China and Islam examines the intersection of two critical issues of the contemporary world: Islamic revival and an assertive China, questioning the assumption that Islamic law is incompatible with state law. It finds that both Hui and the Party-State invoke, interpret, and make arguments based on Islamic law, a minjian (unofficial) law in China, to pursue their respective visions of “the good.” Based on fieldwork in Linxia, “China’s Little Mecca,” this study follows Hui clerics, youthful translators on the “New Silk Road,” female educators who reform traditional madrasas, and Party cadres as they reconcile Islamic and socialist laws in the course of the everyday. The first study of Islamic law in China and one of the first ethnographic accounts of law in postsocialist China, China and Islam unsettles unidimensional perceptions of extremist Islam and authoritarian China through Hui minjian practices of law.

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CHINA AND ISLAM

The Prophet, the Party, and Law

MATTHEW S. ERIE
University of Oxford
To my mother and father, and
In memory of Loren V. Erie
Zhengjiao bu zhengquan.
(Contend for the teaching, do not contend for power.)
A Hui saying
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ABBREVIATIONS

Ar. Arabic
AR autonomous region
BCA Bureau of Civil Affairs
BEA Bureau of Ethnic Affairs
BON Bank of Ningxia
BRA Bureau of Religious Affairs
CBRC China Banking Regulatory Commission
CCP Chinese Communist Party
Ch. Chinese
CPPCC Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference
EAGC Education Administration Guidance Committee
GWDP Great Western Development Policy
ICBC Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
IRC Islamic resource center
KTV karaoke bar
MCA Ministry of Civil Affairs
NGO nongovernmental organization
NPC National People’s Congress
PLA People’s Liberation Army
PMC people’s mediation committee
PRC People’s Republic of China
PSB Public Security Bureau
Q. Qur’an
RMB renminbi, the official currency of China
SAEA State Administration of Ethnic Affairs
SARA State Administration of Religious Affairs
SARS severe acute respiratory syndrome
SCO Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SEAC State Ethnic Affairs Commission
SEZ special economic zone
U. Uyghur
UFWD United Front Work Department
Yi-Xie China Islamic Association (Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui)
A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

I have endeavored to minimize foreign terms. However, because much of the work of making sense of Islamic law in Chinese society among Hui requires translation, this book necessarily tracks several concepts across languages (Arabic or Persian, Chinese, and English). Where foreign language terms or phrases are of particular salience to the text, I gloss them in English, although I do not gloss a few key terms, such as minjian, in order to retain some of the term’s texture. Chinese terms are rendered in pinyin with the exception of a handful of Taiwanese names and such pre-PRC figures as Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen, which I render in Wade-Giles. Where two different Chinese words have the same pinyin, I provide the Chinese characters to distinguish. I have provided the names of laws and regulations in pinyin after the English translation. For Arabic terms, I have followed the transliteration system of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (“IJMES style”). Pursuant to the IJMES style, I use half-rings for ’ayn (e.g., shari’a) and hamza (e.g., Qur’ān) and –ay and –aw endings for diphthongs. For Chinese names within the text and in the Chinese language reference list, following standard Chinese usage, I begin with the family name and then provide the given name (e.g., “Ma Laichi” in text or “Ma, Laichi” in the reference list). For Arabic names in the reference list that begin with “al-” I alphabetize them according to the first letter after “al-.” When citing works in foreign languages, I have retained the original spelling of and capitalization in foreign language titles pursuant to the preference of the author. For interview material, I have attempted to minimize transliterations, but I have included the pinyin for Chinese and used IJMES style for Modern Standard Arabic where applicable. In transliterating terms from the local dialect of Bafanghua, which includes Chinese and Arabic as well as other languages, in accordance with Hui phonetics, I have modified pinyin for terms that diverge from the Chinese or Arabic original languages (e.g., bei homo for the Chinese bai maozi [“white cap”] and nietie for the Arabic niyya [“intent”]). Following the main text is a multilanguage glossary, which includes both the Chinese and Arabic scripts for relevant words.
Figure 0.1      Map of Northwest China
Source: the author