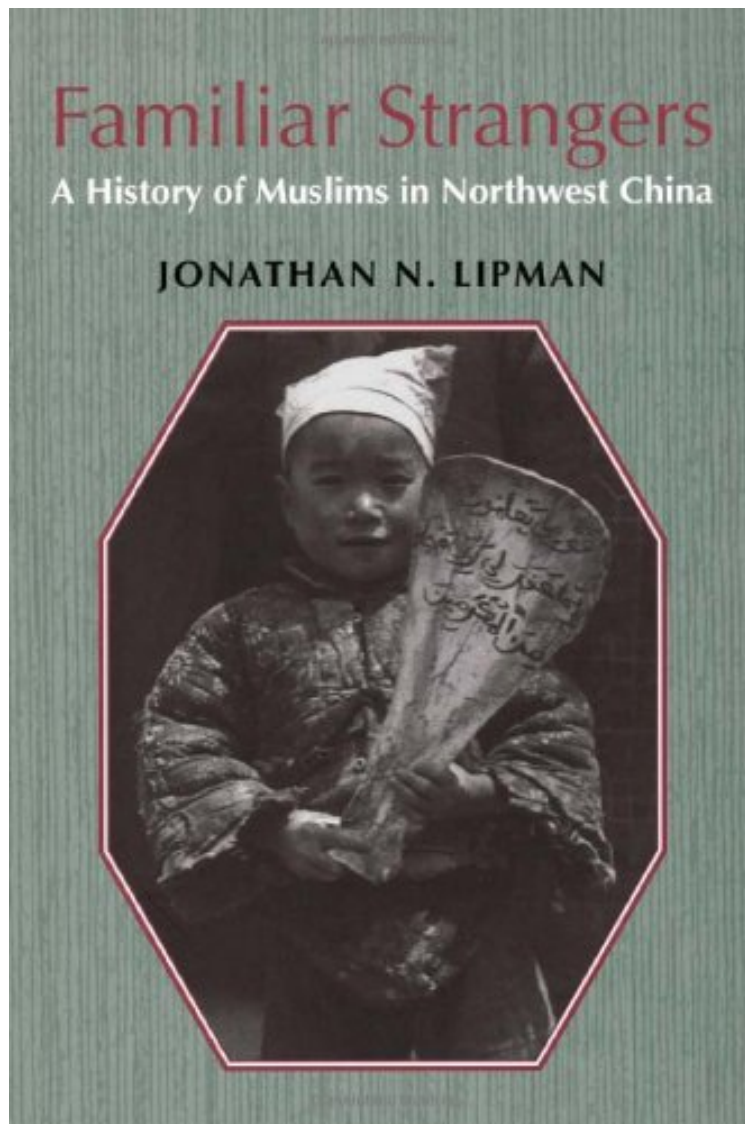


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Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China)

Jonathan N. Lipman

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Jonathan N. Lipman : Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China):

32 of 33 people found the following review helpful. The periphery of two worldsBy Stephen TaylorMost Americans

don't know squat about Islam itself, let alone Islam in China. Yet today there are about 15 million Muslims in China, centered mostly in the northwest (Xinjiang province), along the margins of the old Silk Road. And they aren't just an insignificant minority: in the Middle Ages, for instance, Chinese Muslims played a central role in bridging the gulf between China, the Middle East, and Europe, bringing goods and knowledge both ways. (...)Jonathan Lipman's "Familiar Strangers" explores some aspects of Islam in northwestern China from the first arrival of Muslims there in the 8th century up through the 20th. Like most similar histories, it revolves around two major dilemmas that have constantly faced Chinese Muslims (as opposed to non-Chinese Muslims living in China): first, is Islam compatible with Chinese culture? and second, can Chinese Muslims themselves properly be considered Chinese? China's "host" culture has always tended to absorb alien peoples and faiths -- whether they're Mongols and Turks (the so-called "barbarians"), Buddhists from India, or whoever. There were always strangers lurking at the gates of China, drooling with envy or burning with ambition, but almost every one of them who managed to break through eventually assimilated and became, in effect, Chinese: in fact, many sought to do so in the first place. But Muslims were an exception. Their Islamic faith forbade them to have the same kind of relationship with traditional Chinese culture as other groups: for instance, ancestor worship and reverencing the emperor were antipathetic to Islam. Consequently, Chinese Muslims were, while not complete strangers, "familiar strangers", ethnically Chinese, foreign by affiliation. Lipman's history isn't a comprehensive account of Muslim culture on the northwestern Chinese frontier. Instead, it examines how Chinese Muslims reacted to the complexity of belonging to two cultures at once. Lipman explores, for instance, Muslim reaction to acculturation policies under the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and Muslims' role as "strangers in bad times" during the Ming-Qing cataclysm in the 1640s. Chapter 3, "Connections: Muslims in the Early Qing, 1644-1781", analyses the introduction of Naqshabandiya Sufism into China in the early 17th century and the struggle between two rival forms of it -- the orthodox Khafiya and the radical Jahriya -- in the 18th century, the latter a branch of revivalist Wahhabism, the earliest modern version of so-called Islamic "fundamentalism". Chapter 4, "Strategies of Resistance," explores the period between 1784 and 1895, looking at three large-scale Muslim rebellions against the Qing state. Chapter 5 examines Muslim "Strategies of Integration" during the Nationalist period and under the People's Republic. Finally, Lipman sums his findings in chapter 6. The book is a scholarly read and not always easy going. If you don't have much previous knowledge of Chinese history, start elsewhere. But if you've got the background, it's a great read. 13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. I learned Myself through the Book! By craig Ding The first time I got the book from a Chinese Muslim scholar, I began to search what i am Intersted and i got it. I t is about a Islamic sect Xidaodang in which I am one member. Mr. Lipman has been in Xidaotang once and did some research on the group. His book shows his description and study are not only successful, but objective as well. He has his own unique view on Chinese Muslim...

The Chinese-speaking Muslims have for centuries been an inseparable but anomalous part of Chinese society-- Sinophone yet incomprehensible, local yet outsiders, normal but different. Long regarded by the Chinese government as prone to violence, they have challenged fundamental Chinese conceptions of Self and Other and denied the totally transforming power of Chinese civilization by tenaciously maintaining connections with Central and West Asia as well as some cultural differences from their non-Muslim neighbors. Familiar Strangers narrates a history of the Muslims of northwest China, at the intersection of the frontiers of the Mongolian-Manchu, Tibetan, Turkic, and Chinese cultural regions. Based on primary and secondary sources in a variety of languages, Familiar Strangers examines the nature of ethnicity and periphery, the role of religion and ethnicity in personal and collective decisions in violent times, and the complexity of belonging to two cultures at once. Concerning itself with a frontier very distant from the core areas of Chinese culture and very strange to most Chinese, it explores the influence of language, religion, and place on Sino-Muslim identity.

"Jonathan N. Lipman appeals for such a new approach with a warning against the conceptual pitfalls of 'hegemonic narrative' and the 'errors of universalism and overgeneralization that plague the dominant paradigms,' especially in the study of Chinese history." James D. Frankel, *Religious Studies*, December 2011 "This book lays the foundation for future studies of Chinese Muslims . . . and demonstrates the far-reaching impact Chinese Muslims have had upon Chinese society and history." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* "No published study comes close to providing this kind of comprehensive and informed study of the history of Islam and Muslims in China." John Voll, author of *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* "By far the most developed historical treatment of Muslims in China, lucidly written and useful for readers from undergraduate to specialist." Pamela Kyle Crossley, author of *Orphan Warriors and The Manchus*