

China Connections *continued*

CONFERENCES IN CHINA

Shanghai Forum

28-30 May 2016, Shanghai
<http://www.shanghaiforum.fudan.edu.cn/en>

The Shanghai Forum, launched in 2005, is known as one of the most famous international forums held in Shanghai. Co-hosted by Fudan University and Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies, and undertaken by Fudan Development Institute (FDDI), the Forum is a non-governmental and non-profit academic organization, which holds an annual symposium each May in Shanghai. This year's theme was "Economic Globalization and Asia's Choice – Interconnectivity, Integration and Innovation: Building Community of Common Destiny in Asia".

Shanghai Forum takes its mission to "Concentrate on Asia, Focus on Hot Issues, Congregate Elites, Promote Interactions, Enhance Cooperation and Seek Consensus" seriously. It endeavors to build an interactive platform for multi-sided communication amongst academic, political, commercial, and press circles through which significant problems both in Asia and the world will be discussed comprehensively and profoundly, so as to seek consensus on Asia's economic, political, social and cultural progress. Shanghai Forum opens application to the world. Many well-known think tanks, universities, enterprises, media and other organizations apply to host roundtables /sub-forums every year.

Over the years, numerous political dignitaries, distinguished scholars, and business leaders have been invited to share their thoughts and wisdom at Shanghai Forum, including Chen Zhili (former Vice Chairman of the NPC of China), Cheng Siwei (former Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC of China), Lee Kuan Yew (former Prime Minister of Singapore), Han Seung-soo (former Prime Minister of Republic of Korea), Shaikat Aziz (former Prime Minister of Pakistan), Robert Alexander Mundell (known as the "father" of the Euro, 1999 Nobel Laureate in Economics), Robert Shiller (2013 Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics), Vladimir Yakunin (President of JSC Russian Railways), and Robert Zoellick (former President of the World Bank Group). Shanghai Forum also receives strong support from the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee and the Shanghai Municipal Government.

Shanghai Archaeology Forum

13-17 December 2015, Shanghai
<http://shanghai-archaeology-forum.org/>

Founded in 2013, Shanghai Archaeology Forum (SAF) is a global initiative dedicated to promoting the investigation, protection and utilization of the world's archaeological resources and heritage. The 2015 SAF was co-organized by the Shanghai Academy, the Institute of Archaeology at CASS, Shanghai Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, and Shanghai University. The forum aims to provide a better understanding of the importance of the field of archaeology and the protection of cultural heritage for our common future.

To celebrate the excellence of archaeological research the SAF Awards were presented to those individuals and organizations that have achieved distinction by making major discoveries and producing innovative, creative, and rigorous works in the past three years. The World Archaeology Keynote Lecture Series presented case studies illustrating key issues such as diverse forms of social and cultural interaction, the formation and transformation of cultural and social identities, the complexities and ambiguities of cultural identities and power relations, the active roles of indigenous agency, practice and ideology in structuring colonial interaction, cultural persistence and the importance of historical contingency and local context.

The Public Archaeology Lecture Series promoted public awareness and knowledge of the ever-increasing wealth of archaeological finds. The Public Archaeology Lecture Series invited three important archaeologists, Charles Higham, Lothar von Falkenhausen, and Colin Renfrew, to share their experiences on archaeology with students, and the general public. After the public lectures, the audience was given the opportunity to engage with these famous archaeologists, discussing archaeological findings, as well as their concerns on the appreciation and protection of cultural diversity and the challenge of vanishing heritage in our globalizing world.

Qiaowei WEI (魏峭巍) is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Shanghai University (weiqiaowei@gmail.com)

Shadian's Muslim communities and trans-local connectivities: observations from the field

Hyeju (Janice) JEONG

I REACHED SHADIAN TOWN after a three hour drive from Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province, China. As I stepped out of the car in the chill of a late November night, the site of Shadian's magnificent Grand Mosque and the call to night prayers reminded me that I was in a zone quite different from Kunming.

Shadian has ten mosques, with the Grand Mosque - modeled upon the Al-Masjid al-Nabawi mosque in Medina and completed in 2009 - as its symbol. Almost ninety percent of Shadian's fifteen thousand residents are Muslims, belonging to the contemporary Hui minority of China. However, Shadian is also known for the so-called Shadian Incident of 1975, in which villagers forcefully opened closed-down mosques during the last years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The 'incident' left 1,600 people dead at the hands of the People's Liberation Army. "The old Islamic schools in Shadian used to have valuable library collections, but everything has been burnt," lamented my informant, Mr. Ma. Across the Mosque was the Islamic Culture and Arts Center that exhibits and sells Sino-Islamic artworks. Within a few blocks of the Grand Mosque, one senses a mix of forward-looking aspirations and painful memories, reflecting a continuing history of repression and resilience of Islam in China.

Shadian's trans-local networks in history

Islam in Yunnan expanded during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), when Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din from Bukhara (current Uzbekistan) was appointed as the provincial governor, promoting both Islamic and Confucian institutions. According to Mr. Ma, "he also built aqueducts, without him you would not see present-day Yunnan". Following waves of Muslim settlement into the town since the thirteenth century, Shadian became a part of caravan trade routes between Yunnan and Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and India. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, trade became so important that, just before the Chinese communist victory of 1949, around 700 out of Shadian's 980 families, had two to three horses conducting commerce across northern Thailand and Myanmar.¹

In the first half of the 20th century, Shadian also emerged as a significant center for Islamic learning. For example, of the thirty-three students from China who studied in Cairo's al-Azhar University in the 1930s and 1940s, five came

from Shadian alone. They were heavily sponsored by Bai Liangcheng (白亮诚, 1893-1965). A scholar and an official, Bai Liangcheng founded the Yufeng Elementary School in 1914, one Islamic Girls School, and several Islamic periodicals. The old Yufeng Elementary School now displays an exhibition on Bai Liangcheng and Shadian's notable Muslims. Here I learned that Bai also initiated industrialized tea commerce based in Yunnan's southernmost Xishuangbanna. With imported technology and machineries from Japan and India, he constructed a large-scale tea factory, creating trade networks domestically and across the borderlands of Thailand and Myanmar. These connections would later provide permanent homes for Shadian diaspora, who migrated to Thailand and Myanmar in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and formed Sino-Islamic enclaves. In November 1948, Bai Liangcheng and fifty others left Shadian, most likely to flee Communist rule. The following year, fourteen of them undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca. "It's embarrassing to say you're escaping," said Mr. Ma. "So you say you're going on the pilgrimage."

Return to Kunming

Back in Kunming, I told my Chinese host family about my experiences in Shadian, but was met with somewhat perplexed and worried expressions flashing across their faces. Later in the evening, my host forwarded me an article on Zhihu Ribao, a Chinese online platform where articles are posted anonymously. The article drew parallels between the Shadian Incident and the contemporary Islamic State in the Middle East - "both groups being violent, self-unifying and terrorist in essence" - echoing the dominant and official narrative in China. The rich histories that I observed in Shadian, rooted in southern Yunnan with its critical ties outwards that have shaped the province's many landscapes, are apparently not making their inroads into the audience who needs them the most.

Hyeju (Janice) JEONG is a Ph.D Candidate in the Department of History at Duke University (janice.jeong@duke.edu)

References

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Islam in contemporary China: an overview

Jianping WANG

CHINA IS HOME to a large Muslim population. According to the Islamic Association of China, the country has over 25 million Muslims, 40,000 mosques and more than 50,000 Akhond, a Persian title for the Islamic clerics who serve the scattered communities all over the country. Every year, more than 10,000 Muslims make their pilgrimage to Mecca, while - over the past thirty years - nearly 12,000 Muslim students have completed their Islamic studies abroad, and another 100,000 have studied Islam in the *madrasa* (religious school) in China. All these figures show that Islam is not an insignificant issue for contemporary China's political and social landscape.

After being banned during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Islam in China has undergone a revival since the reform and opening-up policy of the late 1970s. In just thirty years' time, it has transformed from an underground religion into an Arabian-style religion that is officially recognized as one of the five religions in China (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism). Whether wearing their long robes, turbans, or hajibs, Muslims can be found all over China; from the big cities of Beijing and Shanghai to the island of Hainan, from Inner Mongolia in the north to Yunnan in the south, from the western border of Tibet to the eastern coastal region. However, more than half of the Muslim population lives in Northwest China, particularly in the Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, the vast region where 23,000 mosques serve various ethnic communities, including Uygur, Kazak, Kirghiz, Tajik, Uzbek, Tatar, Salar, Hui, Dongxiang, and Bao'an. Islam is also flourishing in the academic world: there are more than sixty Islamic periodicals, Muslim professors and scholars teach and research Islam in various universities or research institutions, and many conferences, workshops and forums on Islam are being held all over China, often sponsored and organized by Muslim elites.

The three pillars of the Islamic network in China

However, although China has more Muslims than any Arabian country, they are in fact still a vulnerable minority in Han-dominated China. While Muslims profit from governmental policies giving preferential treatment to ethnic minorities ('affirmative action') and officially enjoy freedom of religious practice, they are supervised carefully and restrictions remain in place over the activities of *madrasas*, religious ceremonies, religious organizations, etc. In order to maintain their Islamic tradition and to uphold their monotheistic identity, it is important for the widely dispersed Muslim enclaves to build a strong network in and outside of China. Three Islamic institutions form the backbone of this network.

Firstly, the mosque plays a central role in the Chinese Muslim community. Besides its religious function as a place for ritual praying, mosques in China also have social, economic, and cultural functions, such as administrative management, festival celebration, social mobilization, economic enterprises, cultural education, or even daily life affairs. Hence, the mosque is a stronghold that binds its local community, while stretching out its external relations with communities in other areas, in order to establish the *umma* (Muslim nation) in the context of an unreceptive environment.

Secondly, the *maktab* (grammar school, or primary level) and *madrasa* (Islamic college or high level) provides the Chinese Muslim community with education in Islamic knowledge, faith reinforcement, and passes Islamic tradition to the next generation. Most *maktabs* and *madrasas* in China are attached to the mosques, however, there are also quite a few *madrasas* set up independently and open to all Muslims in society. They are not only responsible for the maintenance of Islam and to cultivate young Muslims, but also to strengthen and revive Islamic consciousness of Muslims of all ages. *Maktabs* and *madrasas* often regenerate the vitality of the community