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Author(s): KWANGMIN KIM

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Profit and Protection: Emin Khwaja and the Qing Conquest of Central Asia, 1759–1777

KWANGMIN KIM

This article provides a Muslim perspective on the eighteenth-century Qing conquest of Xinjiang. It explores the career of Emin Khwaja, a leader of the Muslim community of Turfan and the most prominent Muslim ally in the Qing conquest. I investigate how the notion of “protection” (ḥimāyat in Arabic), a key concept in the Central Asian Muslim understanding of religious and political patronage, informed Emin’s decision to ally himself with the Qing. I argue that Emin understood his alliance with the “infidel” Manchu not as a collaboration in betrayal of Islam but as a positive policy to achieve security and prosperity of the Muslim community in the changing political and commercial environment of eighteenth-century Eurasia. Emin was able to build a local coalition of Muslim commercial interests for the support of the Qing, while promoting his standing within the regional political hierarchy of Muslim Central Asia.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1731, “Ningyuan” (Pacification of faraway places) Commander-General Yue Zhongqi, fighting a difficult war against the Zunghar Mongols in Central Asia, had this surprising piece of good news for his ruler, the Yongzheng emperor: “2,000 Zunghar enemies surrounded the wall of Lukchun [a small town of Turfan]. They fought for 20 days, day and night. Local Muslims of Turfan showed courage and made raids, and killed 200 enemies, and hurt many more.” It was not a small achievement that an obscure Muslim community could withstand a drawn out offensive from the Zunghar Mongols. After all, the Zunghar was a formidable military power that competed with the Qing for the political domination of eastern Eurasia in the eighteenth century (Fuheng 1:23, YZ9/6/jiawu, Edict).

In this remarkable encounter between the Turfan people and the seasoned warriors of the Zunghar Mongols, the Turfanese were led by one Emin Khwaja—the “headman” of the Muslims (*Huimin*) of Lukchun. For his heroic battle with the Zunghar, Emin Khwaja received a Qing aristocrat title and became a *fuguo gong* (a Qing imperial aristocrat of the lowest rank). As it turned out, Emin was instrumental in the Qing conquest of the Muslim oases of eastern Turkestan and in the consolidation of the Qing empire in the region

Kwangmin Kim (Kwangmin.kim@colorado.edu) is Assistant Professor of Chinese History in the Department of History at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

afterward. From 1755 to 1759, he participated in the Qing war against the Zunghar Mongols and resistant Muslim clerics. In subsequent years, Emin worked as the superintendent of the Qing administration in the conquered Muslim oases almost until his death in 1777 (QDWFMGHBWGBZ 110).

This article investigates the career of Emin Khwaja, arguably the most prominent Muslim collaborator in the Qing imperial expansion into Central Asia, and provides a Central Asian Muslim perspective on the eighteenth-century Qing expansion.¹ This article argues that profit and protection are the two key concepts that explain Emin's alliance with the Qing. First, Emin Khwaja and Central Asian caravan merchants entered an alliance with the Qing empire in order to promote their position in the overland trade of eastern Eurasia, through participation in the wartime economic boom created by the Qing expansion into Central Asia. Second, originally a religious leader of the Turfan Muslim community, Emin Khwaja justified this commercially motivated alliance with the Qing using the notion of "protection," an issue of vital concern in the Central Asian Muslims' understanding of their relations with other contending state builders in the region. Emin presented the alliance with the Qing as a positive means to gain the security of the Muslim community from the ever-menacing threat of the nomads.

The purpose of this study is to provide a new understanding on the issue of the Qing empire building in Central Asia in the eighteenth century. Recently, scholars shed new light on the issue by investigating the frontier policies of the Qing that had contributed to the successful establishment of its empire in Central Asia. Its innovative military and economic strategies and tactics, flexible fiscal policies, and deft use of Inner Asian symbolic resources—which the Qing was able to adopt as an Inner Asian power—the scholars argue, eventually made it possible for the Qing to extend deeply into Central Asia, and to maintain its empire there successfully afterward (Komatsu 2000; Millward 1998; Perdue 2005). These studies significantly broaden our understanding of the Qing empire in Central Asia. However, by primarily focusing on what the Qing ruler did, they in effect oversimplify the complicated process of the empire building of the Qing into component parts of fiscal, ideological, or military policies of the Qing court, and particularly also reduce the complex nature of the Qing's multiethnic empire itself into being merely a unilateral Manchu domination.²

One has to seriously consider the issue of the local agency of the Xinjiang Muslim community in order to explain the reality of the Qing empire building in Central Asia. Previous scholars argue that the local agency belonged particularly to the Turco-Mongolian military leaders of the region, commonly referred

¹In spite of Emin's significant contribution to the Qing conquest of Xinjiang, however, scholars have yet to provide a systematic examination of his contribution to the Qing empire building. For previous scholarship that deals with parts of his career, see Newby (1998); Su and Huang (1993); Saguchi (1986); Brophy (2008).

²For an explanation of the multiethnic nature of the Qing empire, see Naquin (2000); Crossley (1992, 2002); Rawski (1998).

to as *beg* (Turkic equivalent of Persian *amār* and Mongolian *noyan*). Nomadic warriors in origin, these *begs* came to dominate the oasis society by virtue of their increasing holdings of landed property there, and the collection of tax dues from these properties as well. Power struggles arose within the oasis community and especially with its Islamic religious establishment (such as the *qādī* [Muslim judges], *akhūnd* [Islamic scholars, or *‘ulamā*, of high rank], and Sufi leaders) that had emerged as patrons of the economic and social interests of the ever-Islamizing oasis society since the late sixteenth century (Fletcher 1978a; H. Kim 2004; Millward and Newby 2006; Newby 1998; Saguchi 1971; Shimada 1952; Togan 1992).

The *begs* entered into an alliance with the powerful nomads, the Zunghar Mongols, to displace the political power of Naqshbandi Sufi leaders known as *khwajas*, based in the oasis cities of Kashgar and Yarkand (hereafter, Kashghar *khwajas*)—the most influential religious elite in eastern Turkestan at the time. After the Qing army defeated their overlord Zunghar in the mid-eighteenth century, the *begs* again chose to ally themselves—this time with the Qing empire. Being familiar with the Turco-Mongolian political languages of Central Asia, the *begs* found especially useful two Inner Asian concepts for justifying their alliance with the Qing. The two concepts—“grace” (Manchu *kesi*, Mongolian *kesig*) and the “duty of salt” (Turki *tūz haqqī*)—refer to the reciprocity of political obligations incurred by the subjects of the nomadic overlords, that is, their obligation to pay back the nomadic overlords’ personal favors shown to them (Hamada 1993; Millward and Newby 2006; for a study of the “grace” in Qing-Mongol relations, see Atwood 2000). Employing these notions, the *begs* emphasized qualities of their own personal loyalty and allegiance to the Qing emperor to justify their alliance with the Qing.

According to this understanding, the Qing empire was a political structure standing upon a thin layer of support from the nomad-turned-landlord ruling class—one without the support of the oasis Muslim community at large.³ However, Emin Khwaja’s career actually exposes the weakness of this exposition, which asserts that the local dynamic of the Qing empire building is based on the binary opposition model of the Central Asian political structure, that is, between the nomadic state builders and the settled Muslim society. Emin Khwaja, as prominent a Muslim collaborator of the Qing empire as he was, was not a Turkic military leader. He was originally the “grand *akhūnd*” of Lukchun, a leader among the high-ranking religious elite that the Qing empire was supposed to exclude from power in favor of the rule of the *begs* or *amārs*, according to the understanding of the previous scholarship. Given the Muslim religious leader’s structural role as the representative of certain economic and social interests of

³Thus, when Joseph Fletcher asserted that Qing rule in Central Asia eventually failed because of the inability of Qing rulers to pose themselves as patrons of Islam or the sultan in the eyes of local Muslims, he points out this lack of support for the Qing rule by the local Muslim community (Fletcher 1978b, 407).

the oasis society (Hodgson 1974, vol. 2, 402–4; Manz 2007, 3), Emin Khwaja's support of the Qing suggests an intriguing possibility that there was a social base for the Qing empire building within the local Muslim society.

Protection and patronage had provided an important framework through which religious leaders had conducted their relations with state and local society in Central Asian and Middle Eastern context (Hodgson 1974, vol. 2, 402–4; Manz 2007, 3). In the fifteenth century, for instance, Khwaja Ahrar (d. 1490), the influential Sufi leader of the Naqshbandi order from Central Asia, justified his political involvement in secular politics in the Timurid state (1370–1526) in the name of *himāyat* (a specific form of protection provided by figures of influence to the townspeople and peasants, especially in matters of taxation). Notably, the *khwaja* provided it in the name of Islamic legality, even though *himāyat* was not originally an Islamic notion. In providing *himāyat*, as the *khwaja* justified, he spared the Muslim society from what he perceived as the most dangerous threat to its integrity, namely, the non-Islamic nomadic political practices of the Turco-Mongol state-builders in Central Asia (Paul 1991).

Admittedly, Emin was not a member of the Naqshbandi Sufi order. And the Arabic word, *himāyat*, does not appear as such in primary sources describing the Emin Khwaja-Qing relations. However, it is notable that Emin Khwaja, and also other contemporary political actors at the time for that matter, used other language rendition related to the concept of protection (Persian *penah*, Manchu *karmambi*, Chinese *baohu*) in descriptions of political relations with the Qing. In order to reconstruct the Muslim perspective on the Qing empire building, this article investigates the actual usages of these local languages referring to concepts of protection, as well as the patronage relations built on the ground between the Qing empire and the Muslim local community.

My analysis of Emin Khwaja's career brings to light the multilayered process of the Qing empire building. From the perspective of a borderland Muslim community, the Qing empire building was not merely a unilateral military expansion motivated by the pure strategic concern of the imperial center of Beijing. Nor did the empire stand only on the opportunistic supports of the local military and political leaders (*begs*) to sustain their own conservative positions. Rather, at the most fundamental level, the building of the Qing empire occurred through a dynamic process in which a local Muslim community actively participated to promote its own political and economic agendas, namely, the protection and promotion of its commercial interests under the changing commercial and political environment of eighteenth-century eastern Eurasia.

SEEKING PROTECTION FROM THE *CIN PADASHAH*

As I showed earlier, Emin Khwaja's spirited battle against the Zunghar Mongols in 1731 marked a turning point in his political career with the Qing.

However, Emin Khwaja's military success against the Zunghar eventually backfired. The Zunghar immediately launched successive attacks on Turfan. Emin Khwaja and the Turfanese could not withstand these attacks, even with the help of the Qing troops. As the Yongzheng emperor retracted Qing soldiers from the Turfan area, Emin Khwaja and the Turfan Muslim community decided to relocate to Qing territory. In 1733, Emin Khwaja and 8,113 Turfan Muslims, including "male and female, as well as young and adult," survived the arduous journey from Turfan to Gansu. They settled in a place called Guazhou, in the Gansu frontier (SZSL 134, YZ11/8/dingmao, Edict).

Looking back at this pivotal moment in the Turfanese community's relations with the Qing empire, Emin later described it as the beginning of the Qing's protective relations with the Turfanese community. His understanding of this protection was clearly revealed in two documents he produced in the aftermath of the Turfanese refugees' resettlement in Gansu. Notably, both documents, intended for two different audiences—one for the Qing ruler and officials, and the other for the local Turfanese community—utilized the notion of protection as a central concept, while expectedly focusing on the different sides of the protective relations for different audiences.

I will provide detailed analysis of Emin Khwaja's understanding of this protective relationship shortly. However, one should first remember that patronage was the common conceptual tool through which the Inner Asian people understood political relations between the nomadic state-builders and their subjects at the time. In fact, it was also not a new concept to the Qing ruler. None other than the Kangxi emperor, who began the Qing expansion into Turfan in the first place, defined the political relation that could potentially result from his conquest of Turfan, and he did so in terms of patronage and protection. In 1717, as the emperor contemplated a potential invasion of Turfan with his field commander, "Jingyi" (Pacification of barbarians) Commander-General Fu'ning'an, the Kangxi emperor made a revealing remark, saying "Once Great Army (i.e., Qing army) attack Turfan and pacify it, it become like Hami. Once it entered [our] domain (Chinese *bantu*), [we] cannot help but protecting (Chinese *baohu*) [it] well" (QDWFMGHBWGBZ 109).

It is notable that the emperor considered the provision of protection to the surrendered Turfan almost as if it was a political obligation that was expected of him, from a certain accepted norm of political relations. The system of political relations the Kangxi emperor had in mind was the military patronage relationship existing between the nomadic overlords and their subjects. Once the lesser rulers, whether they were rulers of nomadic tribes or settled polity, surrendered to the nomadic overlords, the latter was supposed to offer military assistance to their subjects. In return, the lesser rulers were expected to provide service to the nomadic overlords—taxes and tributes in the case of the settled society and military service in the case of nomadic tribes. In most likelihood, the political environment of Central Asia in the post-Mongol Empire (1206–1368) period,

in which Turco-Mongolian nomads played the role of major state or empire builders, forced the people in the region, nomadic rulers and the settled local society alike, to think of their relations in terms of this military patronage.

Thus, when Emin Khwaja portrayed his relations with the Qing in light of military patronage to the Qing court, Emin was clearly talking to an informed audience. However, where the Kangxi emperor saw political obligation, Emin Khwaja saw imperial grace. In other words, while the Kangxi emperor considered the provision of military protection as his obligation, Emin Khwaja presented it as the emperor's "grace" (Manchu *kesi*). The document that shows this interpretation is Emin Khwaja's Manchu-language memorial to the Yongzheng emperor written in 1733. Judging from its fluent Manchu writing style, this memorial was most likely recorded by Qing scribes according to Emin's dictation. Emin composed this memorial in order to thank the Qing emperor for settling the Turfanese community in Guazhou and also to request permission to go to Beijing for an audience with the emperor.

In this document, Emin mentioned that he and his Turfanese had not expended efforts for the Yongzheng emperor, referred to as the "Great Divine Lord Above" (Manchu *dergi amba enduringge ejen*), at all. But the Qing ruler took pity on the Turfanese when the Zunghar caused them to suffer greatly, and sent an army to continuously protect and look after the Turfanese. Also, during and after the Turfanese journey to Guazhou, the emperor had provided abundant provisions, including silver, food, tea, tents, as well as a walled town, pasture, and houses. In so doing, the Yongzheng emperor saved them from disaster and allowed them to reside together. Thus, Emin mentioned, the Turfanese, the emperor's slaves, have since lived peacefully and comfortably "under the feet of the Divine Lord's horses" (MLZZ, Emin Khwaja's memorial, YZ 11/7/20).

Clearly, in this representation, Emin used the notion of "protection" (Manchu *karmambi*) in conjunction with the notion of "grace," and described the "protection" as a result of the "grace" of the Qing ruler. The protection given to the Turfanese community was the result of the Qing emperor's "serious grace that is like heaven and earth" (Manchu *abka na i adali ujen kesi*). Although Emin Khwaja and the Turfanese did nothing worthy of the protection, nor did they even request the protection, the emperor decided to give the Turfanese protection anyway due to his grace toward the Turfanese and his concern for their suffering. In light of the fact that the notion of "grace" is a typical Inner Asian political concept that is used to describe interpersonal relations between the Turco-Mongolian nomadic overlords and their subjects (Atwood 2000; Millward and Newby 2006, 119), the goal of this representational strategy is clear enough. The leader of the Turfanese community sought to present the Qing patronage of Turfan according to the tenets of Inner Asian political relations, as relations between nomadic overlords and their subjects.

However, when he communicated with the Turfan community, Emin Khwaja took a different strategy and added a religious dimension to the explanation of the

Qing patronage of Turfan. Emin portrayed the Qing's protection as the protection of the security of the Muslim community against the threat posed by the Zunghar nomads. The document that shows this representation is an anonymous Turki document stored in the Ethnography Museum (Etnografya Müzesi) in Ankara, Turkey. This document is a part of the official history of Emin Khwaja and his family written from Emin's perspective and was probably commissioned by either Emin himself or his descendants. The document, which Ahmet Temir first introduced to general readership in 1961, narrates the entire process of Emin Khwaja's relocation to Guazhou (Temir 1961). Although the author of the document is unknown, it stands to reason that the author was a member of the *'ulamā* of the Turfan Muslim community, the primary source of the literate class. Regarding the date of its composition, one can only say approximately that it was written sometime after 1741. That is the year of the last event recorded in the document as it stands. However, given the possibility that the reference is only a fragment of a much larger document, it is possible the piece was recorded at a much later date.

The 10,000 men of the Turfan Muslims, this document narrates, were in constant battle with the Zunghar before their surrender to the Qing. In the Horse Year of 1135 (1722–23), “due to the misfortune and the evil of the Zunghar army,” the Turfanese had to move from their hometown Lukchun to another town in the Turfan area, Calis. There they had to suffer the hardships of famine, cold winter, and other various catastrophes “that broke forth as if on the Judgment Day.” Soon, they found themselves subject to the attack of “great troops of the Zungharian unbelievers” again. For twelve years, many Turfanese died while fighting the Zunghar. Their sons were separated from fathers, their daughters from mothers. Finally, when the superiority of the unbelievers became too much to overcome for the Turfanese, their leader, “his majesty the commander of the faithful” Emin Khwaja, asked the Chinese emperor (*Cin padashah*) for “protection” (*penah*) upon the advice of his political advisors (*vazir*) and political leaders (*amīr*) as well as venerable Muslim scholars (*'ulamā*) and judges (*qādī*) of the community for the sake of safety and mercy.

According to this narrative, Emin's surrender to the Qing was a political decision to bring protection to the Muslim community of Turfan against the threat of Zunghar nomads. It was a communal decision supported not only by the military and political leaders—*vazir* and *amīr*—but also the religious establishment—the *'ulamā* and *qādī*. It is unmistakable that there is a religious dimension to the document's use of the notion of “protection.” This document presented the Qing's protection against the Zunghar as protection against the Zungharian “unbelievers.” In making this decision, Emin Khwaja was hailed as “Amīr al-Mu'minin,” meaning “commander of the faithful.”

This document does not use the specific Arabic word, *himāyat*, to describe the protection that Emin Khwaja sought from the Qing. It uses another word, *penah*, to describe the patronage that Emin Khwaja sought from the Qing.

As it was used in this document, the word *penah* also does not connote the specific economic meaning of the patronage implied in the *himāyat*, namely, the protection of the local peasants from taxation from the government. However, the protection Emin provided to the Muslim community and that Khwaja Ahrar, the fifteenth-century “activist” Sufi leader, provided to the Muslim community have a crucial commonality. In providing protection, both men considered nomadic power as well as the non-Islamic ruling methods of the nomadic power as the most dangerous threat to the integrity of the Muslim community. Therefore, in the most concrete political terms, both concepts of protection meant the protection of the Muslim community against the threat and violence of nomadic power.

In this regard, it is notable that Khwaja Ahrar saw the constant warfare among the Timurid rulers and their *amirs* as one of the gravest dangers from which the Muslim community should be protected. And the *khwaja* was involved in multiple peace negotiations among the warring nomadic rulers as mediator (Paul 1991, 534; Urumbaev 2002, 17). By surrendering to the Qing ruler, Emin Khwaja achieved essentially the same goal as Khwaja Ahrar—bringing protection to the Turfanese Muslim community against the destruction caused by the threats of nomadic power. Emin Khwaja, a member of the *‘ulamā* and a descendant of a famous Sufi leader (Hamada 1991, 97–98), clearly understood the political benefit of using this Islamized notion of “protection” in swaying the local society, especially the all-powerful religious establishment, to support his decision to enter into an alliance with the Qing.

Admittedly, this religious justification—to use one non-Muslim power, the Qing, to protect the Muslim community from another non-Muslim power—is ironic. However, this justification may have just worked for Turfan’s *‘ulamā*, because the threat the Turfan had had to face was Zunghar. In the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* (History of Rashīd), the chronicle of the Islamized Mongol rulers of Chagatai descent and the Muslim saints of Central Asia from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, written from a Muslim perspective, the Buddhist Oirats, of which the eighteenth-century Zunghars were descendants, were described as the archenemy of the Muslim community and the constant target of Holy War. According to this understanding, the Zunghar was the most menacing threat to the security of the Muslim community of Turfan.

In this regard, it is notable that the document referred to the Qing emperor as “Cin Padashah,” or the “emperor of China.” To Inner Asian constituents of the Qing empire such as Manchu and Mongol nobles, the Qing ruler was not an “emperor of China.” He was the ruler of the Da Qing (the Great Qing), of which China was only a part. Having previously lived under the rule of Chinggisid descendants, undoubtedly Emin Khwaja must have known this Inner Asian understanding of the Qing ruler. Thus, when Emin addressed the Qing ruler as the “Cin padashah,” he intentionally invoked a unique image associated with the “Chinese” ruler for the Central Asian audience. The image was none other

than of a ruler tolerant to Islamic faith, though he himself was not Muslim. Especially, the Muslims had long viewed the rulers of the Tang and the Yuan in such a light and not without historical justification (Hamada 1993). Thus, by calling the Manchu Qing ruler “Cin padashah,” Emin and the Muslim community of Turfan invoked this image of a tolerant nonbeliever ruler in contrast to the worse menace of the Buddhist Zunghar.

MAKING PROFIT IN THE TIME OF WAR

However, seeking protection from hostile nomadic power was only one reason for Emin Khwaja and the Turfan community to enter into alliance with the Qing. There was a worldly factor, so to speak, also working in the decision. That was the commercial benefit that could be brought to the community by entering an alliance with the Qing. More specifically, Emin Khwaja made a conscious effort to take advantage of the new commercial opportunity unexpectedly created by the half-century-long Qing-Zunghar war (1690–1759) in eastern Eurasia at the turn of the eighteenth century.

The Qing-Zunghar war produced a substantial wartime boom in the overland trade in eastern Eurasia. The scale of the wartime economy was enormous. The Qing government had spent 137,000,000 *liangs* of silver in total for the military campaign against the Zunghar Mongols since the late seventeenth century. The Qianlong government spent 23,000,000 *liangs* for the Zunghar campaign and *khwaja* campaign (1754–59) alone. This was one of the biggest military outlays by the Qing government. Only the spending on the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories from 1674 to 1681, which amounted from 100,000,000 to 150,000,000 *liangs*, matched the scale of the military spending during the Qing’s western campaign (Chen 1992, 248).

The silver flowed into the local economy of the Muslim oases through many channels. Muslim chieftains and their followers received silver and other coveted Chinese goods such as tea and silk either when they surrendered to the Qing army or when they offered their military service to the Qing (K. Kim 2008, 414–30, Appendix C). However, the wartime trade opportunity created by the presence of the Qing military provided an even bigger opportunity for enrichment of the Muslim communities. The sheer distance between Xinjiang and the Gansu frontier made it impossible for the Qing army to mobilize all the necessary logistical support it needed from China. The Qing troops came to rely heavily upon the purchase of military supplies such as horses, grains, and livestock from local merchants and producers (*caimai*) in the Central Asian warfare. Accordingly, the expansion of the Qing campaign deep into the Tarim Basin created plenty of new trading opportunities for the local oasis Muslims.

The Turfan community keenly exploited this new commercial environment. Located at the Chinese end of the Eurasian overland trade route, the Turfan local

community's economic vitality and financial health depended much upon the success of its trade with China. That is the reason why Turfan and its neighboring towns, most notably Hami, developed strong interests in the China trade early on (Mackerras 1990, 337–39). This region's commerce-driven relations with China culminated in the Ming tribute system. The region was the most avid participant of the Ming (1368–1644) tribute system in the northwestern frontier of China. Turfan and Hami sent numerous tribute missions to the Ming court. No other Central Asian communities matched the numbers of the “tribute envoys” dispatched by the two principle polities of the region (Rossabi 1970).

Emin Khwaja responded to the newly presented commercial opportunity decisively and swiftly. After the Qing forces made an overture base in the early 1720s, Emin Khwaja entered commercial relations with China to supply it. For instance, Emin Khwaja provisioned grains to feed the Qing troops under the command of General Yue Zhongqi in the battle against the Zunghars in 1730. For such provision of grains, Emin Khwaja received 20 bolts of satin and 2,000 *liangs* of silver.⁴ His provision of the grain sustained the Qing troops in the region. The mutually beneficial relations between the Qing troops and the Turfan obviously provoked the Zunghar ruler to attack the Turfan in 1731. From this participation in the new opportunity of China trade, Emin Khwaja's willingness to enter into alliance with the Qing followed. Given that the new commercial boom was created by the opportunity in the trade supporting military logistics—horses, livestock, and grains—it was almost natural for Emin Khwaja to enter political relations with the Qing, in order to obtain better opportunity in the wartime trade.

This development shows that there was a proactive dimension in the protection and patronage Emin Khwaja sought from his relations with the Qing. The protection that Emin Khwaja sought as the leader of the Turfan Muslim community was not merely a protection of the security of the Muslim community from potential destruction. He sought protection for, and a promotion of, the trading interests of the Turfanese community as a whole. The reason may be that Emin Khwaja's success as the local leader of the Muslim community was dependent upon his ability to induce the success of Turfan Muslim community in the China trade. Increasing the China trade would give the Turfan community opportunity for enrichment and prosperity as well as the chance for social and political stability. Or so Emin Khwaja and the Turfanese community hoped.

In fact, in seeking strong commercial relations with China, Emin Khwaja closely followed in the footsteps of the commercially engaged Muslim religious leaders of the Turfan of early times. The most prominent example of these was Khwaja Taj al-Din in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. A descendant of a legendary Central Asian Sufi master, Khwaja Taj al-Din moved to Turfan to

⁴During the Qing period (1644–1911), one *liang* (tael), as it was set by the Board of Revenue, equaled 37 grams of silver, 95–99 percent purity.

spread Islam in the still Buddhist-dominated city in the late fifteenth century. While in Turfan, interestingly, Khwaja Taj al-Din was also heavily involved in worldly economic pursuits. According to a Muslim source, “The khwaja occupied himself, also with commerce and agriculture. And from these occupations he accrued, by the blessing of the Most High God, great wealth” (Haydar 1895, 127).

In fact, God’s blessing came in the form of lucrative trade with Ming China. Khwaja Taj al-Din traveled to Beijing as the head of numerous tribute missions and participated in the official trades with China within the tribute system. No doubt, the popular Chinese commodities, such as silk and tea, sold well in the Eurasian overland trade market and significantly contributed to his wealth. In turn, Taj al-Din used the wealth thus accumulated in keeping the Muslim community flourishing in Turfan. His wealth provided help to the needy within the Muslim community and thus sustained the prosperity and stability of the Muslim community in general. “The poor and indigent—nay, more, the peasant, the villagers, the artisan, and the merchants, all profited [by his wealth]” (Haydar 1895, 127).

Certainly, the Qianlong court was well aware of the commercial underpinning of the Muslim alliance with the Qing. For this reason, the Qing court was even willing to sustain an artificially high price for the goods the Muslims provided. In March 1759, Qing troops were preparing for a final attack on the *khwaja* brothers in Kashgar and Yarkand, and field commanders were trying to buy horses, animal skins, and grain from Aksu, a major oasis city in the middle of the Tarim Basin. When Commanders Shuhede and Yonggui reported the price they determined for the trade, the Qianlong emperor expressed worry. The emperor pointed out that the commanders paid too little for the goods they bought from Muslims. The emperor declared, “The nature of the Muslims is greedy and rude. If the low price makes them feel discontent, there will be no benefit [for us in the future].” He ordered the field commanders to raise the prices for the Muslim goods above the current official price (GZSL 582, QL24/3/jiashen, Edict). In other words, the emperor felt a low price for Central Asian goods would not be advisable. Economically, a low price would make the local Muslims less willing to sell their goods to the Qing troops. Furthermore, low prices might alienate the Muslims from the Qing in the future. Eventually, Commander Shuhede decided to pay whatever the Muslims proposed for the grain and horses. Shuhede reported, “The Muslims all jumped with joy. Thus [Your servant Shuhede] sent orders to Wushi and Kucha to handle [the situation] in the same way” (GZSL 586, QL24/5/renwu, Shuhede’s memorial).

All in all, the wartime environment was less a disaster and more of an opportunity for the oasis Muslim communities. Especially, the Qing expedition into Central Asia signaled a time of extraordinary economic boom for the Muslim merchants. For the Muslim merchants in Xinjiang, whose prosperity primarily

depended upon the success of the China trade, it was an opportunity that could not be missed. And it was on the basis of this prospect of new commercial prosperity that Emin Khwaja built a new coalition of local Muslims to support the Qing expansion further, deep into Central Asia, in coming years.

EMIN KHWAJA AND THE QING EMPIRE BUILDING

Emin Khwaja would have ended his life as a minor frontier headman after his resettlement in Guazhou. However, almost unexpectedly, the Qing campaigns against the Zunghar Mongols and Kashgar *khwajas* from 1754 to 1759 thrust him back onto the central stage of Qing imperial politics. In the summer of 1754, when the Qianlong emperor was planning the campaign against the Zunghar, the emperor ordered Emin Khwaja to lead a band of 200 Uyghur Muslim soldiers and participate in the campaign (GZSL 464, QL19/5/renwu, Edict). The emperor deployed Emin Khwaja to persuade the local Muslims—as a source of logistical support and local intelligence—to join the Qing side. Having previously been involved with supporting the Qing army under General Yue Zhongqi in the 1720s, Emin was the perfect candidate to become the recruiter for additional Muslim alliance with the Qing troops.⁵

Moreover, Emin's career with the Qing empire did not end after the war. When the Qing completed its conquest of Muslim Xinjiang in 1759, the most pressing concern left facing the Qing was the possibility of a revival of influence of the resistant Kashgar *khwajas* in their "New Territory." Although the Qing army had expelled the Kashgar *khwaja* brothers and they died soon after in Pamir, those who supported the *khwaja* resistance still remained in the former strongholds of *khwaja* power, namely, Yarkand and Kashgar. If anyone with relations with the Kashgar *khwajas* stepped in, he could mobilize the Muslim population and challenge the nascent Qing regime in Xinjiang.

The Qianlong court was well aware of this possibility. For this reason, the Qing relocated many branches of the Naqshbandi *khwaja* from Xinjiang to Beijing, even those who did not participate in the *khwaja* resistance during the war. For instance, in 1762, the Qing court relocated another *khwaja*, "A-ta-mu," to Beijing, after a Manchu superintendent, Yonggui, made a dubious claim that

⁵For instance, as Emin Khwaja entered Turfan following the Qing army in 1754, he dispatched three Muslims to carry the Qianlong emperor's announcement to the Turfan Muslims. The message that Emin Khwaja's men carried to the Muslim communities was that the Qing campaign was not a war against the Muslims but rather was a war beneficial to the Muslims, one that would deliver them from the Zunghars and their oppression. This message clearly conveyed the notion of protection by which Emin Khwaja explained their surrender to the Qing in the early 1730s. For a detailed and lively description of this process, see MLZZ, QL20/4/9, Yungcang and others' memorial, and Fuheng 2:9, QL20/3/yiwei, Right-side Lieutenant General for the Pacification of Frontier, Sa-la-er's memorial. For a detailed account of the Qing conquest of the Zunghar Mongols and Kashgar *khwajas*, see Zhuang (1982) and Perdue (2005).

local Muslims came to worship him because he was a close relative of the Kashgar *khwajas* (GZSL 669, QL27/8/bingwu, Edict).

In this context, the Qianlong emperor concluded that in order to neutralize this potential threat he had no other choice but to rely upon Muslim allies, who knew the local situation well and had a proven record of loyalty to the Qing at the same time. Emin Khwaja was a perfect candidate for the job. Thus, the Qing court appointed him as the “Grand Minister Superintendent,” a high-ranking superintendent of the Qing administration in Muslim Xinjiang, and stationed him in Yarkand, one of the former strongholds of the *khwaja* resistance.

Emin Khwaja’s main duty in Yarkand was to counter the threat posed by the émigré Kashgar *khwajas*. Khwaja Burhān al-Dīn, the older of the two Kashgar *khwaja* brothers, reportedly had three sons. After their father died in 1759, these sons of Khwaja Burhān al-Dīn had moved about in the neighboring Central Asian states, and comprised the biggest source of threat to the Qing empire in the region. Collecting information on their activities and operating a search mission that aimed to bring the émigré *khwajas* under Qing custody constituted the most important part of Emin Khwaja’s thirteen-year career in the Qing administration (QDWFMGHBWGBZ 110). The Qing source vividly portrays one of those operations for us, described below.

On a summer day in 1761, Emin Khwaja received a piece of disturbing news about the recently expelled Kashgar *khwajas*. A certain Yarkand Muslim, named Khwaja Tai-li-bu, confided to Emin Khwaja: “[The expelled Khwaja] Burhān al-Dīn has three sons: Khwaja A-shi-mu, A-bu-du-ha-li-ke, and Khwaja Ba-ha-dun. They currently reside in the neighboring Muslim state of Badakhshan. The people, who are raising them, are poor and hard-pressed and they are afraid to be hurt [by the Qing]” (Fuheng 3:11; GZSL 637, QL26/5/dingmao, Shuhede’s memorial). The Qianlong court took this news seriously. The Qing immediately began a search for the *khwaja*’s remaining sons and their followers. The search was resolved when the ruler of Badakhshan, Sultan Shah, handed over the *khwaja* remnants (both family and rebel) to the Qing commanders in Yarkand in 1763.

The revelation in the summer of 1761 was not the first time that news about Khwaja Burhān al-Dīn’s remaining sons surfaced. Three months previously, Haiming, another Qing general stationed in Yarkand, reported to Beijing that he found Burhān al-Dīn’s son Sarimsāq, his wet nurse, and his guardian. The Manchu general transferred them to Beijing immediately (Fuheng 3:10, QL26/2/gengxu, Edict). However, Tai-li-bu Khwaja’s confession to Emin Khwaja in 1761 immediately threw Haiming’s previous report about the capture of Sarimsāq into doubt. Tai-li-bu indicated that Burhān al-Dīn’s son Sarimsāq, whom Haiming claimed to have captured and sent to Beijing three months ago, was still at large with his brothers. The Qianlong emperor instantly gave credulity to Tai-li-bu Khwaja’s report. Also, the confession contained another piece of disturbing news. A-li-ya-si, the guardian of Sarimsāq, had

secretly stolen Burhān al-Dīn's corpse from the grave in Badakhshan and fled with it to a place named Yi-mu-la-gun-tu-si.

The emperor instructed the Qing generals in Muslim Xinjiang to handle this situation cautiously. The emperor reasoned that another round of searching for Sarimsāq by the Qing would rather stir unnecessary "fear and suspicion" among local Muslims. He gave an order to just conduct a patrol around Burhān al-Dīn's "ancestral tombs" in Kashgar. A-li-ya-si might try to return to the ancestral tombs with Burhān al-Dīn's sons to bury the stolen corpse secretly (Fuheng 3:12, QL26/6/wuyin, Edict). The Qianlong emperor worried about this possibility. Such secret burial might well incite the defeated followers of the *khwajas* to again rally against the Qing empire in the region, which was still young and unstable.

Emin Khwaja discussed this information with Shuhede and other Manchu commanders. They concluded that if the Qing requested Burhān al-Dīn's sons from Sultan Shah, then the ruler of Badakhshan would utilize Burhān al-Dīn's sons as leverage against the Qing. Thus, Emin Khwaja secretly instructed Tai-li-bu Khwaja to conduct an investigation about the whereabouts of Burhān al-Dīn's sons. Emin Khwaja also instructed his trusted servant named "Sufi" to go to Badakhshan with several Muslim "Bo-de-er-ge," from Yarkand, using the excuse of trade. Emin Khwaja told "Sufi" to find and urge the Muslims who were raising Khwaja Burhān al-Dīn's three sons to surrender with [the three sons]. And, in doing so, Emin Khwaja was instructed to handle the search operation on his own. In this way, the Qing government could avoid troubles with the Badakhshan ruler, Sultan Shah, if something went wrong in the search operation.

The deep involvement of the Central Asian merchant communities in this operation is interesting. The search mission sent by Emin Khwaja comprised the "Bo-de-er-ge" Muslims from Yarkand. "Bo-de-er-ge" merchants were a powerful group or guild of caravan merchants. They dominated the trade between the Muslim oases of the Tarim Basin and other Central Asian states (Yonggui, "Maoyi huiren xinggui jiaoliang" [Comparison of the business regulations of each guild of Muslim merchants]). They were not local merchants of Kashgar and Yarkand. These merchants came from major commercial centers of Central Asia such as Bukhara, Andijan, and sometimes as far away as "Hindustan." However, in spite of their diverse local origins, the local Muslims of Xinjiang just referred to them as "Andijanese," in the same way the people of other parts of Central Asia referred to the merchants who came from the Tarim Basin oases collectively as "Kashgarian" (Qishiye 1966). According to the Qing source, by 1764, five years after the Qing conquest of the Muslim Xinjiang, 220 of these foreign caravan merchants resided in Yarkand. During a similar period, 170 households and 585 people of these merchants resided in the main city of Kashgar (GZSL 712, QL29/6/yiyou; *ibid.* 716, QL29/8/bingxu; Yonggui, "Ka-shi-ga-er" [Kashgar]).

During the Qing campaign against the Kashgar *khwajas*, these Central Asian merchants had been one of the major contingents of the *khwaja* brothers' resistance to Qing occupations (GZSL 598, QL24/10/dinghai, Edict; *ibid.* 594, QL24/8/jimao, Edict). Their loyalty to the Kashgar *khwajas* was natural. Many of the merchants were Sufi initiates of the Naqshbandi order, where the Kashgar *khwajas* belonged. Bukhara, where many of the Central Asian merchants originally came from, was also the place of origin as well as a firm stronghold of the Naqshbandi order. In the aftermath of the Qing conquest of Xinjiang, they soon became the channel of communication between the émigré *khwajas* and the local Muslims in Kashgar. Their mobility across the frontier as merchants made them perfect candidates to become messengers for the émigré *khwajas* to the local Muslims in Qing Central Asia (Fletcher 1978a, 87).

Their strong previous ties with Kashgar *khwajas* make their involvement in Emin Khwaja's search operation notable. If the Central Asian merchants' original attraction to Kashgar *khwajas* was the advantage of the trade associated with the Kashgar *khwajas*, the reason why Emin Khwaja could sway some of the merchants to his side also had to do with commercial advantage. The Central Asian merchant community had good reason to switch their allegiance to the new Qing empire. First of all, the existence of the Qing troops and officials in Muslim Xinjiang, which numbered 5,000 strong right after the war, brought a new demand to their business. The major commodities the caravan merchants carried across the border were cattle, animal skins, tobacco, and sugar; these were major items consumed by the Qing troops. In addition, the new Qing administration also lowered the rate of customs duties (*baj*) on goods carried by the foreign Muslim merchants from earlier levels. The Zunghar Mongols kept the rate of the customs duties at one-twentieth of the commodities carried. The Qing lowered it to one-thirtieth. Moreover, if the caravan merchants came to Muslim Xinjiang as part of the emissaries of their rulers, their trade even received a tax exemption (GZSL 615, QL25/6/renyin, Haiming's memorial; Fuheng 3:17, QL25/10/dingwei, Haiming's memorial).

However, the most important benefit of the Qing rule in Muslim Xinjiang to the caravan merchants lay elsewhere. That was the provision of security, "protection" so to speak, to the trade route of the region so crucial in the flourishing of long-distance caravan trade. The Qing local administration was active in protecting the safety of caravan traders, who traveled across the Qing border to conduct trade in the Xinjiang oases. In 1761, a group of Kirghiz nomads robbed the goods of the caravan of Andijanese merchants traveling across the Qing border in Pamir. The subsequent investigation found that these Kirghiz nomads belonged to a chieftain named A-wa-le-bi. The Qing prodded A-wa-le-bi to return the goods to the Andijanese merchants. A-wa-le-bi's younger brother, Wu-mu-er-bi, who was responsible for robbing the merchants, was sent to Beijing (GZSL 627, QL25/12/dingyou, Edict; *ibid.* 628, QL26/1/guichuo, Edict).

Right after Wu-mu-er-bi's robbery, another robbery happened. Two Muslim merchants were robbed by a gang of thirty people on their way to the Chong-ga-ba-shi tribe of Kirghiz for trade. Soon, the head of the robbery, a Kirghiz chieftain named Ma-er-ka-bi, was captured. "The Muslims pleaded [with the Qing generals] to remove this bad 'rebel'." The Qing generals immediately executed him, and cut off the hands of a participant of the robbery according to "Muslim law" (*huifa*). The Qing returned all the stolen commodities to the merchants (GZSL 627, QL25/12/dingyou, Edict; *ibid.* 628, QL26/1/guichuo, Edict).

Before the coming of the Qing, the Kirghiz was the power that dominated the caravan route across the Pamir. For a long time, the Kirghiz nomads were the most formidable armed force along the trade route that led into Kashgar and Yarkand. The Kirghiz could easily rob the merchants. In order to avoid robbery, the merchants had to pay a heavy protection fee or road fee to the Kirghiz. Although the Zunghar Mongols had been the overlords of the oasis Muslims since the late seventeenth century, they did not station any troops in the Muslim oases. If the Kirghiz robbed the Muslim merchants, the Zunghar Mongols were too far away to protect the merchants, even if they wanted to. However, the establishment of the Qing rule in the region changed the situation significantly. To the Central Asian Muslim communities, the newly established Qing rule was a welcome development that provided safety on the trade route, which had eluded them until then.

In this situation, at the very least, the Muslim merchants did not want to disrupt the Qing rule. Some of them were even willing to work for the Qing. Eventually, it took another round of search missions to bring back the Kashgar *khwaja* remnants and the corpse. In early 1763, Emin Khwaja sent two other Muslim collaborators, Sali and A-bu-la-san, to Badakhshan as envoys. After confronting the Badakhshan ruler Sultan Shah face to face and urging him to present Burhān al-Dīn's sons and corpse, Sali finally came back with Burhān al-Dīn's three wives and three sons as well as Burhān al-Dīn's corpse, the last freshly exhumed from Faizābād about a month later (Fuheng 3:21, QL28/3/wuwu, Xinzhu's memorial).

The relationship revealed between the Qianlong court and Emin Khwaja in these episodes of searching for the Kashgar *khwaja* remnants shows interesting qualities of mutual dependence between the Qing ruler and Emin Khwaja. The Qing needed to depend on Emin Khwaja's local political influence and intelligence resources in securing security for its empire; on the other hand, while working for the Qing, Emin Khwaja could promote his local status vis-à-vis the local Muslims, especially the merchant community that benefited from the military presence of the Qing in Xinjiang and wanted to maintain better relations with the Qing.

What was the implication of this relationship of mutual dependence between the Qing and Emin Khwaja for Central Asian regional politics? How did the deep involvement of the Qing empire in Central Asian politics through Emin Khwaja

change the latter's status in the hierarchy of Central Asian regional politics? A 1763 episode involving Emin Khwaja, the Qing court, and Badakhshan provides a clue to these questions.

BECOMING A MUSLIM CLIENT OF THE QING EMPIRE

In early 1763, while Emin Khwaja was still busy searching for the *khwaja* remnants, Badakhshan attacked a neighboring country, called Bolor. The ruler of Bolor sent messengers to Yarkand and requested the Qing to intervene on his behalf (GZSL 677, QL27/12/guichou, Edict). This must have disturbed the Qianlong emperor greatly. If the Qianlong had permitted the Badakhshan ruler to have his way, the newly established Qing power in Central Asia would have begun to crack even before it had a chance to become consolidated. The Qianlong emperor decided to intervene on behalf of Bolor.

The emperor ordered the Qing administration in Yarkand to begin a negotiation to force the Badakhshan ruler, Sultan Shah, to give up the Bolor territory. In the process of the diplomatic negotiations, Emin Khwaja carried out all the practical communications between Yarkand and Badakhshan. Emin Khwaja dispatched a Muslim collaborator, Sali, to Badakhshan to confront the Badakhshan ruler about the incident. After Sali made two trips to Badakhshan, Sultan Shah finally succumbed to the Qing's pressure. In late 1763, Sultan Shah finally retrieved his forces from Chitral (Ji-te-la-er) (Fuheng 3:22, QL28/6/gengyin).

The pivotal role played by Emin Khwaja in this negotiation was evidenced by the Qianlong emperor's decision to postpone Emin Khwaja's regularly scheduled return to Turfan for "rest" until the resolution of the crisis. The emperor was afraid that the Hami Muslim chief Yusuf, who was supposed to come to Yarkand as Emin Khwaja's replacement, did not have as strong a local influence as Emin Khwaja. Emin Khwaja was able to return to Turfan only after the crisis was resolved (QDWFMGHBWGBZ 110; Fuheng 3:21, QL28/3/gengshen, Edict).

However, as soon as Emin Khwaja left Yarkand, Badakhshan Sultan Shah sent an envoy to Yarkand and requested that Chitral be given back to him (GZSL 713, QL29/6/xinchou, Edict). The Badakhshan ruler still insisted that Chitral had been originally the territory of his ancestors. According to him, but previously, the Qing superintendent in Yarkand had only listened to the Bolor ruler's one-sided story, and forcefully ordered him (Sultan Shah) to give up the territory.

Soon, the Qianlong emperor issued an edict of rebuttal to the Badakhshan ruler. In this edict, the emperor was well aware of the history of Chitral: that it had originally belonged to Bolor, later came under the occupation of Sultan Shah's uncle during the period of Zunghar rule, but later was regained by Bolor again. After chastising Sultan Shah for his attempt to deceive the Qing,

the emperor asked, “Turfan *junwang* [the second highest rank in the Qing imperial aristocracy] Emin Khwaja, the general who had worked [in Yarkand], would soon return [to Yarkand] when his turn comes. What would you use as an excuse then? You used to call Emin Khwaja father, but as he (Emin Khwaja) has returned to his pasture (Turfan), you are now accusing him of listening to the one-sided story [of Bolor]. You are truly inconsistent” (GZSL 713, QL29/6/xinchou, Edict).

It is notable that the Qianlong emperor was very knowledgeable about the history of a territorial dispute in such a remote spot of the west. Needless to say, it was Emin Khwaja who provided the information and thus gave the emperor a powerful tool for negotiating with the Central Asian ruler. However, what is more interesting is that the emperor was willing to utilize Emin Khwaja’s local political status in Central Asian politics in dealing with the Badakhshan ruler. The emperor mentioned to the Badakhshan ruler, “You (Sultan Shah) used to call Emin Khwaja father.” In common Inner Asian expressions of regional political relations, the language of familial relations—“father-son” relations and “older brother-younger brother” relations—was used to depict the relative strength of rulers who were considered independent equals. “Fathers” and “older brothers” possessed greater power. But the “sons” and “younger brothers” signified less powerful rulers but not subjects.⁶ Thus, when the Badakhshan ruler addressed Emin Khoja as “father,” he tacitly acknowledged Emin as a superior local ruler in his own right—not as a mere Qing official.⁷

Notably, the Qianlong emperor had no aversion to the Badakhshan ruler calling Emin “father.” Rather, the emperor was reprimanding the Badakhshan ruler about how he could accuse Emin Khwaja of being one-sided, after having formerly acknowledged Emin as “father.” Clearly, the Qianlong emperor was working within the logic of regional politics in Central Asia. The Manchu emperor acted primarily as if he were a patron trying to protect his client’s regional political status. In fact, when Sultan Shah’s letter initially arrived in Yarkand, the Qianlong emperor even ordered a copy of the Badakhshan ruler’s letter to be sent to Emin Khwaja, who was “resting” in Turfan at the time, to look at it.

However, while Emin Khwaja acted as if he was an independent local ruler in relation to his fellow Central Asian rulers, the regional politics of Central Asia was

⁶In fact, the Qianlong emperor also referred to the ruler of a Central Asian country, Koqand, as “my son,” when the emperor spoke to the tribute envoys from Koqand through the Turki interpreters in the Qing court. In addition, the Mongolian rulers also used familial language in addressing the Russian rulers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Fletcher 1968, 221–22; 366, fn. 112.

⁷Just from this document, it is not clear what exact word the Badakhshan ruler used in calling Emin Khwaja “father.” However, provided that the Badakhshan ruler had probably used a Turki word, he must have used the word “ota.”

never independent of the encompassing relations between the Qing empire and the region as a whole after the Qing conquest of Xinjiang. This reality was plainly revealed when the Badakhshan ruler sent two separate letters, one to the Qianlong emperor and the other to Emin Khwaja, after receiving the Qianlong emperor's letter of reprimand. In his letter to Emin Khwaja, the Badakhshan ruler requested Emin Khwaja to call him "son," although they had previously been calling each other "father." The Badakhshan ruler told Emin that he never had intended to accuse Emin of being one-sided. But his envoy misrepresented his intention in Yarkand. After reporting that he had already punished the responsible envoy, the Badakhshan ruler asked Emin to "report good words to [the] Great Emperor" for him (GZSL 725, QL29/12/guimao, E-er-jing-e's memorial).

The Badakhshan ruler's willingness, if only a gesture, to accept an inferior position in the local relations with Emin Khwaja is striking. However, this had nothing to do with Emin Khwaja's political strength on the local political scene. In fact, the terms of the relations between the two Central Asian rulers had nothing to do with the relative strength of their local political influence from the beginning. It was only because Emin Khwaja was the prime handler of the Qing empire's relations with Central Asian rulers that he had been able to have an equal footing with the ruler of Badakhshan, a significant regional power in the first place. And, when the Badakhshan ruler needed Emin Khwaja's help with relations with the Qianlong emperor, Sultan Shah reformulated his relation with Emin Khwaja in regional politics accordingly. He wanted Emin Khwaja to call him "son."

This finding carries a broader implication in understanding the nature of the political relationship between the Qing and Emin Khwaja. The issue is whether it would be more appropriate to describe the relationship between the Qing ruler and Emin Khwaja in terms of patronage: in other words, Emin Khwaja was a client ruler of the Qing patron overlord, the Qianlong emperor, rather than a mere official in the Qing administration, so to speak. The Qing ruler was dependent upon Emin Khwaja's own local political influence for the maintenance of the imperial presence in Central Asia. In other words, the strength of Emin Khwaja's influence as a local ruler was ironically the key to the maintenance of the Qing empire in this remote frontier. For this reason, the Qing ruler was reluctant to diminish Emin Khwaja's local prestige and political status. Weakening Emin's local political status would diminish the effectiveness of Emin Khwaja for the defense of the Qing empire in Central Asia.

In the meantime, the patronage and protective relations he had with the Qianlong emperor strengthened rather than weakened Emin Khwaja's status and prestige as a local Muslim ruler in Central Asian regional politics. For it was primarily Emin Khwaja's special relationship with the Qing ruler, the major outsider military presence in Xinjiang, that put him on the map of Central Asian politics in the first place. Emin Khwaja's dependence upon the Qing

power was, in other words, the source of his independence and prominence in the regional politics of Central Asia.

However, in the end, Emin Khwaja's eminent status as a power broker was precarious at best. Emin Khwaja's prominent career as the Qing superintendent abruptly ended in 1772, five years prior to his death. Behind the sudden dismissal of Emin Khwaja from his seat of power was the Qing's suspicion that Emin Khwaja's power grew intolerably. In 1771, a minister superintendent in Xinjiang, Fusan, reported that Emin Khwaja was called "*wang-khan*" (*wang*: Chinese title of king; *khan*: a title given to Chinggisid rulers of the confederations of Turco-Mongolian tribes in Inner Asia) in Kashgar (MLZZ, Fusan's memorial, QL36/12/24).

Emin's use of the title "khan" alarmed the Qianlong emperor. Emin was supposed to have no claim to being "khan." In the Central Asian context, the "khan" title was reserved only for Chinggis Khan's descendants, the Chaghatais and Moghuls. Emin Khwaja utilized his prominent local position, which he acquired from his close ties with the Qing, to position himself as an independent ruler equal to the stature of the Chaghatai and Moghul khans of the preceding generations. Fusan's revelation was the direct reason for Emin's dismissal. Emin Khwaja was removed from Kashgar within a month of the revelation. Emin Khwaja died in 1777, five years after he was removed from the post of the Qing superintendent of Muslim Xinjiang.

CONCLUSION

In 1778, the newly appointed Turfan *junwang*, Sulaiman, built a monument, Madrasa-i Maymūna, and a minaret (known to Chinese as *Sugongta*) to commemorate the memory of his father, Emin Khwaja. In recognition of Emin Khwaja's contribution to the establishment of the Qing empire in Xinjiang, the Qianlong court donated 7,000 *liangs* of silver to this project. The Chinese inscription that was attached reads: "Emin Khwaja enjoyed 83 years of life. [He] received fortune and protection (*fubi*) from Heaven above. [Thus] he did not perish nor [suffer from] disaster, [but he] protected and assisted (*baoyou*) people. Because of this, [in order to] pay back the grace of Heaven, [Sulaiman] reverently built a tower (minaret)" (Saguchi 1986; Sun 1996).

"Protection" was the key concept in this summary discussion of Emin Khwaja's life. Emin received the protection of Heaven. Because of this protection, he was able to avoid disaster and calamity; in turn, Emin was able to protect his people. The Turkic inscription, which does not have direct reference to Emin Khwaja's relations with the Qing, also does not feature the notion of protection. However, it still contains a similar concept, "aid" of God—"God is the Lord whose aid is begged." Thus, one can infer that this Turkic inscription

indirectly means that it was due to God's aid that Emin Khwaja was able to rule (Brophy 2008; Tenishev 1969).

What is notable about the inscription, the Chinese one in particular, is the ambiguity concerning the entity from which Emin received the protection. Unlike the Turkic inscription, the exact interpretation of the meaning of "Heaven," from which Emin Khwaja received protection, is ambiguous at best. It could be a reference to the Qing emperor. It could also be a reference to God or Allah. In most likelihood, Sulaiman deliberately used the word ambiguously. After all, Sulaiman had double audiences. On the one hand, the Qing emperor would read it. The Turfanese people, at least some of them, could also read it.

However, this ambiguity surrounding the meaning of Heaven almost unwittingly raises an interesting question for the historians interested in Emin Khwaja's career. Were there any meaningful connections between the two connotations of the protection from Heaven—the protection from Heaven the God and the protection from Heaven the Qing emperor? Was the protection given by the non-believer Manchu emperor of the Qing a hidden or disguised protection of the Muslim community of Xinjiang provided by God? In most likelihood, Sulaiman did not see any connections himself, at least consciously. However, the survey of Emin Khwaja's career with the Qing clearly shows that the truth about the Muslim collaborations in the mid-eighteenth century lies in the unarticulated connections between the protection from Heaven the God and the protection from Heaven the Qing emperor.

For Emin Khwaja and the Turfan Muslim community, the alliance with the Qing was not a betrayal of Islam from political expediency. In entering an alliance with the Qing, Emin Khwaja and the Turfanese Muslims sought from the non-Muslim "Chinese" power the protection and delivery from the threat posed by the formidable Zunghar nomads, who had wreaked havoc on the Muslim community for a long time. Another crucial motivation for Emin's alliance with the Qing was the promotion of commercial relations with China, so crucial in benefiting the Muslim community of Turfan, located at the Chinese end of the Eurasian overland trade route.

All in all, according to this Muslim perspective, the Qing empire in Central Asia was less a unilateral Manchu conquest than a multilayered domination in which the local Muslim community interacted significantly. As a local client ruler of the Qing empire, Emin Khwaja built for the Qing empire a local coalition of Muslim commercial interests, and it contributed critically to the consolidation of the empire against the continued threats from the émigré Kashgar *khwajas*. And, in doing so, Emin Khwaja also promoted his own status within the political hierarchy among the regional powers of Muslim Central Asia. Needless to say, the reason why the Muslim leader from a small oasis town could climb up the ladder of the political hierarchy in regional politics was because he had the "protection" and patronage of the powerful Qing ruler. The new Qing empire in

Central Asia was not just an alien rule of the Manchu; it was a domination of a local Muslim ruler, who expanded its reach under the patronage of a non-Muslim power, as well.

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