

Islam in Taiwan

THE UNLIKELY STORY OF AN IMPORTANT GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

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Taiwan is making an effort to become a Muslim-friendly society, [Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen] said, in the areas of tourism, trade, culture, and more. She told the group that nurturing exchanges between Muslims and non-Muslim Taiwanese has been placed at the top of her administration's agenda.

—*Taiwan News*, September 18, 2019¹

In the increasingly adversarial relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC), two seemingly distinct issues have taken on considerable prominence: Washington's forceful criticism of Beijing's mistreatment of the Muslim Uyghur population in Xinjiang and the reiterated commitment to the defense of Taiwan. Yet these two policy points—human-rights violations against Muslims and the insistence on the sovereignty of the Republic of China (ROC)—intersect in Taiwan's domestic and foreign policies through its efforts to fashion itself as a Muslim-friendly society and its diplomatic outreach to Muslim-majority countries. Understanding this complexity requires delving into the historical background that informs both the interactions and the reasons for these interactions between Taiwan and the Muslim world.

When most people think of Taiwan, Islam and Muslims likely do not immediately cross their minds. Yet there is an important—and growing—community of Muslims in Taiwan that have provided a leverage point for the Taiwanese government in its posturing in relation to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the early years of the Cold War. There are currently around 250,000 Muslims living in Taiwan (around 1 percent of the total population of the island), and most of them are foreign workers from Indonesia and Malaysia. How did this come to be?

Taiwan's engagement with Muslim actors and Muslim nation-states from Indonesia to Morocco has never occurred in a vacuum and has always been deeply intertwined with regional and global geopolitics. Framing Taiwan's politicization of Islam in a longer, historical trajectory allows for reflection on the ways that governments ranging from Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist government-in-exile (KMT) starting in the early 1950s to the current Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and



Figure 1. Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen meets with Taiwan's 2019 hajj delegation in a photo from *Taiwan Today*, September 19, 2019



Source: Taiwan Today (courtesy of PO), <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=346&post=162407>

president of the Republic of China, Tsai Ing-wen, frame policy decisions regarding Muslims as one of many maneuvering points in their ongoing international quest for legitimacy vis-à-vis the PRC. As the assault on Islam continues in the PRC, Taiwan's outreach and engagement with Muslims and Muslim-majority nation-states could prove a fruitful diplomatic tool in its arsenal.

Historical Precedents and Antecedents

The story of Islam in Taiwan does not really start until the late 1940s.² Itinerant travelers and Muslim traders who were part of the maritime sphere of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) made their way to the island, but as far as a Muslim or Islamic past, it is hard for those now living in Taiwan to make any substantial claims to much of one. In the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), Quanzhou in Fujian developed into a large maritime trading entrepôt with several influential Muslim family lineages. In the 1660s, Muslim soldiers from the region played an important role in the seizure of Formosa (now Taiwan) from the Dutch. After this, a limited number of Muslim families were brought to the island by the Qing government to work as local administrators. In 1725, Muslims dug a well for holy water and erected what is believed to be the first mosque in Taiwan. At that time, the Qing census registered around six hundred Muslim households on the island. This number slowly dwindled as Muslim women intermarried with non-Muslim men and migrants stopped arriving from the mainland.

During World War II, Muslims in China had divided loyalties. Some supported the Chinese Nationalists, while others worked with the Japanese or the Soviets to implement their own reform agendas.³ When World War II ended, the Chinese Civil War between the KMT and the CCP resumed immediately after the Second United Front crumbled in the wake of Japan's defeat. Once again, Muslims were divided in their loyalties, with some continuing their support for the KMT and others hedging their bets with the CCP. (Of course, there were also groups of Muslims that did not offer political support to either of these parties.) The Chinese Muslim Association (*Zhongguo huijiao xiehui*) had been established by the KMT in 1938, during the Second Sino-Japanese War, to rally Muslim support against the Japanese. The organization moved to Hong Kong in 1947 before many of the influential members retreated to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek after the Communist victory on the mainland. The CCP counterpart to the Chinese Muslim Association (hereafter the CMA) is the Islamic Association of China (*Zhongguo yisilan xiehui*), founded in 1953, four years after the Communist victory on the mainland.

At the time that the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan, there were only a handful of Muslims on the island. Most of them were traders who traveled around the South China Sea and used the island as a home base. However, in the aftermath of the defeat of the Nationalists, somewhere around twenty thousand Nationalist-supporting Muslims retreated to the island. Many were KMT soldiers who were repatriated from exile in Burma. Others were urban elites with political connections and clout, such as high-ranking civil servants, military officers, and professors. Some came alone, while others brought their families.⁴

The retreat to Taiwan was bittersweet and challenging. While many of the Muslims who arrived on the tropical island quickly got to work reestablishing important overseas networks that they had maintained since at least the 1920s with Muslims throughout Southeast Asia, South Asia, and beyond, the new geopolitical realities of the Cold War also severed many of the ties that these Nationalist-supported Chinese Muslims had established with their brethren abroad.⁵ In the wake of the retreat, the CMA started raising funds to build a mosque in Taipei from anticommunist Muslim leaders around the world, understanding that the mosque would be both a religious space and a political gesture, specifically signaling the ROC and the Nationalist government's support for Islam and their support for religious freedom more broadly.

The Taipei Grand Mosque became a place where the local needs of the exiled Muslim community converged with the global aspirations of the KMT and the CMA.



The building of the mosque was an intentional gesture of outreach to counteract the CCP's efforts to cultivate relationships with Muslims around the globe, but it was also important to the Nationalists' efforts to maintain international legitimacy, especially in the movement of nonaligned nations after the Bandung Conference of 1955, as well as at the United Nations, where they were the effective representatives of China until 1971.⁶

In their anticommunist crusading, Muslim diplomats, such as the famous General Bai Chongxi, quickly rallied support from other anticommunist Muslims around the globe. Among those who made symbolic donations to the mosque-building project were Turkish prime minister Adnan Menderes (who donated \$1,000 USD on behalf of the Turkish Government), King Saud of Saudi Arabia, Shah of Iran Mohamed Reza, King Hussein of Jordan, and Prince Abdullah of Iraq (who reportedly gave close to \$1,500 USD).⁷ In conjunction with breaking ground on the new mosque, Taiwan and Iran issued a joint communiqué regarding the "promotion of cultural cooperation" between the two states, which included provisions to exchange university professors and to promote reciprocal language learning. A similar treaty of amity was drawn up with anticommunist ally Jordan.⁸ By the time of the opening of the mosque, the CMA had an active policy to expand diplomatic relations with Arab Islamic countries.⁹

This type of outreach and diplomacy continued into the 1960s. In 1967, when US-backed Haji Mohammad Suharto seized power in Indonesia, the CMA reached out to congratulate him on "assuming political power in Indonesia" and offered him their "best wishes" in the continued "success in the fight against communism."¹⁰ The CMA also wrote to him, reiterating the need to showcase the "injustices perpetuated by the Chinese Communists" against Muslims living "under occupation" on the mainland.¹¹ At the time, Muslims on the mainland were being severely persecuted and suppressed during Mao's Cultural Revolution, and news of this persecution surely reached Taiwan's Muslim community through informal chains of communication.¹²

There was another small surge of Muslim migration to the island in the 1970s and 1980s. Chinese Muslim exiles from communities in Burma and Thailand who had fled from Yunnan Province in southwestern China during the Chinese Civil War or after the Communist Revolution made their way to Taiwan in the late 1970s and early 1980s looking for economic opportunity as Taiwan had developed into one of the four "Asian Tigers."¹³ By the early 1980s, the population of Muslims on the island began to level off and then decline, as many of the older diplomats who had retreated with the Nationalists to Taiwan began to pass away. New arrivals often intermarried with non-Muslim women.

It was not until the early 1990s that there was a resurgence in the Islamic community in Taiwan. This time, however, many of the Muslims were migrant workers from Indonesia, coming to the island to work in high-tech jobs or as caregivers for Taiwan's burgeoning middle and upper classes. There are also many Malaysian migrant workers in Taiwan, but most of them are ethnic Chinese (given the large population of ethnic Chinese in Malaysia), and therefore only a small proportion of Malaysian workers in Taiwan are Muslim.¹⁴

Demographic Changes and the Changing Landscape of Islamic Practice in Taiwan

The rise in Muslim migrants was the direct result of a policy decision in 1989 to allow more migrant workers (*waiji laogong*) to fill low-wage and low-skill jobs in Taiwan's growing industrial sector.¹⁵ Throughout the 1990s, the Muslim population living in the Republic of China continued to grow, and three new mosques opened on the island in 1992 alone.¹⁶ There are now close to 250,000 Muslims who either permanently call Taiwan home or who work on the island for several years to save money from relatively high wages. Although the percentage of the total population is small (around 1 percent), the community is important for Taiwan's self-presentation as a Muslim-friendly country.

Many of these workers are single women from the rural areas of Java.¹⁷ Because they wear hijabs and are present in the public sphere (as caregivers for the elderly or for young children), they have raised awareness in the Taiwanese public about Islam and Islamic practices.¹⁸ Bao Xiuping argues that the visibility of these young women has helped place Islam in Taiwan into the wider discussion of religion, while in the past "hidden Muslims" (*yinshen de musulin*) had not found their way into the consciousness of everyday Taiwanese.¹⁹ In this regard, the Taipei Grand Mosque is now in large part a women's mosque, because it serves the young and single Muslim migrant workers who care for the children and elderly relatives of middle-class and upper-middle-class Taiwanese.

Throughout this time, the CMA made more direct outreach efforts in Southeast Asia to recruit workers, and the government began what would become a close relationship with the Regional Islamic Da'wah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, which is based in Malaysia.²⁰ Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Taiwan also began to position itself as a place where the Muslim community practiced inclusivity and syncretism (*ronghe zhuyi*). In other words, mosques in Taiwan are much more ecumenical—especially compared to mainland China—and practitioners embrace different types of Islamic expression because they come from many different religious traditions.²¹ This



is presented as a unique characteristic of Taiwanese culture (*Taiwan dute de moshi*) that should be nurtured precisely because it is distinct from the ways that the CCP and Muslims on the mainland approach Islam and Islamic practices.²²

Visiting the mosque on a Friday afternoon, one finds the space full of Indonesian and Malaysian women in their brightly colored headscarves milling about and selling snacks to passersby. The halal market at the mosque is a testament to the vibrant and growing community of Muslims making Taiwan their temporary or even permanent home. Beyond Indonesian and Malaysian cuisine, one can purchase halal Thai snacks; overseas Burmese Chinese-style fried rice (*maindian huoqiao de mainshi you fan*); Indian-style lunch sets; and Algerian, Jordanian, and Egyptian cuisine. These culinary offerings give evidence of patterns of migration that are reconfiguring ways that the physical space of the mosque is used and the ways that Islam is practiced and understood in Taiwan.

The Halal Food Industry, Tourism, and Muslim Investment Opportunities

In September 2019, Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen pledged to “continue working to build a welcoming environment for Muslims” while showcasing the current government’s “efforts to strengthen ties with the Islamic world.”²³ At stake are policies designed to make Taiwan a more accessible place for Muslims. In 2007, with the support of the CMA, the Taiwanese government started the process of getting halal accreditation for food-processing plants and for several hotels around the island. Since 2011, when the Taiwan Halal Industry Quality Assurance Promotion Association was established, more than one hundred companies and restaurants have applied for and received halal certification. This is in part a desire of the government to attempt to secure a foothold in this multibillion-dollar industry by exporting halal products, including cosmetics, processed foods, biotech products, and ingredients such as cocoa, tea, and coffee.²⁴

There are also a growing number of restaurants with halal certification, including a large halal food court underneath the main train station in Taipei. In 2014, the “Taiwanese International Halal Expo” was held in Taipei to draw attention to the large international market for halal products that are being manufactured in Taiwan for export to a “global Muslim market.”²⁵ In 2019, Taiwan introduced its first halal vending machines in an effort to be more accommodating to Muslim residents and visitors to the island.²⁶ The government has even created an English website and app for Muslim tourists to locate halal restaurants, mosques, and Muslim-friendly accommodations. The website lists Indian, Indonesian, Turkish, Moroccan, Chinese

(including a Yunnan cuisine restaurant), and Thai restaurants among those that have received halal certification from the CMA.²⁷

In recent years, the government has also made a concerted effort to accommodate Muslim travelers. In 2018, Malaysia ranked Taiwan as “the second most Muslim-friendly nation in the world, after itself.”²⁸ In 2021, Mastercard also ranked Taiwan behind Singapore as the second most “Muslim-friendly travel destination” among non-Islamic nations (followed closely by the United Kingdom, Thailand, and Hong Kong, rounding out the top five) in its yearly Global Muslim Travel Index.²⁹ By positioning itself as a favorable place for Muslim travelers and a global leader for Muslim travel among non-Muslim nation-states, Taiwan is attracting a new type of tourist—middle-class Southeast Asian Muslims. This is partly a response to the dwindling numbers of tourists from mainland China, who—until recently—made up a large proportion of the foreign tourists to Taiwan.³⁰ (The Chinese Communist Party banned tour groups from the mainland in 2016 after the Democratic Progressive Party won the election.)

Another allure of Taiwan is a growing hajj tourism industry. There are already tour groups and tour organizations that help Muslims living in Taiwan get the hajj visas needed to complete their pilgrimages. Because Indonesia and Malaysia are such populous nations, hajj quotas imposed by Saudi Arabia mean that less than 10 percent of those who apply are able to go on hajj every year (Indonesia is allocated 221,000 spots, while Malaysia gets 31,600).³¹ However, all the states beyond Islamic countries generally get around 25 percent of the allotted hajj visas, meaning that Muslims from Indonesia or Malaysia who live in Taiwan have a much better chance of obtaining a hajj visa while living in Taiwan than they would ever have if they applied at home.

Taiwan is also setting itself up to be a leading destination for cosmetic surgery and health travel in the region and advertises this widely to Muslim travelers.³² In addition, upper-middle-class Southeast Asians, including Muslims, send their children to Mandarin-language summer camps on the island.³³ This is a part of President Tsai’s “New Southbound Policy,” which aims to lure tourists from Southeast Asia to the island, and these efforts have led to an increase in “Muslim-friendly” facilities and activities.³⁴ In this regard, Taiwan is positioning itself to be what Nile Green terms a “trans-Islamic” space where the “aspirations and activities” of Muslims in Taiwan are seen in conjunction with the aims and goals of Muslims around the world.³⁵

In stark contrast to Taiwan’s efforts regarding its Muslim minority and its profile in the Muslim world, Beijing’s persecution of the Uyghurs, a sizable minority of



Turkic Muslims in its westernmost province, has drawn international condemnation. The ongoing efforts to suppress Islam and Uyghur culture have led to the illegal incarceration of more than one million Uyghurs and to severe criticism of the Chinese government for committing cultural genocide in Xinjiang.³⁶ However, the Uyghurs are not the only targets of the Chinese state, and all Muslims living in the PRC find themselves limited in the ways that they can express their Islamic faith.³⁷

When the War on Terror started, the Chinese government seized the opportunity to cast Uyghurs in Xinjiang as terrorists and extremists.³⁸ The Hui, on the other hand, were touted as a model minority.³⁹ The Hui are one of China's ten officially recognized Muslim minority groups, accounting for around eleven million people. They are ethnically Chinese and speak Chinese as their first language, although they are practitioners of Islam. Since they speak Chinese as their first language, and many Hui also learn Arabic, the Hui were seen as valuable assets to help smooth diplomatic relations between the Chinese state and Muslim nation-states around the world, while the clampdown on the Uyghurs ramped up.⁴⁰

Although the Hui have also had a contested history with Chinese state power going back many centuries, and international attention is rightly focused on the current cultural genocide of the Uyghurs, this does not mean that the Hui (and other Muslims, like Chinese Kazakhs and Uzbeks) are immune to the ongoing efforts to suppress what the party state identifies as “foreign religions” in China. Campaigns to “Sinicize” Islam and Christianity are part of a long-range plan to suppress outside influence on religious expression in the PRC.⁴¹ In 2019, observers began noticing increasing crackdowns on Islam and Islamic practices in the predominantly Hui communities in the northwestern Gansu and Ningxia provinces of China.⁴² Because the international response to the illegal internment of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang has rarely gone beyond merely verbal condemnations, President Xi Jinping and his regime have been emboldened to extend these campaigns to other Muslim minorities.

This recent wave of “Sinicization” of religion has also been termed “de-Arabization” when referring specifically to Islam. These de-Arabization campaigns are intentional policies geared at all Muslims and are an attempt to reduce the visibility of Islamic practices in daily life in order to integrate Muslims into the dominant Han Chinese culture through an erasure of Muslim pasts and presents. The most visible signs of these de-Arabization campaigns are seen in the daily lives of Muslims in China. For example, the *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer, has been prohibited. Minarets have been removed from mosques. Some mosques have even been bulldozed completely.⁴³

Figure 2. Old (pre-2019) Chinese halal certification symbol from the Islamic Association of China as used on the Chinese mainland, with the characters *qing* (pure) and *zhen* (true) under the Arabic word *halal*



Source: Photograph by Timothy Grose

In terms of the large halal food industry in China, these de-Arabization policies are also causing a stir. Starting in 2019, Arabic signage on Muslim restaurants (of which there are many) and shops was removed and restrictions on halal certifications were lifted, meaning that there is no longer a standardized accredited certification for halal products made in China.⁴⁴ This factor obviously distinguishes the PRC from Taiwan, where efforts to promote standardized and safe halal products for domestic consumption and—more importantly—for export are a key strategic and economic factor in Tsai’s southward push into Southeast Asia and beyond.

Making Connections with Muslims beyond Taiwan: Muslims and Taiwan’s Foreign Policy Objectives

As the PRC party-state continues its efforts to delegitimize Islam and Islamic practices, there is an opportunity for Taiwan to cultivate relationships with predominantly



Figure 3. Muslim Chinese restaurant with Arabic signage removed as a result of Beijing's ongoing de-Arabization campaigns



Source: Jason Lee / Reuters Pictures

Muslim nation-states, such as Turkey and Malaysia, that are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the systemic oppression and hard-line policies against Muslims in the PRC.⁴⁵ For a full understanding of the changing meanings of Islam and Islamic practices in Taiwan, it is also imperative to look at the ways that Muslim actors and the Taiwanese government increasingly prioritize interactions with Muslim nation-states.⁴⁶ Given the mounting military pressure from China in the region, Taiwan needs allies beyond the United States—such as Malaysia and Indonesia. The Taiwanese government also maintains close relations with the Muslim World League, based in Saudi Arabia, and the Regional Islamic Da’wah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, which is based in Malaysia.⁴⁷ In this regard, Taiwan has never simply relied on the United States for its international legitimacy and understands well the need to cultivate other strategic allies in the region.

Historically, the situation regarding Muslims and Islam in Taiwan has vacillated depending on larger geopolitical currents. For instance, in 1956, Chiang Kai-shek gave an interview with a French reporter where he offered the “full support” of the Chinese Nationalists to the French government in the ongoing war in Algeria. He went on to note that although he was not a colonist, he was concerned that the French needed to help Algeria resist “communist infiltration” and that Algerians had not reached “political maturity” to govern themselves. Chiang’s paternalistic comments incited anger among Arabs, but Chiang was hedging his bets and threw his support behind the French, who had apparently been “pressing the Nationalists for support in this issue” for some time.⁴⁸ As a smaller nation-state whose sovereignty is constantly questioned by the CCP, these maneuverings are an ongoing and careful balancing act of international geopolitics.

Yet, at the same time, many Arab countries looked to Taiwan for development strategies and aid throughout the early years of the Cold War. For instance, from 1946, when the KMT was recognized as the legitimate government of China by the Saudis, and through to the early 1990s, Saudi Arabia had no diplomatic relationship with the PRC. In 1990, Saudi-PRC rapprochement meant that Taiwan was sidelined for a short time, but recently, the Saudis have favored economic energy deals with the Taiwanese over the PRC party-state.⁴⁹

Although initially anticommunism was an important factor in the relationship between Nationalist Taiwan and Saudi Arabia, eventually economic incentives for Taiwan to help develop the Saudi oil industry became the crux of the relationship, as Taiwan also grew increasingly dependent on Saudi oil throughout the 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁰ Taiwan imports 100 percent of the crude oil it uses to support its large petrochemical industry.



Around 35 percent of this oil comes from Saudi Arabia, with Kuwait and Angola being the next two largest suppliers. There is also a small indigenous natural gas extraction sector in Taiwan, but most of the natural gas is imported from Indonesia and Malaysia, although Qatar is a growing player.⁵¹

In return for a constant flow of oil, Taiwan sent agricultural advisors to Saudi Arabia throughout the 1960s, followed by infrastructure aid during the 1970s and 1980s. This all helped the Saudis acquire the “technologies necessary for economic diversification,” through technical assistance programs.⁵² These relations were formalized with the signing of the Taiwanese-Saudi Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement in 1975, which was meant to further industrial development potential for Taiwanese companies in Saudi Arabia.

Taiwan’s relationship with Saudi Arabia is by far the ROC’s most important, and one of the “most successful,” with Arab States. In fact, Saudi Arabia continued to acknowledge the ROC after 1971 and was the only Arab state to do so after 1978.⁵³ It was also the only Arab state to vote against UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 in 1971, which dropped the ROC as the legitimate state representing China at the UN, replacing it with the PRC (Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, and Bahrain all abstained).⁵⁴

Part of the favoring of Taiwan over China could potentially have to do with growing Saudi awareness of the CCP’s United Front work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.⁵⁵ These efforts target the large numbers of second- and third-generation overseas Chinese who are citizens of Saudi Arabia. According to Mohammed Al-Sudairi, Saudi Arabia “hosts one of the largest overseas Chinese populations in the Middle East (estimated to be at 150,000–180,000),” and they are targeted by United Front programs similar to the Birthright program run by Israel.⁵⁶ These programs are intended to “enhance the positive feelings” toward the PRC, but they have raised concerns for Saudi officials, who worry that United Front infiltration and indoctrination of people of Chinese descent in the region could undermine their own ideological programs.⁵⁷ These efforts are not limited to Saudi Arabia, and as business ventures by Chinese companies continue to proliferate around the Middle East, these United Front outreach efforts are likely to continue.⁵⁸

Competing Agendas, Differing Tactics: The PRC’s Repression and Assimilation versus Taiwan’s Diversity and Inclusion

In its international posturing, Taiwan presents itself as a beacon of religious freedom and expression. This is certainly true when comparing it to the Chinese party-state and its repressive campaigns against Islam. However, while incidents of Taiwanese Islamophobia

are rare, they do take place. As elsewhere, they sometimes occur because of disrespect or lack of understanding for Islamic observances. For instance, anecdotes circulate of Taiwanese factory owners forcing their Muslim employees to eat pork, which is a staple in Taiwanese cuisine.⁵⁹

Early in the global COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan had one of the best responses, with very low infection rates and enforced quarantines. But, as numbers began to rise on the island, there were outlashes of Islamophobic sentiment targeting migrant workers.⁶⁰ Migrant workers in the tech sector live in segregated dorms and became scapegoats for the spreading of the virus. They were forced to stay indoors although Taiwanese faced no such restrictions, leading to some claims of discrimination against them.⁶¹ At the same time, the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has pledged that migrants will be treated no differently than Taiwanese citizens in the administration of vaccinations and that it is prioritizing the vaccination of all migrant workers.⁶² Although there are individual cases of Islamophobia, it is much different than in the PRC, where Islamophobia is rampant and fueled and directed by the state's explicit policies.⁶³

As Taiwan looks for more allies in the Pacific and continues to increase its outreach to Muslim sojourners and visitors, Muslims could have an impact on what it means to be Taiwanese. Arif Dirlik describes “Taiwanization” as a process whereby “post-1945 arrivals” started to distinguish themselves from mainlanders “in ways that have unwelcome implications for the PRC’s national identity and ethnic politics.”⁶⁴ It seems that this process of “Taiwanization” now extends beyond the wider Taiwanese to include Muslims and Taiwan’s approaches to its Muslim population. Through the reclamation of Taiwan’s own Islamic past and the promotion of religious freedom, and by further strengthening ties with Muslim nation-states, there is an added layer of complexity to this process of “Taiwanization.” And, as the current Taiwanese government and the CMA continue to promote connections with Muslims from around Asia, and as Beijing takes an increasingly hard-line stance against Islam, Taiwan’s engagement and outreach to Muslims will draw more attention and provide opportunities to deepen these international networks and connections. The distinctiveness of Taiwan’s relationship to Islam is turning out to be yet another component in the differentiation of Taiwan from the PRC and therefore a feature relevant to US-China policy, with its ongoing commitment to Taiwanese independence.

NOTES

- 1 Huang Tzu-ti, “President Tsai Meets with Local Muslims, Touts Taiwan’s Muslim-Friendly Environment,” *Taiwan News*, September 18, 2019, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3779196>.



- 2 For more on this, see Kelly Hammond, “Cold War Islam: Islam and Politics in Nationalist Taiwan,” *Twentieth-Century China* 47, no. 2 (forthcoming; May 2022).
- 3 Kelly A. Hammond, *China’s Muslims and Japan’s Empire: Centering Islam in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).
- 4 “Yisilanjiao zai Taiwan zhi fazhan,” *Zongbao jikan* 17 (2004), 22–23. The organization also puts out articles and material on the history of the mosque and Islam in Taiwan for a lay Taiwanese audience in Chinese.
- 5 On international Muslim networks, see John Chen, “‘Just Like Old Friends’: The Significance of Southeast Asia to Modern Chinese Islam,” *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 31, no. 3 (2016): 685–742.
- 6 Hammond, *China’s Muslims*; see also Chen, “‘Just Like Old Friends.’”
- 7 “Donation for Mosque,” *South China Morning Post*, November 11, 1957; “First Mosque in Formosa to be Built,” *South China Morning Post*, May 5, 1958.
- 8 “Documents: Cultural Convention between the Republic of China and Iran/Treaty of Amity between the Republic of China and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,” *Taiwan Today*, December 1, 1957.
- 9 “Dai zhuan wo huijiao tuanti zhi guowai zhengfu lingxiu hanjian,” *Guoji zongjiao shiwu*, Waijiaobu [Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs] 020000028734A; 020-029903-0003 (1960–1965), Academia Historica, Taipei.
- 10 “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui fangong shengzhi jingdian,” *Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui hedian*, Waijiaobu [Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs] 02000030124A; 020-010802-001 (1965–1968), Academia Historica, Taipei.
- 11 “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui fangong.”
- 12 Michael Dillon, “Muslim Communities in Contemporary China: The Resurgence of Islam after the Cultural Revolution,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1994): 70–101.
- 13 “Taiwan Musilin de fazhan yu bianqian” (Development and changes among Taiwan’s Muslims), *Frontiers .org*, April 27, 2020, https://www.frontiers.org.tw/blog_page.php?id=45.
- 14 Liwei Sun and Retno Widyastuti, *Social Adaptation of Muslim Ethnic Minorities in Taiwan: Case Study of Indonesian Muslim and Chinese Muslim* (master’s thesis, National Chengchi University [Taiwan], 2015), 28.
- 15 There is an important body of scholarship produced in Chinese about the Muslim community on the island. These works are mostly written by sociologists and anthropologists and tend to focus more on the ways that the recent wave of Indonesians and Malaysians who sojourn in Taiwan have changed how Islam is observed and practiced in the twenty-first century. For example, see: Jia Fukang, ed., *Taiwan huijiao shi* (Taiwan’s Islamic history) (Taipei: The Islamic Cultural Service Industry, 1991); Bao Xiuping, “‘Yinshen de Musilin’: Yisilan zai Taiwan de fazhan yu bianqian jianshi (1949–2015),” *Huizu yanjiu* (Journal of Hui Muslim minority studies), no. 3 (2016): 61–65; Zhangyu Shejun, “Taiwan yisilanjiao de fuxing yu duoyuan jiaozhi,” *Yantao luntan* 6 (2014): 23–26; Liu Zhihao, “Jinnianlai Taiwan yisilanjiao fazhan xianzhuang ji yanjiu chutan,” *Huijiao yanjiu* 2.90 (2013): 128–34; Liu Zhihao, “Zhongguo Taiwan Gaoxing qingzhensi Zhong de duoyuan zongjiao wenhua fazhan xianzhuang jitedian,” *Zongjiao Xinyang yu minzu wenhua* 11 (2012): 151–60; Luo Qiangqiang, “Taiwan musilin wenhua renting de sikao,” *Huijiao yanjiu* 2.98 (2015): 43–47.
- 16 “Building Faith, Islamic traditions,” *Taiwan Today*, May 1, 1992.
- 17 Sun and Widyastuti, *Social Adaptation*, introduction.
- 18 In the circulations of gendered labor in the Pacific, it is important to note that most Taiwanese families would likely prefer an English-speaking Filipino caregiver. Yet these women generally make their way to Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, and North America, where salaries are higher.

- 19 Bao, “‘Yinshen de Musilin.’”
- 20 Dawood C. M. Ting, “Islamic Traditions Continue in Taiwan,” *Taiwan Today*, January 1, 1998.
- 21 Liu, “Zhongguo Taiwan Gaoxing qingzhensi,” 151–52.
- 22 Liu, “Zhongguo Taiwan Gaoxing qingzhensi,” 165.
- 23 “Tsai Pledges to Deepen Ties with Global Muslim Community,” *Taiwan Today*, September 19, 2019, <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2,6,10,15,18&post=162407>.
- 24 Michael Brose, “China and Transregional Halal Circuits,” *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 5 (2018): 208–27.
- 25 Sun and Widyastuti, *Social Adaptation*, 63–68. However, many Muslims who live in Taiwan buy live ducks and chickens to slaughter them in accordance with halal traditions or buy meat from local mosques who import it in larger quantities for resale. Also see Taiwan Halal Center, <https://halaltaiwan.taiwantrade.com>.
- 26 “Tsai Pledges to Deepen Ties.”
- 27 “Muslim-Friendly Environment,” Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://eng.taiwan.net.tw/m1.aspx?sNo=0020308>.
- 28 “Tsai Pledges to Deepen Ties.”
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