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Sent 3/18/16 by Randi Hacker, CEAS Outreach Director

## CHINA – Women-only Mosque (Gr. 6-12)

In light of recent Muslim controversies both here and abroad, I thought these reports about women-only mosques in China would be enlightening and eye-opening. Except for the Women's Mosque of America in Los Angeles, CA, women-only mosques seem to be unique to China. Though the Communists pretty much eradicated religion when they took over in 1949, China has long been the home to diverse religions and religious groups. For example, over a 1000 years ago, Jews fleeing persecution in Persia, traveled the Silk Road to Kaifeng where they settled and stayed. So welcomed were they, that the emperor gave them 7 names which even now, after years of total assimilation, indicate Jewish ancestry. Islam is the most recent of world religions to come to China and is said to have arrived during the Tang Dynasty as a result of trade along the Silk Road and sea routes. It is now the third largest religion in the country after Buddhism and Christianity with 20 to 30 million practicing Muslims. This article talks about the creation and continuing relevance of women-only mosques in Kaifeng. Here, women do everything that men do in traditional mosques: They act as imams, they teach the Koran, they are free to worship. In a religion that is traditionally patriarchal and male-centric, the existence of these places of worship is interesting and may even seem surprising. You might incorporate this into a unit on World Religions and compare and contrast the role and place of women in religion throughout history.

[http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35629565?ocid=global\\_bbccom\\_email\\_23022016\\_magazine](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35629565?ocid=global_bbccom_email_23022016_magazine)

<http://www.npr.org/2010/07/21/128628514/female-imams-blaze-trail-amid-chinas-muslims>

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