



RESEARCH PAPER

**The Formation of Hui Ethnic Group in China in Yuang Dynasty:
Diversity and Integration**

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ABSTRACT

China is known for its ethnic diversity. The emergence of the Hui community represents a unique phenomenon, characterized by the amalgamation of Islamic and Chinese cultures. Originating in the Tang Dynasty, the Hui community coalesced during the Yuan Dynasty, drawing from a diverse ethnic composition that encompassed various Islamic believers of the era. Predominantly comprised of Arabs, Persians, and Islamized Turkic groups, alongside a minority from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa, as well as non-Islamic Azoreans, Jews, and Gypsies. The formation of the Hui during the Yuan Dynasty stemmed from the Mongol Western Expedition. This expedition facilitated the Hui formation through two principal means the enforced recruitment of soldiers and artisans by the Mongol army, and the reopening of the Silk Road, both overland and maritime, which facilitated the influx of Muslims, particularly of Arabian and Persian descent, into China. Furthermore, the vast expanse of the Yuan Dynasty, characterized by a multitude of ethnicities and relaxed ethnic policies, provided fertile ground for Hui formation. Concurrently, the notion of the Chinese nation embodied a concept of multi-ethnic assimilation, reflecting a pattern of pluralism within unity. This paper is an attempt to highlight the emergence of Hui community and its contribution to Chinese National life. Historical descriptive method is used to analyzed the data. The existence of Hui community revitalized the image of China that its economic progress is hidden in the unity in diversity.

Keywords: Ethnic Formation, Hui Community, Islam, Yuan Dynasty

Introducation

Hui ethnic group, one of China's 56 recognized ethnicities, represents a distinctive amalgamation of Muslims from diverse nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, and linguistic traditions, unified by the cohesive influence of Islam. Despite not being indigenous to China, the Hui are neither exclusively foreign nor strictly cross-border, embodying instead a synthesis of various cultural and ethnic elements. According to data from China's seventh national census in 2020, the Hui population stands at 113,779,914, ranking as the nation's fourth-largest ethnic group. The Hui ethnic group are scattered in various provinces of China, among which they are more widely distributed in Ningxia, Gansu, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Henan and Yunnan provinces (regions). How did such an ethnic group originate in history? How was it formed? It has always been one of the hot spots of Hui research. This thesis aims to investigate the historical origins and formation of the Hui ethnic group in China, particularly focusing on its emergence during the Yuan Dynasty. Central to this inquiry is an examination of the constituent races that contributed to the formation of the "Hui" during this pivotal period.

The genesis of the Hui community can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty, a period marked by the flourishing of both land and sea silk routes, which facilitated the influx of Muslims from the Arab Empire into China for commercial endeavors. Primarily

congregating in major urban centers such as Chang'an and Luoyang, as well as prominent port cities like Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Quanzhou, and Yangzhou, these migrants played a significant role in the cultural and economic landscape of the time. Historical records indicate that during the Tang and Song dynasties, a substantial number of Muslims from Arabia and Persia settled in China, engaging in trade and establishing familial ties. However, their legal status during this era remained classified as "foreigners," lacking official household registration.

The Yuan Dynasty ushered in a new chapter in the formation of the Hui community, characterized by the migration of a sizable contingent of Arab, Persian, and Islamized Turkic peoples into China, propelled by the Mongol westward conquest. Furthermore, the vast territorial expanse of the Yuan Dynasty facilitated extensive interethnic interaction, fostering a milieu wherein various ethnicities cohabited and engaged in mutual exchange. Notably, the Yuan Dynasty bestowed household registration upon Muslims migrating from Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia, designating them as "Hui Hui." This administrative action heralded the emergence of a distinct ethnic group, the Huihui, within the Chinese societal framework.

The term "Huihui" initially appeared during the Northern Song Dynasty within a war song documented in Shen Kuo's *Brush Talks from Dream Brook* (Shen Kuo, ca. 1093). In the context of numerous Song dynasty texts, "Huihui" referred to migratory birds and held no association with Islam. However, during the Yuan Dynasty, the connotation of "Huihui" transformed. The term "Huihui" during this period originated from the Chinese transliteration of the Mongolian term "Sarta' ul" (Qiu Shusen, 2012). In Mongolian, "Sarta' ul" denotes all Muslim territories situated in the western region of the Mongolian Empire, excluding the Huihui (Jiang Yuan, 2015). Following the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty, "Hui Hui" denoted practicing Muslims, including Arabs, Persians, and Islamized Turkic peoples, among others. These Muslims hailed from diverse countries, regions, and ethnic backgrounds, converging in China, and coalescing due to their shared faith, thereby giving rise to the Hui ethnic group. "Huihui" represents the early stage of the "Hui" identity in China, with the Yuan Dynasty serving as a pivotal period in its formation. The emergence of the Hui in China was not instantaneous but rather the culmination of a protracted process involving continuous exchanges and integration among various ethnic groups sharing common beliefs.

This paper mainly uses the literature research method. Firstly, by consulting a large number of literature materials, the general law of the formation of the nation is studied. Then, from the perspective of history and the nation itself, the law of the formation of Hui nationality is analyzed. Secondly, by reviewing the historical data, it is found that the Mongol expedition to the West provided the transportation foundation for the formation of Hui nationality, and the Yuan Dynasty's ethnic policy provided the living soil for the formation of Hui nationality. Finally, through consulting the history of the Mongol Empire and the Yuan Dynasty, it is found that the "Hui Hui people" are mainly: Arabs, Persian and Turkic Peoples (Turkic peoples, Argyns), Other Turkic Groups in Western Liao (Qangli, Chinchas (Kipchak people)), Other races (Black Hui Hui, Jiminyahoo, Huihui in South Asia), Racial Integration of Non-Muslim Sections into Huihui (Azorian, Juhu, Loli Hui Hui)

Literature Review

The study of Chinese ethnic history originated from Liang Qichao, who published *New Historiography* in the early 20th century, proposing that "the nation is the mastermind of history" (Liang Qichao, 1902), which opened the starting point of Chinese ethnic studies. Beginning with Liang Qichao, "nationality" as a whole concept and academic research discourse began to be known. The study of Hui ethnicity originated from Chen Yuan's book "Examination of the Chinese in the Western Regions of Yuan Dynasty" published in 1923, which focused on the situation of "Hui Hui people" in the Yuan Dynasty. Since then, the study

of Hui people began. In 1935, Jin Jitang published the book *Research on the History of Chinese Muslims*, in 1940, Fu Tongxian published the book *History of Chinese Muslims*, and in 1940, Ma Yiyu also published the book *History of Chinese Muslims*. Bai Shouyi, as a key expert in the study of the Muslims, published a number of books on the study of the Muslims, such as *A Small History of the Muslims in China* in 1944 and *An Outline of the History of Islam in China* in 1948.

Since then, Hui studies have begun to develop in an explosive manner, covering the history of the Hui, regional and local Hui history, Hui characters, Hui uprisings, Hui education, Hui economy, Hui culture, and so on. This paper focuses on the reasons for the formation of the Hui and the composition of the Hui people during the Yuan Dynasty. The studies related to it are as follows.

The main studies on the composition of the "Hui Hui" in the Yuan Dynasty include: Qiu Shusen's *History of the Hui in China*, published in 1996, which is an encyclopaedic work on the history of the development of the Hui in China, and a detailed account of the formation of the Hui and the composition of the Hui people. Since 1985, Mu Dequan has published three papers on who were the Hui during the Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties? Where did they come from? A detailed account of the composition of the Hui people is given (Mu Dequan, 1985). Gao Zhanfu published his paper "The Hui Hui People of Gansu in the Yuan Dynasty" in 1992, Na Xiaobo published his paper "An Examination of the Origin of the Hui in the Northeastern Region" in 1992, Liu Ming published his paper "The Spread of Islam in Yuan Dynasty China" in 2004, Zheng Xiaolu published her paper "A Study on the Family Marriage of the Hui Hui People in the Yuan Dynasty" in 2016, Ma Juan published her paper "The Muslim Immigrants in Hangzhou in the Yuan Dynasty," Zhang He's 2018 dissertation, "A Research on the Forming of Hui Community in the Yuan Dynasty," and Sa Haitao's 2021 dissertation, "Three Questions on the Examination of Hui Hui People in the Yuan Dynasty," among others. Numerous scholars have analyzed the composition of Hui Hui people in the Yuan Dynasty period from different perspectives at different times.

The main reasons for the formation of "Hui Hui people" in the Yuan Dynasty: The study of the causes of the formation of the Hui originated in the 1980s. In 1983, Lin Song wrote a paper entitled "On the Decisive Role of Islam in the Formation of the Hui in China", in which he argued that Islam played a major and decisive role in the formation of the Hui (Song Lin, 1983). Ma Weiliang's thesis, "An Experimental Study of Islam and the Formation of the Common Mental Qualities of the Hui People," argues that Islam played a bonding and facilitating role in the formation of the Hui people (Ma Weiliang, 1983). Jin Yunfeng's 1999 paper "How to View the Formation of the Hui Nationality", Ma Junfeng's 2008 paper "Governing Policies to Hui Nationality in the Dynasties of Yuan, Ming and Qing and Formation of Hui Nationality," Hao Zhixue's 2008 paper "The discussion of Relationship between Huihui Army and Hui Nationality's Formation", Ma Junfeng's 2009 paper "Integration: An Ethnological Interpretation of the Huis", Wang Yun's 2000 paper "The Origin and Formation of the Huihui", Wang Shulan's 2015 paper "A Syllogism of Ethnic Formation and a Preliminary Study on the Formation of Hui Nationality". Many scholars have analyzed the reasons for the formation of Hui nationality from different perspectives such as history, ethnology and anthropology.

Material and Methods

Hui related research has always been one of the research hotspots. There are many literatures on the formation of Hui nationality and the composition of Hui people. The number of researchers has increased since the 1980s. This paper starts with the formation process of the Hui nationality, analyzes its difference with other nationalities, and points out the particularity of the formation process of the Hui nationality. Based on the history of the Yuan Dynasty, it is pointed out that the Mongol conquest to the west and the national policy of the Yuan Dynasty were the basic conditions for the formation of the Hui nationality.

Combining Mongolian history and Yuan Dynasty history to analyze who "Hui Hui people" are and where "Hui Hui people" come from. This study complements the research content of the formation of Hui nationality. Descriptive method is used to analyzed the historical data of this ethnic group.

The Formation of the Hui Ethnic Group: Distinctive Characteristics

The process of nation formation has garnered scholarly attention globally. Lewis H. Morgan, an eminent American anthropologist, outlined this process in his work *"Ancient Society, or Research in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization."* suggesting a progression from gens, phratry, tribe, confederation of tribes, to nation (Morgan, 1877). Building upon Morgan's framework, Friedrich Engels, in his seminal work *"The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State."* further elucidated the stages of nation formation as Clan...Cellular...Tribe → Patriarchal Clan...Regional Tribe...Tribal Confederation → NATION (Jiang Daren, 2001). Typically, the formation of nations correlates with economic development, transitioning from a gathering or hunting economy to the era of civilization. This pattern holds for various ethnic groups worldwide, including the Han, Tibetans, Bai, and Zhuang.

However, the formation of the Hui in China deviates from this conventional trajectory, presenting a unique case. The Hui ethnic group emerged through a complex historical process characterized by the settlement of Muslim merchants from the Arab Empire in China during the Tang and Song dynasties, as well as the migration of Muslims from Central Asia, Persia, and Arabia to China during the Yuan dynasty for diverse reasons. These Muslims, representing diverse nationalities, intermarried with each other and with the Han Chinese, resulting in the formation of a distinct ethnic group in China. Unlike conventional ethnic formations, the emergence of the Hui involved a direct fusion of disparate ethnic components, transcending several conventional stages of ethnic development (Lai Cunli, 1988).

The debate over whether the formation of a people hinges on objective identity or subjective construction constitutes a central point of contention among scholars. Proponents of objective identifiers assert that factors such as geography, lineage, language, and cultural norms exert a determinative influence on ethnic group formation. They contend that ethnic group formation is a historical phenomenon shaped by objective realities beyond human volition. Conversely, subjective constructionists argue that objective characteristics are subjectively constructed and lack inherent originality. They emphasize the significance of subjective factors like imagination, emotion, and identity in shaping ethnic identities, asserting that nations are conceptual communities constructed and imagined by people's subjective will, imbued with contemporary relevance rather than historical inevitability (Wang Jun 2008).

In analyzing the formation of the Hui nationality, scholars have approached the topic from both objective and subjective perspectives. Researchers who emphasize the role of objective characteristics typically examine the historiography of ethnicity. During the Tang, Song, and Yuan Dynasties in China, Muslims migrating from Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia settled in China and, despite originating from diverse countries, regions, and ethnic backgrounds, coalesced, assimilated, and proliferated to form the Hui ethnic group due to their shared adherence to Islam (Jin Jitang, 1936). Scholars argue that various objective "common factors and qualities" decisively influenced the formation of the Hui. The Hui community emerged within the context of China's feudal agrarian economy, influenced by shared cultural, customary, and psychological traits associated with Islam (Ma Weiliang, 1993). Moreover, the Hui shared common "living conditions, economic circumstances, language, and national psychology" (Bai Shouyi, 2000). Islam served as the foundation for Hui unity, with agricultural and commercial activities constituting the primary economic base, and Chinese serving as the common national language (Wang Yun, 2000).

Consequently, the Hui coalesced around their shared Islamic faith, forming a collective identity characterized by common economic practices, language, and culture. These shared cultural symbols played a pivotal role in the constitution and development of the Hui ethnic group.

Scholars advocating for the subjective construction of ethnicity posit that subjective consciousness played a pivotal role in shaping the identity of the Hui ethnic group. During the Yuan Dynasty, the "Hui Hui" community distinguished themselves from other groups in several ways: as foreign immigrants maintaining memories of their homelands, as politically privileged Semu(qari irgen), and as adherents of Islam. However, the first two aspects of differentiation waned in significance after the Ming Dynasty compared to the Qing Dynasty. Post-Ming Dynasty, the first two aspects gradually diminished, and the Hui identified with an "imaginary common homeland," thus evolving into a collective group of "descendants" with an "imagined common homeland" distant from the Han, Manchu, and Mongols (Yao Dali, 2007). The Huihui, predominantly hailing from Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia, belong to various countries and ethnic backgrounds. In constructing their ethnic identity, they envisioned a collective "Huihui homeland," thereby forging a sense of "common blood" within their consciousness. This collectively constructed cultural symbol formed the foundation of the Hui ethnic identity. This concept gained further traction and dissemination during the Ming and Qing dynasties' Islamic cultural revival movements, which "interpreted scriptures through a Confucian lens." During the Republican era, Sun Yat-sen advocated for the idea of a "five-ethnic republic" upon the establishment of the Nanjing Provisional Government on January 1, 1912, proposing the unification of the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, and Tibetan peoples. Subsequently, during the later stages of the War of Resistance Against Japan, various forces continually stimulated the Hui national consciousness and identity, culminating in a zenith of historical significance for the Hui people.

Nevertheless, Western scholars approach the topic with skepticism. In their studies of the Hui community, Dru C. Gladney and Jonathan N. Lipman eschew the concept of ethnicity, instead referring to this group using terms like "Familiar Strangers," "Chinese-Muslim," and "Sino-Muslim." They contend that the notion of Hui as a static, amalgamated concept existed before modern China (Chen Chilu, 1992). These scholars emphasize the significance of the modern state apparatus in shaping the Hui identity, positing that it was only after the 1950 ethnic identification that the Hui came to be recognized as such and subsequently evolved into an ethnic group. Proponents of subjective construction argue that the self-identification and self-selection of the Hui played pivotal roles in their ethnic formation, with the state exerting considerable influence.

These contrasting perspectives on Hui formation are, in fact, complementary studies. Nation formation is a complex process not dictated by a singular moment or factor. Likewise, the formation of an ethnic group is multifaceted and unfolds over time through a series of historical events, representing both natural and deliberate choices in cultural development. Throughout history, the Hui people have shared common traits such as religious identity, blood ties, language (Chinese), social customs, dietary habits, and attire. Within the Chinese social milieu, the distinction between "us" and "others," as well as the gradual development of national identity, has evolved over a prolonged period of historical development.

From the Tang Dynasty, when Arabs and Persians settled in China as "foreigners," to the Yuan Dynasty, when a significant influx of Muslims from Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia obtained household registration and were recognized as "Hui Hui," to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, when further waves of Muslims from China, Persia, and Central Asia settled in China and were similarly categorized, the process of "Sinicization" gradually transformed these "foreigners" into Chinese Muslims. This gradual assimilation, influenced by phenomena like the Islamic cultural movement that interpreted scriptures through a

Confucian lens during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, represents a progression from quantitative to qualitative change.

Basis for the Formation of the Hui

The Mongol Western Expedition and Transportation Infrastructure

In 1189, Genghis Khan (1162-1227) ascended as the leader of the Mongol Kiyán tribe and proceeded to unite various Mongol tribes between 1189 and 1206, establishing the Great Mongol State, commonly referred to as the Mongol Empire, in 1206. Following this, Genghis Khan emerged as a prominent figure in global politics. By 1215, Genghis Khan had seized control of Zhongdu (present-day Beijing), marking a significant conquest. In 1218, he directed General Zhebe to initiate a campaign into Western Liao, paving the way for the Western Expedition. The Western Expedition commenced in 1219, embarking on a series of conquests that lasted for half a century under Genghis Khan and his successors.

In 1258, Hulaiwu captured Baghdad, solidifying Mongol dominance over territories inhabited by Islamic believers stretching from west of the Onion Ridge to east of the Black Sea. By 1259, the Mongol Empire had reached its zenith in territorial expansion, encompassing vast regions extending from Hungary, Syria, and Iraq to the Persian Gulf and the Black Sea, and extending eastward to the northern reaches of the Korean Peninsula and the Kuril Islands. In the south, the empire reached the Dali Kingdom, bordered by the Qinling Mountains and the Huaihe River alongside the Southern Song Dynasty. To the southwest, it extended to the Himalayan Mountains, bordering Tianzhu (present-day India), while to the north, it reached Siberia and the area north of Lake Baikal within a single generation. In 1259, Mongol Khan Mongkol passed away, triggering a power struggle between Alibeko and Kublai for the throne, leading to a four-year-long war. By 1263, the Mongol Empire began to fracture, culminating in the formation of the Yuan Dynasty and four independent khanates in 1279, namely the Khanate of Chagatai, the Khanate of Vogtai, the Khanate of Ilkhanate, and the Khanate of Chinggis (Amitai R, Morgan D, 1999).

The sixty-year period from the Mongol Empire's western conquests to the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty had varying impacts on Islam. Firstly, the conflict inflicted severe damage on Islamic culture while inadvertently facilitating its broader dissemination. Central and West Asian Islamic countries and regions suffered significant destruction of Islamic architecture and culture due to warfare. However, the migration of Muslims eastward brought Islamic culture to China, leading to the emergence of unique groups such as the "Huihui people" and subsequent Islamized ethnicities like the Hui, Dongxiang, Salar, Bao'an, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Tajik, Uzbek, and Tatar. The Mongol Empire's western conquests and the Yuan Dynasty's century-long rule brought about substantial changes in China's ethnic composition and cultural landscape (Qiu Shusen, 2012).

Secondly, the period witnessed unprecedented advancements in transportation, both domestic and international. Before the Mongol Empire's western expeditions, constant conflicts among the Song, Liao, Xia, and Jin Dynasties disrupted east-west transportation routes and paralyzed the overland Silk Road. However, the Mongol Empire's campaigns reopened these routes, fostering close ties between the Yuan Dynasty and the Khanates of Chagatai, Vogtai, Ilkhanate, and Chinggis. The establishment of shared postal stations facilitated convenient transportation across borders. During Ghazan Khan's reign in the Ilkhanate (1295-1304), postal stations extended to China, India, and neighboring countries (Ruashid-Din Hamadani, 706).

Moreover, maritime transportation during the Yuan Dynasty surpassed that of the preceding Song Dynasty due to advancements in shipbuilding and navigation techniques. Marco Polo's return to China aboard a Chinese ship revealed significant improvements, with

vessels boasting fifty to sixty cabins and two hundred sailors. Each ship towed two smaller boats, each manned by forty or fifty sailors (Marco Polo, 1299). Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveler, witnessed even larger Chinese ships, noting vessels with three to ten sails, each manned by a thousand men, including six hundred sailors and four hundred warriors. Additionally, three smaller ships accompanied each large vessel, built in ports such as Guangzhou and Quanzhou (Ibn Battuta, c. 1346). Apart from shipbuilding, Yuan Dynasty navigation techniques advanced significantly, surpassing previous generations in fields such as astronomy, nautical meteorology, and compass usage.

During the Yuan Dynasty, China and Islamic nations, alongside the traditional land and sea Silk Roads, saw the opening of the "Yunnan through the Tianfang Road" by Yunnan Muslims. "Tianfang," during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, referred to Mecca, the birthplace of Islam, and later encompassed the broader region of Arabia. In the Yuan Dynasty, the sizable Muslim population in Yunnan necessitated the establishment of a route to Mecca for pilgrimage and trade purposes.

From the Mongol Empire's western conquests to the foundation of the Yuan Dynasty, transcontinental transportation experienced unprecedented efficiency. The land Silk Road regained its prominence akin to the Tang Dynasty era, while the Maritime Silk Road thrived. This seamless east-west transportation network laid the groundwork for Muslims from diverse Islamic nations and regions to journey to China. Firstly, a significant influx of Arabs, Persians, and Islamized Turkic peoples accompanied the Mongol Western Expedition as soldiers and artisans, becoming pivotal contributors to the Mongol conquests of the Jin, Xia, and Southern Song Dynasties. Secondly, numerous Muslim artisans, children, and women were captured and brought to China by the Mongol forces during their Western campaigns. Thirdly, the revival of the land Silk Road facilitated the migration of Muslims from Central Asia to China. Fourthly, the efficient sea transportation network facilitated the arrival of Muslim merchants, clerics, artisans, scholars, and other individuals from Central Asia, West Asia, Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia to engage in trade and missionary activities in China. Many of these Muslims who arrived in China during the Yuan Dynasty settled in the country, assimilating into Chinese society as "Huihui" people.

Foundations of the Ethnic Policy in the Yuan Dynasty

The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) marked a significant epoch in Chinese history as the first dynasty established by nomadic rulers. This period witnessed numerous historical milestones in China. Notably, it was the first instance of a northern nomadic people extending their rule over the entirety of China, boasting the largest territorial control and governing the most diverse array of ethnic groups. It was a time when ethnic mingling occurred on a large scale, with migrations and interactions reaching an apex (Zhang Fan, 2002).

During the Yuan Dynasty, frontier peoples migrated into the interior of China, fostering mutual identification and coordinated development among various ethnic groups. This era heralded a period of profound unity, transcending the traditional distinctions between the Han and ethnic minorities. Historically, China had been predominantly Han, with other ethnic groups relegated to the status of minorities or frontier peoples, creating a hierarchical ethnic structure. However, the Yuan Dynasty challenged this paradigm, diminishing the dominance of the Han and fostering a broader recognition of China's multi-ethnic composition. It was a realization that China encompassed not only the Han but also Mongolian, Tibetan, Hui, and other ethnicities, forming a cohesive Chinese nation comprising diverse ethnic groups. The ethnic policies of the Yuan Dynasty underscored China's pluralistic ethnic landscape and cemented the concept of the Chinese nation as a historical reality. The Yuan Dynasty implemented the "four classes of people" system, although it was not a novel concept exclusive to that era. Precedents of this stratification can be traced back to the Jin Dynasty, where the ruler of the Jurchen explicitly delineated four

classes: Jurchen, Bohai, Khitan, and Han. Therefore, the Yuan Dynasty's ethnic policy was inherited from earlier regimes. Based on the order of conquest, the population during the Yuan Dynasty was classified into four groups: Mongols, Semu(qari irgen), Han Chinese, and Southerners. The first class are the Mongols; the second class are the Semu(qari irgen); the third class are the Han Chinese, referring to the Han Chinese, Khitans, and Jurchen in the former Jin Dynasty, as well as the people of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, and the Goryeo people; and the fourth class are the South Chinese, referring to the various ethnic groups in the Southern Song Dynasty, which was finally conquered by the Yuan Dynasty(Han Rulin,1985).Semu(qari irgen),which encompassed individuals of varied skin tones and eye colors, including adherents of diverse religions such as Islam and Catholicism. Hui Hui belonged to the Semu(qari irgen), as documented by Tao Zongyi in his *Notes Recorded during Respite from the Plow*, which enumerates 31 ethnic groups among the Semu(qari irgen) people (Tao Zongyi, 1366).

While the ethnic policy of the four classes was formally established, its implementation was nuanced. Across political, military, economic, and cultural spheres, the four classes intersected, particularly within the ruling elite, fostering an environment of interdependent coexistence among Mongols,Semu(qari irgen), Han Chinese, and southern groups. This policy aimed at amalgamating and juxtaposing all ethnicities, rather than elevating one over the others (Ma Wei, 2015). Over time, the ruling composition of the Yuan Dynasty evolved into a coalition of "Mongols, Semu(qari irgen), Han Chinese, and collaborating Southerners" (Xiao Qi-Qing, 1994). Additionally, there were dualistic theories positing the unity of Mongols with Sromos, and Han Chinese with Southerners. Government documents from the Yuan dynasty, such as "*Da Yuan Sheng Zheng Guo Chao Dian Zhang*," indicate that in the imperial examination system, Mongols and Semu(qari irgen) formed one group, while Han Chinese and Southerners formed another. Furthermore, intermarriage between the four classes was permitted, as was freedom of religious belief.

Indeed, the ethnic system of the four classes during the Yuan Dynasty reflected the historical evolution of the Yuan Empire as a multi-ethnic unified state. Initially, the Yuan rulers aimed to uphold Mongol dominance, with other ethnic groups relegated to subordinate positions. However, practical constraints meant that the Mongols lacked the capacity to exert sole authority, leading to a system of co-rule or semi-autonomous governance, while ensuring Mongol interests were safeguarded (Ma Wei, 2015). Consequently, the ethnic policy of the Yuan Dynasty laid the groundwork for the emergence of the "Huihui" ethnic group, representing one of the most significant contributions of the Yuan dynasty to Chinese ethnicity.

Formation of the "Hui Hui" people in the Yuan dynasty period

Arabs and Persians

During the Tang and Song dynasties, a significant number of Muslims settled in China, primarily originating from the Arab empire, comprising both Arabs and Persians. These Muslim settlers were commonly referred to as Huihui during the Yuan Dynasty.

In the course of their westward conquests, the Mongols enlisted a substantial contingent of Arabs and Persians as soldiers in China. For instance, historical records document the formation of an army consisting of 50,000 individuals, comprised of young men and women from Khufu (present-day Leninabad, Tajikistan), Blackadarat, Buharat, Samarqand, and other cities and villages (Juvaini, c. 1260). Numerous accounts in the Yuan dynasty annals attest to the presence of soldiers from Arabia and Persia who attained significant ranks within the military hierarchy.

Additionally, as part of the Mongol military campaigns, a considerable number of artisans were conscripted into China. For instance, historical records indicate that 30,000

artisans were forcibly relocated from Samarqand alone. During the reign of Vogtai (1229-1241), 3,000 households from Samarqand were resettled in Nettlewood (present-day Wanquan Xishimalin, Hebei Province), where a governmental institution, the Nettlewood Artisan Tijuzhi, was established, dedicated to producing fine textiles such as lost satin (Rashid-Din Hamadani, 706). Many of these artisans, along with architects, contributed to the construction of numerous mosques in China. For example, the *Quanzhou Islamic Rock Carvings* document the efforts of Rukhber Haji Ahmad ibn Mohammed Jaddes, from Shiraz (now in Iran), who oversaw the reconstruction of the Quanzhou Mosque, known as the Temple of Aisuhab, in 1310-1311.

Muslim traders traversed the Silk Road by both land and sea routes to reach China during the Yuan Dynasty. In 1263, the Yuan capital Zhongdu (modern-day Beijing) counted 2,953 Hui households, primarily composed of affluent merchants (Qiu Shusen, 2012). Ibn Battuta, in his travelogue, noted encountering Muslim merchants in every region he visited in China (Ibn Battuta, c. 1346). The accessibility of transportation facilitated the influx of Arab and Persian merchants into China during this period, with their presence extending across the entire country. The Yuan Dynasty witnessed the emergence of various Islamic clerics in China. Official documents of the Yuan Dynasty government mention clergy such as "(Persian Danishimand) (Persian darwish), (Arabic Gadi)" (Qiu Shusen, 2012). According to records from the Quanzhou Islamic Rock Carvings, during the restoration of the Qingliang Temple (mosque) in Quanzhou in 1350, Wu Jian authored a "*Record of the Qingliang Temple*," documenting clergy members holding titles such as "Shaikh-al-Islam, iman, Mutawalli, and Murzin (Arabic)." The term "Shaikh-al-Islam" designated a clergy member. Ibn Battuta also mentioned in his travelogue the existence of Muslim districts in every city in China, each governed by an official known as the Shaykh-ul-Islam, responsible for overseeing Islamic affairs in the city (Ibn Battuta, c. 1346). The widespread dissemination of Islam during the Yuan Dynasty was marked by standardized religious activities, facilitated by a continuous influx of missionaries from the Arab and Persian regions to China.

Islamized Turkish Peoples

Following the fragmentation of the Turkic khanate in the sixth century AD, Turkic migrations westward ensued, accompanied by the division of the Turkic tribes. By the eleventh century, descendants of the Oghuz and Seljuk Turks had migrated to Asia Minor and the Balkans, with the majority embracing Islam. Concurrently, during the latter half of the twelfth century, nearly all Turkic peoples, except for the Gaochang Hui migrants in the eastern regions, had adopted Islam. This included various nomadic Turkic tribes inhabiting the northern steppes of China.

Turkic peoples, dispersed across different regions and belonging to diverse ethnic groups, settled in China and assimilated into the "Hui Hui" community. Among them were the Hazarus, indigenous to the northeastern corner of Taiwan. Originating from the tribes of Western Turkestan, the Hazarus inhabited the region around Haihari, east of Lake Kashgar. In the mid-tenth century, the Hazarus embraced Islam and established it as the state religion of the Kara Dynasty. Subsequently, they were incorporated into the Western Liao Khanate, maintaining autonomy as a vassal state under the rule of a monarch known as "Arslan Khan." In 1211, Arslan Khan of the Hazarus submitted to the Mongols, and Genghis Khan formed marital alliances with their clan (Rashid-Din Hamadani, 706). During the Mongol westward conquests, numerous Hazarus joined the Mongol ranks. In the Yuan Dynasty, a significant Hazaru population resided in China, and in 1287, Yuan Shizu assembled Hazaru soldiers from various regions to establish a government department known as the Hazaru Wandoufu (哈刺鲁万户府), responsible for palace security.

Argyns: The Arghuns were a Turkic tribe residing in the region between Tashyos (southeast of present-day Jambul, Kazakhstan) and Bashashashagon (south of present-day

Tokmak, Kyrgyzstan). They were part of the territory controlled by the Qara-Khanid Khanate and adhered to the Islamic faith. During Genghis Khan's Western campaign, they pledged allegiance to the Mongol Empire. Additionally, Genghis Khan organized the Arghun Army, which played a role in the conquest of Khorezm. Under the reign of Yuan Taizu Vogtai (1229-1241), the Arghun Army was stationed in Nettle Marin and Fengzhou, engaging in the production of Nawaboi cotton satin. Towards the end of the Yuan Dynasty, the Alhun Ministry Army was established to provide security for the palaces where the emperors resided. Other Turkic Groups in Western Liao: While the rulers of Western Liao adhered to Buddhism, they did not impose restrictions on the practice of Islam within their domain. Among the prominent Turkic communities were the Ü-Tsang people, inhabitants of the Hotan region in present-day Xinjiang, the Alimari people residing northwest of Hocheng in present-day Xinjiang, and the Bie lost Bali people located in Jimusar County, also in present-day Xinjiang.

Qangli: The Qangli were nomadic Turkic tribes residing east of the Ural River and to the northeast of the Aral Sea. In the latter half of the 12th century, coinciding with the spread of Islam, a significant portion of the Qangli migrated southward to Khorezm. This movement intensified as Islam gained traction, resulting in a substantial influx of Qangli to Khorezm. Under the rule of Khan Alā'al-Dīn Muhammad (reigned 1200-1220), the Qangli were enlisted into his military ranks, with more than half of the garrison in Samarqand comprised of Qangli soldiers. Following the Mongol conquest of Samarqand, a considerable number of Qangli were captured in the central plains. During the reign of Yuan Wuzong (1307-1311), the establishment of a governmental agency dedicated to the Qangli people occurred in 1308: the Guangwu Qangli Guards and Military Commanders. This agency, known as the Gwangmukangri Guards Service Relatives Commanding Division, was tasked with safeguarding the capital and the imperial city.

Chinchas (Kipchak people): The Chinchas, also known as the Kipchak people, inhabited the region stretching from the Ural River to the northern shores of the Black Sea. They were nomadic Turkic tribes. During the Mongol westward conquest, a significant number of Chinchas were either enslaved or enlisted in the army. In 1286, the Chinchas Guards of the Army Commanding Generals was established. In the second year of Emperor Yingzong's reign, the Chinchas were divided into two divisions: the Left and Right Chinchas. Under the reign of Emperor Wenzong, the combined military strength of the Left and Right Chinchas guards ranged from 15,000 to 21,000 soldiers (Shi Weimin, 1992).

Other Races

During the Yuan dynasty, in addition to Muslims from Arab, Persian, and Turkic ethnic backgrounds, the Huihui community also encompassed other groups practicing Islam who settled in China. These included:

Black Hui: This term dates back to the Tang Dynasty when it referred to black-skinned slaves from South and Southeast Asia. Chinese literature referred to them as "Kunlun Nu," with "Kunlun" meaning black. In the Yuan Dynasty, black-skinned individuals who adhered to Islam were termed "Black Hui Hui." They generally occupied low social statuses and often remained in servant roles. Ibn Battuta, in his travels, mentioned black slaves serving as sailors on Chinese ships. He also noted the presence of "Habshi" individuals among the soldiers in major cities. "Habshi" refers to black slaves who converted to Islam and were brought to India historically.

Jiminyahoo: A native of Champa, residing on Hainan Island. In antiquity, due to the limitations of sailing ship construction, maritime voyages were constrained to follow the coastline, necessitating frequent stops along the way. Therefore, Hainan Island held a strategic position on the ancient Maritime Silk Road. Serving as a major east-west maritime thoroughfare, Hainan Island served as a crucial port of call for both Chinese and foreign

merchant ships traversing to and from China. *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (785-804) records that during the Zhenyuan period of the Tang Dynasty, Jia Tain documented a sea route from Guangzhou to Arabia via Hainan Island. Additionally, the Arab geographer Huldazbeh documented a route from Basra that concluded at the port of Guangzhou, passing through Hainan Island (Abu'l-Qasim Ubaydallah ibn Abdallah ibn Khordadbeh, ca. 885). Hainan Island was already inhabited by Muslims during the Tang and Song dynasties. During the Yuan Dynasty, Muslims predominantly hailed from Champa, either engaging in commerce or immigrating to Hainan Island to escape conflicts in Champa. According to the *Zhengde Qiongtai Zhi*, during the early Yuan Dynasty's Zhengde period, numerous families from Champa relocated to Hainan Island to seek refuge from the turmoil of war.

Huihui in South Asia: During the Yuan Dynasty, several countries in South and Southeast Asia underwent Islamization. Ma'abar, situated on the coast of the Coromandel Sea in India, was among these Islamic nations. The prime minister of Ma'abar, Bu Ali Said, originally hailing from Hassan Hedi (present-day Oman), migrated to China with a hundred followers accompanying Yuan emissaries in 1291 due to disagreements with the king, ultimately settling in Quanzhou (Liu Minzhong, 1334).

Racial Integration of Non-Muslim Sections into Huihui

Azorian : Azovs, Iranian people residing in the North Caucasus and practicing Greek Orthodox Christianity, were involved in the Mongol Western Conquest. When Mongol conquered the city of Azov (present-day northern Caucasus), a significant number of Azovs joined the Mongol army and relocated to the Central Plains, participating in the campaign against the Song Dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Wuzong, both left and right Azorian guards were established. While there is no documented evidence in Yuan Dynasty records indicating that Azorians embraced Islam, towards the end of the Yuan Dynasty, Quan Heng noted in *Geng Shen Wai Shi* that "the Azu, green-eyed Hui Hui also." This suggests that Azorians were considered Huihui people, though the reason for this classification is unclear. It's plausible that Azorians may have converted to Islam after settling in China, or they were mistakenly categorized as Huihui due to their distinctive eye color (Semu,qari irgen). As mentioned earlier, Semu(qari irgen) individuals refer to ethnic groups with eye colors differing from those of the Chinese.

Juhu: The term "Juhu" is the Chinese rendition of the Persian word "Juhud". During the Yuan Dynasty, Jews were referred to as "Juhu". In the early 12th century, some Jews from Bombay, India, migrated to Kaifeng, China, and were designated as "Juhu Huihui" by the Yuan Dynasty. The Yuan Dynasty labeled them as "Jiku Hui Hui". The "Yuan Dianzhang", documented on December 24, 1279, in a royal decree, records that the lifestyle of "Jiku Hui Hui" and "Muzuo barbarians Hui" was similar. "Muzuo barbarians" is the Chinese interpretation of the Persian term "musulmn" during the Yuan Dynasty. During the Yuan Dynasty era, there is no conclusive evidence indicating that Jews in the Kaifeng region converted to Islam; literature solely records their lifestyle, which resembled that of Muslims, suggesting a potential conversion to Islam during that period. By 1663, during the Qing Dynasty, there were over two hundred households of Jewish descendants, who by then had assimilated into the Hui community (Jin Jitang, 2000).

Loli Hui Hui: The term "Loli," which originated as a Chinese transliteration of the Persian word "Luri" or "Lūri" during the Yuan Dynasty, denotes the presence of Gypsies. Gypsies migrated to Persia from India during the ascendancy and outward expansion of Turkic peoples in Afghanistan around the 10th century AD. By the 13th century, the Mongol Western Expedition facilitated the influx of a Gypsy group into China. Historical records from the Chengzong period of the Yuan Dynasty, specifically in 1302 as documented by Yang Zhijiu (1991), attest to the presence of Gypsies in China. The "*Yuán Shǐ*" (History of the Yuan Dynasty) documented instances of Gypsies engaging in disruptive behavior and criminal activities such as robbery and theft. During the Yuan Dynasty, literary

sources referred to Gypsies as "Loli Huihui." This categorization likely stemmed from their Persian origin and the prevalent association of people from Arabia and Persia with Islam, identifying them as "Huihui" individuals. Although the religious practices of these Gypsies during this period remain uncertain, they were consistently labeled as "Huihui," aligning them with the later-established Hui ethnic group. In 1466, during the Chenghua period of the Ming Dynasty, records from Qinzhou (present-day Tianshui, Gansu Province) indicated that "Loli Hui Hui" refrained from intermarrying with Han Chinese but instead practiced endogamous marriage within their own ethnic group, as noted by Li Yingzhou (1984).

Conclusion

Throughout its long history, China has served as a melting pot of diverse ethnicities, embodying a rich tapestry of cultural exchange and integration. From the ancient concept of "Huaxia" to the notion of the Han and the modern idea of the Chinese nation, the evolution of the Chinese ethnic identity reflects a journey of pluralism and unity. The Chinese national community emerged organically over time, representing a convergence of numerous ethnic groups into a unified whole. This process was marked by cultural inclusivity, economic interdependence, emotional affinity, and political cooperation among different ethnicities. Indeed, China's 5,000-year history is a testament to the unity in diversity that characterizes the Chinese nation. The formation of the Hui ethnic group exemplifies the fusion and exchange of various ethnicities within China. It underscores the open and tolerant nature of ancient Chinese society and culture, as well as the integrated and harmonious development of multiple ethnic groups throughout history. This historical reality highlights the enduring model of a pluralistic and cohesive Chinese nation, where diversity is celebrated and unity is cherished.

Recommendations

- Societies are known for its social structure and it can be enacted through the multicultural ethnicities.
- Cultural diversity can be minimized intolerance as Hui community remain tolerant in many phases of history.
- The vibrant ethnicity in China has a long history of their existence and they are contributing in the economic growth of the country.
- The pluralistic society are progressive which ultimately leads towards productivity.

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