims, identification with one's territorially defined locality—place of birth and residence, village, neighbourhood, oasis and, ultimately, the whole political-administrative entity—formed one important part of the commons. Most people belonged to several interconnected and overlapping communities and networks, which were

held together by religious, life-cycle and everyday rituals. These rituals expressed values and practices which local people today characterise as 'our traditions'.

I argued that in the social life of the settled Turkic-speaking Muslims, communities were constructed along very diverse axes: ethnicity played a part, but it did not necessarily trump other types of identities, ranging from regional to religious to professional to gender-based and other affiliations. Oasis identities did not necessarily supersede lower- or higher-level regional identities; the context determined which level of regional belonging was emphasized. By the late nineteenth century, a basic Islamic identity characterized a large majority of the population, but neither religion nor ethnicity nor language ever served as an unambiguous, static boundary. The historical record demonstrates examples of both ethnic conflict and peaceful accommodations across ethnic boundaries. Society was structured by the imposition of foreign rule, the domination of the local nobility and unequal access to resources. Special attention was paid to the social hierarchy as perceived from 'below', i.e., from the point of view of the lower echelons of local society. I discussed poverty and the social institutions which ensured the periodic and partial redistribution of wealth as a form of 'social security' As far as the legal framework regulating community life is concerned, I made use of the concept of legal pluralism: to the historians' two-tiered model of imperial and Islamic law, I added the hitherto neglected realm of 'local', or 'customary', law. Customary law and Islamic law were of great importance in settling disputes among Muslims and regulating social relationships within the community. Although the two overlapped in some areas, they came into conflict in others. In resource management, the force of custom could supersede imperial law. Intra-familial dynamics and gender relations constituted a contested field between local and Islamic law. In contrast, hospitality, which provided the ideological framework for cementing and maintaining community, was practised under the exclusive and binding control of customary norms.

Life-cycle rituals also played an important role in making and maintaining the pre-socialist community. Birth, death, marriage rituals, male circumcision and the celebrations of female fertility were important social institutions of redistribution and included the elements of commensality, gift exchange and charity. The rituals emphasized boundaries around and within the community. Communality with

insiders was reinforced through ceremonial gift exchange, but it could also be extended to outsiders through ritual inclusion. The presence of 'strangers' was often indispensable. These rituals were embedded in local notions of gender relations informed by an overarching patriarchal ideology but also by frequent and far-reaching counter currents. While Islam provided the general religious context for social praxis and local knowledge, some life cycle rituals made more use of Islamic symbols than others. Women's coming of age ceremonies seem to have been almost disembedded from this context, while death rituals show numerous links to general Islamic eschatology.

During the pre-socialist period, Islam provided an important source of identification, manifested in praying and the communal observance of official Islamic holidays and unofficial rituals regulated by both the Islamic calendar and the agricultural seasons. The major structural elements of these rituals were again commensality, gift exchange and charity. While acknowledging the convergence of various traditions in religious beliefs, I have drawn particular attention to the significance of the domestic cult, which centres on the veneration of dead spirits. The ideology informing the domestic cult is that community must be extended to the dead and periodically reinforced through sacrifice. I have shown that popular celebrations such as the Barat and the healing ritual, often described as 'Central Asian shamanism', as well as visits to shrines and cemeteries, create a wider context for the enactment of these beliefs. Although healing rituals were often treated by researchers (especially in Soviet scholarship) as pre-Islamic relics, I privileged the emic view which, as demonstrated by the indigenous manuscript quoted in detail, considered healing ceremonies to be an integral part of the Islamic way of life.

My Han Chinese co-researchers, local representatives of the state and villagers themselves often invoked the pre-socialist past as a baseline against which to measure socialist achievements. In this discourse, the old society was sometimes presented as traditional, backward, unjust and exploitative, in sharp contrast to the world created in the course of socialist restructuring. This view, generally endorsed by Chinese intellectuals and partially internalized by local cadres and rural people with a poor peasant or landless background, was only one of a number of alternative ways to construct the past. Other representations 'on the ground' tended to consider the pre-socialist past as a repository of resources underlying ritual practice, informing everyday norms and behaviour and infusing people with a sense of group belonging.

Although fieldwork was conducted under restricted conditions, I listened carefully to what people had to say on these matters. Fieldwork helped me to understand how these and other elements combine to maintain a sense of belonging at various levels and how continuities and changes are perceived. The past is often treated as a resource which people may mobilize for self-definition or in response to unpopular state interventions.

The evaluation of social equality and inequality raises complex issues. Pre-socialist society was widely perceived as a fundamentally unequal system, characterized not only by ethnic hierarchies but also by internal economic and social stratification. This perception was fully borne out by the evidence of the sources. The Maoist period was regarded as an era of relative equality, but this recognition was not unequivocally positive: locals pointed out the coercive nature of this equality, emphasizing shared poverty and the limited scope for social mobility. This long period of economic levelling came to an end with the onset of the reforms in the early 1980s. This new era of the 'socialist commodity economy' was evaluated as a period of new freedoms, increased opportunities and inequalities. That this state of affairs was regarded as something almost 'natural', something given, was suggested by a metaphor, often quoted by rural and urban people alike: 'The five fingers of a hand are not similar' One can speculate as to whether this folk ideology of inequality emerged as a recent reaction to enforced equality or whether it survived from the pre-socialist period, in which local stratification was to some extent mitigated by redistributive social institutions (as, of course, it is today).

* * *

In a sense this work simultaneously goes beyond and falls short of historical anthropology. It goes beyond the usual understanding of historical anthropology because it also draws in part on my own fieldwork data. At the same time the work falls short of the ideals of historical anthropology, because not all sources for the pre-socialist period have been fully utilized. The insider and outsider sources used still need to be augmented by the view from 'above', i.e., by sources generated by the colonizers, not to mention a wider range of indigenous documents (such as marriage, divorce, inheritance documents, court records) than I was able to access. This study is thus only a first step towards a comprehensive historical anthropology of the region in the period specified.

Whenever possible, attention was drawn to social changes. However, many pre-socialist institutions, such as rituals, appear in the sources as relatively stable. The work sets the agenda for future research in the sense that it introduces a new perspective to the study of Xinjiang history, which until now has been dominated by political, social and ethnic history. This is the first attempt to investigate social relations in the context of everyday and ritual life, paying special attention to those social actors who, on account of their restricted access to power, have so far been largely ignored. By shifting the focus away from ethnic relations, it has been demonstrated that rules of exclusion and inclusion construct a multiplicity of boundaries, and not just ethnic or religious ones. The desire to enter and retain membership of real or imagined communities derives from the intrinsic sociability of humans. Understood in this broad and flexible way, community matters and continues to matter.

It is a truism that social identities can be shaped by any number of factors, including family status, gender, age, religion, access to economic resources and political power. Some of the possibilities have been explored in this work. The chapter divisions have followed analytical categories, but I have tried to suggest throughout that these aspects are not separate entities but closely intertwined and constantly reconstructed as individuals proceed through the messiness of everyday life. People manage to survive as best as they can, making strategic and creative combinations of their identities in order to cope with constantly changing micro- and macro-political conditions. In this, the Uyghurs of Xinjiang are no different from other human beings. By attempting to locate the sources of their modern ethnic identity as embedded in the history of social practices, I have departed from those studies of Xinjiang which tend to presuppose the salience of inter-ethnic conflict, given the political history of the region. The ultimate rationale for this approach is that 'bringing back the social' into a broadly and flexibly defined concept of community may also bring us closer to doing justice to the multiple experiences of local people themselves, both in the past and in the present.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Bridal couple from Kashgar: Qämmer-Nisa (from Yarkand) and Rozä Ähmet Petrus (Kashgar). Kashgar in November 1932.
(Box 132, sheet nr. 27 a, neg. nr. 1074. Ester Johanssons samling)

Fig. 2. Cradle.
(Box 146, sheet nr. 14, neg. nr. 1005. Ester Johanssons samling)

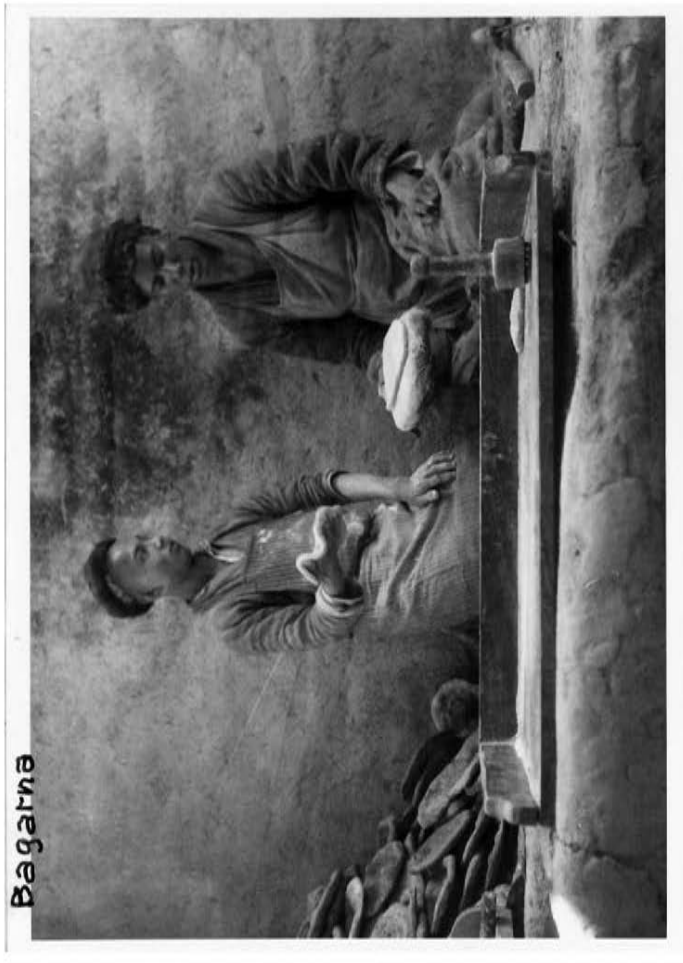

Fig. 3. Bakers.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 59, neg. nr. 4745. Gunnar Hermanssons samling)

Fig. 4. Threshing.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 12, neg. nr. 4712. Gunnar Hermanssons samling)

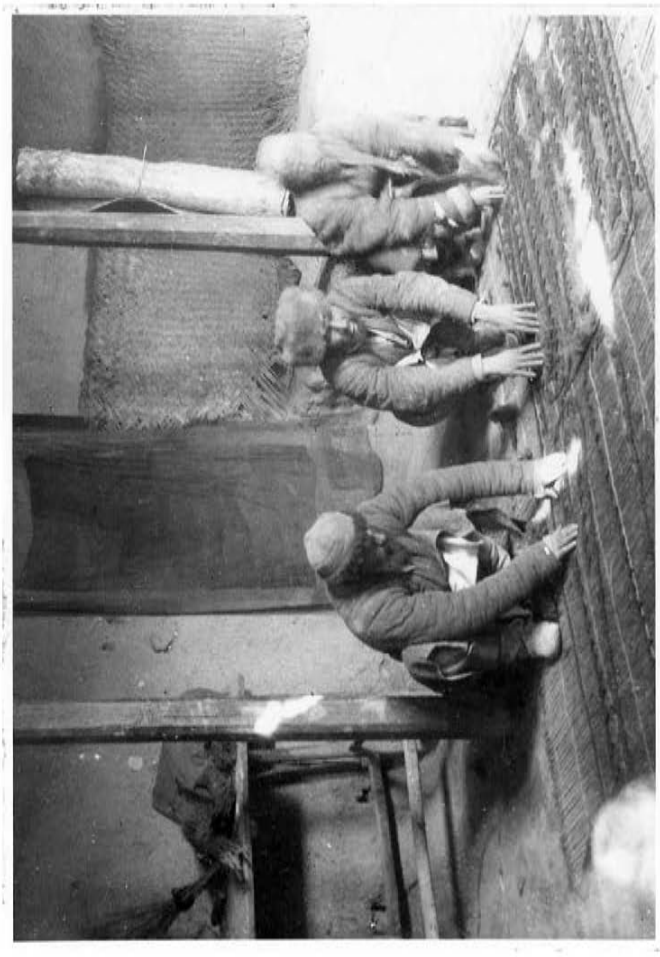

Fig. 5. Carpet makers.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 52 a, neg. nr. 1823)

Fig. 6. Market vendor.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 36, neg. nr. 1371. Gustaf Raquettes samling)

Fig. 7. Carpet makers.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 56, neg. nr. 1358. Gustaf Raquettes samling)

Fig. 8. Weavers.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 43, neg. nr. 4772. Hanna Anderssons samling)

Fig. 9. Beggar.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 57 b, neg. nr. 4664. Gunnar Hermanssons samling)

Fig. 10. Shoemaker.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 53, no neg. nr. Naemi Rydéns samling)

Fig. 11. Medicine man.
(Box 145, sheet nr. 53, no neg. nr. Hanna Anderssons samling)

Fig. 12. Women, about 1915.
(Box 146, sheet nr. 44, neg. nr. 776. Gottfrid Palmbergs samling)

Fig. 13. A wealthy man.
(Box 146, sheet nr. 46, neg. nr. 280. Gottfrid Palmbergs samling)

Fig. 14. Reciting the Koran.
(Box 149, sheet nr. 16, neg nr. 4846. Samuel Fränes samling/Stina Märtenssons samling)

Fig 15. Celebrating the Festival of Sacrifice in Sheriff's home in Kashgar on the 10th of May 1930.
(Box 147, sheet nr. 17, neg. nr. 2716. John Törnquists samling)

Fig. 16. A woman with her children, about 1934.
(Box 146, sheet nr. 11, no neg. nr. Hanna Anderssons samling)

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GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TURKI/UYGHUR TERMS

Altä şähär (Altishahr)—the 'Six Cities' (the oases of the Tarim Basin)
alwañ—corvée, labour obligation
amban—Chinese official
aqsaqal—elder, local official
arwah—spirits
arwaxçi—healer, exorcist
axun—1. title of Muslim religious dignitary 2. male honorific title
äzan—call for prayer
barat—popular religious holiday
baxşi—healer, exorcist
bay—1. rich, abundant 2.a rich person
bäg—indigenous officeholder
bäzmä—1. amusement, entertainment, recreation 2. feast, banquet
binamaz—one with no religion, a heretic
büwi, büwüm—female religious specialist
çaräk—measurement of weight, 10 kg
çiraq—torch, lamp
çokan—young married woman with no child
damolla—learned molla, honorific title
dastixan—tablecloth
daxan, duaxan—healer, exorcist
dällal—1. go-between 2. match-maker
dixan—peasant
doppa—Uyghur skull-cap
fatwa/pätiwa—formal legal opinion
guna—sin
haj—Hajj, the pilgimage to Mecca
haji –a person who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca
halal—lawful
haram—unlawful
imam—religious office holder who leads public worship
isqat—payment given to strangers at the grave as a form of redemption
jan—soul
jiñ—measurement of weight, 500 gr.
juwan—married woman with child
kätmän—hoe
khoja—1. honorific title used for the descendents of Muhammad 2. respectful form of address 3. master
mazar—Muslim shrine
mädräsä—Islamic college
mähällä—Muslim neighbourhood
mähr—marriage payment prescribed by Islamic law
mäjlis—meeting, session
mäktäp—school
mäşräp—form of socialisation, conviviality
mäzin—muezzin

mäzlum—woman
mirab—official in charge of the distribution of water
mo/mu—area measurement, 1 mu = 1/15 hectares = 1/6 acre
molla—1. title of religious office holder 2. scholar 3. title of respect
mufti—Islamic scholar, legal arbiter
murid—disciple, faithful
murşid—spiritual guide
namähräm—unfamiliar, a stranger
namaz—ritual prayer
näzir—1. ritualised communal meal 2. commemoration of the dead
nika—marriage ceremony
noruz—beginning of the solar year
patihä/fatiha—the first sura of the Koran
päri—spirit
päri oynatiş –exorcising the spirits
pärixun, pärixan exorcist, healer
pärz—mandatory duty
pir—elder, patron saint
pul—money, coin
puñ—area measurement, 66, 67 square metres
qazi—judge
qäländär—mendicant dervish
qiblä—the direction of Mecca
qurban—sacrifice
ramazan/rozä—Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, the month of fasting
räkät—a complete act of worship with the prescribed postures and prostrations, a unit of the namaz
risalä—religious and moral 'code of conduct' for craftsmen
roh—spirit
sawap—meritorious deed
sädiqä—alms, charity
sär—measurement of weight, ca. 35 gr.
şäri'ät—Islamic law
şäyx—1. judge, theologian 2. guardian of a saintly shrine
şiñ—measurement of volume, 1 litre
tağar—'sackful'; weight measurement, its size was probably variable
taranchi—the Turkic speaking Muslim cultivators of Northern Xinjiang
täkbir—the pronouncing of the formula 'God is great!'
täñgä—coin, currency unit
toy—joyous celebration, wedding
toyluq—marriage payment
tuğ—spirit flag, rope
tungan—Chinese Muslim
waqf/wäxpä—pious foundation
xaniqa—Sufi cloister
xan—1. Khan 2. suffix to female names
yağ puritiş—creating a fragrance by heating oil, oil sacrifice
zakat—1. alms (prescribed by Islam) 2. alms tax
zikr—remembrance, Sufi ritual

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