Cutting off the Queue for Faith, Preserving the Queue for Face: Chinese Muslims' Queue-Cutting Movements in North China during the Xinhai Revolution Period*

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Abstract

This article attempts to relativise the nationalism of Chinese-speaking Muslims, which has tended to be overemphasised in previous studies, focusing on a movement in which Muslims in North China cut off their braids or queues—Manchu men's traditional hair-style imposed on Chinese people under the Qing rule—and related debates among the Muslim elite before and after the Xinhai Revolution. Unlike some Chinese men who cut off their braids for patriotic reasons or anti-Manchu sentiment, Muslims did so for religious reasons, arguing that Islam forbids queues because they look like the tail of a pig, an animal considered to be unclean in their religion. It is notable that some Muslims simply followed the social trend among the majority and cut off their queues, while a young Muslim scholar in Tianjin chose not to do so to prevent conflicts among Muslims and save face. This study thus illustrates the complex and diverse opinions of Muslims at that time, which cannot be completely explained by patriotism or piety.

Keywords: Chinese Muslims, queue (hairstyle), Xinhai Revolution, North China, nationalism

Rezanje kit za vero, ohranjanje kit zaradi ugleda: Gibanje za rezanje kit kitajskih muslimanov v severni Kitajski v obdobju revolucije Xinhai

Izvleček

Članek poskuša relativizirati nacionalizem kitajsko govorečih muslimanov, ki je bil v prejšnjih študijah tako zelo poudarjen, tako da se osredotoča na gibanje, v katerem so si muslimani v severni Kitajski rezali svoje pletenice ali kite – tradicionalno pričesko mandžurskih moških, vsiljeno kitajskemu ljudstvu pod vladavino Qing – in s tem povezane razprave med muslimansko elito pred revolucijo Xinhai in po njej. V nasprotju z nekaterimi kitajskimi moškimi, ki so si kite odrezali zaradi patriotskih razlogov ali protimandžurskih

* This article is a revised version of a paper originally published in Japanese (Unno 2015).

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občutkov, so muslimani to storili iz verskih razlogov, saj so menili, da islam prepoveduje kite, ker so videti kot rep prašiča, živali, ki v njihovi religiji velja za nečisto. Izpostaviti velja, da so si nekateri muslimani kite odrezali preprosto zato, ker so sledili družbenim smernicam, medtem ko se je vpliven mladi muslimanski učenjak v Tianjinu odločil, da tega ne bo storil, s čimer je hotel preprečiti konflikt med muslimani in rešiti svoj ugled. Obravnavana študija tako prikaže večplastna in raznovrstna mnenja muslimanov v tistem času, ki jih patriotizem ali pobožnost ne moreta popolnoma pojasniti.

Ključne besede: kitajski muslimani, kite (frizura), revolucija Xinhai, Severna Kitajska, nacionalizem

Nationalism, Hairstyle, and Faith

Earlier research on the modern history of Chinese-speaking Muslims¹ has exclusively concentrated on how the Muslim elite sought to accommodate their religious identity within their national identity and expressed patriotism for the Chinese nation. Scholars have emphasised the importance of Muslim reformists' "survival strategies" (Matsumoto 2003), and "efforts for national integration" (ibid. 2006, 139), examining how they "strove to be patriotic and nationalistic" (ibid., 118) and "implemented the Islamic revival movement in order to coexist with the other ethnicities" (ibid., 138).² Some researchers even romanticise Muslims' "contribution" (Ch. *gongxian* 貢獻) to the Chinese nation³, and present an overwhelming emphasis on the "patriotic" and "pious"⁴ qualities of Muslims, frequently citing the slogan "*aiguo aijiao* 愛國愛教" ("to love one's homeland is to love faith") which derived from the Arabic saying "*ḥubb al-waṭan min al-īmān*" ("love for the homeland is part of faith") first spread by Islamic reformists in the Middle East (ibid., 126). However, nationalism was not the sole characteristic of Chinese-speaking Muslims in the early twentieth century. To reconsider Muslims' patriotism, this study looks at the example of queue-cutting, which is often regarded as evidence of Chinese people's patriotic behaviour and anti-Qing sentiment.

- 1 Chinese-speaking Muslims in this article are roughly equivalent to present-day *Huizu* 回族, one of the ethnic minorities in the People's Republic of China, who are said to be the descendants of Arab, Persian, and Turkic Muslims who had visited China and intermarried with local people.
- 2 As for the Islamic revival movement in Beijing promoted by a noted Islamic scholar Wang Kuan 王寬 (or Wang Haoran 王浩然, 1848–1919) and his followers in the early twentieth century, see Unno-Yamazaki (2016).
- 3 For a representative example, which emphasises Muslims' contributions to the Chinese nation during the Xinhai Revolution, see Chen (2011).
- 4 For example, Ma (2006) presents how "patriotic" and "pious" Muslim intellectuals in modern China, such as Ma Jian 馬堅, tried to reorient and reposition Muslims and Islam by minimising differences and maximising commonalities with Han nationalism and socialism during the Republican and the Communist regimes.

As is widely known, a queue (Ch. *bianfa* 辮髮, or *bianzi* 辮子) or cue is a male hairstyle traditionally worn by certain Eurasian nomads like Jurchens and Manchus, where the front and the sides are shaved while the rest of the hair is tied into one or two bunches and twisted into a long plait or plaits, worn either at the back of the head or one on each side of the head. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Manchus led by Nurhaci (1559–1626), the founder of the Qing Dynasty, and his son and successor Hong Taiji (1592–1643), were gaining ground and preparing to conquer China. Under the Manchu rule, some Chinese wore the queue style to denote their submission to the new rulers even before the Manchus had crossed the Great Wall (Kuhn 1990, 53). Dorgon (1612–50)—fourteenth son of Nurhaci and the uncle and regent of Fulin (1638–1661), the first Qing emperor to rule over China—first announced the head-shaving policy on June 5, 1644 (Wakeman 1985, 420). Under the slogan “Keep your head, lose your hair; keep your hair, lose your head” (ibid. 1975, 58), the Qing rulers forced people, especially Han Chinese, to give up their traditional hairstyles and instead adopt the queue as a “measure of a person’s loyalty toward the Qing throne” (Cheng 1998, 128), and thus “persecuted hair growers without mercy” (ibid., 125). This requirement was met with stubborn resistance and sometimes caused public fear.⁵ Due to the harsh enforcement of the hair-cutting rules, abandoning the queue came to denote an expression of rebellion against the Qing.⁶ Indeed, the queue in China was “a fashion to die for” (Metzger 2014, 27) and “a symbol of allegiance to the ruling dynasty” (Kuhn 1990, 12). Meanwhile, the Manchu rulers did not issue any equivalent rules about female hairstyles.

Previous studies, which discuss how the queue came to an end in China and the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia before and after the Xinhai Revolution, have elucidated the political and social significance of the hairstyle, mainly by analysing the anti-Qing/Manchu sentiments and nationalistic discourses of the Han Chinese elite (Ryū 1990; Godley 1994; Cheng 1998; Yoshizawa 2003; Hou and Hu 2005; Mochida 2012).⁷ Most of these works emphasise the political aspects of the queue-cutting movement among the Chinese people, and link it to

5 In particular, people in the Jiangnan region between Shanghai and Nanjing fiercely resisted the policy (Wakeman 1975, 55–7; Wakeman 1985, 646–50).

6 The members of the Taiping Rebellion in the late nineteenth century let their hair grow to wear a traditional Confucian hairstyle that was different from the Manchu queue. The Qing government referred to them in official documents as “long hair rebels” (Ch. *changmao zei* 長毛賊) or “hair traitors” (Ch. *fazei* 髮賊) (Cheng 1998, 128).

7 Tejapira (1992) focused on the queue hairstyle in Siam (i.e. today’s Thailand) before the early twentieth century as an alleged sign of “Chineseness” to examine the genealogy of “Chineseness”, asserting that this was a recent invention in Thai racist discourse that had little to do with the queue itself.

modernisation and nationalism. At the same time, Chinese-speaking Muslims, who were “perceived as Chinese and had to wear the queue or be punished by the same law as other Chinese” (Lipman 2006, 104), were also forced to adopt the hairstyle.⁸ In the early twentieth century, some Chinese-speaking Muslims in Beijing and Tianjin, the national capital region and political centre of China, cut off their queues one after another, not for reasons of nationalism or modernisation, but because of their religious faith and the social trends surrounding them. By examining Muslims’ disputes over whether the queue was un-Islamic, drawing mainly on periodicals published by Chinese-speaking Muslims in North China, this study provides a brand-new viewpoint on the queue-cutting movement by showcasing the example of Chinese-speaking Muslims and illuminating an unknown aspect of the Muslim communities in Beijing and Tianjin in the early twentieth century from the perspective of hairstyle and appearance. It will also present the interesting example of Chinese-speaking Muslims with regard to the links that tie hairstyle and human beings’ bodily expressions, politics, cultures, and religious faith.

It is well known that discussions on queue-cutting were often connected to the end of costume changing (Ch. *yifu* 易服) during the Xinhai Revolution (Yoshizawa 2003, 122, 131–5; Cheng 1998, 132–3). I will not talk about these issues in this article, since there is not much said about clothes in Muslims’ discussions over queue-cutting. Still, it is interesting that the male Muslim elite in Beijing did not seem to pay much attention to women’s foot binding (Ch. *chanzu* 纏足), which was a common practice present in China from the tenth century until it officially ended in 1949, and often regarded as problematic in terms of the modernisation of the Chinese nation.⁹ The male Muslims in Beijing and Tianjin who were literate enough to write articles in periodicals were more concerned about queue-cutting than foot binding. It can be said that the absence of descriptions of foot binding in the Muslim media reflects the indifference of the male Muslim elite toward women’s issues, as well as the urgency of discussing the topic of queues.

8 On the other hand, Turkic-speaking peoples of the Tarim Basin (roughly equivalent to present-day Uyghurs) did not need to wear a queue—except for their leaders, who had to travel to Beijing to pay homage to the Manchu emperors (Lipman 2004, 22). Interestingly, some Turkic Muslim officials and *begs* (a local Muslim governor in East Turkestan) in Xinjiang eagerly appealed for the “right to wear the queue” so as to show their steadfast loyalty to the Empire (Millward 1998, 215–6).

9 For the origins, purpose, practice, and demise of foot binding in China, see Ko (1997; 2002). Chinese-speaking Muslim women, particularly in the northwest part of China, such as Gansu, had practiced foot binding (Hastings et al. 1916, 893). James Legge (1815–97), a Scottish missionary and scholar, claimed that in 1881 he came across a placard in a mosque in Canton in southern China that denounced foot binding, saying Islam did not allow it since it was a sin against God’s will (Legge 1881, 111–2). The *Xidaotang* 西道堂, a Chinese Islamic sect based in the Northwest China, advocated cutting off the queue and opposed the binding of women’s feet (Dillon 1999, 143).

Muslims' Queues as Seen by Foreigners

Before examining Muslim polemics over the practice of queue-cutting, I will introduce a perspective on Muslims' queue hairstyles in Beijing, as seen by two foreigners who visited China in the early twentieth century: Marshall Broomhall (1866–1937), a British Protestant missionary to China, and Abdürreşid İbrahim (1857–1944), a Russian-Tatar journalist who travelled to China in 1909.¹⁰ Their descriptions are valuable in that they carefully observed and depicted Muslims' hairstyles, which may have been so natural for the Muslims themselves that they did not record them.

Broomhall noted the appearance of Chinese-speaking Muslims, and gave particular attention to their moustaches and hairstyles, writing as follows in his book *Islam in China*:

Reports, emanating from districts as far apart as Kansu, Manchuria, and Canton, speak of the habit of clipping the moustache flush with the upper lip for the length of the mouth alone, it being allowed to grow at the sides as long as it will. This custom is said by themselves to have descended from Moses, and has the advantage of enabling them to identify one another when among strangers. The Mullahs and Ahongs¹¹ in many cases, if not always, shave the entire head, and all conceal the queue during worship. (Broomhall 1966, 222)

According to Broomhall, a fellow missionary from Canada named Donald MacGillivray also noted the Chinese-speaking Muslims' queues and caps in Shandong during worship at a mosque: "Their queues were carefully tucked away under these caps by winding them round the head. The priests and a few helpers wound a long piece of white cloth around their caps, and thus made very fair turbans". (ibid., 187–8) In another part of *Islam in China*, ten Chinese Muslim men in Beijing seem to have shaved their heads at around the same time (ibid., 242), instead of having queues that they tucked away under their caps only during worship.

The caps referred to here are the skullcaps that Huizu still wear today, which are called "worship caps" (Ch. *libai mao* 禮拜帽) or "Muslim caps" (Ch. *Huimin mao*

10 For İbrahim's trip to China in 1909 and his relations with Chinese-speaking Muslims, see Yamazaki (2014).

11 *Ahong* is the Chinese transliteration of *ākhund*, the Persian term for a Muslim cleric or a worship leader of a Muslim community. Its Arabic synonym is *imām*. It is also transliterated as *aheng* 阿衡 or *ahun* 阿渾, and its Chinese synonyms are *jiaoshi* 教師 and *zhangjiao* 掌教. For its definition, see Wang (2001, 2).

回民帽).¹² Since these caps are not very thick and there is almost no space to put something inside them, it must have been rather bothersome for Muslims to need to tuck away their queues under these caps. Moreover, since one of the Five Pillars in Islam and a mandatory religious duty for every Muslim is to pray five times a day, having to put one's queue under one's cap would have been a frequent annoyance. Abdürreşid İbrahim, who also looked at Chinese-speaking Muslims' worship during his stay in Beijing, noticed that Muslims tucked the queues in their caps during the service. He recorded that, while worshipping (Pe. *namāz*), the Chinese people (Ot. *Çinliler*, i.e. Chinese-speaking Muslims) wore caps similar to Bukhara caps instead of turbans, that they put their long hair into the caps, and that they wore these caps only in mosques and always let their hair hang free apart on other occasions (İbrahim 1911, 22–3). This description indicates that the Muslims did not wear caps outside mosques, and let their queues hang down their backs.

It seems İbrahim was highly interested in queues, and asked locals the reasons for wearing them wherever he went, in both Beijing and Shanghai.¹³ He expressed his respect for Chinese men, for their preservation of their national culture, as seen in their clothes and queues (ibid., 154), comparing the situation to the Ottoman Empire where some people were embarrassed to wear their national fez headdress, and noting that Chinese people were superior to the Ottomans in that they cherished their national dress (ibid., 554). Nevertheless, İbrahim was not happy that Chinese-speaking Muslims had queues (ibid., 512). In Beijing, he was introduced to a very old man by an '*alim*' (i.e. a scholar, an intellectual man), when the topic of hairstyles came up in their conversation by chance (ibid., 565). İbrahim, after telling the old man a lot of the Hadith and teachings of Islam, advised him to shave his entire head, saying that anyone who was a Muslim, especially those who had lived long like the old man, had to assume the right attitude towards the Prophet's Sunnah (i.e. deeds and sayings of Muhammad). In other words, İbrahim thought Muslims should cut their queues because they were against Sunnah. He stated that the braid grew like the tail of a mouse (ibid.). Perhaps he said this to avoid writing the word "pig".

A similar description can be seen in a travel book written by Süleyman Şükrü, an Ottoman government official who visited China at the beginning of the twentieth century: he claimed that having queues was contrary to the practice of the Prophet

12 It is said that the Muslim males' caps derive from the Arab and Persian Muslims who came to China in the Tang Dynasty and became prevalent during the Yuan era (Tao 2003, 13–4). Besides the caps, Broomhall mentioned *ahongs*' (i.e. *imams*') turbans and Muslim women's dress as well (Broomhall 1966, 223).

13 "A Hairless Man in China" (İbrahim 1911, 575–6), "Shanghai" (ibid., 582–4).

Muhammad, and that Muslims should distinguish themselves from non-Muslims by employing Islamic clothing and lifestyles (Şükrü 2005, 563). However, neither İbrahim nor Şükrü offered any clear reason for why a queue hairstyle was contrary to Islamic teachings. Are there any specific hairstyles that are prohibited for men in Islam? According to *Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, one of the more authoritative Sunni Hadiths, which was edited by Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (810–870), the Prophet Muhammad forbade *al-qaza’*, a hairstyle in which one part of the hair is shaved and another is left.¹⁴ There is also a verse in the *Qur’an* which implies that Allāh prefers his believers to have their heads shaved and their hair kept short.¹⁵ It is unclear if İbrahim had this in mind when he suggested that the old man cut his queue, but it is certain that a queue looked extraordinary to this Russian Muslim visiting China for the first time. Although there are some mistakes and prejudices in *‘Ālem-i İslām*, İbrahim was allowed to take a good look at the Muslim community in China as a fellow believer and thus carefully observe local Muslims with his clear insight. His observations that many of the Chinese-speaking Muslims in Beijing had queues in 1909, that they tucked these queues into caps during worship, and that local Muslims did not care about his criticism of queues as “un-Islamic”, are especially interesting in light of the contrast with the queue-cutting movement after 1911.

Reasons for Queue-cutting

According to Yoshizawa Seiichirō, by 1910 the Qing authorities were discussing queue-cutting. The Political Advisory Board (Ch. *Zizhengyuan* 資政院), a temporary central assembly established in Beijing to prepare for constitutional monarchy in the late Qing Dynasty, passed a vote to abolish queues. Although the proposal was stopped before the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, to some extent queue-cutting was promoted by servicemen, students, and civilians, particularly by the urban elite who considered themselves to be “enlightened”. After that, since the revolutionary regime promoted queue-cutting, more and more people started to cut their queues as they followed the trend of change (Yoshizawa 2003, 154–5).

There were three main reasons for queue-cutting. First, a queue was not compatible with the policy of increasing national prosperity and military power, because it is difficult to move one’s body with a queue. Second, foreigners despised queues. Third, the Han Chinese rejected queues because they were forced

14 Book 72 “Clothes”, No. 803 (Bukhārī 1997, 428, 429).

15 Chapter 48 *Al-Fath* (*The Victory*), Verse 27 (Ahmed Ali and Mirza 2004, 1535).

on them by the Manchu Dynasty (ibid., 154). Muslims' queue-cutting might be regarded as consistent with the general view that "the idea that the problems of clothing and customs were involved in the entire social order seemed to be very natural" (ibid., 148–9). However, as will be described later, Muslims had their own context within which to assert and practice queue-cutting. Therefore, this section reviews the Muslim debate over queue-cutting in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* (正宗愛國報) (ZhA: Genuine Patriot Daily, Beijing, 1906–1913)¹⁶ and examines the related practices.

Starting in autumn 1910, several articles in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* began to discuss the decisions on queue-cutting and changing clothes by the Political Advisory Board, and the situation of queue-cutting in cities such as Beijing. Let us consider an article entitled "Islamic Ahongs Should Cut Queues", reprinted in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* in November 1910 and contributed by a prominent Muslim journalist from Tianjin named Liu Mengyang 劉孟揚 to *Minxingbao* (民興報), a magazine which he published himself.

Our Chinese men's queues (Ch. *fabian* 髮辮) and women's foot binding are the things that we, Islam (Ch. *Huijiao* 回教, i.e. Muslims) should not have. It is just hard to break with [them] because they are customs. Despite knowing these two do not agree with Islamic teachings (Ch. *jiaozhi* 教旨), all of us Muslims (Ch. *Huijiaoren* 回教人) do not try to [stop these practices], and nobody tries to improve [these customs]. Putting foot binding aside, let's first talk about queues today. We Muslims treat worship as an important duty. Ablution is essential during worship, but these queues cause inconvenience for performing ablutions. It is not necessary to talk about the ordinary Muslims, but what about ahongs? Usually, we feel as if these queues did not exist, but we have to put them on the head when wearing caps and tuck them away under the caps. It goes without saying that these queues are unnecessary. Now the atmosphere (Ch. *fengqi* 風氣) for queue-cutting has been created. Almost every day, there are people who cut off their queues. I often come across such people. It [i.e. such a scene] is not novel at all. The weirdest thing is that I have never heard that those people who should never have queues have cut off their queues.

16 *Zhengzong Aiguobao*, founded and run by a Beijing-based Muslim Ding Baochen 丁宝臣 (1876–1913), was the first periodical published by Chinese-speaking Muslims. In this newspaper, Muslim contributors recorded the daily lives of Muslims and sometime expressed their opinions on various topics. It was widely read by Muslims in northern China, but was addressed to a wide Beijing audience regardless of the readers' religious backgrounds. For more details of this newspaper, see Unno-Yamazaki (2016, 33–5).

He continues:

What kind of people should not have queues? They are our Islamic ahongs. What ahongs preach about in the prayer hall [in mosques] is what Islam [i.e. Muslims] should not do. [Strangely enough] Ahongs usually prohibit [things against the Islamic teachings], but the only thing that ahongs still do not dare do is to cut off this inappropriate queue. It seems the queue is not in accordance with the Islamic teachings. On the 15th [of the month], I went to the funeral of the Zhang family who are my relatives. All the close friends of mine who are also Muslims saw me with the queue cut off and said that it [i. e. cutting the queue] matches the creed. Since cutting the queue is in accordance with the Islamic teachings, not cutting off the queue does not match the creed. Ahongs are the people who are in charge of the administration of religious things. It is almost like they themselves are doing something against the teachings of Islam. In the past, there was no trend of queue-cutting, but we can no longer say that is true, because now the atmosphere (Ch. *qifen* 氣氛) has been created. Our Islamic ahongs, there is no obstacle to standing up together. Everyone, just cut them. Moreover, foreigners call our Chinese queues pigs' tails (Ch. *zhuweiba* 豬尾巴, i.e. the tail of a pig). It is the character *zhu* 豬 [i.e. pig] which our Islam hates the most. Why do ahongs still have such things on their heads? Cut them immediately. (Liu 1910, 6)

To reiterate Liu's points, the first reason he—who had already cut his queue—called for ahongs to cut their queues is that they were a nuisance during worship, and it was bothersome to tuck them under caps when at prayer. This description reminds us of how Ibrahim and Broomhall recorded the hairstyles and caps of Chinese-speaking Muslims. The second reason is that foreigners called queues pigs' tails, which referred to a taboo in Islam. It is not difficult to imagine that Muslims in northern China, who repeatedly had troubles with non-Muslims over fake *ḥalāl* food and the pork taboo, and even hated homonyms that sounded like *zhu* 豬 (pigs) (Unno 2016, 16–9), strongly rejected queues knowing that foreigners called them “pigs' tails”.

It is unclear how much influence Liu Mengyang's article had, but it was reported in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* in December 1910 that approximately forty students of a school named Shunzhimenwai Xiangxuetang 順治門外湘學堂, and six students who learned Arabic in a mosque (probably located in Beijing) had cut their queues (Anonymous 1910). Furthermore, Wang Jingzhai 王靜齋 (1879–1949), a prominent ahong from Tianjin, responded to Liu's article in this manner:

Recently, I read speech notes by Mr. Liu Mengyang, published in *Tianjin Baihuabao*.¹⁷ Its title is “Islamic Ahongs Should Cut Queues”. I cannot but be embarrassed when reading this, because we ahongs should observe Islamic teachings, recommend good deeds, and prevent bad deeds [by other Muslims]. We should not do things that disagree with Islamic teachings in the first place. Although these useless and harmful queues disagree with Islamic teachings, nevertheless, great and sophisticated ahongs with good reputations do not intend to cut them in general and even advocate [not cutting the queue]. Moreover, all of our ahongs are conversely advised [to cut their queues] by outsiders. The persons who should recommend [cutting the queue] are paradoxically advised to do so by other people. Isn’t that an embarrassing thing? [...]

Some may say, “Although the queue should be cut off, why don’t you ahongs cut it?” I would say, “Among Muslims, there are many stubborn people (Ch. *Huijiaoren duo you wangu de* 回教人多有頑固的). Generally, they think that it is heresy to react as occasions may demand. [...] Having a queue does not by any means agree with Islamic teachings. Habits and customs tend to create this sort of evil custom, which is hard to break with. If anyone cuts a queue, he will definitely be insulted by people without common sense. (Wang 1910)

Wang Jingzhai thus thought queues to be against Islam, and recommended that other ahongs cut them off, as Liu Mengyang did.

Wang Jingzhai continued noting that Zhang Ziwen 張子文 (or Zhang Dechun 張德純, 1875–1966), one of the central figures of the Beijing Muslim community at that time, was subjected to severe criticism when he cut off his queue in spring 1910.

I remember that some stubborn people (Ch. *wangu dangmen* 頑固黨們) severely criticized Zhang Ziwen 張子文, an ahong in Beijing Madian 馬甸, when he resolutely cut his queue this spring. Some say Mr. Zhang disregarded *guocui* 國粹 [i.e. the essence of the nation] (but having a queue disregards the Islamic teachings); others say he accommodates Western people (as they might not know what kind of person

17 It cannot be confirmed whether this article was reprinted in *Tianjin Baihuabao*, since the only back numbers currently available are from No. 80 (published on 10 April 1910) to No. 254 (1 October 1910). Still, judging from the title, author, and contents, this article should be the same as the one that was written by Liu Mengyang, originally published in *Minxingbao*, and later reprinted in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* on November 29, 1910 with the title “Islamic Ahongs Should Cut Queues”.

the Prophet Muhammad was). Eventually, they nicknamed him Monk Zhangsi (Ch. *Zhangsi heshang* 張四和尚). [...] The funniest thing is that, even though the tops of the queues of some aged, virtuous elder ahongs (Ch. *niangao youde de lao ahongmen* 年高有德的老阿衡們) are not as big as copper coins, whether they are old or young, they hate to cut them off. Isn't it funny? Great, respectable and sophisticated ahongs with reputations, I respectfully recommend you to cut your queues immediately. I say only once. Don't make people laugh when they see your heads, ha, ahongs. (Wang 1910)

Considering that most of the articles advocating queue-cutting in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* were published after autumn 1910, Zhang Ziwen would have been one of the earliest Muslims in Beijing to cut off his queue. This episode provides us with valuable information about what those Muslims who were against queue-cutting, who were often called “stubborn people” and whose opinions were seldom included in the Muslim press, were actually thinking. It is notable that Wang Jingzhai intentionally made fun of the “aged, virtuous elder ahongs” who had not cut off their queues yet, which implies that there was a generational gap between older and younger ahongs over whether or not to cut the queue.

Two more things can be identified from the above quotation that explain many Muslims' disagreement with queue-cutting. First, these Muslims opposed queue-cutting because they did not want to look like Buddhist monks. The word “*heshang*” literally means a Buddhist monk, and Buddhist monks were exempted from the queue and shaved all of their hair.¹⁸ The expression “*Zhangsi heshang*”,¹⁹ which was used to ridicule Zhang Ziwen, thus implied that he was no longer a Muslim, which would have been an unbearable insult as he was a devoted Muslim. It is therefore interesting that both Muslims in favour of and against queue-cutting were afraid that others would see them as non-Muslims. Second, the above quotation reveals that the “stubborn people” criticized Zhang Ziwen's queue-cutting for the lack of *guocui* 國粹. This word originally referred to Japanese nationalism (Ja. *kokusui* 国粹), which harshly criticized Westernisation and encouraged the Japanese to cherish their own history and culture under the sovereignty of the Emperor. The terminology was invented by a Japanese intellectual and politician named Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 (1863–1927) and rapidly spread during the Meiji era. This concept was borrowed by Chinese intellectuals, yet developed in a different way in China where the revolutionaries used it not to support the Qing Dynasty, but

18 Besides Buddhist monks, men in mourning, young boys, and Taoist priests (who let their hair grow) were exempted from having the queue (Rhoads 2000, 60).

19 The number *si* (four) is from his *paihang* 排行, or seniority in age within one family generation.

instead to oppose it.²⁰ The word *guocui* in Wang's article can be translated simply as "nationalism", or can be understood as "the national essence" if we assume that the author considered the queue a national symbol of China.

In this article, Wang Jingzhai introduced two episodes in the Arabic scriptures to explain the reasons Muslims must not keep their queues. The first story was about a man who had his hair cut but left half of it long after the Prophet Muhammad had passed away. Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Quhāfah al-Šiddiq (573–634), a senior companion of Muhammad and the first Muslim Caliph, "thought this hairstyle to be against Islamic teachings" and chopped the man's head off. The second episode involved an Islamic leader putting a man to the sword for saying that he did not like the cropped hairstyle which Muhammad favoured (Wang 1910). Leaving the veracity of these episodes aside, what should be emphasised is that both Liu and Wang recommended that other Muslims cut their queues on the grounds that they were contrary to Islamic teachings, while non-Muslims were being told to cut their queues to increase national prosperity, military power, and free themselves from Manchu rule. This fact indicates that Chinese-speaking Muslims did not always act in accordance with the slogan, *Aiguo aijiao* ("to love one's homeland is to love faith").

In other words, contrary to non-Muslims' queue-cutting movement, which was motivated by anti-Qing sentiment and patriotism, for Muslims queue-cutting was also a matter of religious belief. Perhaps for that reason, *Zhengzong Aiguobao* had few descriptions of Confucian ethics, while the non-Muslim urban elite in the late Qing period tended to discuss the pros and cons of queue-cutting in light of Confucian values, arguing that "to cut a queue is to hurt the body given by one's parents. It is unfavourable because it is against the ethics of filial piety (Ch. *xiao* 孝)" (Yoshizawa 2003, 148). Also: "A queue is a hairstyle that shaves more than half of the hair, so it is against the teachings of Confucius" (ibid.). Moreover, though non-Muslims hated queues because they were a custom of Manchu rulers and seen as "barbarian (Ch. *yi* 夷)", it is likely that Muslims avoided discussing the "barbarism" of queues. This does not mean that anti-Manchu sentiment did not exist among Chinese-speaking Muslims during the Qing rule over China.²¹ Nonetheless, as far as the Muslim elites in Beijing and Tianjin in the early twentieth century were concerned, they were reluctant to take a hostile attitude towards Manchus, although they were not altogether pro-Manchu.

20 For further studies on the *guocui* movement in modern China in relation to Japan, see Kawakami (2001) and Han (2015).

21 Atwill (2005, 139) has pointed out that Du Wenxiu 杜文秀, who was the leader of the Panthay Rebellion in Yunnan, was not targeting the Han Chinese. Rather, he had anti-Qing and anti-Manchu sentiments and wanted to destroy the Manchu government.

Difficulties of Queue-cutting

We do not know how ordinary Muslims reacted to the reports that Liu Mengyang, an eminent journalist, and Zhang Ziwen, who had great influence on Muslim communities in northern China, had cut their queues. In any case, the situation greatly changed from the time when Abdürreşid İbrahim had recorded Muslims' queue hairstyle in 1909, as queue-cutting became a mainstream practice by the second half of 1911.

The names and occupations of people who cut their queues in Beijing and Tianjin were listed in *Zhengzong Aiguobao*, although it was not shown whether they were Muslims or not. At the same time, the discussions on queue-cutting by the Political Advisory Board were often reported, and several articles on the pros and cons of queue-cutting were published in the newspaper. Some Chinese were worried that it would be difficult to find jobs if one rushed to change one's hair and style of clothing (Mengdie 1911). Still, the *Zhengzong Aiguobao* favoured articles that recommended queue-cutting as soon as possible, saying, for example, "Chinese people's queues are ridiculed by foreigners" (Letian 1911), or "[a queue] looks good only because we are used to it" (Xinmin 1912). It is difficult to check the names of the contributors or whether the authors of these articles were Muslims because they used pennames. Nevertheless, it can be safely assumed that *Zhengzong Aiguobao* took a positive attitude towards queue-cutting, and the opposing view was seldom presented in the newspaper.

Notably, a short article was published in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* on January 2, 1912, right after the establishment of the Republic of China, saying that a Muslim hair-cutting comrade association had been founded in the Qianmen area in Beijing (Anonymous 1912a). It reported that some members would soon organize a hair cutting group for Muslims, and that it would be located inside the seventh primary school for the learning of Islam and Confucianism in Qianmenwai Puchenshi (Ch. *Qianmenwai Puchenshi jingru diqi xiaoxuetang* 前門外鋪陳市經儒第七小學堂). This organization's goals and practices are not totally clear, but it seems that they promoted the slogan "freedom of haircut (Ch. *ziyou jianfa* 自由剪髮)" and queue-cutting by Muslims.

The queue-cutting movement continued for a while, even after the establishment of the Republic of China. Several lists of the names of people who cut their queues in Beijing were published in *Zhengzong Aiguobao* through 1912. Not all of these were necessarily Muslims, but it would not be surprising if some of them were Muslims. We can see that queue-cutting had reached across generations from the

fact that the name of a 10-year-old was listed (Anonymous 1912b).²² Pro-queue-cutting articles also continued to be published: “The number of queue-cutting people has been increasing day by day. Not only people in academia, politics or military, but also those engaged in business know the benefits of queue-cutting very well” (Baofa xingwuzi 1912). Moreover, an article also said: “Cut queues immediately, or it will be too late when you really have troubles” (ibid.). There must have been Muslims who were encouraged to cut their queues by these words rather than by patriotism or faith. In other words, as is discussed in Liu Mengyang’s article above, it was also the social atmosphere of the times, in which people had already cut their queues, that made Muslims cut their hair.

Nonetheless, it was true that a certain number of people in Beijing chose not to cut their queues, even when eighty or ninety percent of the population had already done so in Nanjing, which later became the capital of the Republic of China (Yoshizawa 2003, 145). As Cheng (1998, 135) noted, “As the queue-cutting issue was related to the conflict between the new and old forces and ideologies, it gave rise to many disturbances and incidents of unrest around the country.” There were also a certain number of Muslims who were against queue-cutting. Let us take a look at an article entitled “Describing the Reasons Why Our Ahongs Never Advocate Cutting Queues” (Anonymous 1912c), presenting an opposing view to the article that announced the foundation of the Muslim queue-cutting comrade association. The author of this article, who called himself *jiaoshi* 教師 (i.e. *ahong*) and *xiaosheng* 小生 (i.e. my humble self), and was called *gexia* 閣下 (i.e. his Excellency) by other Muslims, spoke out on the difficulties of recommending queue-cutting to anti-queue-cutting Muslims in Tianjin.

The author thought that the queue was neat and clean, saying that the hairstyle was the essence of the nation (Ch. *guocui* 國粹), something which only Chinese people have in this world. At the same time, he wanted to cut his own queue, because he thought that the old customs should be removed along with the old regime when it was gone. He also believed that, even though the queues did not contravene Islamic teachings, “they were opposite to the deeds of the Prophet Muhammad” (Anonymous 1912c, 5), as they were annoying during worship, and it was more convenient if they cut them. He agreed with Liu Mengyang’s opinion that queues were against Islamic doctrine, and was very dissatisfied with the behaviour of the ahongs in Tianjin who did not follow Liu Mengyang’s proposal of cutting them off. However, the author eventually gave up on the plan of cutting his own queue because of the opposition of ordinary Muslims. As he stated, it was not until the author became an ahong himself that he became aware that some

22 A similar list can be seen in No. 2051, published the next day.

Muslims were so stubborn that they had the power to give ahongs trouble. Young ahongs such as he were not powerful enough to urge such stubborn people to cut their queues. He suggested that, if an old custom, like the queue hairstyle, did not disrespect Islamic teachings, then ahongs should not pay too much attention to it and should refrain from prohibiting it immediately to avoid resistance from Muslims and save faces (Ch. *bao timian* 保體面).

It is difficult to identify the author of this article, because it is impossible to check the original text in *Tianjin Baihuabao* (天津白話報). But, judging from the context, he was an ahong based in Tianjin who had expressed his agreement with Liu Mengyang's argument on queue-cutting. If so, it is probably safe to say that Wang Jingzhai, about 30 years old, was the author who contributed this article to support Liu. If what is stated in this article is true, anti-queue-cutting Muslims were so persistent in Tianjin that ahongs could not persuade them otherwise. It can thus easily be imagined that there was severe friction between them and pro-queue-cutting Muslims. It is surprising that the author, i.e. Wang Jingzhai, who supported Liu Mengyang, eventually decided not to cut off his queue, even though he thought that the queues were against the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad. As a young Muslim who had just become an ahong, Wang Jingzhai could only compromise to avoid the resistance of "stubborn" older Muslims and save face (Ch. *bao timian* 保體面), and took a wait-and-see attitude, trying to be neutral and flexible.

Here, I would like to focus on the word *timian* 體面, one of those that can be translated as "face" in a sociological context and idiomatically refers to an individual's public self-image based on her/his own sense of dignity or prestige (Goffman 1967, 5). This term, which thought to have its origin in the Chinese language (Ho 1976, 867), is regarded as "the principle of the Chinese spirit" (Lu 1959, 129) and "the most delicate standard by which Chinese social intercourse is regulated" (Lin 1935, 200). I am not aiming to simplify the history of Chinese-speaking Muslims, yet it seems that their guiding principles have aspects that can be understood with the concept of face. The episode of the young ahong in Tianjin, probably Wang Jingzhai, shows us that saving face was his motivation for acting to preserve the queue. He wanted to cut off his queue because of his *faith* in Islam, but preserved it to save *face*. Also, instead of persisting in his belief that the queue was against the teachings of the Prophet, he chose to keep his queue for the long-term aim of not provoking conflicts among Muslims. In other words, keeping a queue was wrong according to the regulations of Islam. However, by doing so, Wang was trying to pacify the anti-queue-cutting Muslims and preserve stability and harmony among the Muslim community in Tianjin. The tension between religious faith and social face may, to some extent, thus help us to understand the real-life practices of Islam in China and Muslims' interactions with others.

Conclusion

In order to deconstruct the nationalism of Chinese-speaking Muslims, which has often been overemphasised in previous studies, this article has shown that Chinese-speaking Muslims were also upset by queues and tormented by what was called hair disaster (Ch. *fa'e* 髮厄) or hair wickedness (Ch. *fahuo* 髮禍) (Kuwabara 1927, 332). Unlike non-Muslim Chinese men who cut their braids because of anti-Manchu sentiment and nationalistic feelings, some Muslims cut theirs off for religious reasons, as they claimed that the hairstyle was un-Islamic and contrary to the practices of the Prophet, making the following claims: queues are bothersome when one performs worship; they look like pigs' tails, which should be avoided in Islam; the Prophet Muhammad liked a close-cropped hairstyle; and his companion disliked a hairstyle which was shaved halfway. Still, a certain number of Muslims tried to preserve their queues. Their opposition was so intense that a young Muslim scholar in Tianjin abandoned cutting off his queue to prevent conflicts among the community and save his face.

To be sure, as previous research has pointed out, during the Qing Dynasty hair was "a means of social control and a focus of cultural and political conflict" (Cheng 1998, 138) and "hair needs to be interpreted as a public symbol" (Godley 1994, 53): "for Han Chinese, the queue hair style embodied the alien conquest, the power of autocracy, and the downfall of traditional rites and cultural pride" (Cheng 1998, 128). However, in the limited case of the Muslim elite in the urban areas of Beijing and Tianjin, queue-cutting was discussed in terms of their inner religious beliefs rather than political issues. In other words, they interpreted the queue-cutting movement in modern China, a symbolic form of social activism of the Xinhai Revolution and one of the most influential events in the modern history of East Asia followed by the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the new Republican regime, in their own context.

As Christian missionaries witnessed and reported, Chinese-speaking Muslims tucked away their queues and concealed them under their caps in the early twentieth century. Some also cut off the queues, as Muslims themselves described, because it was troublesome to hide them under their caps. It is also possible that they did not want to leave their "un-Islamic" queues hanging down their backs during worship. Muslims' attitudes toward the queue-hairstyle remind us of what Marshall Broomhall recorded about their "compromise", by which they pretended to pray to idols or the Imperial Tablet (Ch. *wansui paizi* 萬歲牌子), which had to be placed into each mosque.

Their [i.e. Muslims'] attitudes as students or as officials towards the worship of the Emperor and of Confucius, or even of idolatry, is that of compromise. Compelled by law to conform, they excuse themselves by saying that they only do so outwardly and not in heart. (Broomhall 1966, 228)

Certainly, Muslims' efforts for national integration and patriotism, as symbolised by the slogan *Aiguo aijiao* ("to love one's homeland is to love faith") and even the title of the newspaper *Zhengzong Aiguobao* (lit. *Genuine Patriot Daily*), which this article has mainly drawn on, were significant throughout the twentieth century. However, at the same time, attention should also be paid to their everyday "compromise" with what Broomhall called "an empty official ceremony" (ibid.). For them, the queue must have been another one of these, as it embodied the reality of the obligation to accept "pagan" rule, whether from the Manchus or Han Chinese. This may explain why the Muslim elite did not express anti-Manchu sentiment. While the Han Chinese were liberated from the Manchu rule and enjoyed freedom of hairstyle under the government dominated by the Han Chinese, the birth of a new regime meant that Muslims again had to seek ways to construct a stable relationship with the un-Islamic, "heathen" government.

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