

Jointly organised by the Muhammad Alagil Chair in Arabia Asia Studies, Asia Research Institute and the Arabia-Asia Research Cluster, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore.

With the growing engagements between Middle Eastern countries and China in the twenty-first century and China's recent One Belt One Road Initiative, Arab-Chinese interactions has become an increasingly important yet under-studied topic. In order to develop and promote work in this area over the next few years, the China-Arabia Encounters and Engagements Conference invites scholars at different stages of their career in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Europe, and the US from a variety of disciplines to participate a two-day meeting. Collectively, they will investigate all aspects of Arabia-China relations, from the distant past, through the present, and into the future. Topics covered by the panels include travellers trading tales, early geostrategy, politics and diplomacy, Muslims' Meccan experiences, intellectual exchanges, as well as economic connections and potentials.

Convenors

Prof Engseng HO

Asia Research Institute, and Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

Dr Nisha MATHEW

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Dr Shuang WEN

Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2016**09:15 – 09:30 REGISTRATION****09:30 – 09:45 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS****Jonathan Rigg**, National University of Singapore**Engseng Ho**, National University of Singapore**09:45 – 11:15 PANEL 1 | TRAVELLERS TRADING TALES**CHAIRPERSON **Nisha Mathew**, National University of Singapore09:45 **China Arab Relations through the Lens of Jeddah's Afghan Middlemen Trading Community****Magnus Marsden**, University of Sussex, UK10:05 **Miraculous Circulations: Fabric Trade from China to Dubai through the Indian Traders****Ka-Kin Cheuk**, Leiden University, Netherlands10:25 **Chinatopia: China as a Worldly Utopia in a 9th-Century Account of a Muslim Traveller to the Orient****Nizar F. Hermes**, University of Virginia, USA

10:45 Questions and Answers

11:15 – 11:45 MORNING TEA**11:45 – 12:45 PANEL 2 | EARLY GEOSTRATEGY**CHAIRPERSON **Ernesto Braam**, National University of Singapore11:45 **Containing the Tibetans: An 8th-Century Sino-Arabic Power Alliance?****Angela Schottenhammer**, University of Salzburg, and McGill University, Canada12:05 **West Asia between South Asia and China: The Complexities and Geopolitics of Intra-Asian Interactions****Tansen Sen**, City University of New York, USA

12:25 Questions and Answers

12:45 – 14:00 LUNCH**14:00 – 15:30 PANEL 3 | DIPLOMACY**CHAIRPERSON **Rosey Ma**, Independent Scholar14:00 **Battlefield without Smoke: Chinese Muslim Delegations to the Middle East and Their Anti-Japanese War Publicity****Jilian Ma**, Middle East Technical University, Turkey14:20 **Cairo Declarations: Remapping Chinese Diplomatic Encounters with West Asia, 1941-1956****Ira N. Hubert**, McGill University, Canada14:40 **China-Japan Rivalry over the Middle East****Ghadda Abdelelah A Hayat**, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan

15:00 Questions and Answers

15:30 – 16:00 AFTERNOON TEA

16:00 – 17:30 PANEL 4 | MECCAN EXPERIENCESCHAIRPERSON **Cemil Aydin**, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA**16:00** **Belonging to the Same Religion, We Forgot our Differences of Nationality: Assessing the Hajj and Travels of Ma Songting and Zhao Zhenwu, 1932-33****John Chen**, Columbia University, USA**16:20** **Showcasing Sectarianism and Converting the Heathen in Mecca: An Exploration of the Hajj as a Contested Space****Mohammed Al-Sudairi****16:40** **Exiled To the Center of the World: The Turkestanis of Mecca****Rian Thum**, Loyola University New Orleans, USA**17:00** Questions and Answers**17:30 END OF DAY ONE****17:45** **BUS TRANSFER TO DINNER VENUE** (For Speakers, Chairpersons, and Invited Guests Only)**18:15** **CONFERENCE DINNER** (For Speakers, Chairpersons, and Invited Guests Only)**20:15** **BUS TRANSFER TO HOTEL** (For Overseas Speakers Only)

FRIDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2016

10:00 – 12:00 PANEL 5 | MUSLIMS AND CHINESE

CHAIRPERSON **Shuang Wen**, National University of Singapore

10:00 **Hui Muslims in the Invention of China: Constructing One Discourse and Deconstructing the Other**

Selim Hai Peng, Reuters News Agency

10:20 **Producing Multiple Imaginaries of Iran in the Hui Muslim Communities through China's Government Sponsored Exchange Programs**

Yang Yang, University of Colorado at Boulder

10:40 **Cross-cultural Encounters along the New Silk Road: Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam**

Yi Liu, Shanghai University, China

11:00 Questions and Answers

11:30 – 12:00 MORNING TEA

12:00 – 13:30 PANEL 6 | INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGES

CHAIRPERSON **Yueyang Chen**, Shanghai International Studies University

12:00 **Spiritual Practice in the Arabic Hagiography of the Chinese Jeherenye Sufi Order**

Florian Sobieroj, Friedrich Schiller-Universität Jena

12:20 **Unraveling the Principles of Nature: Arabic Philology in China, 16th-18th Centuries**

Dror Weil, Princeton University, USA

12:40 **The Scientific Muslim: Ma Jian and His Translation of Husayn al-Jisr's Treatise**

Zeyneb Hale Eroglu Sager, Harvard University, USA

13:00 Questions and Answers

13:30 – 14:30 LUNCH

14:30 – 16:10 PANEL 7 | BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

CHAIRPERSON **Jianhua Yu**, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

14:30 **The History of Bilateral Relation between China and Kuwait 1971-2009**

Riyan Hidayat, Universitas Indonesia

14:50 **From Ideology to Strategy: China's Development Aid to Yemen and Sudan**

Jiuzhou Duan, Tsinghua University, China

15:10 **The Chinese Imprint on the Algerian Economy: A Strategic Cooperative Relationship**

Siham Matallah, University of Tlemcen, Algeria

15:40 Questions and Answers

16:10 – 16:40 AFTERNOON TEA

16:40 – 18:10 PANEL 8 | ECONOMIC POTENTIALS ANALYSEDCHAIRPERSON **Engseng Ho**, National University of Singapore

16:40 **Can China-Arabia Regional Multilateral Cooperation be the New Model of International Regimes? Game Theory Analysis of China-Arabia Civil Aviation Relations within the Context of One Belt One Road Strategy**

Jiangtian Xu, University of East Anglia, UK

17:00 **China-Arab Economic Relations: Current Status and Future Challenges**

Liangxiang Jin, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, China

17:20 **Historical Reemergence, Global Economic Shifts: Chinese Overseas Investments in Saudi Arabia**

Alvin A. Camba, The Johns Hopkins University, USA

17:40 Questions and Answers

18:10 – 18:30 CLOSING REMARKS**18:30 END OF CONFERENCE**

18:45 BUS TRANSFER TO DINNER VENUE (For Speakers, Chairpersons, and Invited Guests Only)

19:15 CONFERENCE DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons, and Invited Guests Only)

20:45 BUS TRANSFER TO HOTEL (For Overseas Speakers Only)

China Arab Relations through the Lens of Jeddahs Afghan Middleman Trading Community

Magnus Marsden

Sussex Asia Centre, Department of Anthropology,
and School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, UK
m.marsden@sussex.ac.uk

This paper will explore the role played by traders from northern Afghanistan in the circulation of Chinese-made commodities sold at the hajj pilgrimage. It is based on fieldwork conducted in Yiwu (China) and Zeytinburnu (Istanbul) with traders from northern Afghanistan, especially though not exclusively those who identify themselves as being ethnically Turkmen and from the administrative districts of Andkhoy and Aqchah in Jowzjawn province. It may also present the findings of research conducted in Jeddah, if a proposed trip takes fruition. The paper is animated by four major themes that speak to the themes of the conference.

Trade and Commerce: The trading activities of Afghanistan's communities in Saudi Arabia and Istanbul are varied and complex: many bring tea shirts and Arab tunics from China (especially Yiwu a city in which members of the community own restaurants and transport companies) to Saudi - 'hajjis buy lots of gifts for their relatives and they don't care about the quality only the price'. One man I have met in both Yiwu and Istanbul for example exports to Jeddah Arab tunics that are made in Yiwu by a company that employs those interned in Chinese jails as tailors. This traders, and others like him, however also exports higher quality Turkish products to Saudi Arabia, especially clothing and carpets. Some of the traders indeed run their own factories, especially in Zeytinburnu and towns in the Southeast of Turkey, such as Gaziantep and Urfa, where there are established communities from northern Afghanistan. These factories initially served the Russian market for leather goods and clothing but have increasingly pivoted in the direction of Saudi Arabia. It has also been reported to me that until the onset of war, Afghan traders would travel from Jeddah to Aleppo in order to purchase machine-made carpets. The situated choices in terms of whether to purchase in Turkey or in China or elsewhere in the Middle East is an important element of the traders' strategies, and reflects and reveals global geopolitical dynamics.

Transnational Community Life: Saudi Arabia is home to thousands of families from northern Afghanistan who moved to the cities of Jeddah, Mecca and Madina in the late 70s and early 80s. During four months of research in Yiwu earlier this year, I met several traders from northern Afghanistan who told me of their work in Saudi Arabia, their business activities in China, and their family and collective lives in Turkey. Afghans residing in Yiwu more generally say that the most successful of their compatriots based in the city were those running businesses in Saudi Arabia. In July 2016, I visited Saudi-based traders I had met in Yiwu in the Zeytinburnu neighbourhood of Istanbul, a home for Turkic speaking Afghans, as well as Central Asian communities more generally, since the 1980s. The community of northern Afghans in Istanbul is growing more and more complex by the day - on the one hand there are the new wave of commercial investors from Kabul and Mazar i Sharif entering the city in order to buy property and open businesses; on the other hand, the sizeable Turkmen communities who continued to reside in Pakistan (especially Peshawar and Lahore) - where they own carpet manufacturing and trading business - are increasingly shifting to Turkey as the Pakistan state has become increasingly hostile to refugees from Afghanistan. An analysis of these dynamic and mobile 'partial communities' requires a consideration of their lives and activities across all of these contexts.

Citizenship strategies: The traders travel to Zeytinburnu in the summer to escape the heat of Jeddah, as well as to order carpets and clothes to be delivered to Saudi on time for the great hajj pilgrimage. Many also attend or organise the weddings of relatives who were resettled in Turkey in the 80s by the Turkish government. Indeed, more generally, Afghan traders have successfully sought to acquire Turkish citizenship in the 1990s and 2000s. Holding a Turkish passport they say, raises their status in Saudi Arabia. It also gives them a national identity they believe is durable (many are from families who migrated from the former Emirate of Bukhara to Afghanistan in the 1920s and 30s). Finally being Turkish also affords the children of these trading families access to higher education, something they say is very difficult in Saudi: 'when our children finish class 12, we have no choice but to bring them into the shop or warehouse and start them trading'. At the same time, however, 'being Turkish' may pose problems for traders visiting China, perhaps one of the reasons why Saudi-based traders might hold Turkish passports but connect their Saudi residency to their Afghanistan travel documents.

Unlike in the other Afghan commercial communities and networks I have studied (e.g. Marsden 2016), the majority of the men I have spoken to who are part of these communities say they have never returned to Afghanistan after they left in the early 80s. Those who theorise this decision say it is because they were already refugees in Afghanistan when they left, having been denied access to the Afghan national identity card (tazkira) until the 1960s. Saudi Arabia, like the UAE, operates the kafilah system (a Saudi citizen is required to be a partner of the business activities of a resident foreigner): some of my informants have told me that their kafilah are third generation descendants of 1920 emigres from Bukhara. These people, they say, have 'become Arab' but are still more trustworthy partners than those without Central Asian heritage. Such relations, however, are never simply straightforward: one trader originally from northern Afghanistan's Samangan province told me how an originally Uyghur kafilah had visited his house in Istanbul saying he would only stay for two weeks, but was still residing in the house 6 weeks later. As a result the Afghan trader had no choice but to put his family up in a hotel for the duration of their annual visit to Turkey.

Magnus Marsden is Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Asia Centre at the University of Sussex. He is author of several books including *Trading Worlds: Afghan merchants across modern frontiers*.

Miraculous Circulations: Fabric Trade from China to Dubai through the Indian Traders

Ka-Kin Cheuk

Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University
k.k.cheuk@hum.leidenuniv.nl

This paper examines how Indian traders, despite continuously indebted to Chinese suppliers, can still sustain transnational trade from China to Dubai. The examination is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Keqiao (2010-2012, 2016-2017), a municipal district of eastern Zhejiang Province, China. Accounting for its one-third annual turnover in China, Keqiao is the trading frontier for fabrics, the semi-finished textiles that are industrially weaved, knitted, dyed, and printed in bulk before being exported. Drawn by the trade opportunities, around 5,000 Indians have flocked to Keqiao to run global intermediary business. Focusing on their everyday activities in Keqiao, the paper shows that in addition to simply banking global capitals from Dubai, Indian traders can also turn such capital flows into what I call 'miraculous circulations': Chinese suppliers continue to take orders through Indian traders, notwithstanding the much-delayed payment and, in some cases, payment discounted or even defaulted. Specifically, the paper describes the ways whereby Indian traders use the capitals from Dubai to break into a lucrative local economy of export rebates, which would be otherwise reserved for Chinese suppliers only. As such, it illustrates that Indian traders not only circulate capitals transnationally, but also honing its usage in a specific China-Arabia context.

Ka-Kin Cheuk is Post-doctoral Researcher at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies. Ka-Kin obtained his PhD in Anthropology from University of Oxford, UK. His homepage can be viewed at <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/ka-kin-cheuk>

Chinatopia: China as a Worldly Utopia in a Ninth-Century Account of a Muslim Traveller to the ‘Orient’

Nizar F. Hermes

Department of Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages & Cultures
University of Virginia, USA
nfh5x@virginia.edu

In my talk, I will explore the representation of China in arguably the first eyewitness Arabic account of China by a ninth-century Muslim merchant/traveler (which was later incorporated by Aby Zayd al-Sirafi in *Akhbar al-Sin wa-l-Hind*). Al-Tajir’s account is a mine of sociocultural, religious, political, and economic information about India and China in the ninth century. Among other things, I will discuss Sulayman al-Tajir’s fascination with ninth-century China’s “Universal literacy,” political justice, social equality, agricultural and economic abundance, and the Chinese unequalled artistic skills in craftsmanship and painting. For obvious reasons, al-Tajir notes with fascination what he saw of widespread literacy among Chinese men and women. Whether poor or rich, young or old, he tells us, the Chinese learn calligraphy and the art of writing. This was the outcome of an effective political policy of decentralized promulgation of education on the part of the Chinese politicians. “In every town,” al-Tajir writes, “there are scribes and teachers who impart education to the poor and their children; they receive their maintenance from the treasury” (52).¹ Since everybody knows how to read and to write, all the disputes and complaints must reach the king not only in documents written by a *katib* (scribe) licensed by the *hikam* (laws) but—to our surprise and amazement—in perfect spelling (51). “[And] before the plaintiff [*sahib-al-qiss*] is presented in the audience of the king,” al-Tajir says, “a person who is stationed at the gate of the house looks into the written [complaint] of the person. If he finds that there are some mistakes in it he rejects it” (51). Universal literacy does not seem to be the invention of our modern times, and “the Literall advantage,” to the detriment of the seventeenth-century English traveler Samuel Purchas (d. 1626), is God’s gift to all.

In the same connection, despite its brevity, al-Tajir’s account of Chinese justice is particularly remarkable. Not only does the Muslim traveler notice with admiration the absence of bureaucracy, but he also speaks with awe of the Chinese *al-dara*: “Every town has a thing called *al-dara*. This is a bell placed near [lit. ‘at the head of’] the ruler of the town and is tied to a cord stretching as far as the road for the [benefit] of the common people” (49). If a person is wronged by another person, he/she shakes the cord that is linked to *al-dara*. When doing so, al-Tajir observes, “the bell near the ruler starts ringing. So he So he [the wronged] is allowed to enter [the palace] to relate personally what the matter is and to explain the wrong done to him” (49). The result of this medieval Chinese “wonder” was the amazing accessibility of the public to the political and judicial hierarchy. In medieval China, it seems, injustice was panoptically controlled and justice was impressively disseminated. This conjures up the modern theory of panopticism. Whereas modern states, as understood by Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault, function through this panoptical controlling of their citizens, the medieval Chinese state, to the surprise of all, used panopticism to repress injustice. Not found even in the most democratic of modern societies, the Chinese *al-dara*, it appears, is a more utopian wor(l)d.

Nizar F. Hermes received his PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Toronto's Centre for Comparative Literature, in association with the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. Before joining the University of Virginia, he had taught at the University of Toronto, Princeton University, and the University of Oklahoma. While Nizar's research interests are interdisciplinary and comparative in scope, he is particularly interested in medieval and early modern Islamic-European contacts, medieval and early modern Arabic-Islamic travel and diplomacy, North African and Andalusian studies, and classical Arabic-Islamic prose and poetry. He is author of *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture, Ninth-Twelfth Century AD* (The New Middle Ages), New York: Palgrave-Macmillan: 2012, and was nominated for the 2015 Sheikh Zayed Book Award for Arabic Culture in Other Languages.

Containing the Tibetans: An Eight-Century Sino-Arabic Power Alliance?

Angela Schottenhammer

History Department, University of Salzburg,
and the Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University, Canada
angela.schottenhammer@sbg.ac.at

According to information provided in a tomb stele (*shendao zhi bei* 神道之碑) of a Chinese eunuch, a certain Yang Liangyao 楊良瑤 (736–806), the latter was sent as an envoy to the Abbasids (*Heiyi dashi* 黑衣大食; lit. “Black-dressed Tajik”, i.e. the Arabs) by Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 780–805) in 785. It seems that the mission was intended to ask the Arabs for military support against the Tibetans. This paper will expound the geopolitical situation in Asia in the second half of the 8th century and comparatively analyse the tomb stele against the background of the political landscape under the Chinese Emperor Dezong and more specifically against the backdrop of the court’s politics in the face of Tibetan aggression. I will argue that although a clear indication that the mission of this eunuch even took place at all is absent in both Chinese and Middle Eastern historiography, there is no plausible reason to automatically rule out the possibility that the mission was carried out, or to assume that somebody might have faked such a story on an epigraphic document like this tomb stele. Historical circumstances and a comparison with information provided in other sources rather suggest that the mission was sent, perhaps even successfully, and there are also quite a few political reasons as to why the mission and information pertaining to Yang Liangyao himself were not included in the official accounts. My paper, consequently, especially wants to address the question of why such an important diplomatic mission is neither mentioned in any other sources, and the question of why it has never been brought up in academic discourse.

The paper will argue that particular historical circumstances suggest that his mission was very plausible; and that the decision to send him to the Abbasid caliphate to ask the Arabs for assistance in pushing back the Tibetans was very much in line with Emperor Dezong’s foreign policy strategy. In this context, the paper seeks to show how two of the most powerful countries in Eurasia at that time, the Abbasid Caliphate in the West and China in the East, were considering forging a military alliance to contain a common “unpleasant” enemy. It will also show that despite of the Battle of Talas between the Arabs and China in 751, both countries subsequently maintained close commercial and political-diplomatic and military relations.

Angela Schottenhammer is professor of Non-European and World History at the University of Salzburg, Austria, and research director and adjunct professor (Chinese History) at the Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC), History Department, McGill University, Canada. She has been professor of Chinese Studies at Ghent University, Belgium (2010–2013), professor of Pre-modern Chinese History at the Centro de Estudios de Asia y África (CEAA), El Colegio de México (2009–2010), professor of Chinese Studies at Marburg University (2006–7 and 2008–9) and research director at the Department for Asian Studies, Munich University (2002–2009). She obtained her Ph.D. in 1993 from Würzburg University, Germany, with a thesis on “Song Period Tomb inscriptions” (M.A. 1989 on Liao Mosha and the Cultural Revolution) and her Habilitation degree (post doctoral university professor teaching qualification) 2000 from Munich University with a thesis on “Song Time Quanzhou in a Conflict Situation Between Central Government and Maritime Trade: Unexpected Consequences of the Central Government’s Grasp for the Wealth of a Coastal Region”. She is the editor of the Online journal *Crossroads – Studies on the History of Exchange Relations in the East Asian World* and of the book series *East Asian Maritime History* and has widely published on traditional Chinese history and culture as well as China’s manifold historical exchange relations and her integration into the Eurasian and global context. Websites: www.schottenhammer.net, http://indianoceanworldcentre.com/Team_3

West Asia between South Asia and China: The Complexities and Geopolitics of Intra-Asian Interactions

Tansen Sen

Baruch College, City University of New York, USA
tansen.sen@baruch.cuny.edu

This paper focuses on the role and contributions of West Asian traders, migrants, and officials in the interactions between South Asia and Song and Yuan China. It demonstrates that traders from West Asia were frequent participants in the commercial and tributary exchanges between the coastal polities in South Asia and the Song court in China. Similarly, the networks of West Asian migrants and Islamic preachers played an important role in connecting various regions of South Asia to coastal China during the Yuan period. Also during the Yuan period, the political alliance between Qubilai Khan and the Ilkhanate in Iran fostered unprecedented interactions across the Asian continent. By highlighting the place of West Asians in the commercial, diplomatic, religious, and migratory networks between South Asia and China, the paper questions the partition of Asia into sub-regions, often placing West Asia in the periphery, and argues that the pre-colonial connections across the continent were multifaceted, multidirectional, and extended from the markets in Baghdad to Khanbaliq (present-day Beijing) in China.

Tansen Sen is Professor of history at Baruch College, City University of New York, USA. He is the author of *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2003; 2016) and co-author (with Victor H. Mair) of *Traditional China in Asian and World History* (Association for Asian Studies, 2012). He has also edited *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Cultural and Intellectual Exchange* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014). Recently he completed a monograph entitled *India, China, and the World: A Connected History* and is now working on a book about Zheng He's maritime expeditions. He was the founding head of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Center (ISEAS) and the founding director of the Center for Global Asia (NYU Shanghai). He serves on the Governing Board of the Nalanda University, India.

Battlefield without Smoke: Chinese Muslim Delegations to the Middle East and Their Anti-Japanese War Publicity

Jilian Ma

Middle East Technical University, Turkey
jilianma@gmail.com

During the period of Anti- Japanese War, several Chinese Muslim delegations with different backgrounds went to the Middle East for various purposes. In 1938, The Chinese Muslim Salvation Association sent Chinese Islam Near East visiting delegation to expand publicity against Japan and seek supports from the Islamic world. One year later, Japan Army sponsored North China Hui Muslim pilgrimage delegation to go to the Middle East. To monitor and forestall their activities in Mecca, Chinese Muslim students in Al-Azhar University organized Islam pilgrimage delegation of Republic of China and went to Mecca.

Analyzing the travel accounts wrote by members of these delegations and related news, this paper explores national identity of Chinese Muslims who lived under both Chinese and Islamic culture traditions, and the discordance of this sense in different groups during the Anti-Japanese War.

It argues that the tradition of Islam and the horizons expanded by faith provided a source and choice for Chinese Muslims to coordinate their belief and the discourse of nation-state; and their religious identity and national identity were interactive and blended in each other. It also addresses that the Muslim elite intellectuals took a significant role in the publicity of patriotic conceptions.

Key Words: Muslim delegation, Anti-Japanese War publicity, Muslim identity, intellectuals

Jilian Ma got her MA (by research) from Department of Chinese studies, National University of Singapore in 2013 and her BA in Chinese Language and Literature from Beijing Language and Culture University in 2010. She went to Turkey and studied Turkish and Ottoman Turkish in language center of Ankara University after her graduation. Addition to learning Turkish, She had also been attending a series of seminars and workshops about Turkish culture and history organized by SETA (Foundation for social and Political Research, Turkey) and ADAM (Ankara Center for Thought and Research). After working in Hong Kong for one year, she came back to Turkey to resume her research. She has started her master study in Middle East studies in Middle East Technical University from this September. Now she is doing a research on scholars sent to China during the period of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Her research interests include Sino-Ottoman/Turkish relations, Ottoman diplomatic history, Chinese travelling to the Middle East and Islamic publishing network in the early 20th century, Chinese Muslim society.

Cairo Declarations: Remapping Chinese Diplomatic Encounters with West Asia, 1941-1956

Ira N. Hubert

McGill University, Canada
ira.hubert@mail.mcgill.ca

The question of border dispute resolution in early Maoist China has been widely debated by historians and policy practitioners, with scholars such as Fravel (2008) and Shen & Lovell (2013) noting the PRC's strategic use of territorial negotiations with neighbors in furtherance of broader foreign policy objectives.¹ While demonstrating the flexible and often conciliatory approach of Communist Party leaders (CCP) to border issues into the 1950s and early 1960s, these studies aiming to theorize and even exceptionalize PRC handling of sovereignty claims (i.e. as a post-imperial polity) note leaders' linkage and sensitivity to an ever-shifting "international environment," but fail to account for the work of diplomacy that any case for territorial ownership then, like now, actually entails. My paper rejects the tendency to see territorial disputes as essentially bilateral, by focusing on spaces abroad. Specifically, I recover episodes from the years 1941 to 1956 whereby Arab publics and government officials, empowered in international relations as non-aligned and anti-colonialist, found themselves introduced and asked to directly adjudicate sovereignty contests involving China and its neighbors. Through analysis of Chinese-language diplomatic correspondence, print media, thirdcountry intelligence reports, and officials' published memoirs (回憶錄), I 'take off the Cold War lens' in order to appreciate a Republic of China ministerial apparatus geared during the Sino-Japanese War towards wartime goals in the Middle East being, by late 1946, re-tasked to outmaneuver anti-Kuomintang sojourners and programs in the region. Also, I observe rhetorical and tactical continuities among KMT and CCP policymakers towards the rapidly decolonizing Arab Middle East — some of which bear a striking resemblance to trans-continental approaches today. I argue that pending colonial questions compelled Iraqi, Syrian, and Egyptian nationalists (among others) to register influential opinions about East Asian affairs; this pattern of intersection surged with the opening of debates at the United Nations, nearly a decade before presumed first encounters at the famed Asian-African Conference at Bandung (1955). A new historiography of the Chinese Civil War and ensuing cross-Straits dispute must challenge the narrow spatial coordinates by which they are conventionally understood, so as to apprehend the global manner by which these and other Chinese sovereignty struggles have been waged.

Ira N. Hubert's fields of interest in McGill's doctoral program, begun in 2012 under the supervision of Dr Lorenz Lüthi, are 20th century international relations (with an emphasis on the post-1945 period), modern Chinese history, and modern Middle East history. Originally from Baltimore, Maryland, Ira has earned his honours BA in political science and MA in Islamic & Near Eastern studies from Washington University in St. Louis. He then spent three years in Washington, D.C. writing on international security issues for the U.S. Department of Justice, followed by a year of independent study based in Guilin and Beijing, China. His dissertation research will focus on variation and change in China's diplomatic engagement with the countries of the Arab Middle East during the Cold War years. Seeking to contribute to new narratives concerning Sino-Arab state relations, some of his related mid-20th century interests include international cooperation against perceived ideological threats (from both Western and 'nonaligned' perspectives); anti- and post-colonial nationalisms; and cultural diplomacy. Tangentially, Ira is also interested in historiographical efforts to situate events of political and social upheaval in post-1945 America in international context.

China-Japan Rivalry over the Middle East

Ghadda Abdelelah A Hayat

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan
ghadha15@apu.ac.jp

Sino-Japanese relationship with the Middle East goes back in history. Due to their economic interests; both countries started their relations with the Middle East at an early age. China and Japan share common interests in exporting their products into the region's rich market, and importing the region's large oil volume. However, those shared interests have led the two to engage in a regional rivalry over energy resources. Toichi (2006) explains the two's rivalry as a clear intensified competition that aims to secure oil and gas shares in the Middle East market. China's influence has been comparatively growing in energy area. According to Graham (2016), China has replaced Japan as the Middle East's second largest crude oil importer and seventh biggest trading partner. As a react to that rising influence; Japan has intensified its engagement in the Middle East region. Pollock (2016) referred to the era of Abe's administration as the most active era in Sino-Japanese confrontation. He explicated how Abe's administration has been trying to establish a defined economic stand in order to ensure that Japan's position is known and that its desires are met even with China's presence in the region. The two countries' rivalry extends beyond energy levels. China has spread its ties in the Middle East in terms of politics, infrastructure, culture, education and even religion, and so has Japan. Both leaders are trying to present themselves as trustable good-faith friends who provide reliable responses on political, economic, and other issues. Nishihara (2014) defined Abe's administration issuance of good-faith policies and promotion of rules-of law and democracy as an attempt to build a solid ground in the area and spread a good Japan's image in the region, an image that contrast to China's.

This paper aims to investigate the political, economic, and people-to-people dimensions of the Sino-Japanese rivalry in the Middle East. By tracking their engagement in the region, analyzing the past and current development, and presenting findings regarding the development that led and shaped their rivalry; this paper attempts to answer the question of:

Why did Sino-Japanese engage in a Middle East rivalry?

Belonging to the Same Religion, We Forgot our Differences of Nationality: Assessing the Hajj and Travels of Ma Songting and Zhao Zhenwu, 1932-33

John Chen

Department of History, Columbia University, USA
jtc2148@columbia.edu

Studies of the Chinese Hajj to date focus almost exclusively on the pilgrimage's significance for Chinese Islam within China (Lipman 1997; Ben-Dor Benite 2014; Petersen 2016). This paper argues that much could be gained by viewing the Chinese Hajj as also a self-sufficient question of circulation, lest it be seen only as a subset of the grand narrative of Chinese Islamic and thus, perhaps, of Chinese history. The Sino-centric perspective is particularly limiting as regards the early twentieth century, for one, because it does not fully account for the transformations of the Hajj itself at that time. These included the increasing normalcy of nineteenth-century imperial regulations such as passports and quarantine (Low, 2008; Roff, 1982), as well as the normative influence exerted after 1932 by the newly established Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In addition, the Sino-centric perspective does not adequately address how the domestic "Chinese" and transnational "Islamic" activities of Republican-era Chinese Muslim elites, rather than requiring reconciliation, in fact automatically reinforced and relied on one another, simultaneously legitimizing Chinese Muslims' status in both the Chinese nation-state and the global *umma*.

This paper develops an alternative circulationist perspective on the Chinese Hajj. It does so by focusing on the Hajj and other Middle Eastern travels of two prominent Chinese Muslims in 1932-33: Imam Abdul Rahim Ma Songting (1895-1992), head of Beijing's Chengda Academy, and Abdullah Siddiq Zhao Zhenwu (1895-1938), editor of China's leading Muslim journal, *Yuehua*. Their journey coincided with a dramatic expansion of the Chinese Hajj: sixty Chinese Muslims made the journey in 1933 (versus only a few in the whole nineteenth century), and over one hundred made it in 1936. As the quotation in this paper's title suggests, that journey was replete with contingencies that led them to experience the *umma* in a manner all but unavailable in China—and, with rare exceptions such as this, untraceable in Chinese sources.

Ma and Zhao's journey through the Indian Ocean to the Middle East was highly consequential. In Singapore, they met Ḥaḍramī patriarch Syed Ibrahim Alsagoff, laying the groundwork for the Chinese Islamic South Seas Delegation's wartime diplomacy in 1939-41. In Egypt, they met King Fu'ad I, who invited them to the last Ramadan *jum'ā* at the Mosque of 'Amr Ibn al-'Aṣ, agreed to send Egyptian imams to work at Chengda, and made a gift of books that became Chengda's "Fu'ad Library." They also delivered the second set of Chinese Muslim students to al-Azhar, and encouraged important further work and decisions by the Chinese Azharites, including Ma Jian's translation of the Quran into Chinese, Pang Shiqian's Arabic-language magnum opus *China and Islam*, and Hai Weiliang's relocation to Cairo from Delhi. They cemented relations with Grand Imam Sheikh Muhammad al-Ahmadi al-Zawahiri and other Azhar sheikhs, and purchased a set of Arabic type to bring back to China. In Jerusalem, they met Grand Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni, who referred them to contacts in Hijaz. Finally, in Saudi Arabia, they not only completed the pilgrimage and enjoyed an audience with King Abdulaziz, but had fruitful impromptu exchanges with several Arabs, Indians, and Southeast Asians, who recognized Ma and Zhao from their involvement with *Yuehua* or their photos in Arab papers.

This paper uses Zhao's travelogue, *Xixing riji* (1933), as well as other accounts from the 1920s and 1930s, to rethink several transnational aspects of modern Chinese Islam—including print exchanges, knowledge transformation, and concepts of Islamic community—in the context of both Chinese Muslim elite politics and the overall evolution of the modern Hajj. In pursuit of a truly multi-perspectival, circulationist account, it will also use Arabic periodicals to assess the relevance of Ma and Zhao's journey, and Chinese Islam generally, to interwar Arabic speakers.

John Chen is a doctoral candidate in History at Columbia University. He is interested thematically in global histories of Islam, science, and knowledge transformation, and regionally in modern China and the modern Middle East. His dissertation, "Making Islam Chinese: Chinese Muslim Elites, Nation-Building, and the Limits of Islamic Universalism, 1900-1960," has been supported by Fulbright-Hays, Columbia GSAS, and Columbia Weatherhead fellowships. His work has been published by *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* (CSSAAME, Spring 2014), the Middle East Institute's Middle East-Asia Project (MAP, March 2015), and the *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* (SOJOURN, forthcoming). Prior to entering Columbia, John worked as a research associate at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in New York. Before that, he lived for over a year in Cairo, where he completed a full-year fellowship at the American University in Cairo's Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) with the support of a Fulbright student grant, and received additional training in written and simultaneous translation with the support of a Critical Language Enhancement Award (CLEA). A native of Massachusetts, John earned his BA from Harvard University (2008), specializing in history and Arabic.

Showcasing Sectarianism and Converting the Heathen in Mecca: An Exploration of the Hajj as a Contested Space

Mohammed Turki Al-Sudairi

msudairi@gmail.com

In the traditional narration of Sino-Islam, the Hajj, by virtue of taking place in the sacred heart of Islam, has functioned, both historically and in the contemporary period, as a major channel for the transmission of various religious discourses among Muslim communities in China. The concentric spread from the 'core' to the 'periphery' has been a longstanding paradigm by which the diffusion of 'reformist streams' – typified by the Yihewani and Salaifeiye *jama'at* – into China has been understood. Little attention however has been accorded as to how the Hajj – and the Meccan space more broadly – has functioned as a *site of contestation* in relation to Sino-Islam in the modern era. The array of groups, narratives, and issues involved can allow us to look at the question of contestation from various dimensions, although two will suffice for now. First, as an intra and inter-sectarian one in the normative and material senses wherein the sectarian complexities of Sino-Islam are brought to the fore. The *al-da'wah al-salafiyya's* fragmentation and the multifaceted connections some of its self-proclaimed leaders have with the Saudi religious establishment (which influences the distribution of quotas, accessibility to the sites, audiences...etc.) exemplifies the intra aspect of this form of contestation. More interestingly, and turning to the inter-sectarian manifestations of this, certain Hanafi revivalist Yihewani groups, like that of the virulently anti-Salaifeiye Ma-Ha network, make a point of displaying their resistance to the hegemony of what they deem as an 'un-Islamic' Wahhabi control of the sacred sites during the Hajj by secluding themselves from congregational practices.

Second, and shedding light on some of the newer developments taking place within Sino-Islam, and particularly with regards to the appearance of Han converts and Chinese-oriented *da'wah* (missionary) activities from across the Islamic world, we turn towards the several thousand non-Muslim Chinese laborers who were brought in 2009-2010 to work on the Haramain train projects close to Mecca. Their problematic and visible presence (with their own 'China town' according to the Saudi press' treatment) led to an uproar within Saudi society contesting state permissiveness regarding this matter. The state's responses, which will be examined in full, have contributed to the emergence of an interesting *da'wah* (missionary) phenomenon targeting Chinese-speaking communities within the Kingdom. This phenomenon has gained considerable momentum over the past few years and – returning to the general theme of the paper - draws upon narratives of contestation in its own right depicting China as a battleground for global sectarian struggles (Sunni-Shia.)

Exiled To the Center of the World: The Turkestanis of Mecca

Rian Thum

Department of History, Loyola University New Orleans, USA
thum@loyno.edu

In 1948, a fourteen-year-old Uyghur girl, Aynur,¹ left her home in Chinese Turkestan and headed for Mecca. She had no idea that she would never return. Today she remembers most vividly the sheer mountain defiles and shaggy yaks of the Karakoram, as well as a stormy sea passage to Arabia, but another turn of events had a more powerful effect on her life. When the Chinese Communist Party took control of her hometown, Aynur's parents decided to remain in the environs of Mecca, where she lives to this day, and where she is known not as a Uyghur, nor as Chinese, but as a Turkestani. This paper examines the historical development of the Turkestani community of Mecca Province in Saudi Arabia, a community formed by successive waves of exile and pilgrimage between the 1870s and the present. In doing so, it argues for a reexamination of our notions of centers and peripheries and shows the close relationship that can sometimes exist between pilgrimage and exile, as in the case of Aynur.

Often we think of exile as a movement to a periphery, but the Turkestanis of Mecca have been exiled from a place usually considered marginal to a place that they and much of humanity see as a center, even *the* center of the world. Of course, more voluntary migrations are often center-seeking, but exile rarely lands one in a place that is more central to one's cosmology than the home left behind. Yet, for all the romanticized desire that Mecca can conjure, many first-generation Turkestani Meccans have felt themselves to be marooned on the periphery.

Their Mecca-born children have faced fewer obstacles to social integration, but have embraced an additional challenge of identity construction. Banding together with the Meccan descendants of Samarqandis, Bukharis, and Khoqandis (people whom today we might be tempted to call Uzbeks), they have embraced a local Arabian category, Turkestani, filling it in with a hybrid identity of their own. It is an identity continually renegotiated across inter-generational contours of successive diasporic waves. Some left Chinese Turkestan before the creation of the Uyghur identity, others after. Some speak an Uyghur dialect shaped by the Chinese Communist Party's Sinicizing policies, others speak an older dialect. All have been forced to re-imagine themselves through the eyes of the center that is now their home.

The aims of this paper are threefold: to provide a basic historical outline for a community that has never been described in English-language scholarship; to uncover the mechanisms that have encouraged pilgrimage and exile to bleed together, including legal, financial, and geographic systems; and to tease out lessons from the Turkestani experience for our understanding of centers and peripheries.

¹ Aynur is a pseudonym.

Rian Thum is Assistant Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at Loyola University New Orleans, USA. His book, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Harvard University Press, 2014) argues that the Uyghurs – and their place in China today – can only be understood in the light of longstanding traditions of local pilgrimage and manuscript culture. The study uses manuscripts in Chaghatay and Persian, contemporary Uyghur novels, graffiti, and ethnographic fieldwork to uncover a complex of historical practices that offer new perspectives on what history is and how it works. The book was awarded the 2015 Fairbank prize for East Asian history (American Historical Association), the 2015 Hsu prize for East Asian Anthropology (Society for East Asian Anthropology, American Anthropological Association), and the 2015 Central Eurasian Studies Society Book Award. Thum's current book project, *Islamic China*, is a re-examination of Chinese Islam that takes full account of the numerous Persian and Arabic sources that Chinese Muslims have used and written. It re-evaluates Chinese-language Islamic traditions in light of their multilingual contexts and uncovers the role of Persianate Islamic networks in binding China and India together over the last 400 years. More generally, his research interests include historical anthropology, mobility, orality and writing, historiography, the history of money, and the place of non-Han peoples in China.

Hui Muslims in the Invention of China: Constructing One Discourse and Deconstructing the Other

Selim Hai Peng

Reuters News Agency
heipern1988@163.com

The Republican era (1911-1949) in China is the critical moment when China began to emerge as a modern nation-state. Various collective identities, including one tied to modern nation-state were formed during this era, enabled by print capitalism and relative freedom of expression. The Hui Muslims, who were historically marked by their alien faith in a largely Buddhist-Confucian world order also began to emerge as a “nationality” despite their wide dispersal across the vast Chinese territory in disarray. This paper traces the life and itinerary of one Hui Muslim intellectual, Noh Muhammad Da Pusheng, who traveled widely in the Muslim World after the full outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. By contextualizing his eight-month sojourn, this paper argues that Hui Muslim intellectuals' contribution to the Invention of modern China is two-fold. With much intellectual and political activism, they enthusiastically sought to subscribe Chinese Muslims to a hegemonic discourse of a modern nation state composed of diverse peoples on the one hand, on the other hand, they also made the unique contribution in deconstructing a competing discourse espoused by Japan, Pan-Asianism. Along those lines, this paper also extends the existing scholarship on Hui intellectual activity of that era beyond a Islamic revival and reform movement aided by a Egypt-China one way traffic of religious pedagogy. By bringing nationalism into the picture, other important sites including the Hajj, the International Holy Convention, and indeed Japan become potential new areas for historical excavation in studying the Hui Muslims' history and their current relationship with the nationalistic historiography in the People's Republic of China.

Selim Hai Peng was formerly a radio journalist with China Radio International for five years. He has a master's degree in East Asian Studies from University of California-Los Angeles, USA.

Producing Multiple Imaginaries of Iran in the Hui Muslim Communities through China's Government Sponsored Exchange Programs

Yang Yang

University of Colorado – Boulder, USA
yang.yang@colorado.edu

This paper examines China-Arabia connections by exploring how individuals, especially the Hui Muslims in China, respond to and appropriate national initiatives on building the New Silk Road. This paper thus looks at how undergraduate Hui Muslim students that major in Farsi and Persian Cultural Studies in Xi'an contribute to local Muslim communities' knowledge about Iran. Students are indispensable to cultural exchanges, especially knowledge transfers between different regions on the Silk Road. This paper specifically asks how the undergraduate Hui Muslims students understand, react to, and appropriate government sponsored exchange programs that are premised upon the strategic concerns over strengthening China-Iran connections through cultural exchanges. Moreover, how do their experiences contribute to the Muslim communities' knowledge of Iran in Xi'an through information sharing on social media?

The Chinese government sponsors exchange programs for Chinese students in foreign language studies to strengthen their language skills. This state sponsorship is manifest in providing governmental scholarships and organizing group itineraries for students, and aims at using students as cultural ambassadors to promote the presence of China in countries along the New Silk Road. However, exchange students—especially the Hui Muslim students—are immersed in the everyday life of Iranians and interact frequently with locals, thus gaining different perceptions about Iran. Through sharing individual experiences of the community members in Iran and learning from Iranians on various things including fashion and media, Muslims in Xi'an become connected to the broader Muslim world.

Xi'an, as the historic east terminus of the Silk Road and the new starting point of the One Belt One Road initiative, is a case in point that shows multiple forms of encounters and engagements in forging China-Arabia connections through the new Silk Road. Xi'an has a significant Hui Muslim population, most of which reside in the Muslim Quarter, an ethnic enclave and well-known tourist attraction that contributes to the local economy significantly. The Hui, one of the ten officially recognized Muslim ethnic minorities, often regards the Persian Empire as one of their ancestries and traces usages of Persian in their dialects and similar features in physical appearance. The Hui Muslim students leverage the historic narratives of Persian lineages among the Hui Muslims in claiming a better understanding of Iran as compared to Han Chinese. This lineage overlaps with government projects aimed at strengthening China and Iran's strategic relations through cultural exchanges.

This paper approaches the complex process of producing knowledges about global Muslim communities in Xi'an through individual travelling by understanding as a process of producing imaginaries of the Arabia in social space. This approach thus brings scholarship of Henri Lefebvre and Benedict Anderson in conversations. Henri Lefebvre's concept on spatial production as interlinked social relations allows it to see the impacts of transferring experiences from elsewhere and thus having impacts on social relations locally (Lefebvre 1991). Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities" shows how imaginaries of Iran from the Chinese side are assembled by different actors and diverse narratives (Anderson 1983). These imaginaries have various possibilities of being assembled together, and thus show impacts of competing actors and their ideas on envisioning Iran. This paper thus addresses diverse experiences of individuals with the new

Silk Road initiative and how the new Silk Road takes form in different local contexts both inside and outside China.

Yang Yang is a PhD candidate in Human Geography at the University of Colorado – Boulder, USA. Her research interests include urban and ethnic geographies, particularly the visualization of ethnicity and religion in the urban built environment. She obtained her Master of Sciences in Human Geography and Urban Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her current research concerns visualization of Islam and the Hui nationality as a process of ethno-religious subject making in inland, second tier cities in northwestern China. She participated in editing a volume on cultural cities in Asia, “Making Cultural Cities in Asia,” which is included in the Routledge series on regions and cities.

Cross-cultural Encounters along the New Silk Road: Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam

Yi Liu

Shanghai University, China
translation.liu@163.com

The historical Silk Road is an idealized type of cross-cultural conversations, including the main religious traditions of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, in parallel with risky trades and military conquests. The “New Silk Roads” proposed by the main powers after the cold war have more geo-political meaning, which is facilitated by the “One-Belt-One-Road” initiative of the Chinese government.

Between these two contrary pictures is the cultural and religious encounters in the new context. On one side, the Chinese government sponsored numbers of Confucius Institutes in countries along the Silk Road, which focus on teaching Chinese language and promoting Chinese culture abroad, but with little religious meaning. On the other side, Islamic missionary groups rose as a counterpart to the Christians and got supports from countries such as Saudi Arabia. They not only operate within China, through publications and training centers, but also target the Chinese migrant workers and students living in the Arabic world.

A third group is smaller in scale than the former two and without government support, but has larger and more complex cultural implications in the global context. That is the “Back to Jerusalem Movement”- the missionary work of Chinese Christians along the Silk Road with Muslims as the main target.

It can be traced back to the Edinburgh International Missionary Conference in 1900 and is considered as a part of the global ecumenical movement. When the China Inland Mission sent Christians to the Muslim area of Northwest China, they met their Islamic counterparts appointed by the Pan-Islamic Sultan Abdul Hamid II of the Ottoman Empire. Later, it developed as a Chinese indigenous movement in the 1940s, which was applauded and propagated by the Western missionaries. It revived in the 1980s among the Chinese “house churches,” which is called the “Great Commission” left for the Chinese Christians. The “One-Belt-One-Road” initiative of the Chinese government provided a new context for its development. And it also won supports from the American and Korean churches, as well as the large group of Chinese diasporas.

It is an illegal, secret movement within China. But the Westerners attribute it a geo-political meaning, i.e. to cultivate a Pro-American and Pro-Israeli group in China, as a counter-back to the cooperation between Confucianism and Islam, a topic proposed by the master of “Clash of Civilizations.” While China is historically well-known for the Confucian synthesis together with Christianity and Islam, this new movement will arise cross-cultural conflicts, due to its Pentecostal-fundamentalist theology, poor education and preparation, and aggressive missionary aspiration.

Yi LIU, PhD from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, is now Associate Professor of History at Shanghai University. In the 2010-11 academic year, he was a post-doctoral fellow at Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs of Georgetown University. And from 2013 to 2016, he acted as the Chinese Director of Confucius Institute at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. His expertise is on history of religion and comparative religions, particularly the mutual encounters between Confucianism, Christianity and Islam. He is the author of two monographs, *Religion and Politics in a Global Context* (Shanghai, 2011) and *Globalization, Public Religions, and Secularism: A Comparative Study of Christianity and Islam* (Shanghai, 2013). He also co-edited the *Blue Book of Turkey*, with three volumes published annually from 2014 to 2016. He was awarded an “Excellent Young Scholar” of Shanghai University in 2011 and a “Shuguang Scholar” of Shanghai Education Committee in 2015.

Spiritual Practice in the Arabic Hagiography of the Chinese Jeherenye Sufi Order

Florian Sobieroj

Friedrich Schiller-Universität Jena, Germany
x8sofl@uni-jena.de; florian.sobieroj@uni-jena.de

The hagiography of the Chinese branch of the Naqshbandiyya order of Islamic mysticism called Jeherenye (Jehelinye, of Arabic *Jahriyya*), mainly rooted in the provinces of Gansu, Ningxia and Yunnan, has been recorded in a small number of texts composed in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Arabic language. The most important are the *Rashaḥāt* (*Reshihaer* 熱什哈爾) of Guan Li Ye, *Kitāb al-Jahrī* (*Daotong shi zhuan* 道統史傳) of Muḥammad Maṣṣūr Ma Xuezhi and *Manāqib* (*Mannageibu* 曼納給佈) of Zhan Ye. As the hybrid Arabic-Persian text of the *Rashaḥāt*, the oldest of these literary works, is not accessible to researchers (however, a Chinese translation thereof has been published), in this paper I will concentrate on the hagiography recorded in the other two texts (extant as facsimile editions and partially in Chinese translation). The hagiography in the three above-mentioned works is made up mainly of stories about the founder of the Sufi order, Ma Mingxin, and his successors in the first few generations. Many of the stories deal with the contemplative discipline (*xiuxing* 修行; Arabic: *amal*) declared obligatory for the followers of the brotherhood (Ma Xuezhi gives a description, in the introduction to *K. al-Jahrī*, of the works he calls *qurubāt* [Chin.: *gongke*], i.e. works which make the disciple draw closer to God), and they include mainly the following practices:

- *Dhikr* 宰可熱, i.e. “remembrance” of God; carried out mainly through the application of the *kalimat al-tawḥīd* (“word of the oneness of God” [Chinese: *qingzhen yan de ci*]); *dhikr* can be performed individually and collectively (the latter has been performed in the circle called *dā’ira*, in the master’s home or in the Sufi convent, *gongbei*); descriptions of the physical execution of *dhikr* are given in the stories; there has been developed, within the Chinese Jahriyya, a whole mysticism of remembrance which has also been the core discipline of Sufism in the Arab lands;
- *Prayer formulas*, which were taught the disciples by the shaykhs, e.g. *subḥāna llāh* for their individual use, and *Litanies*, apparently learnt by Mingxin in Yemen (*Awrād al-sharīfa* [Chinese: *zunguide zanci*]);
- *Recitation of the “canonical” texts (jing)*, in the Sufi assemblies, namely: the *Suwar Khwājagān* (selections of Qoranic verses); the *Mukhammas* and the *Madā’ih* (the first in verse, the second in prose) in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, allegedly brought from the Yemen by Mingxin;
- *Connecting with the master* (shaykh), through the heart (cf. *rābiṭa* in the wider Naqshbandiyya order); copying the *Nisbat* (*nisibaiti* = genealogy of the masters of the Sufi order), thereby connecting with the Sufi ancestors.

Questions to be examined include the following: To what extent are the contemplative principles and practices of the wider Naqshbandiyya Sufi order reflected in the Jahrī hagiography? Are deviations from the classical Arabic Sufi models discernible which may be due to the influences of the Chinese environment and its religions, Buddhism and Taoism (cf. the physiology of the performance of *dhikr* involving the “raising of the *qi*”)? Is the hostility of Mingxin, pathfinder of the Jahriyya order, against Buddhist iconography characteristic of the Jahrī masters’ attitude towards the Chinese religions?

Florian Sobieroj, born 10.4.1958, is active (since the start of his employment in 1995) as a cataloguer of Arabic manuscripts in the project KOHD under the auspices of the Akademie der Wissenschaften Göttingen. He has published three catalogues in the VOHD series, including descriptions of Arabic as well as some Persian and Turkish Mss. of the BSB München and of some major collections of Thuringia. Sobieroj has studied oriental languages and history of religion at Freiburg university (he attained his PhD in 1991) and he worked as a lecturer of Arabic and Islamic studies at Victoria university of Manchester (1993-95) and as a replacement professor at the universities of Tübingen, Erlangen and Jena (he obtained his *venia legendi*, "Habilitation", in 2004). Besides cataloguing Islamic Mss. he takes an interest in Sufism, focusing on its manifestations in Arabic and Persian language literature. He has written a number of articles and books on manuscript studies and Sufism, including an *editio princeps* of one of the works of al-Qushayrī (he is preparing a translation of the Arabic mystical text with a special focus on the poetry). Sobieroj also studies Sufism in China (his article "The construction of the sanctity of Ma Mingxin" has been published in *Asia* 2016. 70 (1), p. 133-169) and he is preparing a publication on the Arabic literature of the Naqshbandiyya-Jahriyya of northwest China. His book publication *Variance in Arabic Manuscripts* (De Gruyter, 2016, SMC 5) also includes some excursions on Chinese Islam.

Unraveling the Principles of Nature: Arabic Philology in China, 16th-18th Centuries

Dror Weil

Department of East Asian Studies, Princeton University, USA
dweil@princeton.edu

The 17th and 18th centuries saw the rise of a new interest in Arabic and Persian texts in China, and the emergence of a new genre of Chinese Islamic literature. Chinese scholars undertook extensive searches for Arabo-Persian manuscripts that had been forgotten in libraries or were brought to China by foreign visitors, and integrated them into a new localized literary genre.

Late imperial China's Islamic literature juxtaposed and integrated Islamic and Chinese views of the natural world, and presented them to Chinese readers. In that process, China's scholars of Islam developed methods of translation of Arabic and Persian texts into Chinese, and forms of textual presentation, as they negotiated the conceptual and lexical bearings of the discourse on nature.

By highlighting representative segments of Islamic works in Chinese and comparing them to their Islamic sources, the talk will address the issues of movement of medical knowledge across Asia and the eastward expansion of Islamic medicine. It will discuss the main conceptual frameworks that were employed to introduce Islamic natural philosophy to Chinese readers, and the ways China's Islamic scholars reconciled Islamic and Chinese physiological paradigms. It will shed light on the historical actors and institutions in both the Islamic and Chinese societies that facilitated the movement of such knowledge.

The talk will refer to the Arabic and Persian works on the natural world that circulated in China during the 17th and 18th centuries, which reveal the scope of late imperial China's scholarly engagement with the Islamic world. In addition, it will discuss methods of cross-cultural translation, aspects of book culture, and their effect on the transmission of medical and scientific knowledge.

Dror Weil is PhD candidate in Princeton University's Department of East Asian Studies. Currently in the final stages of completing the dissertation, entitled: "The Vicissitudes of Late Imperial China's Accommodation of Arabo-Persian Knowledge of the Natural World, 16th-18th Centuries".

The Scientific Muslim: Ma Jian and His Translation of Husayn al-Jisr's Treatise

Zeyneb Hale Eroglu Sager

Fairbank Center, Harvard University, USA
hale.sager@gmail.com

Ma Jian, one of the most influential Chinese Muslim scholars in the twentieth century, translated Husayn al-Jisr's (1845–1909) *A Hamidian Treatise on the Truth of Islam and the Shari'a of Muhammad* into Chinese in 1938 when he was a student at al-Azhar University. Al-Jisr's treatise was an early version of the new discourse becoming prevalent among Muslim reformists concerning the compatibility of science and Islam. Nonetheless, Husayn al-Jisr held conservative views concerning social matters like slavery, polygamy, and jihad, which contradicted Ma Jian's already-established ideas. It therefore remains a curious question as to why Ma Jian chose to translate the treatise a few years after he translated Muhammad Abduh's *Theology of Unity* although Abduh's treatise surpassed that of al-Jisr in its espousal of rational thinking and presented an Islamic worldview closer to that of Ma Jian. In this paper, I analyze the original and the translated texts in comparison. This approach enables us to observe how Ma Jian navigated the highly controversial and heterogeneous reformist discourse in Egypt. His "peculiar" translation of al-Jisr's treatise, in which he not only selectively translated chapters but also totally changed the content of some others in order to make them conform to his own views, demonstrate that the religious, cultural, educational, and intellectual baggage Ma Jian brought from China to Egypt determined how he selected, adopted, and appropriated ideas from the Arabic reformist literature. His selection of al-Jisr's treatise for translation should be seen in light of the challenge posed by the theory of evolution prevalent among New Culture intellectuals in China. Husayn al-Jisr was among the first Sunni scholars who provided Muslims with a road map showing the direction Muslims should take in facing the positivistic challenge, specifically Darwin's theory. Al-Jisr's theological manuscript, with its distinctive coverage of evidence from all kinds of scientific disciplines, helped Ma Jian not only confront the anti-religion discourse in China but also go beyond the apologetic and rejectionist discourse prevalent among Chinese Muslim reformist literature in 1930s, mainly concerning the question of the compatibility of Islam and the theory of evolution.

The History of Bilateral Relation between China and Kuwait 1971-2009

Riyan Hidayat

Universitas Indonesia
riyan.hidayat51@ui.ac.id

China and Kuwait have bilateral relations long enough. At March 22, 2016, the Government of Kuwait did anniversary of China-Kuwait bilateral relations 45th year. Both of countries have accounted for the contribution and support of this bilateral relationship. The relations established in various fields such as politics, economy, culture and other minor fields such as sport and developing a human resources. Diplomatic visits between the two countries in a time series that alternates between 1989-2009 a regular agenda that is intended to strengthen the relationship and cooperation between the two countries. starting from the visit of President Yang Sang Khun from China to Kuwait in 1989 and the last visit was done representatives of Kuwait, Emir al-Sabah in 2009. In addition, Kuwait is the first country in the Middle East area which establish formal diplomatic relations with China. Both do perception and views on discourse and international dynamics that occur. for example, in the fields of investment, Kuwait continues to perform a variety of strategies to contribute to the development of investment in China. In other fields, China highlighted the events of the Gulf War in 1990 and against it. Gulf war itself could potentially lead to the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq's invasion activity. China also voiced diligent in offering solutions to the problems that occurred in the Arabian Gulf region.

China and Kuwait in the constellation of political influence and trade in their respective area. China with great economic power often cultivate influence in developing countries and in the region itself. In the perspective of the future, China can influence not only in the regional area, but also has the potential to control the world economy. position Kuwait as an Arab country "special" who have cooperated for a long time with China has a rich base is very large in China petrified in investing its resources for the benefit of Asia and the Middle East region. This requirement makes China continue cooperating with Kuwait to continue to work and vice versa, Kuwait did the same thing.

Results from this study is the explanation of the development of relations between China and Kuwait in the fields of politics, economy and trade in the period 1971-2009. Good communication in the political corridors between the two countries becomes very significant in maintaining political relations. Common vision to build mutual between the two countries is an important factor in the development of good bilateral relations. Siding with one another be a reinforcement of the relationship. In the field of economics and trading, Kuwait put myself as a variable guard the stability of the Chinese state through investments in infrastructure and monetary policies. China function as bilateral contacts that contribute economic development of trade in Kuwait with the contribution of export of goods that are not widely circulated in Kuwait. Based on the historical information, this relationship is forecast to continue to run and will increase in the years ahead. These developments will affect in regional economic developments such as in the Gulf, Arab or East Asia.

The significance of this paper is to provide enough information about the origin of the bilateral relations between China and Kuwait, provide sufficient information about the history of relations between China and Kuwait in the field of politics in the period 1971-2009, providing information on the history of relations between China and Kuwait in the fields of economy and trade in the period 1971-2009, and provide related analysis of the relationship between China and Kuwait in the future.

From Ideology to Strategy: China's Development Aid to Yemen and Sudan

Jiuzhou Duan

Tsinghua University, China
georgedd0@gmail.com

As its economic achievement and global stature enhancing, China's development aid to other countries become the highlight of world's attention. According to statistics in the White Paper *China's foreign aid*, the China's overall aid to foreign countries reaches 355.63 billion RMB which covers the periods from the 1949 to 2012. Although there exists quantitative gap between China and major western countries like the USA in foreign aid, China as an emerging donor is playing an incrementally important role in global development.

In China's foreign aid, Arab countries constitute a major part, especially Sudan and Yemen to which China offers consistent development aid for more than four decades. China's development aid to Sudan and Yemen began from late 1950s, until present the evolution of its priorities can be broken down into four stages. In the first stage, which is before 1978, the dominant incentive in China's foreign aid is communist ideology and internationalism. In the second stage, which is between 1979 and 1989, China degraded ideological factor in foreign aid, whereas turned to emphasize "aid in the benefits of domestic economic development". In the third stage between 1990 and 2011, due to the end of cold war, economic and energy factor plays increasing vital role in China's development aid to Sudan and Yemen. The context for the fourth stage is diplomatic transformation after President Xi came to office in 2012, China's foreign aid witnessed strategic adjustment in coordination with "One Belt One Road" initiative promulgated by Chinese President.

This paper tries to present the evolution of the People's Republic of China's priorities and its unique pattern in foreign aid to Arab countries. By offering a historical overview of China's development aid to Sudan and Yemen, this paper first outlines China's characteristic pattern when conducting foreign aid to Arab countries. Then, it details the China's major interests over foreign aid policies in the Arab region as it emerges as increasingly important shareholder in it, while finally providing a prediction as to how China might reassess its foreign aid policy to Arab countries in the context of President Xi's global strategic adjustment.

The Chinese Imprint on the Algerian Economy: A Strategic Cooperative Relationship

Siham Matallah

Institutional Analysis and Development, Department of Economics,
University of Tlemcen, Algeria
siham.maatallah@yahoo.com

China and Algeria have a deep historical relationship which has built a mutually beneficial partnership and become a role model for the South-South cooperation. The Sino-Algerian ties are based on equality, trust and mutual respect, especially since China has shown its solidarity and support for the Algerian people (e.g., the recognition of the Algerian independence, the relief efforts after the 2003 earthquake, etc.). China plays a vital role in the Algerian economy through its considerable participation in the hydrocarbon sector especially in exploration projects. Moreover, the Algerian economy depends heavily on the Chinese goods and technical expertise; hence Algeria is one of China's most important overseas markets. Additionally, the Chinese firms are always the first resort of Algeria's infrastructure sector. In fact, this close relationship that carries a strong socio-cultural dimension has induced both countries to further cooperate in higher education and scientific research and exchange students and scientists, and this is an indication of the peaceful coexistence between the two peoples. Thus, this paper will analyze the different aspects of China's contribution to the Algerian economy from 1962 to 2016. Particularly, this paper will discuss the prospects of Sino- Algerian relations in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI), it will also unearth very interesting and research-worthy aspects of the Algerian investment climate and shed additional light on intriguing questions concerning the new challenges confronting China in the North African region especially after the political turmoil that has spread across the Arab region.

Can China-Arabia Regional Multilateral Cooperation be the New Model of International Regimes? Game Theory Analysis of China-Arabia Civil Aviation Relations within the Context of One Belt One Road Strategy

Jiangtian Xu

Political Science, University of East Anglia, UK
xujiangtian@icloud.com

The ultimate ambition of the paper is to explore whether China-Arabia Cooperation, within the context of China's One Belt One Road Strategy, can make new international regimes through their efforts to negotiate, contract as well as sustainably promote the political norms of regional multilateralism internationally.

Game Theory analysis will be used as the method to explore whether China-Arabia regional multilateral cooperation can form new model of international civil aviation regimes as well as whether this model can be applied in the world to be the international standards. The four game theory scenarios between China and EU's rational interactions (friendly or cold to each other) will be exposed, while the four payoffs of China and EU's each within four different contexts of EU and China's rational behavior patterns will be compared vertically and horizontally.

The conceptual framework will be established based on the research findings of Regimes Theory from Krasner, Ikenberry, Keohane, Nye, Stein, Powell and others. The exploratory study of my research approached by Game Theory analysis can contribute new dimensions to both academic discussion as well as practical operations of international civil aviation politics which claims that China-Arabia Cooperation under One Belt One Road Strategy has high potential to make the new international civil aviation regimes with the ideology of regional multilateralism, it is also highly possible to promote it to wider applications in the world.

Jiangtian Xu is PhD Candidate of Politics (with Full PhD Scholarship) at University of East Anglia in the UK. My research interests are China's Foreign Policy, EU's Foreign Policy, Regimes Theory and Game Theory. I have presented at the conferences (all with conference grants) held by Cambridge University (UK), Victoria University (Canada), Hong Kong Baptist University, Bamberg University (Germany) and Bremen University of Technology. My most recent presentation on China's Foreign Policy was *Can China or EU Become the New Hegemon or Regime Maker of Global Politics?* at *Global China: UK-China Next Generation Dialogue*, University of Sheffield, UK (with Conference Grant) in July 2016.

China-Arab Economic Relations: Current Status and Future Challenges

Jin Liangxiang

Senior Fellow with Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS)
jinliangxiang@siis.org.cn

The new century witnessed rapid development of economic relations between China and Arab countries. And despite the security challenges, economic relations between the two have been stable in general. China's economic relations with major Gulf oil producers have contributed greatly to maintaining the feature of stability. China's economic relations with the countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt and Tunisia, which had experienced turmoil, resumed very quickly and even increased greatly shortly after the turmoil.

The reasons are numerous. The most important should be the mutual complementarity of the two by nature. Gulf countries are major oil producers while China is major consumer; Gulf Arab countries are short of laborers while China is abundant with; Arab countries are short of infrastructure construction capabilities while China has. Besides, since the beginning of the new century, China had encouraged its enterprises to go out, and the Arab Middle East is one of the major destinations. And China has also been a major partner for the reconstruction of turmoil-devastated countries.

China-Arab cooperation will see new areas in the coming decade in addition to these old areas, and economic cooperation between the two is going into a new stage. China is currently talking about the establishment of the "1+2+3" cooperative pattern. That is with energy cooperation as the principal axis, infrastructure construction and trade and investment facilitation as the two wings, and the three major high-tech fields including nuclear power, space satellite and new energy as the breakthrough.

China-Arab economic relations will see numerous opportunities. The first should be the current political and economic transformations in the Arab world. Within this context, Arab countries, in order to reconstruct their political legitimacy, will need both investment and export market, which will greatly strengthen economic cooperation between the two. Secondly, China has already launched its Belt and Road Initiative, which will greatly facilitate economic connections between the two; thirdly, the post 2030 development agenda of the United Nations will also create fields of cooperation.

China-Arab cooperation will also have to face challenges. The first one should be security challenges. Business people will have to include security risks in their calculation. China will have to find out ways to protect the security of its economic interests in the region, but its military resources are still very poor. Secondly, China and Arab countries will have to always prepare for the worst scenario where a third player might defame and disrupt the cooperation between the two.

Jin Liangxiang is a Research Fellow with Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS). He mainly focuses on the Middle East international relations and China-Middle East relations. He in particular works on Iran nuclear issues in the last two years. He used to stay as visiting fellow in the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace (2002-2003), the Baker Institute (2011) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2013) as well.

Historical Reemergence, Global Economic Shifts: Chinese Overseas Investments in Saudi Arabia

Alvin A. Camba

The Johns Hopkins University, USA
acamba1@jhu.edu

While Chinese ODI has taken on multiple roles in African and Latin American economic growth, the question of whether or not China's rise has fostered the reemergence of previously vibrant historical ties, such as the Sino-Saudi relationship, remains unexamined. While the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Saudi Arabia established formal ties and trade agreements in 1988, the relationship between the two only picked up steam in 2009. Sino-Saudi trade was worth \$2.7 billion in 2000, but it rapidly rose to \$41.5 billion in 2009. Between 2011 and 2016, Saudi Arabia and China agreed on joint energy development, multiple infrastructural projects, and reciprocal diplomatic support on global political issues, such as economic sanctions against Iran in 2010, joint military exercises in 2014, and support for China's suzerainty in the South China Sea in 2016. If the political window for closer ties has been there since the end of the Cold War, what accounts for the recent rapprochement?

To explain the reemergence of Sino-Saudi ties in the post-2009 juncture, the paper takes a global economic perspective. Using primary data from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and secondary sources from international organizations, I argue that the contradictions of Western capitalism, seen in the global financial crisis of 2009 and the growing ruptures of the US global order, led to the reemergence of the historical Sino-Saudi relationship. As the crisis of Western capitalism continues, China and Saudi Arabia are seeking to hedge against the US global order by forging stronger ties with one another. While China buys less US treasury bonds and instead reinvests capital in key energy infrastructures, Saudi Arabia hedges against US Petrodollar recycling by drawing in huge sums of Chinese overseas direct investment (ODI) in critical infrastructures, the energy sector, and trade agreements. Chinese ODI, thus, spearheads the reemergence of Sino-Saudi ties.

I nuance this argument in the post-2009 economic structures and political needs of the PRC and Saudi Arabia. PRC's economic engine depends on financial repression that transfers wealth from net borrowers in Chinese households to allow the domestic capitalists to reinvest capital across the world. After the 2009 global financial crisis and the 2015 Chinese stock market crash, Chinese companies severed some of their Western financial ties and instead reinvested capital in strategic, profitable and secure destinations across the world. Chinese ODI in Saudi Arabia, worth \$27.5 billion today, flows through the One-Belt Silk Road Initiative, targets strategic infrastructures and energy supplies, and relies on the Kingdom's strong political order. The PRC has been deeply involved in Saudi infrastructural construction – Princess Noura University for Women, rail project to Mecca, and many others. Saudi Arabia holds one of the biggest oil supplies in the world, reassuring continuous material inputs for Chinese manufacturing production and capital for reinvestment. But unlike African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian states, Saudi Arabia's political hierarchy mimics Beijing's own experience in energy development and social order. This similarity reassures Beijing that popular protests and labor rights will not derail the delivery of oil and chemicals supplies to Chinese factories across world, which have been expanding since the 2009 economic crisis.

Seeking to hedge against the American position in the Middle East, which pressures Saudi Arabia's energy reserves during turbulent times, and US petrodollar recycling, which ties and endangers oil to the dollar, the 2009 global economic crisis made China a more appealing strategic partner to Saudi Arabia. China provides the political support and economic ties needed to perpetuate Saudi Arabia's dominant position in the region. While China-Iran relations have historically been strong, tensions grew in recent years: termination of Beijing's energy contracts, competition over cheap manufacturing, China's growing presence in Pakistan, and Tehran's support for Chinese Muslims. Saudi Arabia capitalizes on these ruptures to build an alliance against Iran, Israel and Iraq, forging ties through Beijing's arms exports, which have become an increasingly preferable alternative to the politically tenuous American military supplies. In addition, the growing demand for better wages and conditions among migrant labor alarms many Middle East states. China's cheap goods, such as household supplies, textiles, and garments, provide an indirect subsidy to supplement the wages of migrant workers. Expensive products from regional manufacturers would induce greater pressure on Saudi households and companies to pay higher wages, limiting their profitability, social mobility, and economic growth.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

Cemil Aydin (PhD, Harvard University, 2002) is currently teaching courses on Middle Eastern and Asian History at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, U.S. His recent publications include *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* (Columbia University Press, 2007), “*Regionen und Reiche in der Politischen Geschichte des Langen 19 Jahrhunderts, 1750-1924* (Region and Empire in the Political History of the Long 19th Century” in *Geschichte Der Welt, 1750-1870: Wege Zur Modernen Welt* (A History of the World, 1750-1870)“ (Beck Publishers, July 2016) pp: 35-253, and *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Harvard University Press, Forthcoming Spring 2017).

Engseng Ho is Professor of Anthropology and Professor of History at Duke University, USA. He is currently the Muhammad Alagil Distinguished Visiting Professor in Arabia Asia Studies at the Asia Research Institute, and the Director of Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore. He was previously Professor of Anthropology at Harvard and Senior Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. He is a specialist on Arab/Muslim diasporas across the Indian Ocean, and their relations with western empires, past and present. His writings include *The Graves of Tarim, Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, and *Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46 (2), 2004.

Ernesto H. Braam is a diplomat and scholar who has lived and worked in Europe, the Middle East, East and Southeast Asia. After studying international law and attaining his Master’s degree with a thesis on the Geneva conventions and the Palestinian territories, he began his career with the Dutch Foreign Service just before the first Gulf War. After 11 years of diplomatic postings in the Far East (Singapore, Japan, Thailand), plus some intermittent postings at HQ in The Hague, Braam returned to the Middle East in 2009 as Chargé d’Affairs of the Dutch embassy in Baghdad. In 2010, he was posted to The Hague to take up a position as Strategic Policy Advisor at the North Africa and Middle East Department. Since July 2015, he has started with a new assignment at the Dutch embassy in Singapore as a Regional Strategic Advisor for Southeast Asia. In addition to, and sometimes interwoven with his diplomatic work, he has conducted academic research on Islamic movements, particularly Salafism (in Southeast Asia and Middle East) and Shi’ism. He has published on both topics in peer-reviewed publications and is currently pursuing a related PhD.

Nisha Mathew is Muhammad Alagil Postdoctoral Fellow in Arabia Asia Studies within the Inter-Asia Engagements Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Dr Mathew received her PhD in History from Wits University, Johannesburg in 2014. Her dissertation, *Understanding Space, Politics and History in the Making of Dubai, A Global City*, is a commercial history of the city explored through the complex interface of commodity, capital and community across the Indian Ocean from the 19th to the 21st century. Her research interests include gold, money, mobility and the contours of the Indian Ocean after empire.

Born in China to Hui Chinese Muslim parents, **Rosey Wang Ma** grew up in Pakistan and Turkey. She had her education in Catholic French schools in Istanbul, then went to Taiwan to study Diplomacy and Political Science at Zhengchi University; and later to France to qualify for a French language teaching certificate. Marriage took her to live in Malaysia where she has spent more than 40 years. After raising 6 children she did a Masters in Education (as a very adult student), specializing in Guidance and Counselling, which made her change a career from teaching French to being a student counselor and also training teachers and care-givers in an English boarding school. Somehow, events and writings pushed her into being interested in Chinese Muslims, which opened up for her a whole new world of research in her own ethnic and religious roots and to a Doctorate degree in Socio-Anthropology. She has been in these studies and research for nearly twenty years. After retiring this year from Fatih University in Istanbul, Rosey resides in Istanbul and tries to keep up with new research and publications about the Hui from various scholars; also goes on with her own research on the colourful multiple identities of the Hui diaspora scattered in many countries in the world.

Shuang Wen is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in History from Georgetown University and an MA in Middle East Studies from the American University in Cairo. Her publications include “Muslim Activist Encounters in Meiji Japan.” In: *Middle East Report 270: China in the Middle East*. Washington, DC: Middle East Research and Information Project, 2014.