

SŪN MÈNGYÁO
Liaocheng University
1310543954@qq.com

MICHAEL KNÜPPEL
Liaocheng University
michaelknuettel@gmx.net

ON CHINESE HUI-MUSLIM ELEMENTARY VOCABULARY (1): PRAYER TERMINOLOGY¹

Keywords: Hui Muslims; Sino-Arabic and Sino-Persian transcriptions; direct and indirect loans; Muslim prayer terminology

Abstract

In the article, which forms the first part of a series on Chinese Hui-Muslim religious terminology, the authors are dealing with the Hui Muslim prayer terminology, that can roughly be divided into direct and indirect loans. While the direct loans are borrowings from Arabic or Persian, the indirect loans are formed by the means of the own languages (so-called calques).

I.

In most Chinese dictionaries compiled in China as well as in the West the specific elementary vocabulary of Islam is omitted although the Chinese Hui Muslims are using it and have even coined some terms used only by them. In some cases common Chinese words are used in the context of Islam but they are not designated as Muslim terminology in the respective compendia. In this article, which forms the first part of a series of papers on Chinese Muslim elementary vocabulary, the writers

¹ The present paper results from some fieldwork in the context of socio-linguistic research on the Hui-Muslim communities in the province of Shāndōng in 2018 and 2019.

give a short overview of those terms used in the context of the prayer and performing prayers among China's Hui Muslims.

The terms can be differentiated to (1) direct borrowings in Sino-Arabic and (in few cases) Sino-Persian transcription (Arabic and Persian loanwords phonetically transcribed with Chinese characters), (2) indirect borrowings or words and phrases formed by the Hui with Chinese elements to describe the material or spiritual aspects of Muslim prayers or related to prayers, and (3) common Chinese words used by the Hui in a specific Muslims context. In some cases Sino-Arabic and Sino-Persian terms as well as originally Chinese terms can describe the same item, issue, concept, idea, etc. The terminology also has to be explained on the one hand, in terms of specific Hui Muslim use and on the other hand, considering the current situation of the community that forms an official “nationality” in the People's Republic of China.

II.

- (1) *bài gōng* (拜功), *suǒūd* (سُجُود) ~ *saǒdah* (سجدة) ‘prostrating’ (uncertain use!), also used to name the formula ‘*alayhi s-salām* (عليه السلام)’ (‘peace be upon him’).
- (2) *bāng dá* (邦答), the first daily prayer = Sino-Persian transcription of بامداد; see also → *chén lǐ* (晨礼).
- (3) *bān kè* (班克) → *xuān lǐ cí* (宣礼词).
- (4) *bū lǐ* (晡礼) ‘before sunset’ – (*ṣalāt*) *al-‘aṣr* (العصر), the third daily prayer (‘prayer before the sunset’); see also → *dǐ gài léi* (底盖雷) ~ *dǐ gài lei* (底盖嘞).
- (5) *chén lǐ* (晨礼) ‘before dawn’ ~ *rì chū tóu* (日出头) ~ *fú xiǎo* (拂晓), (*ṣalāt*) *al-faǒr* (الفجر), the first daily prayer (‘prayer before daybreak’), the last one again is a Sino-Arabic transcription; see also → *bāng dá* (邦答).
- (6) *dà zàn cí* (大赞词), *takbīr* (تَكْبِير), the name of the Arabic phrase to praise / glorify Allāh (*Allāhu Akbar* [الله أكبر]).
- (7) *dǐ gài lei* (底盖嘞) → *dǐ gài léi* (底盖雷).
- (8) *dǐ gài léi* (底盖雷)² ~ *dǐ gài lei* (底盖嘞),³ the third daily prayer = Sino-Persian transcription of ديكن; see also → *bū lǐ* (晡礼).
- (9) *ěr dài jié* (尔代节), ‘*īd* prayer (عيد) also: *ṣalāt al-‘īd* (صلاة العيد) ~ *ṣalāt al-‘īdāin* (صلاة العيدين) a prayer offered to commemorate two Islamic festivals: (1) ‘*īd al-fiṭr* (عيد الفطر) and (2) ‘*īd al-aḏḥā* (عيد الأضحى).
- (10) *fú xiǎo* (拂晓) → *chén lǐ* (晨礼).
- (11) *fù zhǔ mìng bài* (副主命拜), *wāǒib* prayer (واجب) = obligatory prayer; see also → *zhǔ mìng bài* (主命拜).
- (12) *gěi bù lái* (给布来) ‘*qibla*(-wall) (in the mosque)’ = Sino-Arabic transcription of Arabic *qibla*(-wall) (قبلة) id.

² Sino-Persian form noted on the board for prayer times in the Hēi zhuāng-mosque of Línqīng.

³ Given as Sino-Persian form for the prayer on the board for prayer times in the East-mosque of Línqīng.

- (13) *hǎi tuī bù* (海推布) ‘preacher (in the mosque)’ = Sino-Arabic transcription of *ḥaṭīb* (خطيب) id.
- (14) *hǔ fū nán* (虎夫难) → *hú fū tān* (湖夫滩).
- (15) *hú fū tān* (湖夫滩)⁴ ~ *hǔ fū nán* (虎夫难),⁵ the fifth daily prayer = Sino-Persian transcription of خفتن; see also → *xiāo lǐ* (宵礼).
- (16) *hūn lǐ* (昏礼) from the sunset to the sunset has completely disappeared – (*ṣalāt al-maḡrib* (المغرب), the fourth daily prayer (‘prayer at dusk’); see also → *shā mù* (沙目).
- (17) *hú tǔ bài* (胡土拜) ‘preaching/sermon’ = Sino-Arabic transcription of Arabic *ḥuṭba* (خطبة) id.
- (18) *jiàn xiē bài* (间歇拜), *tarāwīḥ* prayer (تراويح), an optional prayer that can be performed during Ramaḍān only.
- (19) *jiào bài lóu* (叫拜楼) → *wàng yuè lóu* (望月楼).
- (20) *jī shù bài* (奇数拜) ~ *yè jiān lǐ* (夜间礼), *witr* prayer (وتر) performed in the night after ‘*iṣā*’ (as night-time prayer) or before *faḡr* (as dawn prayer).
- (21) *jū gōng* (鞠躬) = *rakʿah* (ركعة), prayer unit, a single complete part of the daily ritual prayer.
- (22) *jù lǐ mù* (聚礼目) ‘call for prayer (ʿAḍān; أَذَان)’. The call is performed in Arabic language only. The sources of information do not know any Sino-Arabic term for this.
- (23) *kǒng jù bài* (恐惧拜), *ḥawf* prayer (خوف), a prayer that is performed during time of fear or being in danger.
- (24) *lǐ bài* (礼拜) ‘prayer’, the common Chinese word for prayer used by Hui Muslims for Islamic prayers, too. Other Chinese terms for ‘prayer’ (*dǎo gào* [祷告], *qí dǎo* [祈祷], and *qí dǎo wén* [祈祷文]) seem not to be in use among Hui Muslims. No Sino-Arabic transcription for Arabic صلاة could be given by the sources of information. For the five daily prayers there are no fixed times, they are related to the position of the sun as in all Muslim societies. In many mosques there is no separate area for women. Because of this, there is also no term for such a women’s corner. The women pray either at home (e.g. in Shāndōng) or in some special cases have a corner separated by a veil (like in the East-mosque of Liáochéng, which is used by female members of the community who are from Gānsù or Qīnghǎi). In few cases the communities have their own mosques for women only (as in Línqīng or Shánghǎi).
- (25) *lǐ bài tān* (礼拜毯) ‘carpet (for prayer)’. Hui Muslims seem to use this term for the carpet for prayer only, although there are other words for this in Chinese (*cháo bài tān* [朝拜毯], *dǎo gào tān* [祷告毯], and *guì tān* [跪毯]). In big mosques nearly the complete prayer hall is covered with carpets, while in the countryside there often is a limited space in the mosque covered with them and it is only

⁴ Sino-Persian form written on the board for prayer times in the Hēi zhuāng-mosque of Línqīng.

⁵ Given as Sino-Persian form for the prayer on the board for prayer times in the East-mosque of Línqīng.

- forbidden to wear shoes on the carpets while in big mosques commonly shoes have to be removed before entering the prayer hall.
- (26) *lǐng bài shī* (领拜师) ‘muezzin’ (< Arabic *mu’addin* [مؤذن]). The Hui Muslim communities mostly have no muezzin as a specific position held by one member of the community. Usually the Āhōng himself is performing the call for prayer, sometimes another member who only has to be able to pronounce the Arabic formula in its correct way is doing this. In some cases the recorded prayer call is played from a tape.
- (27) *lǚ xíng bài* (旅行拜), journey prayer, that is spoken either before or after a journey.
- (28) *mǐ hé lā bù* (米河啦布) ‘*mihṛāb* (the niche in the *qibla*-wall)’ = Sino-Arabic transcription of Arabic *mihṛāb* (محراب) id.
- (29) *mǐn ā lā bó* (敏阿拉伯) → *wàng yuè lóu* (望月楼).
- (30) *mǐn bài ěr* (敏拜尔) → *xuān jiǎng tái* (宣讲台).
- (31) *qìng hè bài* (庆贺拜), *taḥiyat al-masǧid* (تحية المسجد), prayer for greeting the mosque. It is prayed only when someone enters the mosque prayer hall and intends to sit for praying there.
- (32) *rì chū bài* (日出拜), *iṣrāq* prayer (إشراق), is a *nafl* prayer which is performed about 12 minutes after sunrise.
- (33) *rì chū tóu* (日出头) → *chén lǐ* (晨礼).
- (34) *rì piān* (日偏) → *shǎng lǐ* (晌礼).
- (35) *sā shī ní* (撒失尼), the second daily prayer = Sino-Persian transcription of پيشين; see also → *shǎng lǐ* (晌礼).
- (36) *shā mù* (沙目), the fourth daily prayer = Sino-Persian transcription of شام; see also → *hūn lǐ* (昏礼).
- (37) *shǎng lǐ* (晌礼) ‘after 12:00’ ~ *rì piān* (日偏), (*ṣalāt*) *aḏ-ẓuḥr* (الظهر), the second daily prayer (‘prayer after twelve o’clock’); see also → *sā shī ní* (撒失尼).
- (38) *shàng wǔ bài* (上午拜), *ṣalāt aḏ-ḍuḥa* (صلاة الضحى), is a supererogatory morning prayer (*ḍuḥa* means early morning, mid-morning, or even late morning).
- (39) *shèng xíng bài* (圣行拜), Sunnah prayer (صلاة السنة) – an optional prayer that can be performed by Muslims at almost any time of the day.
- (40) *tài lā wēi hái* (泰啦威孩), prayers performed in the nights of the month of Ramaḏān = Sino-Arabic transcription of Arabic *tarāwīḥ* (تراويح) id.
- (41) *wàng yuè lóu* (望月楼), *jiào bài lóu* (叫拜楼), *xuān lǐ tā* (宣礼塔) ~ *mǐn ā lā bó* (敏阿拉伯) ‘minaret’; the last one is a Sino-Arabic transcription (< Arabic منارة id.). The terms *jiào bài lóu* (叫拜楼) and *xuān lǐ tā* (宣礼塔) are not widely known and used. They seem to point merely to the architecture. Not all Hui Muslim mosques have minarets in a common understanding. Some (especially in small villages) have elevated symbols of towers only. In big towns of today’s China the use of the minarets for the traditional call for prayer is not permitted – officially because of “noise pollution”. Already in 2017 loudspeakers for prayer calls were banned (e.g. in Qīnghǎi) (Yusha, Siqi 2017). The Imāms (Chin. āhōng 阿訇 < Pers. آخوند – *ākūnd* ~ *ākōnd*)⁶ of the most communities claim that the

⁶ On this title see Knüppel (2020).

minarets are observatories to observe the moon during Ramaḍān only and were never used for other purposes. Indeed this is and was one function of the minarets, but the explanations have a direct relation to the ban of public prayer calls which is denied by the Āhōngs and members of their respective communities, even though some “minarets” still have loudspeakers though not in use today. Besides this, the prayer calls in many places are performed publicly (mostly from a record).

- (42) *xiāo lǐ* (宵礼) ‘after the sunset’ – (*ṣalāt al-‘iṣā*) (العشاء) ‘the fifth daily prayer’ (‘prayer after the sunset’); see also → *hú fū tān* (湖夫滩) ~ *hǔ fū nán* (虎夫难).
- (43) *xuān jiǎng tái* (宣讲台) ~ *mǐn bài ěr* (敏拜尔) ‘minbar’, Sino-Arabic transcription of *minbar* (منبر), that can be in Hui Muslim mosques either an elevated and rich decorated podium with a roof, or three or four simple wooden steps resembling a ladder and symbolizing a *minbar* only.
- (44) *xuān lǐ cí* (宣礼词) ~ *bān kè* (班克) ‘preaching, sermon’. For this again we have two terms. On the one hand, an alleged Sino-Arabic form, on the other hand, the Chinese term coined for this. The preaching is performed in Arabic language only. According to the Āhōngs *bān kè* (班克) is borrowed from Arabic, but no corresponding Arabic form could be either given by them or found by the author. Should it be somehow related to *banīqa* “originally a silk scarf in which all ministers coming to the Council carried their documents” (Colin 1986)?
- (45) *xuān lǐ tā* (宣礼塔) → *wàng yuè lóu* (望月楼).
- (46) *xū qiú bài* (需求拜), *ṣalāt al-istiḥārah* (صلاة الاستخارة), prayer performed in necessity of guidance on any issue in life.
- (47) *yè jiān bài* (夜间拜), *tahaḡud* prayer (تجدد), this is performed in the night after the first going to sleep for a while in the evening.
- (48) *yè jiān lǐ* (夜间礼) → *jī shù bài* (奇数拜).
- (49) *zàn zhǔ qīng dān* (赞主清单), the formula *subḡāna wa ta‘āla* (سبحانه و تعالى) ‘Glory to Him, the Exalted’.
- (50) *zhǔ má* (主麻) ‘Friday prayer’, this is a Sino-Arabic transcription of (*ṣalāt jumū‘ah*) (جمعة) id. and the commonly used term (as abbreviation of *zhǔ má bài lǐ* [主麻拜礼], *zhǔ má jù lǐ* [主麻聚礼], and *zhǔ má rì jù lǐ* [主麻日聚礼]).
- (51) *zhǔ má bài lǐ* (主麻拜礼) → *zhǔ má* (主麻).
- (52) *zhǔ má jù lǐ* (主麻聚礼) → *zhǔ má* (主麻).
- (53) *zhǔ má rì jù lǐ* (主麻日聚礼) → *zhǔ má* (主麻).
- (54) *zhǔ mìng bài* (主命拜) = *farḡ* prayer (فرض), the five obligatory daily ritual prayers.

Some important further terminology from the context of prayer and performing prayers (such as *taṣaḡhud* [تشهد], *ṣalāt al-janāzah* [صلاة الجنازة], *ṣalāt al-nafl* [صلاة نفل], *rukūc* [رُكُوع], and *taḡwīd* [تجويد]) could not be verified by the sources of information because of the circumstances of fieldwork and therefore it will be dealt with later.



III.

Key (systematically arranged nos.)

1. (Type of) prayer: 24
 - 1.1. (Daily) ritual prayers: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 33, 34, 37, 42, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54
 - 1.2. Supererogatory prayers: 20, 31, 32, 38, 39, 47, 48
 - 1.3. Communal mandatory prayers: 27
 - 1.4. Congregational prayers: 18, 40
 - 1.5. Prayers for special purposes: 9, 23, 27, 31, 32, 40, 46
2. Components of prayer / prayer unit: 1, 6, 21, 49
3. Mosque: 3, 12, 13, 17, 19, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 41, 43, 44, 45
4. Prayer call: 22

References

- Colin G.S. 1986. *Banīka*. – *EI* [new edition, vol. 1]: coll. 1016 a–b.
- Knüppel M. 2020. On Chinese *Āhōng* 阿訇. – *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis* 137: 83–84.
- Yusha Z., Siqi C. 2017. Loudspeakers from mosques removed in Qinghai to eliminate noise. – *Global Times* [published: 2017/8/21 23:03:40; <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1062477.shtml>; retrieved: 6.11.2019].