

# A Street's Collective Memory

## — case studying on Chinese Muslim community

### Abstract:

This paper presents the history of the Muslim street in Xi'an, China, and the story of Hui nation, as one of the Chinese Muslim nations. Hui nation has settled down in the street for hundreds of year since their forerunners had immigrated here from Central Asia area in the Tang Dynasty. By tracing the history from the Tang Dynasty to the present day briefly, the article particularly emphasized on the architectural heritages in different periods. These heritage buildings and street space together shape the performances of identity of the Muslim community. The place is made and enriched over generations since beginning.

The paper especially focuses on religious community, also called as 'jiaofang', impacted by Islamic culture on its political and economic system. As religious system, each 'jiaofang' has surrounded one mosque as their center, ranging from a dozen to several hundred households. Today, as special places of collective memory, religious buildings, as well as the rituals, practices, festivals taking place there, make great contributions to the Hui's ethnic identity.

Surrounded by the majority Han communities, the Muslim community has great significance for the Hui minority to keep their own identity. It avoided the separation of the community for several times during the historical period.

Further more, the role these architectural heritages play in the modern city, the relationship between these buildings, and the city's public spaces will be also discussed.

**Key words:** Chinese Muslim community; muslim street; ethnic identity; immigration history