Historical Mosque Management System's Changes in China: from Organizational Communication Perspective

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Abstract

Since Islam introduced into China from the Tang Dynasty, it has been experienced for nearly a thousand years, from the history of Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing, Republic of China to PRC, in the specific organizational communication ways. The paper would be based on Rensis Likert's Support Relation Theory. By studying the changes of the communication system of mosques in Chinese history, exploring the changes of the management system of religious organizations in the communication patterns under China's context, it would provide a historical change for the management and development of mosques in the contemporary China. From the perspective of Muslims' specific organizational communication ways, this paper will reveal historical changes of China's Mosque Management System.

Keywords : *China's Mosque, Management System, Organizational Communication, Support Relation Theory*

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Introduction:

During the period of the opening-up policy in Tang Dynasty, a large number of Muslim traders from Arabia and Persia lived and conducted business in China. They were called *Fans* and their residence was called *Fangfang*. There were mosques in the *Fanfang*. *Suleyman*, Arab, came to China as a businessman in the fifth year of Tang Xuanzong's reign (AD 851). After returning home, he wrote the book *Suleyman's Journey to the East*, which included descriptions of *Fanfang*. The highest leader in the *Fanfang* was the "Senior Chief of *Fans*" or "Senior of *Fan*", which was generally borne by fan members of high reputation and respect. The *Fan's* chief was not only a political leader, a religious judge, but also the *Shaikh* of Islam (that is, duties of the leader of the *Fanfang* and the Imam in mosque were unified, so were the powers). It should be noted that after the chief being elected by Muslim businessmen, his confirmation was subject to the approval and formal appointment by the Tang government. The chief could independently handle affairs in *Fanfang*, that is, extraterritorial jurisdiction and the responsibility of soliciting foreign businessmen. Tang officials could not interfere with the affairs they handle. The standard was based on the Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic laws and customs, which can be found in Volume 6 of the *Tang Lu Shu Yi* and the historical monuments of Huaisheng Temple in Guangzhou.

At the end of the Tang Dynasty, due to the influence of the *Huangchao Peasant Uprising* (found in the India Chronicles of China), the *Fanfang* dispensation declined. After entering the Song Dynasty, the *Fanfang* system was developed again. The governor set up specialized management organization, in an effort to gradually divide the religious power and economic management rights. *Fanfang* was also fertilized by Chinese culture. It was called *Jiaofang* (Pingzhou Narratives, Volume 2). At this time, the triumvirate management system came into shape in Chinese mosques. It included three religion leaders in the management of the mosque. The Shaikh was responsible for religious affairs like chanting and worshiping. *Khatib*, who praised and taught the religion, was responsible for lecturing on religious knowledge. *Mu'adhdhin* called prayers to come to pray, being responsible for *Adham*. The three positions were mostly hereditary. The triumvirate management system gradually developed into a *al-Shaikh* system, mostly run in *al-Tariqah sects*. Among them, the Shaikh must be appointed by the relevant government departments and had clear procedures to perform. This regulation might have been generally implemented in the reign of emperor Ming Shizong (1522) of China. The triumvirate management system of the mosques initially emerged in the Song Dynasty, it was established, at the latest, in the late Southern Song Dynasty, and basically completed in the Yuan Dynasty.

The triumvirate management system of the mosques must have been completed in the Yuan Dynasty in China. In the 10th year of Zhizheng (AD 1350), a clear division of responsibilities in religious affairs was written in the Monument of the Reconstruction of the Mosque by *San Shan Wu Jian*. This system borne by *Shaikh, Khatib, and Mu'adhdhin* had influenced the management of the mosques to this day. Today, most mosques in China still use this system. In addition, during the Yuan Dynasty, a central government office

for the administration of Islamic affairs was established. In *Office of Hui Qadir*, the word *Qadir* was derived from Arabic. The current translation of *Qadir* means "executer of religious laws". *Qadir's*, whose main duty was to judge civil, commercial, and criminal lawsuits between Muslims in accordance with Islamic law, was a senior faculty member, preacher, religious leader, also judicial and executive officer, Muslim chief. Therefore, *Qadir* was both a government official and a religious leader. In the middle and late Yuan Dynasty, the court clearly stipulated that the duties of *Qadir* were limited to religious affairs and must not interfere with economic and legal matters between Muslim.

In the Ming Dynasty of China, it had been more than 700 years since Islam entered China, between Tang and late Yuan Dynasty. During this period, the exchange of the ambassadors from and to the Islamic countries and trading were usual. In the Ming Dynasty, the fans settled in China for a long time and merged with the Chinese people. They scattered around the country forming densely resided spots. They also took Chinese surnames. Despite the assimilation, the continued development of Islam in China was, on the one hand, passed down from generation to generation. On the other hand, this continuity was due to the establishment of mosques. The mosque was gradually managed by Imam, which was a position of whole power over management. There were several *Akhonds* set under the Imam. They shared the power to preside and teach religion. Meanwhile, these positions became hereditary, which continued till the end of the Qing Dynasty, when the Imam system and its hereditary feature prevailed. This was a brief history of the development of Chinese Islam and its carrier mosque, which deeply affected the changes of the mosque management model in China.

In the case of Islam and mosques in the Qing Dynasty, there were branches of sects (such as the *Sufis* in Gansu called *Mufti sect*, mosque's faculty), and the development of the religious education continued. However, the management mode of the mosque still retained the hereditary Imam-in-charge. As time passed, the hereditary system lost its common base, mainly because the religious leaders failed to keep good reputation or earn their respect. Muslims, living surrounding the mosque, had united to abolish the hereditary system. This part of history has been recorded on two monuments that described the heredity history from Hongli and Wanli year in Ming Dynasty in Beijing's Niu Street Temple. Later Muslims from *Jiaofang* destroyed them, demanding the abolition of the hereditary system. The development of the religious education had cultivated a large number of religious talents for Islam, who became *Akhonds* after graduation, which fundamentally devastated the Imam-in-charge system over religion and gradually disintegrated this system. The *Akhond* management system empowered *Akhond* to preside religious matters, marking a new stage of development in the management mode of mosques.

Before the Ming Dynasty, *Akhond* management system was not traceable, until the early Qing Dynasty. It was only found in the literature, such as, at the end of Kangxi year in Qing, Hui religious teacher, Zhao Can wrote *Religious Faculty Chronicles*, also, during Qianlong years, *Emperor Presided Documentation of Lanzhou* wrote such issues in Volume Six and Volume Eleven. Such literal information showed evidence that in the middle of the Qing Dynasty, the *Akhond* management system had become popular, this system is a

highly centralized religious power, bringing the teaching, educating and spreading of religious matters under one body. Qing government loosed governmental control over religious affairs. However, in the mosque, Muslims would place the tablet read "Long Live Emperor" in order to perform daily religious activities. In forty-sixth year of Qing Qianlong's reign (1781) *Su Forty-three* led the *Jahariyah Muslim Uprising* and was suppressed. Qing Court, in an aim to weaken Muslim organizations, implemented the elder association system, separating the mosque management and religious teaching. "The public coming to mosques would elect a sincere prime minister among their community. The elected prime minister presides over internal and external affairs", and finally an elder association was formed. This association was made up of a director minister and prime ministers, led by the director minister. The main duties of the elder association were to manage the affairs of the mosque, to recruit or dismiss the faculty of mosques, and so on. The prime minister should serve for a term of three years and could be re-elected. In short, Qing government had been trying unsuccessfully to abolish the Muslim system of mosque management and organizations to implement the system of elder association management. There has always been a special form of religion management in its Muslim areas. In addition, in the first year of Emperor Qing Xuantong's reign (1909), Board of Shanghai Mosques appeared as one of such management organizations. 21st Century Shanghai Muslim Party Dealing Religious Affairs in Public Interest — the Board of the Shanghai Mosques and Its Successors, co-authored by Mr. Jin Yuyun and Mr. Ji Bainian, points out that "the Board of the Shanghai Mosques is the product of the times, a new kind of religious management system." Its board of directors was set up in four stages, in turn, they were: public election, electing by votes, reporting to the local government approval, 94 members of Shangahi Chuanxin Street Mosque signing on the Public Letter to General Council sent to the General Association Director. That letter was to show shanghai Muslims' support of the board of directors elected. They would also hold a grand celebration. The board system is a product of the 20th century New Cultural Movement and, the growing influence of Chinese Muslims during the beginning of Qing Dynasty.

Since the Republic of China, Chinese Muslims have been lacking strict organizational management. There had been many cases of insults (cases on New Asia, South China Literature, North New Library, and so on) during this period. A unified management body of mosques should be vigorously developed. The structure of mosque-oriented lanes across places has been well come into shape since its emergence in Yuan Dynasty. In the 1940s, the single mosque lane has been a general Muslim lane structure, which put the mosque as a key focus of the management. There were two kinds of mosque organization communication systems in the period of the Republic of China. The board of mosques assisted the *Akhond* of both reputation and respect in teaching and publication, forming fairly professional communication organization. Apart from this, in most parts of China, *Akhond* held full charge over religious teaching and publication. All above shows the organizational communication system during the Republic of China was indeed rooted under the mutual-impact of personal relations and post-modern organization system. To clearly present the main point of this paper, the management

theory of Rensis Likert was employed to illustrate the changes in Mosque management in China as seen in table.

Table 1: Changes in Mosque Management in China under Likert Theory

The Likert Theory Index	Management system	Historical Background	Characteristics	Communication Features			
				Content	Movement	Mode	Class
Exploitative-authoritative	Fanfang	Land silk road、 Business trading、	decision-making in the upper echelons ; lack of trust ; no cross level communication ; fertilization of informal organization ;	task	vertical	Verbal Ceremonial literal	informal
	The Triumvirate Management System	Religion of Fan、 Native Fan、Water Silk Road		innovation Maintenance	Vertical Horizontal free	Verbal Ceremonial literal interviewing	Formal Informal (mainly)
Benevolent-authoritative	Shaikh In-charge and Hereditary System	Hui Qadir Office (Yuan Dynasty) Hui Prison (Middle of Song Dynasty）、	Supreme decision made by upper class ; a master-servant relationship ; communications are minimal ;	Task maintenance innovation	Vertical Horizontal free	Verbal Ceremonial literal	Formal
Consultative-democratic	Akhond subject to recruiting and dismissing Sufis Sect Shaikh in Sects	Religious Education、 Jahariyah Muslims' Uprsing、Elders Association、	General policy and planning made by upper class ; partial trust ; partly decision making by lower class ; fair	Task maintenance	Vertical Horizontal	Verbal Ceremonial literal arm force	Formal and informal coexisting

	The Board of Directors	The Board of Shanghai Mosques、religious insulting cases Ma 'Anliang forcefully implementing the recruiting and dismissing of the Akhond	communication through class ; informal organizations may uphold the decision of policy-maker ;	Task maintenance innovation	Vertical Horizontal	Verbal Ceremonial literal arm force	Formal, informal (mainly)
Participative- democratic	Commission of democratic management	The founding of PRC (1949) Religious Reform (1958), The Sixth China Islamic congress meeting (1993) 、the democratic management measures of the Mosques (2006)	Total trust ; decision making across the organization ; thorough communication of information ; integration of the formal and informal organization ;	Maintenance innovation	Horizontal Free	All channels except arm force	Formal

Research Conclusion and Discussion

Analysis of the mosque management system in China from the perspective of supportive relationship theory.

According to the supportive relationship theory, the relationship between superiors and subordinates in an organization is mutually supportive. That is, a leader should help his followers to achieve material goals and fully understand their own value and importance. This relationship will inspire followers to adopt an attitude of cooperation and trust toward the leader, and finally support his will to power.

Over the course of its development, the mosque management system in China has always featured two types of supportive relationships. One is the external mutually supportive relationship, where imperial rulers in different historical periods gave independent jurisdiction to mosque leaders, which in turn facilitated the exertion of imperial power on material, economic, and human resources. This is the mutual support between empires and Muslim communities centred around mosques. The other type is the internal mutually supportive relationship. In Chinese history, as the imperial power system evolved, and Muslim communities gradually supported imperial power and integrated with Chinese culture, mosque leaders separated religious power, economic power, and affairs management power. This indicated that Islamic religious leaders encouraged believers to pursue their personal values. In a word, the internal supportive relationship provided the basis of the exertion of the external imperial power, and the internal mosque management system promoted believer's identity with their religious leaders, thus achieving the establishment of the institutional system of Islamic sinicization and cultural communication.

2. Triple identities of Hui Muslims reflected in the dynamic mosque management system in China.

Islam has long followed a form of communication through authority. According to Adam Possamai and Bryan S. Turner (2015), "Before mass education and the translation of the Quran into vernacular languages, the ulama had exclusive rights over the interpretation of the Quran, in other words, "scholarly monopoly of traditions (ijtihad)". Due to its high spatial crossover and integration with Chinese culture, the Hui Islamic culture took a more subtle and closed communication pattern. Bai Shouyi (2000) argued that the introduction of Islam into China was not a conscious effort by the Hui ancestors, but rather a result of "hereditary communication of faith". "It seems that they did not wish to make their religion widely understood by the rest of the public, nor have a book on Islamic doctrine written in Chinese available for everyone." This typical intra-organizational communication form has had a long-lasting influence until today. Within the Hui ethnic group, interpretation rights are authorized by religious power in an unchallengeable manner, which is rarely seen outside Islamic communities.

The modernization of digital media has fully deconstructed the traditional power system and disrupted traditional forms of communication, while offering new opportunities for communication. Thus, in a multi-dimensional space, the mosque management system in China and the identity system will be forced to change their forms.

Western modernity potentially has a disruptive impact on both Islamic identity and Chinese identity. This requires both Islamic and Chinese culture to make a positive response. After hundreds of years of development, the Hui nationality has creatively constructed a binary model of Islamic and Chinese identities. Under the current background, the Hui needs to construct a triple model of Islamic-Chinese-modernity identities, which is a more complex and fluid field of power.

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