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The festival of fast-breaking Eid al-Fitr in the Great Mosque of Lhasa. Some observations

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Introduction

- 1 This study describes the festival of fast-breaking, Eid al-Fitr, as celebrated by Lhasa Muslims in the Great Mosque of Lhasa (Tib. bod ljongs lha sa yi si lam phyag khang chen mo; Chin. lasa qingzhen da si)¹ and is based on field research on Ramadan and the Eid celebrations conducted from August 6th to September 6th, 2011. In this article I define “Lhasa Muslims” as those Muslims who have been living in Lhasa for several generations such as Hui who originated from inland China, and Khache (Tib. *kha che*) who presumably originated from Central Asia, Kashmir, Ladakh, India and Nepal². As Muslims living in the heart of a Tibetan Buddhist region, this religious group has received close attention from Chinese researchers in recent years³. But although some research on this group has already been done, a detailed description of the religious festivals of the Lhasa Muslims is not yet available.
- 2 In 2011, Lhasa Muslims observed Ramadan, *i.e.* the month of fasting, from August 2nd until the Eid al-Fitr on September 1st. Therefore, the main Ramadan activities occurred from August 2nd to 31st, and the Eid celebrations such as Eid prayer and the visiting of

relatives mainly occurred on September 1st. From August 6th to 31st my research focus was placed on the attitudes of the Lhasa Muslims towards Ramadan, on Ramadan activities in Lhasa Great Mosque and in its nearby neighborhoods Wapaling (Tib. wa pa gling; Chin. Hebalin) and Telpungang (Tib. thal spungs sgang; Chin. Tiebengang), and on some Muslim families. On September 1st, the research concentrated on the Eid prayer in Lhasa Great Mosque, on visits to the cemetery and on family activities. This was followed by complementary research conducted from September 2nd to 6th.

- 3 Being a Hui myself with a systematic education in ethnology, and having been engaged in Tibetan Muslim studies for several years, I was able to blend in well with the Lhasa Muslim community and the festivities. During the research, I lived within the local Muslim community and was thus able to study their attitudes towards the festival, the preparations and the celebrations as participant observer and, furthermore, to conduct several in-depth interviews. Altogether thirty-two interviews were conducted with mosque imams, renowned elders, retired intellectuals, mosque management staff, public servants, merchants, housewives, college students and Nepalese Muslims⁴. Out of respect for Muslim customs, I dressed in long-sleeved jackets and long pants and wore a veil (*hijab*), particularly during religious events. However, a shortcoming of this study is that I could only observe closely a small number of households during family get-togethers and during the exchange of Eid greetings. Also, some of the religious rituals during Eid still need to be described in more depth.
- 4 Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), is the center of politics, economy, culture and Tibetan Buddhism in the Region. Although the majority of the local population is Tibetan, Lhasa is also home to many other ethnic groups including Han, Hui and Mongols, among others. The Hui constitute by far the largest group of Muslims in Lhasa. In the 1940s and 1950s, Lhasa had a Muslim population of about 2000 people or 200 households (Zhou 2000, pp. 102-112). According to the 2000 census, the number of Tibetans in Lhasa reached 387 124 whereas the permanent Hui population reached 4741 (of altogether 9031 Hui, who lived in the TAR)⁵. In 2010, the permanent Hui population in Lhasa had increased to 6412 (of altogether 12 630 Hui living in the TAR) while the Tibetan population in Lhasa had risen to 429 104⁶. Lhasa Muslims mainly live in the Wapaling and Telpungang neighborhoods, located in the Chengguan district (Tib. khreng kon chus) of Lhasa. Other Muslim communities in Tibet are found, for example, in Shigatse (Tib. Gzhis ka rtse), Chamdo (Tib. Chab mdo), Nyingchi (Tib. Nying khri), and Lhoka (Tib. Lho kha). This shows a characteristic feature of Tibetan and Chinese Muslims: that the majority of them inhabit compact urban areas while only a minority lives in the Tibetan countryside.
- 5 According to Chinese scholarship (Fang 1992, pp. 102-114; Xue 1986, pp. 68-77; Zhou 2000, pp. 101-112), Muslims came to Tibet at two main periods: during the 7th and 8th centuries, and then during the 17th and 18th centuries. Some foreign scholars, however, argue that the Islamic world had initial contacts with Tibet only starting from the 8th century (Yoeli-Tlalim 2011, p. 1). The *Shijie jingyu zhi* (*Record of the World Territories*), a book written between 982 and 983 AD, states that “Lhasa, a small town with many ‘idol’ temples, has a mosque and a small Muslim population” (Yiming 2010, p. 66), and thus provides evidence that there existed a mosque and a Muslim population in Lhasa at least since the 10th century.

- 6 The Muslim population falls into two groups based on their origin: Muslims of inland China and those of other descent. The former group came from inland China mainly as Hui officials and troops, together with their families, serving in the central government's institutions and armies in Tibet, and also as merchants and vegetable farmers. This group of Muslims is generally called "inland Muslims" (*nEidi musulin*) by modern Chinese scholars. The latter group, which is also known as Khache in Tibetan, stems from Central and South Asia, including Kashmir, Ladakh, India and Nepal. In China, they are usually referred to as "Central Asian Muslims" (*Zhongya xitong musulin*) or "foreign Muslims" (*waiji musulin*)⁷.
- 7 Being Sunni adherents of the Hanafi School of Islam (Chen 2000, pp. 87-94), Lhasa Muslims are in general pious in their religious faith, strictly following Islamic behavioral codes in their daily diet and social affairs. For instance, they usually only consume halal food as accepted by Islam, and they usually do not smoke or drink alcohol. But apart from these habits, they follow similar dietary practices as the Tibetans. For example, they are very fond of drinking sweet or buttered tea and yoghurt, and of eating roasted barley flour mixed with butter (*tsampa*), dried meat, rice and flour-based food.
- 8 For most Lhasa Muslims, Tibetan is the main language for daily communication when socializing. As one elderly local Muslim named Yousaf put it: "We are old Lhasa people [*lao lasaren*] who have been living in Lhasa for several generations. Our ability to speak the traditional Lhasa Tibetan dialect, which includes many traditional honorific forms, is well received by the local Tibetans"⁸. Sulahai, a middle-aged Lhasa Muslim, added: "Tibetan has become our main language. We have even translated excerpts of the Quran into Tibetan, which is quite exceptional"⁹. Nevertheless, multilingual communication is common due to the different origins of the various Muslim groups and to the Islamic scriptures, which are written in Arabic mingled with a few Persian words. Typically, inland Muslims have a good command of Chinese, while Nepalese Muslims can also speak Nepali, and Muslims from India or Kashmir can also communicate in Urdu. When addressing family members, Lhasa Muslims have adopted some Chinese terms mingled with the polite Tibetan address *lags* (Chin. *la*): for instance, they use *aye la* for grandfather, *apo la* for grandmother, *adie la* or *ala* for father, *gege la* for the elder brother, *saosao la* for the elder brother's wife, and so on. With regard to the name they use to designate themselves, they prefer the Urdu Bhai or the Chinese Hui to Tibetan Khache¹⁰ (*i.e.* Kashmiri Muslim). Some interviewees said that Bhai meaning "elder brother" in Urdu, has been redefined by Lhasa Muslims to mean "Muslim"¹¹. Other informants, however, also pointed out that Bhai only refers to male Muslims, so the term is not used for female Muslims. Chinese is being used more and more frequently due to the increasing communications between Tibet and inland China. Particularly, the younger generation of Muslims speaks fluent Chinese.
- 9 During festivals, Muslim families in Lhasa have picnics (Tib. *gling ka*) with their friends, and young people play a game of billiard just as Tibetans do. During the Chinese Spring Festival, the Tibetan Shodön (Tib. *zho ston*) Festival (commonly known as the Yoghurt Festival) and the Western New Year, the local Muslims also have holidays and exchange gifts with their Han Chinese and Tibetan neighbors and friends, giving blessings to each other. However, Muslims basically neither go to the local dance halls (Tib. *nang ma*) for entertainment nor to the Buddhist temples for worship, except for visits. Lhasa Muslims have close contacts to the local Tibetan community through work and

commerce and have considerably assimilated to the Tibetan way of life. They greet each other when they meet on the street, and Muslim shops and restaurants also employ Tibetan staff. In fact, even the mosques employ Tibetans for part-time jobs during Ramadan, as will be discussed in more detail below. The most obvious evidence of close contact is inter-ethnic marriage. Although, in general, Lhasa Muslims practice endogamy insofar as they only marry other Muslims, marriages with Tibetans do occur based on the free will of the bridal pair and on the precondition that the Tibetan partner is expected to convert to Islam.

Photo 1. Lhasa Great Mosque

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- 10 Lhasa Great Mosque (Photo 1) was chosen as the research focus for two reasons: first of all, Lhasa Great Mosque is the bigger and more famous of the two officially registered mosques in Lhasa¹², it has the longest, uninterrupted history, and is large and well managed. Secondly, it is a comparatively influential mosque not only among the local Muslims but also among the new immigrants. Wapaling neighborhood, where the mosque is located, is not only the traditional residential area of the Lhasa Muslims, but it also attracts Muslim traders who are only temporarily in Lhasa to participate in religious activities. Thus, Lhasa Great Mosque provides favorable conditions for the study of local Muslim customs.

Time and space of the festival

Religious significance of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr

- 11 Ramadan is the Arabic name for the 9th month of the Islamic calendar and the month in which, according to Islam, the Quran was revealed. During this month, Muslims all

around the world must fulfill their Islamic duty of fasting from dawn to dusk. This month of fasting is the most respected and blessed month for Muslims (Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, p. 735). Ramadan starts when the first crescent of a new moon is sighted in the 9th month and ends with the sighting of the first crescent in the next month. On the night of the 29th day of fasting, the crescent will be observed closely. If it is visible, then the next day will be the day of fast breaking, Eid al-Fitr; if it is invisible due to cloudy weather, the fasting will continue and Eid will be postponed for one day (Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, pp. 285, 734-735).

- 12 Fasting is one of the five basic acts in Islam, called the Five Pillars of Islam¹³. For Muslims, the meaning of fasting lies in overcoming one's desires, in moderating one's behavior, in atonement of one's sins and in empathy for the poor and the weak. Furthermore, Muslims fast to revere Allah and to assume the responsibilities, which a Muslim should undertake for Allah. Muslims are supposed to purify themselves from body to soul through fasting and to perform prayers devoutly. The fasting starts at dawn after a small meal and ends at dusk with the fast-breaking meal. When possible, Muslims should go to the mosque for prayers and meditation.
- 13 The major rituals for fast-breaking on Eid al-Fitr are: 1) to have a small meal after morning prayer (*fajr*), and to show one's gratitude to Allah for the completion of fasting; 2) to give a donation that must be paid before the Eid prayer as an Islamic obligation (*sadaqah al-fitr*, also called "Eid donation"), which Chinese-speaking Muslims usually call "fast-breaking donation" (*kaizhai juan*) or "fitr money" (*feituer qian*). The donations will either be distributed directly to the poor or used as funds for the mosques; 3) to recite the Eid prayer. On the morning of the Eid al-Fitr, after dressing well and performing the major ablution (*ghusl*), male Muslims will assemble at the mosque for the grand Eid prayer. Thereafter, they will shake hands with each other and exchange greetings.
- 14 Apart from the main rituals mentioned above, Muslims hold banquets to entertain their families and friends, and neighbors exchange some festive food with each other. Some families will read the Quran to thank Allah and pray to him for blessings and peace for their families. Others will visit the graves of their deceased and read the Quran to mourn the dead (Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, p. 285, 478).

Timing of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr

- 15 According to the Chinese comparison table of the Islamic calendar and the Gregorian calendar, the 2011 Ramadan started on August 1st and ended on August 31st. However, in Tibet the time of Ramadan is usually recalculated locally due to different weather conditions and thus can vary by up to three days. In fact, in 2011 the Lhasa Muslims started Ramadan only on August 2nd. The times for fasting, fast-breaking and prayers during Ramadan were calculated by the local imam according to the local sunrise and sunset and were thus based on local conditions. The imam then wrote them on a little blackboard hanging on the north wall of the mosque yard so that the notice was readily seen by all. In addition, a bell sounded twice a day to remind Muslims of the times for fasting and fast-breaking. Before 1951, the mosque would dispatch someone beating a gong along Barkhor Street to inform the local Muslims of the fasting times during Ramadan. On August 26th, 2011, a notice was posted in Lhasa's Small Mosque¹⁴, which read:

August 30th, 2011 will be the day for observing the new moon. When Muslims have sighted the crescent, Eid al-Fitr and the Eid prayer will start on August 31st at 8:00 am.

PS: The donation *Sadaqah al-Fitr*¹⁵ will be ten yuan for each adult and child. (my translation)

- 16 On the afternoon of August 30th, after twenty-nine days of fasting, several Muslims assembled in the mosque to observe the moon through a telescope. Since it was cloudy, the new moon was not seen. Therefore, the fasting continued through August 31st and, instead, September 1st was confirmed as the day of Eid al-Fitr. The Eid prayer was rescheduled to start at 8:30 am and to end at around 9:00 am. The prayer time was scheduled by the imam not only based on the Islamic doctrines, but also on the experiences of the previous years and for reasons of convenience.

Choice of space

- 17 During Ramadan, both the religious rituals and the festivities are carried out at specific spaces, which can be classified as follows: spaces for religious events such as the Eid prayer and visits to graves, and spaces for secular events such as family activities, individual customary activities and shopping for festival foods.

Eid prayer in Lhasa Great Mosque

- 18 In the Islamic world the Eid prayer is usually organized in central mosques or in open spaces. Lhasa Muslims perform the Eid prayer mainly in the Lhasa Great Mosque, located in Dongtsezur road (Tib. Gdong tse zur lam; Chin. Dongzisulu) no. 7, in the Chengguan district of Lhasa. This mosque is under the administration of the Wapaling Neighborhood Committee, Kyiré Office (Tib. Skyid ras don gcod khru'u; Chin. Jiri banshichu) of the Chengguan District Government. It was initially built in the 10th century and was expanded twice, in 1716 and 1793. During the Tibetan rebellion¹⁶ of March 1959, the main hall of Lhasa Great Mosque and its historical tablets were burnt down by Tibetans¹⁷. At the end of 1959, local Muslim volunteers rebuilt the hall of the Great Mosque as a single-storey Tibetan style building of 360 sqm, which was funded by the People's Government of Lhasa. During the Cultural Revolution, Lhasa Great Mosque was used as an office for the Wapaling Neighborhood Committee and the agricultural producers' co-operative. Only in 1978 was Lhasa Great Mosque restored to its original purpose and the local government also allocated funds for the maintenance of the mosque. Furthermore, in 2002, the Tibet Autonomous Regional Government and the Lhasa Municipal Government each provided 500 000 yuan for rebuilding and expanding the mosque. In March 2009, the supervision of Lhasa Great Mosque was transferred from the Municipal Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs to the Chengguan District Government.

Photo 2. Outline of Lhasa Great Mosque, 2011¹⁸

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Photo 3. Northern entrance of Lhasa Great Mosque

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- 19 Lhasa Great Mosque covers an area of 3598 sqm¹⁹. The layout of the mosque's premises (Photo 2) is irregular in shape for historical reasons. The northern mosque entrance is

styled as a tripartite arch with four columns (Photo 3). The upper part of this gate has a gable roof with its eaves decorated in Tibetan style patterns and designs (Bai 2010, pp. 47-48). The official name of the mosque, *i.e.* Lhasa Great Mosque of Tibet, is written in Arabic, Tibetan and Chinese on the upper part of the gate. To the right of the mosque is a two-storey building. The rooms on the first floor are used as shops and those on the second floor as the reception room of the mosque management committee. The mosque's yard is spacious and the prayer hall is located to its west. The prayer hall combines Islamic architectural style with Tibetan style décor, featuring typical colors and patterns. The prayer hall is a three-storey building laid out in an east-westerly direction, topped by a green dome roof with a crescent and with two minarets on each side. Above the door of the prayer hall hangs a gold-framed tablet with the Chinese inscription meaning "Time-honored Islam" (*qingzhen gujiao*) (see Photo 4). The decoration of the door features a mix of Tibetan and Chinese patterns and colors as well as typical Arabic décor and Arabic gold-lettered script. The floor of the hall is made of wooden boards covered with prayer rugs. In the center of the hall's western wall is the semicircular niche designating the direction of Mecca (*mihrab*), with four columns and three recesses (Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, p. 377). The *mihrab* is beautifully decorated with golden twisted lotuses and engraved with white-lettered Quran verses written on a green background in order to provide a magnificent, solemn and respect-demanding impression. In the left recess of the *mihrab* we find a raised pulpit (the *minbar*), from which the imam addresses the congregation²⁰. The cabinet, which holds Islamic scriptures and hi-fi equipment, is located in the recess to the right. On both sides of the *mihrab* hang large paintings of the Kaaba of Mecca, painted by local Muslim artists. A certain part of the second floor of the prayer hall is reserved for women praying during Ramadan. Located to the south of the yard is another two-storey building which houses the classrooms of the pre-school and the teachers' office. To the west of the classrooms we find the office of the mosque's management committee, the shower room and the water supply room. To the south of the classrooms are a kitchen and a canteen, a storage room and an office to the east.

Photo 4. Tablet in Prayer Hall of Lhasa Great Mosque

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- 20 During Ramadan and Eid, an increased number of local and migrant Muslims will come to pray in the mosque. Therefore, when the prayer hall is full, many adherents have to perform prayers in the yard (Photo 5), where sunshades, rugs and straw mats will be pre-arranged by the management committee. In the case of rain, the classrooms for the pre-school education will be opened for praying.

Photo 5. Yard of Lhasa Great Mosque during Eid prayer

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Graveyards

- ²¹ The cemetery affiliated to Lhasa Great Mosque is located in Dokdêshang (Tib. Dog sde shang; Chin. Duodixiang) in the northern suburb of Lhasa. Its full Tibetan name is “Lhasa Municipality’s Great Mosque Muslim Cemetery” (grong khyer lha sa’i dbyi si lan phyag khang chen mo’i mu si ling gi dur sa)²¹, but the local people call it “east of hillside” (*ge ge shar*). In general, Lhasa Muslims of inland origins are buried there, but due to the increasing number of migrant Muslims doing business in Tibet, some of those migrants are interred there as well. Covering a total area of 64 000 sqm, it is 200 m wide from east to west and 320 m long from north to south. To the west of the cemetery is a mountain and on the other three sides, the cemetery is surrounded by walls. The Tibetan-style gate faces east and has two pointed minarets on both sides (Photo 6). The houses of the cemetery keepers and the cemetery prayer hall are both inside the gate on the cemetery ground. Poplars, wild peach trees, hawthorns, willows and green lawns can be seen there. According to one of the cemetery keepers, the Lhasa Cultural Relics’ Record listed more than 1000 graves for the 1980s, and in recent years the number has increased. Currently, there are still sixteen Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) tombs and one of the Chinese Republican Era (1912-1949). These monumental graves are erected in the traditional Chinese style, in which the upper parts of the stone tablets are rounded (Xizang zizhi qu wenwu 1985, pp. 88-89). Facing east, the prayer hall of the graveyard covers an area of more than 500 sqm. It consists of a hall, a hallway, guest rooms, a shower room and a yard. All the buildings are decorated in a mixed Tibetan and Islamic style. The entrance of the prayer hall faces east and the wooden floors are covered with prayer rugs. As in the Great Mosque of Lhasa, a *mihrab* is placed

in the center of the western wall and tapestries depicting the Kaaba of Mecca hang on both sides. The pavilion-shaped *minbar* is located on the upper left side of the *mihrab*.

Photo 6. Gate of Lhasa Great Mosque Muslim Cemetery

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- 22 East of the cemetery gate is the so-called “Muslim Cemetery Park of Lhasa Great Mosque” (Tib. grong khyer lha sa’i dbyi si lan phyag khang chen mo’i mu si ling gi dur sa’i sngo ljang khul; Chin. lasa qingzhen dasi musulun mudi lühuaqu) surrounded by a brick wall. There, a row of Tibetan style houses with flat rooftops is used for the gatekeepers. The park’s lush gardens make it a popular place for many Muslims to hold picnics.

Space for festival shopping

- 23 In the Wapaling and Telpungang neighborhoods in Lhasa, where most of the local and migrant Muslims live, numerous shops are located. These offer a wide range of products such as halal meat and other foodstuffs, general Muslim supplies, tea, and caterpillar fungus (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*). Furthermore, there are facilities such as halal restaurants, public shower rooms, dry cleaning, and so on. With the gradual growth of Muslim businesses now offering all kinds of commodities, Muslim life in Lhasa has become more convenient. During Ramadan, Muslims run dozens of halal food stands at the mosque gate, opening after 5 pm and mainly selling various snacks and fruit. The snacks are mostly of northwestern Chinese cuisine and include various kinds of cooked, barbecued, boiled and pickled food, but also cold noodles and twists of fried dough (*sanzi*). The customers are mostly Muslim visitors to the mosque who wait for fast-breaking, but also Buddhist Tibetans living nearby.

Home as a space for fast-breaking activities

- 24 The house is one of the main sites for secular activities, such as preparing for the festival and festival gatherings. The architectural style and the interior decorations of Muslim homes in Lhasa are almost the same as those of Tibetan Buddhists. In line with recent economic development in Tibet, the income of Lhasa Muslims living in the Wapaling and Telpungang districts has increased and they often rent out premises to migrant Muslims. As Imam Yakup put it: “To rent out housing is mutually beneficial for both local and migrant Muslims. Migrant Muslims living in Wapaling can conveniently pursue both religious activities and daily life. And local Muslims can increase their income”²². In the past five years, many Lhasa Muslims have refurbished or rebuilt their houses, which are mostly three or four-storey Tibetan-style buildings. The landlord’s family will usually live on the well-lighted top floor while the lower floors will be rented out to migrant Muslims. Although interior decoration and furniture are similar to the homes of Tibetan Buddhists, a Buddhist altar and Buddhist scrolls (*thang ka*) are missing; instead, tapestries of the Kaaba of Mecca or Arabic calligraphy will decorate the walls. Along with social development and increases in income, fashionable modern furniture is gradually entering the homes of the Lhasa Muslims.
- 25 In general, Muslims in Lhasa will not prepare special home decorations for the Eid festival. Although cleaning is a daily routine for them, with the advent of Eid, every Muslim household will take extra care to clean the house and to tidy up the rooms. The yard and the gateway will be swept and everything will be put in order.
- 26 On the day of Eid al-Fitr, Muslim women, who are supposed to perform the Eid Prayer at home, will get up very early to prepare huge amounts of food for their families and for visiting relatives to enjoy when they come back from the Eid Prayer. Muslim men will also get up early to perform the major ablutions and to dress properly for the Eid Prayer at the mosque, while reciting the “Allah is the greatest” (*takbir*) silently all the way to the mosque.

Organizational structures of the mosque and festival arrangements

- 27 Historically, two socio-religious Muslim communities (*jamaat*) have developed in Lhasa, one around Lhasa Great Mosque and the other around Lhasa Small Mosque²³. The two communities were always managed independently of each other. Lhasa Great Mosque has established a two-fold organizational structure, one for religious affairs named “religious committee” and one for the mosque administration named “mosque managing committee”. This practice is similar for most inland mosques in China.

The former and present organizational structure of Lhasa Great Mosque

- 28 Before 1959, the mosque managing committee of Lhasa Great Mosque was called “*changwuchu*” and was in charge of the secular affairs of the mosque (Ma 2005, pp. 4-5). Similar to the Muslim council of elders (Chin. *xianglao hui*)²⁴ in which renowned community elders (*xianglao*) acted as board members, the *changwuchu* was composed of a number of board members recommended by the Muslim community at large. All the

other ones of Lhasa Great Mosque then elected a board member in-charge. Immediately below them in rank were two team leaders (Chin. *baozheng*), who were called “*xieyun*” in Lhasa. The establishment of the council of elders (*xianglao hui*) had to be approved by the former Tibetan Department of Agriculture²⁵ (Tib. *So nam las khungs*; Chin. *Suonanlekong*). The responsibilities of the council of elders included many different tasks: the recruitment or dismissal of the imam and other clergy members of the community mosque, the mediation or arbitration of civil and criminal cases within the Muslim community, the organization of collective religious events, the establishment of religious education and of welfare services, the protection and maintenance of the mosque’s premises and of the communal cemetery, the collection and management of funds and properties, and so on. The community-elders who led the *xianglao*, the *xianglao*-in-charge, usually served for three years but could continue their service when agreed upon. According to inscriptions on wooden boards of the mosque that were burnt in 1959, some other posts like house manager, storage manager, oxtail manager²⁶, deacon and general dispatcher existed as well (Xue 1986, pp. 68-77). This suggests that the council of elders had a complete internal administration and a specific division of work.

- 29 The actual duties of the mosque’s team leaders (*baozheng*) are still disputed. According to Ma Wenzhong²⁷, the two team-leaders served under the *xianglao*-in-charge and were only responsible for specific affairs of the association. This opinion is shared by most Chinese scholars. Xue, however, argues that the team-leaders operated outside of the council of elders, *i.e.* the *xianglao* association (Xue 1986, pp. 68-77). He maintains that although the *baozheng* were recommended by the local Muslim community, they were appointed by and under the direction of local Tibetan authorities. For example, whenever the Dalai Lama proceeded to the Summer Palace and to the Jokhang Temple, the two team-leaders would be in his retinue riding horses and wearing Chinese style clothes. When a dispute arose between Muslims, the team-leaders had the right to mediate and to handle the case. The dispute would only be reported to the Tibetan government when the team-leaders could not solve it (Xue 1986, pp. 68-77). Regrettably, Xue does not mention the relationship between the team leaders (*baozheng*) and the council of elders (*xianglao hui*). Based on my fieldwork and interviews, I suggest that the *xianglao* association was an autonomous Muslim institution in charge of the secular affairs of the mosque headed by the *xianglao*-in-charge, whereas the *baozheng* held lower management offices in the Tibetan government. While the *xianglao* association was an autonomous management model of the Muslims, the *baozheng* institution served as the Tibetan government’s model for supervising the Muslims. Though both had similar management functions and one person could be both a council elder (*xianglao*) and a team leader (*baozheng*) at the same time, the entities that endowed them with management power were different. This fundamental difference needs to be clearly noted.
- 30 With regard to the former religious administration of Lhasa Great Mosque, Xue states that the mosque exercised a “three directors system”, commonly known as the “three ways” (*sandao*) system in the 1950s. In this system the “first director” was the leading imam, also named “first master”, who was responsible for the five daily prayers as well as for all religious affairs. The “second director” was called “second master” (*hatib*) and was the deputy of the first director. He was responsible for reading the sermon (*khutbah*) during the congregational Friday (*jumah*) prayer. The third director, named

“third master” (*mu’addin/muezzin*), was responsible for the call to prayer (*adhan*). In addition, there were a fourth and a fifth master, who were in charge of slaughtering sheep and yaks and of managing the shower room (Xue 1986, pp. 68-77). In contrast, Chen Bo states that, based on his research, Lhasa Great Mosque had exercised the so-called “*ahong*-in-charge system” (Chen 2000, pp. 87-94). Since the time when mosque education was first established in China during the late 16th century, Chinese Muslims have been calling the mosque teacher “*ahong*”. This term soon became a popular form of address for the imams of the mosques. At the end of the 18th century, with the weakening of the aforementioned “three directors system”, the “*ahong*-in-charge system” began to replace the former. Lhasa Great Mosque also underwent this transition. Chen argues, however, that the “three directors system” and the “*ahong*-in-charge system” were not in contradiction (Chen 2000, pp. 87-94)²⁸.

- 31 Since 1982, the secular affairs of Lhasa Great Mosque have been administrated by the Democratic Management Committee (DMC) (Ma 2005, pp. 28-29). According to the field research I conducted, the 10th DMC had 9 members whose term of service ran from May 2009 to May 2012. There was one director, one deputy director, one accountant, one cashier, two managers for the premises, two for logistics and one for vehicles. The leading imam of the mosque was *ahong* Yakub supported by nine other *ahongs*²⁹. The income of the mosque mainly derived from donations (Arab. *niyyah*; Chin. *nietie*), charity, annual Islamic tax (*zakat*), and rent. The major expenditures comprised the allowances of the *ahongs*, expenses for secular activities and the costs for water, electricity, gas and office materials.

The organization of Ramadan and Eid prayer by Lhasa Great Mosque

- 32 Since many customs during the Eid festival are closely connected to the mosque, the arrangements made by the mosque for Ramadan and Eid are of great importance. While the mosque teacher (*ahong*) is responsible for carrying out specific religious activities such as holding and leading the Eid prayers, the DMC is in charge of general preparation and organization of secular activities. It also receives local government officials who offer greetings. Since the Lhasa Muslims have a tradition of breaking fast collectively in the mosque, the preparation of the collective fast-breaking meals is the principal work of the DMC during Ramadan. Before Ramadan, the DMC will calculate and set the prices for the Ramadan meals for the current year. For instance, on August 18th, 2009 the DMC’s public notice read: “Due to the rise of commodity prices, the calculated expenditure for ginseng pilaf³⁰ has been raised to 4500 yuan each evening and for beef pilaf to 6000 yuan during Ramadan 2009” (see Photo 7). Ali, a member of the DMC, also pointed out: “Lhasa Muslims regard the sponsoring and provision of Ramadan meals as charity and therefore actively support the funding of these meals. The sponsoring of Ramadan meals has already been scheduled up to Ramadan in 2014”³¹. On July 28th, 2011, the DMC of Lhasa Great Mosque published a list of meal sponsors for all twenty-eight days of Ramadan 2011. The sponsors’ names (as individuals, families or a group of friends) and donation purposes – usually to commemorate the dead – were written on a paper for each day. Every day during Ramadan, a red cover sheet with the date would be torn off, and then the sponsors’ names and purposes appeared (see Photo 8). The DMC purchased rice, mutton, beef,

butter, potentilla tubers, sugar, and so on as required. Simultaneously, the DMC recorded and published the donations (*niyyah*) accepted during Ramadan (see Photo 9).

Photo 7. Ginseng pilaf

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Photo 8. Board with meal sponsors' names

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Photo 9. Ramadan *niyyah* announcement

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- 33 For Ramadan, the DMC usually employed poor Muslims and Tibetans as assistants. In 2011, the salary was 1300 yuan plus free meals. Some of these assistants had already worked for the mosque for many years and were well acquainted with their jobs as assistants. For example, a young Tibetan male assistant stated, when interviewed: “I have already helped out at two previous Ramadan, so I am familiar with the job. I can get money and meals; it is not bad”³². The assistants’ duties included tidying up the kitchen, washing up the cooking utensils and kitchenware, and setting up the sunshades. In the morning, they always cleaned the kitchen and swept the yard, washed rice and potentilla tubers, melted butter, cooked the pilaf and boiled mutton and beef. In 2011, when Ramadan took place during the summer vacation, the pre-school classrooms had to be emptied as well for performing prayers and for having fast-breaking meals. At the end of Ramadan, the assistants put the cleaned utensils into storage and swept the premises.
- 34 Every day during Ramadan at around 3:00 pm, Muslim customers who want to buy pilaf queue outside the mosque’s office to buy meal coupons. When the pilaf is ready, they obtain it in exchange for the coupons. The assistants place the pilaf on enamel plates of 30 cm in diameter they cover with a second plate. The customers then wrap the plates up in square pieces of cloth to facilitate transport of the dish.
- 35 The rice meals are very popular with Lhasa Muslims. If the sponsor wants some orders to be given away for free, he is supposed to tell the DMC in advance. At around 7 pm every day, Muslims who wish to receive a free meal queue outside the office and the assistants hand them the meals in snack boxes. In order to guarantee a meal for each person who wants one, the maximum quantity of meals per night and per person was two.
- 36 Starting from 5 pm, the assistants begin to prepare the fast-breaking food: sweet milk tea, buttered tea as well as hot and cold dishes. The food varies according to the requirements of the different sponsors. Some sponsors have some of the meals prepared by their female family members. In this case, the assistants only need to prepare the pilaf and to boil mutton and beef, while the sponsors’ families cook the other dishes.
- 37 When waiting at the mosque for the time to break the fast, some local and migrant Muslim children offer plates of sweets and refreshments such as boiled dates, dry dates, and fruits. These are usually accepted with pleasure but not eaten before the time of breaking fast. During Ramadan, Muslims can break the fast collectively in the mosque or individually at home. However, only Muslim men go to the mosque to break their fast. Every day during Ramadan (usually for twenty-eight days), the prepared food and drinks are put on the table before the time of fast-breaking and then, at fast-breaking, everyone has his share. Respected elderly people have their meals served in the office on the second floor of the storage building. The DMC members, the mosque teachers (*ahongs*), native Lhasa Muslims, migrant Muslims and children all have their specific places to take their meals, either in the offices or in the classrooms. At around 9 pm – the time for fast-breaking varied according to the time of sunset – when the bell for fast-breaking is rung, everybody first makes a supplication (*du’a*), and then eats a small amount of food in a hurry. Two or three minutes later, the *maghrib* prayer³³ is performed on the prayer rugs or mats. Only after do the believers finish their meals and go home.

- 38 The day before Eid, the DMC hang a banner with “Blessed Eid”, *i.e.* “Eid Mubarak”, written in yellow characters on a red background in front of the prayer hall while the sunshade is stored away. On the very day of Eid, the DMC members come to the mosque early before the Eid prayer to arrange everything. They open the reception room and check if buttered tea, sweet milk tea, fruit and twists of fried dough (*sanzi*) are ready for the local officials: members of the Tibetan Regional Administration for Religious and Ethnic Affairs, the Lhasa Bureau for Religious and Ethnic Affairs and the Chengguan District Bureau for Religious and Ethnic Affairs, who come to the mosque after the Eid prayer and extend their Eid greetings to the assembled Muslims. After receiving the officials, the DMC members go back home and have a family meal. At around 11 am, they go to the Hui cemetery in the northern Dokdé (Tib. Dog sde) suburb of Lhasa and to the mosque’s cemetery park to offer their greetings to the two gatekeepers and their families by presenting them butter, twists of fried dough (*sanzi*) and fruits. The gatekeepers prepare buttered tea, sweet milk tea and refreshments for the DMC members. After the exchange of greetings, the DMC members perform minor ablutions (*wudu/abdast*), and go to the graveyard for a visit to the graves (*ziyarah al-qubur*).

Festival celebrations

- 39 The major Eid celebrations of the Lhasa Muslims include the performance of the Eid Prayer at the mosque, family reunions and visits to the graveyard. These activities are all shaped by Islamic rules and traditions, but reflect typical characteristics of the Lhasa Muslims, whose customs are somewhat different from those of the Muslims in other parts of China, as described below.

Eid prayer

- 40 In 2011, the Eid Prayer in the Lhasa Great Mosque started on September 1st at 8:30 am. Many Muslims had arrived early and most of them wore white round caps and modern Chinese style clothes. They greeted each other by saying “peace be upon you!” “assalamu alaykum!”³⁴ to congratulate each other. Those Muslims who had already performed their ablutions went directly into the prayer hall to wait for the prayer. Those who had not yet performed their ablutions waited for their turn to enter the shower room. Only men performed Eid Prayer at the mosque while the women prepared Eid meals at home. The number of migrant Muslims who performed the Eid Prayer on September 1st, 2011, was smaller than in the previous year’s Eid and Friday (*jumah*) prayers, because some migrant Muslims who had come from Gansu and Qinghai provinces had already ended their fast on August 30th.
- 41 The Eid Prayer was led by Imam Yakub, but the other nine mosque teachers of Lhasa Great Mosque were present as well. In contrast to the custom of Muslims from inland China of burning incense, Lhasa Muslims never burn incense in religious events, but only use incense for hygienic purposes. When it was the time for the Eid Prayer, Imam Yakub went into the prayer hall, knelt in front of the semicircular niche (*mihrab*) and started to read from the Quran. Thereafter, he led the Muslims inside and outside the prayer hall to perform the actual Eid Prayer and then stepped onto the pulpit (*minbar*) to read the sermon (*khutbah*) in Arabic. The prayer then ended with a supplication (*du’a*). After the Eid Prayer, all the Muslim men greeted one another in the yard by

shaking hands and wishing one another “Eid Mubarak”. The whole Eid event in the mosque lasted for about half an hour.

Family Reunions

- 42 Ending the blessed month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr is one of the three main festivals for Muslims, and hence the time for Muslim families to get together for celebrations. Housewives usually buy twists of fried dough (*sanzi*), beef, mutton, vegetables and groceries in advance. Although, with the changes of modern food tastes, traditional refreshments like fried *sanzi* are rarely eaten, they are still placed on the table. The main dish usually consists of variations of beef noodles, for example, with cooked celery, sorghum, Chinese cabbage or potatoes, or with cold beef slices, preserved duck eggs and cucumbers. These beef noodle dishes are all quite light in taste. As for fruits, these include apples, peaches, grapes and bananas. Tibetan buttered tea and sweet milk tea are “must haves” with regard to drinks. When the men return home from Eid Prayer, the Muslim families enjoy a solid meal together in a joyful and peaceful ambiance. After the main meal, refreshments like the *sanzi* and fruits will be placed on the table again. This first family meal after Eid is usually finished rather quickly. Thereafter, the Muslim men will visit relatives and friends to exchange Eid greetings.

Visits to the graveyard

- 43 The Islamic custom of commemorating the dead by visiting the graves of deceased family members is meant to inspire Muslims to be more charitable and to abandon evil behavior in order to become upright and pious Muslims (Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, p. 721). Therefore, on special occasions such as Friday (*jumah*) or Eid Prayer, birthdays, death anniversaries or holidays, most Muslims, either individually or with their families or friends, visit the graveyard and read chapters (*surah*) of the Quran. In Lhasa, Muslim men will visit the Muslim cemetery in the northern suburb after the Eid meal. Some will go together with the whole family, but only men who wear a white cap are allowed to enter the cemetery according to Muslim practice, while the women, although wearing veils (*hijab*), have to wait outside.

Festival food and dress

- 44 Festival food and dress are the two most significant cultural markers for the Lhasa Muslims. They embody an important cultural factor that contributes not only to the festival ambiance, but also displays their Muslim ethno-religious identity and strengthens their ethno-religious community. The food and dress preferences of Lhasa Muslims have distinctive local characteristics compared to those of inland China’s Muslims, and reflect specific traits of Islam in Tibet as well as the social changes of the Lhasa Muslims in recent years.

Festival food

- 45 Muslim halal food probably came to Tibet with the first Muslim migrants as early as in the 10th century or even before. In the long process of its development, Lhasa’s halal

food has kept some of the Central Asian halal dietary characteristics, but has also mingled with the Tibetan and Chinese cuisines and cooking techniques. Now it has even become an important part of Tibetan dietary culture. Before 1951, a well-known restaurant in Lhasa's Muslim catering service was "sheepfold restaurant" (Tib. *Lug tshang za khang*). In addition, there were Muslim teahouses serving sweet milk tea, snack bars, refreshment shops and so on. Nowadays, the Muslims in Lhasa mainly run teahouses, restaurants and eateries specializing in steamed buns, fried potatoes and farinaceous food.

- 46 The food that Lhasa Muslims usually have during festivals and in daily life includes, for example, buttered tea, sweet milk tea, mutton and yak meat, *tsampa*, cold beef slices, Chinese dumplings (*jiaozi*), leavened pancakes, *piriny*³⁵, *sowany*³⁶ and *helao*³⁷, yoghurt, meat jerky, meat and vegetable stews, and noodles. In general, Muslims also eat fish, seafood and poultry while traditional Tibetans usually do not. Typical festival food of the Lhasa Muslims also includes the above-mentioned pilaf, which is mostly prepared and distributed or sold by the mosque, and the twists of fried dough (*sanzi*), which are mostly sold in the markets. In the first half of the 20th century, Muslim families in Tibet would generally prepare some *sanzi* and fried food during the festival. It is said that the *sanzi* of the Lhasa Muslims were much thinner than those sold by the Muslims from Qinghai and Gansu provinces now. However, the oil cakes, which are very popular in inland China during Muslim festivals, are not seen in Lhasa markets during Ramadan and Eid. Instead, the local Muslims once sold snacks like *piriny*, *sowany* and *helao*. However, with the improvement of living standards and the changes in people's tastes, these snacks have more or less disappeared from the markets during Ramadan over the last five years.

Festival dress

- 47 With regard to festival dress, many Lhasa Muslims have a distinctive dressing style. For Muslims, Eid al-Fitr is a very important festival, therefore at Eid, Muslims must perform a major ablution (*ghusl*) and wear clean and proper clothes. I observed that among the male Muslims who performed the Eid Prayer, only one adult and one child wore Tibetan style clothes and yellow, embroidered prayer caps. Some people wore white or yellow *thobe*³⁸ and *dastar*³⁹ while only very few dressed in Nepalese or Indian style. Most Muslim men, however, wore modern Chinese style clothes. The usual explanation given to me was that because of the summer heat it was inconvenient to wear Tibetan style clothes. However, if Ramadan takes place during winter, more Lhasa Muslims would wear Tibetan dress.
- 48 Though the Lhasa Muslims dress in different styles for Eid Prayer, they all follow Islamic dress codes. In general, middle aged and elderly Muslim women in Lhasa wear Tibetan style clothes both in daily life and during festivals. Before they go out, they wrap up their hair using a dark scarf and put a sunbonnet on top. Young Muslim women usually dress more fashionably in modern Chinese style clothes. Some of them like to wear bright colored Nepalese and Indian style clothes. But all of them will wear veils (*hijab*) during religious events. However, neither Muslim men nor women wear accessories connected with Buddhism. Due to the increase in the number of local Muslims who go on pilgrimage to Mecca, Arabic style Muslim clothes and *hijab* as well as Islamic prayer beads, *misbaha/subhah*⁴⁰, are also encountered more often in Lhasa.

During Ramadan, young Muslim women who wear black Central Asian style clothes, with embroidered golden patterns, can also be seen during prayers.

Conclusion

- 49 This study endeavors to add to our scarce knowledge of Muslim life in Tibet by highlighting the local characteristics of the Eid Festival as celebrated by the Lhasa Muslims. I have chosen to focus on Lhasa Great Mosque, because with its long history it is the most representative and has had – and still has – significant influence on local Muslims. It serves as an exemplary mirror of Muslim life in Tibet. I also argue that the observed religious activities for Ramadan and the Eid Festival reflect certain peculiarities of Muslim practices in a Tibetan Buddhist environment.
- 50 The study reveals that the Muslim community of Lhasa is deeply rooted in Islam as is demonstrated by its awareness of the exact times for Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. Lhasa Muslims consult the Islamic calendar and read the notes put up by the mosque for Ramadan and Eid. They actively partake in preparing and sponsoring the fast-breaking meals. Their religious activities are mainly held in the mosque and in the graveyard, while their secular activities take place among their families and friends in the Wapaling and Telpungang neighborhoods. With regard to its organizational structure, Lhasa Great Mosque practices the “unitary *jamaat*”, *i.e.* it is not subordinate to any other mosque. During Ramadan and Eid, the mosque DMC is responsible for the preparation and organization of the festival as well as of some secular events, while the leading imam is in charge of the specific religious activities. Festival celebrations mainly include the Eid Prayer, family get-togethers and visits to the graves, which all conform to the Islamic religious doctrines. Only Muslim men can perform Eid prayer. On the day of Eid, Muslim families usually have family reunions, share festive meals, visit the graves to commemorate their ancestors and exchange holiday greetings. All these activities serve to reflect their pious Islamic faith and their rich religious heritage.
- 51 However, their festival food and dress also clearly demonstrate their exposure to Tibetan and other cultural influences. For example, the festival food of the Lhasa Muslims displays some distinct local features. Except for the twists of fried dough (*sanzi*), various fried snacks and beef noodles, which are the same as in inland China, dishes like pilaf, *piriny*, *sowany*, and sweet milk tea clearly feature Central Asian and Tibetan tastes. Also with regard to festival dress, Lhasa Muslims wear different styles varying from modern Chinese to Tibetan, Indian and Central Asian styles.

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APPENDIXES

Chinese terms

adie la 阿爹啦 father

ahong 阿訇 imam

ala 阿啦 father

apo la 阿婆啦 grandmother

aye la 阿爷啦 grandfather

Bajiaojie 八角街 Barkhor Street

baozheng 保正 team leader, the leader of the *changwuchu*, also called *xieyun*

changwuchu 常务处 the mosque managing committee of Lhasa Great Mosque before 1959, also called *xianglaohui*

Chengguan 城关区 one of the municipal districts of Lhasa City

danyi jiaofang zhi 单一教坊制 unitary *jamaat*

Dongzisulu 东孜苏路 Dongzisu Rd.

Duodixiang 夺底乡 Duodi village

feituer qian 菲图尔钱 fast-breaking donation

gege la 哥哥啦 older brother

Hebalin 河坝林 Hebalin (name of neighborhood)

Hebalin shequ juweihui 河坝林社区居委会 Hebalin neighborhood community

Hui 回 ethnic group of China; “Chinese-speaking Muslims”
 Jiaozi 饺子 dumpling
 Jiri banshichu 吉日办事处 Kyiré Office
 juema 蕨麻 (Tib. gro ma) *Potentilla anserine*
 kaizhai juan 开斋捐 fast-breaking donation
 la 啦 phonetic for Tibetan *lags*
 Lasa qingzhen da si 拉萨清真大寺 Great Mosque of Lhasa
 Lasa qingzhen dasi musulin mudi lühuaqu 拉萨清真大寺穆斯林墓地绿化区 Muslim Cemetery Park of Lhasa Great Mosque
 lao lasaren 老拉萨人 old Lhasa people
 nietie 乜帖 donation
 neidi musulin 内地穆斯林 inland Muslims
 qingzhen gujiao 清真古教 time-honored Islam
 renshenguo zhua fan 人参果抓饭 a seasoned rice meal with *Potentilla anserine*
 sandao 三道 “three ways” system
 sanzhi 馓子 twists of fried dough
 saosao la 嫂嫂啦 sister-in-law
 shijie jingyu zhi 世界境域志 Record of the World Territories
 suonanlekong 索囊勒空 the former Tibetan Department of Agriculture
 Tiebengang 铁崩岗 Tiebengang neighborhood community
 waiji musulin 外籍穆斯林 foreign Muslims
 wudu 小净 minor ablution
 xianglao xiang 乡老 board members of the Muslim council of elders
 xianglao hui 乡老会 mosque managing committee of Lhasa Great Mosque before 1959, also called *changwuchu*
 xieyun 乡约 the leader of the *changwuchu*, also called *baozheng*
 Xizang Lasa qingzhen dasi suoshu Hebalinxue qianban gaikuo jiangongcheng guihua kexingxing yanjiu baogao ji sheji fang'an 西藏拉萨清真大寺所属河坝林学前班改扩建工程规划可行性研究报告及设计方案 Feasibility Report and Designing Scheme for the Replacement and Expansion of the Wapaling Pre-School Classrooms of Lhasa Great Mosque
 Xizang zizhiqu jianzhu kancha yanjiuyuan 西藏自治区建筑勘察研究院 Construction and Prospecting Academy of the Tibet Autonomous Region
 Yuan 元 here: Chinese currency
 Zhongya xitong musulin 中亚系统穆斯林 Muslim of Central Asian descent

NOTES

1. Forthwith called Lhasa Great Mosque.
2. Muslims who have been living in Tibet for several generations, have intermarried with Tibetans and are ethnically and/or culturally Tibetan, are usually designated as “Tibetan Muslims” or *khache*, often regardless of their original place of ancestry. “Hui” is a term, which designates both an ethnic and a religious category, and is generally reserved for Chinese-speaking Muslims. However, these terms are often used with different meanings with regard to Muslims in Tibet. For an insightful clarification of these terms see Atwill 2016, pp. 596-603. Apart from Tibetan and Chinese Muslims and Muslims of South Asian descent, the Muslim community

in Lhasa also comprises Uighur, Kazakh, Salar, Dongxiang and Baoan (Xizang nianjian 2014, p. 11). For more information see below.

3. See Yang Xiaochun 2011.

4. The informal interviews were conducted and recorded in Chinese.

5. The term “permanent Hui population” refers to Hui who live in Lhasa for more than 6 months annually, including those coming from inland China for business etc. Census data refers to this permanent population (Tongjiju 2002, p. 35). Tibetan Muslims have also been categorized as Hui in the general sense of “Muslim” by both the Republican and Communist Chinese governments and are still thus categorized in censuses today. The number of Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa is smaller than that of the permanent Hui population, but the exact numbers are not available to me. In an interview in 2015, Imam Yakup of Lhasa Great Mosque estimated that there were almost 5000 Tibetan Muslims living in the TAR and that more than 80 % of them lived in Lhasa.

6. In 2010, the permanent population of Uighurs in Lhasa reached 66 (205 in the TAR), 143 Kazakh (2143 in the TAR), 375 Salar (757 in the TAR), 87 Dongxiang (255 in the TAR) and 12 Baoan (15 in the TAR). See Tongjiju 2012, p. 70, 72, 80, 86, 92, 100.

7. For an insightful and in-depth description of the different Muslim groups in Lhasa and the related terms see Atwill 2016, pp. 596-603. On the different origins of the Tibetan Muslims see also Cabezón 1997, pp. 14-15 ; Abdul Wahid Radhu 1997, pp. 160-161 ; Altner 2011, pp. 339-352 ; Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark 1952, pp. 233-240 ; and Jest 1995, pp. 8-20.

8. My translation.

9. My translation.

10. On the term *Khache* see Atwill 2016, pp. 596-603 and Tshe dor 1995, pp. 23-57.

11. See also “*bhai*” (brother) in Abdul Wahid Radhu 1997, p. 164.

12. There are presently altogether four officially registered mosques in the TAR according to the Ethnic and Religious Committee of the TAR.

13. The Five Pillars are faith (*shahada*), prayer (*salat*), fasting (*sawm*), charity (*zakāt*) and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).

14. Lhasa Small Mosque is located in the southeastern corner of Barkhor Street. It was built in the 1920s with funds mainly provided by Muslims from Kashmir, India, Nepal and Ladakh. See Xizang zizhiq wenwu 1985, p. 55.

15. Donation to be paid on Eid al-Fitr.

16. This is the term preferred by the author to the more usual “uprising” (Note of the editors).

17. This information derives from an internal brochure about Lhasa Great Mosque printed by the DMC of Lhasa Great Mosque. See also Ma 2005, pp. 16-18. The reasons for the involvement of the mosque are very complex, see also Atwill 2016, p. 605.

18. This map has been drawn by the Construction and Prospecting Academy of the Tibet Autonomous Region (*Xizang zizhiq jianzhu kancha yanjiuyuan*) in their Feasibility Report and Designing Scheme for the Replacement and Expansion of the Wapaling Pre-School Classrooms of Lhasa Great Mosque (*Xizang Lasa qingzhen dasi suoshu Hebalin xueqianban gaikuo jiangongcheng guihua kexingxing yanjiu baogao ji sheji fang'an*) of May 2011. In August 2012, all buildings in the mosque's yard were dismantled for rebuilding with the exception of the prayer hall and some offices.

19. See *ibid*.

20. In Arab countries, the *minbar* is located to the right of the *mirhab*, whereas in China, the *minbar* is always situated to the left of the *mihrab*, *ibid*, p. 377.

21. This cemetery is also mentioned in Altner 2011, p. 350.

22. My translation.

23. For Lhasa Small Mosque see fn 12.

24. In Chinese Muslim communities, *xianglao* has two meanings: the more specific one is “members of the mosque managing committee”, while the other, more general, meaning is

“members of the Muslim community”. Since the ancestors of many Tibetan Muslims originally came from inland China, they retained numerous Chinese terms referring to the internal administration. This applies especially to the Muslim community of Lhasa Great Mosque.

25. According to oral history of the Lhasa Muslims and to Chinese archival documents from the 1940s, the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933) ordered the Tibetan Department of Agriculture to administer the Muslim community of Lhasa Great Mosque in 1912. See the archival document quoted in Research Group 2009, p. 45 and Ma 2005, p. 5.

26. Some Muslims in Lhasa earned a living by slaughtering yaks and selling meat. Since the Tibetan authorities stipulated that the hide and tail of each slaughtered yak should be sold to the Tibetan government at a price of 300 g of Tibetan silver, Muslim butchers were able to make some extra profits. See Xue 1986, pp. 68-77.

27. A local Muslim and former head of the mosque managing committee.

28. Furthermore, during the early Republic of China, the “unitary *jamaat* (Chin. *danyi jiaofang zhi*)” appeared, meaning that every mosque and its community had to act independently of other mosques and their communities, and that they all had equal status (Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, pp. 13-14, 260).

29. By the end of 2012, the revered imams/*ahongs* of Lhasa Great Mosque were: Sehkang, Ma Liangjun (Yahayah), Ma Mingzhong (Teb), Ma Keneng (Gurubah), Ma Yueming (Hassan), Ma Youshou (Sulliman), Ma Guangming (Yahayah), Shan Jizu (Aduramah), Ma Xiufeng (Mussah), Ma Chaofeng (Hassan), Ma Yanfu (Teb), Huzuhr and Yakub (Ma 2005, pp. 28-29).

30. Although this meal is called “ginseng pilaf” in Chinese (*renshenguo zhuafan*), it is actually a seasoned rice meal prepared with the plant *Potentilla anserine* (Tib. *gro ma*; Chin. *juema*).

31. My translation.

32. My translation.

33. The *maghrib* prayer is the fourth of the five formal daily prayers, and is performed right after sunset.

34. Also transcribed “*as-salam alaikum*”.

35. A traditional food of Lhasa Muslims made of rice flour, milk and sugar.

36. A kind of thin noodles made of wheat flour and egg, boiled with milk and sugar.

37. A food made of butter, fried barley flour and brown sugar.

38. A *thobe* or *thawb* is a tunic-like garment, which, in China, is worn on religious occasions. There are two types: a big collar robe and a small collar robe. See Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, p. 777.

39. *Dastar* is the Persian term for a Muslim turban-like headdress. In Arabic it is called *emamah/imamah*. See Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, p. 127.

40. Islamic prayer beads are used for counting the *tasbih*, i.e. short repetitive utterances glorifying Allah. See Zhongguo Yisilan 2007, pp. 732-33.

ABSTRACTS

This article describes the fast-breaking festival at the end of Ramadan as celebrated by the Lhasa Muslims in Tibet. It is based on field research conducted in the Great Mosque of Lhasa from August 6th to September 6th, 2011.

Cet article décrit la fête de la rupture de jeûne célébrée à la fin du Ramadan par les musulmans de Lhasa au Tibet. Il s'appuie sur une enquête de terrain qui s'est déroulée du 6 août au 6 septembre 2011.

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Mots-clés: Tibet, Lhasa, musulman, jeûne

Keywords: Tibet, Lhasa, Muslim, fast

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