MUSLIMS IN CHINA PRIOR TO THE QING DYNASTY (1644-1911 AD), A HISTORICAL SURVEY

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摘　要

中國之伊斯蘭及穆斯林歷史一直被中外伊斯蘭學者所忽略，至今尚未有一較完整且具科學性的現代著作問世。（西方之研究自十九世紀末、二十世紀初以來就產生研究斷層。而中國大陸回族學者之著作與台灣坊間之有關書籍亦缺乏科學批判研究精神，且大多爲人云亦云之襲作。）本文之目的在於提供中國穆斯林歷史起自唐代下至明末的背景探討，並藉以拋磚引玉，期能引起更深入的研究。由於滿清時代之穆斯林情況較爲複雜，需要較長篇幅專題探就故不在本文內研討。伊斯蘭之傳入中國的時間與途徑中外至今尚無定論，然在唐代已有穆斯林或以經商或以外交目的進入中國。此些人以蕃客自居而享有唐朝廷之禮遇，且自組成一非漢人社會。宋朝期間穆斯林陸續移入中國尤以南宋爲甚，且以商賈居多。多數穆斯林商人遂逐漸定居中國繁衍。蒙古西征中亞伊斯蘭國家後，吸收不少穆斯林爲其所用，尤以軍事、經濟方面爲最。更大量穆斯林繼而隨著蒙古入主中國而移入中原，進而散布至中國各角落。由於蒙古帝國之建立有賴穆斯林之助，故穆斯林在蒙古元朝享有高於漢人而僅次於蒙古人之某些特權。然而明朝創立之後，朱元璋鼎立推行漢化政策，穆斯林亦受影響而逐漸融入漢文化社會，而其信仰之伊斯蘭宗教亦因而蒙上中國色彩，進而演變發展成一獨特之中國伊斯蘭。簡言之，穆斯林在中國歷史演變過程可由「蕃客在中國」至「中國之穆斯林」的過程中探討。

Abstract

This article aims to provid a historical survey of Muslims in China prior to the Manchu-Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The history of Chinese Muslims has not been thoroughly studied by modern scholars. This research will shed some light on this important but neglected field. How did Islam enter China has been an unsolved issue in Islamo-sinology. This is caused by the confusing Chinese sources.

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However, it is certain that Muslims first migrated to China in the Tang period. During that period, Muslims in China were mainly traders or some envoys who came from Arabia or Central Asia via sea rute or partially by the land silk road. They were treated with honour by the Tang Court. Through the Song period, more Muslims flocked into China from South Arabia and Southeast Asia for the purpose of trade. Many of them became settled in China and assimilated into Chinese society. However, they were still regarded as foreigners by the Han Chinese. The Mongol conquests of Central Asia brought a great number of Muslims into China proper. These Muslims were with various skills. With their assistance, the Mongol-Yuan dynasty in China was established. Thus Muslims secured more privileges than other Chinese peoples, and Muslims played a significant role in the Yuan politics and economics. Under the Ming rule, Muslims' social status declined due to central government's policy on minorities. The founder of Ming dynasty stipulated strict law which was to sinicise non-Han people, to eliminate foreign elements in Chinese society. As a result, Muslims were forced to adopt Chinese traditions and assimilate further into Chinese society, and their religion became syncretised with Chinese elements.

MUSLIMS IN CHINA PRIOR TO THE QING DYNASTY (1644 AD), A HISTORICAL SURVEY

There is no doubt that Islam was introduced to the "Middle Kingdom" by means of existing relations between China and Central Asia via the so-called Silk Road. It is also likely that Islam entered China via the sea route through Sino-Arab sea trade. Chinese Islam did not develop into its concrete shape until after the Mongol conquest of China in 13th century with the assistance of Central Asian Muslims. Before this Muslims in China were regarded as foreigners. The mass immigration of Central Asian Muslims into China enabled Islam to take root in China. Through the Mongol-Yuan and Ming periods Muslims gradually assimilated to Chinese culture and integrated into Chinese society, and their Islam became syncretized.

During the Manchu-Qing period Muslims were treated as a minority and their ethno-religious identity was complicated by the central government's policy on minority nationalities. This caused Muslim resentment which led to social disorder, political turmoil, and eventually open revolt against the Qing authority. In this study we shall deal with Muslims in China only from the Tang to the Ming dynasties, demonstrating how they changed their status from foreign to Chinese Muslims.

Sino-Arab intercourse prior to the Tang Dynasty (--618 AD)

There is a *hadith* which was put into the Prophet Muhammed's mouth, saying

"Seek for knowledge, even unto China".[1] This *hadith*, regardless of its authenticity, proves that Sino-Arab relations had existed even before Islam came to the Middle Kingdom (Zhongguo). Long before Islam was established, commercial traffic between China and Arabia had begun mostly via the so-called silk route and, to a lesser extent, by sea.

The earliest Chinese historical accounts of Western Asia appear in the Han official history. Western Asians were referred to as the people of "Tiaozhi". According to the *Shiji*, The Historical Records, compiled by Sima Qian, the Emperor Wudi (138-125 BC) sent Zhang Qian to Xiyu (the western countries) in Central Asia to ally those principalities against the Hun invasions. The furthest west that Zhang Qian reached was Anxi (Parthia) and the Tiaozhi border.[2]

The country of Tiaozhi has been a focus of debate in the field of East-West relations. Scholars hold differing opinions on the etymology of Tiaozhi and the location of this country.[3] The account of Tiaozhi in the *Shiji* reads as follows:

> . . . to the west of Anxi lies Tiaozhi and to the north of Ancai. Tiaozhi is situated several thousand li to the west of Anxi and borders on the Western Sea. It is hot and damp and they cultivate the fields and grow rice. There are great birds whose eggs are as big as pots. The population is very numerous and everywhere there are minor lords and chiefs. Anxi has, however, subjugated it, regarding it as a vassal state . . . [4]

The *Hanshu*, Han History, by Ban Gu gives a similar account of Tiaozhi as that in the *Shiji*.[5] However, the *Hou Hanshu*, the Later Han History, by Fan Ye gives more detailed information:

> In 97 AD, the protector general Ban Chao sent Gan Ying as an envoy to Dachin [Rome]. He arrived in Tiaozhi bordering on the Great

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[1] This hadith is considered weak for its lack of transmitters. See Al-Muttqi al-Hindi, *Kunz al-'Ummal*, vol.10, Allepo: Maktabat al-Turath al-'Arabiya, 1971, p.138; al-Manawi *Mukhtasar Sharkh al-Jami' al-Saghir*, Cairo: Dar al-Hayya', 1954, p.73.

[2] *Shiji*, s.v. "Dayuan Zhuan", Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962, bk 123, pp.3162-64.

[3] For various views see D. Leslie & K. Gardiner, "Chinese knowledge of Western Asia during the Han", *T'ong Pao*, 68(1982), pp.254-308.

[4] English translation see D. Leslie, *Islam in traditional China*, Canberra: College of Advanced Education, 1986, pp.7-8.

[5] *Han Shu*, s.v. "Xiyu Zhuan", Beijing: Zhonghua, bk 96a, pp.3889-90.

> Sea. When about to take his passage across the seas, the sailors of the western frontier of Anxi told Gan Ying: 'The sea is vast. With favourable winds it is still only possible for travellers to cross in three months. But if one meets with slow winds, it may even taken two years . . .' On hearing this, Gan Ying gave up.[6]

From the above accounts, Tiaozhi seems to correspond to the Mesopotamia area. A modern Chinese scholar, Zhang Xinglang, accepting Yule's account, regards Tiaozhi as the same as the so-called Dashi in Tang records, which is a transliteration of the Persian word *Tazik* [7], referring to the Arab tribe *Tayy*. This view is supported by Yule's assertion.[8] However, Henri Cordier disagrees. He suggests that Tiaozhi corresponded to the ancient Micaenae, the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates.[9] Zhang Xinglang's view, which he bases on a modern transliteration of the present-day Mandarin sound "Tiaozhi", that it corresponds to Dashi, is hardly convincing. The name "Tiaozhi" would in any case have been pronounced differently in ancient Han Chinese dialect. Some Japanese scholars argue that it should have been pronounced something like *Taô Kê* and can thus be regarded as a corruption of the name of the so-called *Tawwaj* area referred to by Arab geographers such as Ya'qub and al-Baladhuri and corresponding to Khuzistan in Persia.[10]

Leslie, who has studied the history of Western Asia in that period, suggests that Tiaozhi was the Seleucide Empire,[11] although this seems to overlook the contemporary political history of Tiaozhi. However, Chinese accounts state that this country was ruled by minor lords and chiefs, thus they might not be the Hellenic States, but rather traditional middle-eastern tribal states. It is known that the ancient Chinese had obtained knowledge of northern Arabia via the land communication, since between the Han and Tang periods, China had frequent

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[6] Hou Hanshu, s.v. "Tiaozhi", Beijing: Zhonghua, 1971, bk 88, p.2918. English translation, see Leslie, ibid.

[7] Zhang Xinglang, *Zhongxi Jiaotong Shi*, vol. 3, Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1961, p.2.

[8] Sir Henry Yule, *Cathay and the way thither*, vol. I. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1915, p.88.

[9] Ibid. pp.42-43 note 2.

[10] Fujita Toyobachi, "Tiaozhikao", *Xibei Gudi Yanjiu*, trans. Yang Lian, Taipei: Commercial Press, 1974, pp.125-133. Also, see *An Historical Atlas of Islam*, edited by William Brice, Leiden, Brill, 1981, maps 14 and 16.

[11] Leslie & Gardiner, ibid., pp.292-93.

contact with West Turkestan.[12] In fact, both Chinese and Arabic sources tell us far more about the land route between China and West Asia than about the sea routes.

According to Yule, who quotes Hamza al-Isfahani and Mas'udi, the earliest sea trade between China and Mesopotamia can be traced back to the first half of the fifth centruy AD. At that time Chinese ships could frequently be seen moored in front of the houses of Hira.[13] Hirth and Rockhill also believe that from the end of the fourth century to the beginning of the seventh century there was sea communication between the China Sea and the Persian Gulf.[14] Wang Guangwu, on the other hand, rejects their assertion. Having analysed Chinese historical accounts, he disagrees that trade between these two waters existed prior to the 7th century AD.[15]

However, the differing conclusions of Eastern and Western scholars regarding Tiaozhi are not our concern here. Due to the lack of pre-Islamic sources in Arabic or other languages, we have little access to information on the knowledge of China possessed by Arabs or Western Asians. The official records of Sino-Arab relations first appear in Tang sources after the establishment of Islam in Arabia. However this does not imply that Islam had spread to China by that time. We shall discuss this in more detail later.

Sino-Arab contact during the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD)

More concrete information on Sino-Arab contact and Islam in the Tang is available. Both Chinese and Arabic sources tell us that Arabs came to China during the Tang period by land and sea but little about the communities they established there. According to the Tang annals the official records of relations between China and Western Asia can be traced back to the mid 7th century. However before

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[12] See W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol invasion*, ed C. E. Bosworth, 4th ed., London: Luzoc & Co, 1968, chapter 1; Yule, ibid., pp.57-64; Luc Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads: A History of Central Asia, 500-1500 AD*, Leicester: University Press, 1979, chapters 4, 5. For Chinese details see Zhang Xinglang, ibid., vol. V, pp.60-100.

[13] Yule, ibid., pp.83-84.

[14] F. Hirth & W. Rockhill, *Chao Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the 12th and 13th Centuries entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Science, 1911, pp.7-8.

[15] Wang Guanwu, "The Nanhai Trade", *Journal of Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31:2(1958), pp.124-7.

proceeding to this, let us first discuss the origin of the term Dashi, given to the Arabs by the Tang.

According to Western scholars, the term "Dashi" originates from the Persian word *Tajik*. Barthold, for instance, states that Tajik, later corrupted to *Tazi*, was the name the Persians gave to Arab tribes.[16] The Arab tribe located nearest to the Persians was known as the Tayy and it was this name that the Persians gradually applied to all the desert Arabs from central Arabia.

This *Tayy* tribe was mentioned as early as the 3rd century by the Edessne along with the Saracens as representatives of all the Bedouins.[17] Apparently the Chinese term Dashi derived from the Persian word *Tazi*. Thus, Arab Muslims were referred to by the Tang Chinese as Dashi, and their country Dashiguo. The Chinese may have learned this name from the Central Asians, as the word *Tajik* passed to the Turks via Persians who had converted to Islam, and later applied it to all people who came from the land of Islam.[18] The French Islamo-sinologist, Deverier agrees with Halevy that *Tajik* was a corruption of the Arab name Tari' which was used by the Nestorians in 510 AD to refer to the Arabs, especially Christian Arabs.[19]

Knowledge of Arabs recorded by the Tang must have been acquired via the land route, since the rapid development of Arab navigation occurred only after the rise of Islam during the Umayyad period (661-750 AD).[20] According to the Tang sources, pre — Islamic Arabs had always been vassals of the Sassanid or sometimes Byzantine Empires.[21] In fact, northern Arabia was a Sassanid colony before the establishment of Islam. Definitive references to Arabia cannot be expected in Chinese sources predating the rise of the Caliphate since Arabia was then considered to be part of the Persian empire. However, Chinese records do report as early as

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[16] E.I., 1st edition, s.v. "Tadjik". Cf. G Ferrand, "L'Element persan dans les texts nautiques arabes", *J. Asiatique*, 1924, pp.193-257.

[17] 'Umar, R. Kakhkhal, *Mu'jam aba'il al-'rab*, vol. 1, Damascus: al-Maktabat al-Hashimiyya, 1949, pp.688-89.

[18] Barthold, ibid.

[19] G. Devérier, "Origin de l'Islamisme en chine, deux legendes musulmans chinoises", *Centenaire de l'Ecole des Languages Orientales Vivantes 1795-1895*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, p.305 note 1.

[20] Details see G. Hourani, *Arab seafaring in the Indian Ocean in ancient and early medieval times*, Princeton: University Press, 1951, pp. 61-78; cf H. Gibb, "The Arab invasion of Kashgar in AD 715", *Bulletin, School of Oriental and African Studies*, 2 (1921-23), p. 469.

[21] "Dashi Zhuan" (History of Dashi) Ouyang Xiu & Song Qi, *Xin Tangshu* (New Tang History), s.v. "Dashi Zhuan", Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975, bk 221, pp.6262-62; Liu Xun, *Jiu Tangshu* (Old Tang History), s.v. "Dashi Zhuan", Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975, bk198 pp.5315-16.

461 AD the arrival of the first ambassador from Persia to the court of Wei (368-535 AD).[22] Therefore, we may assume that Arabs, Dashi, arriving in China prior to the Tang, were mistaken for Persians.

The Tang court maintained good relations with Dashiguo, the Muslim Arab state. According to historical accounts, between 651 and 798 AD, tributes from this state to the Tang court were said to be sent on at least 37 occasions from Umayyads and 'Abbasid Caliphs.[23] In fact, of these tributes, only one was sent by the Umayyad Caliph Sulayman in 716 AD. The others were sent by the local governments (mainly in Khurasan) of the eastern part of the Islamic state. Leslie suggests that at least three Caliphs: 'Uthman b. 'Affan, Sulayman and Harun al-Rashid sent their envoys to the Tang court.[24] This assertion needs to be corroborated with the Arabic sources. However, the official history of the Caliphate seldom mentions its foreign policy towards the Far East. The eminent Arabist, Gibb, suggests:

> . . . in the great majority of cases, if not all, the embassies were despatched not by the Caliph himself, but by the governor of Khurasan in his name.[25]

During this period, the Tang Chinese and Muslim Arabs competed for dominance over their central Asian vassals. Good relations between these great powers were not seriously affected by this competition or even by the military encounters in the area. The decisive defeat of the Tang army by the Arabs at the battle of Talas (751 AD) finally enabled the Arabs to assert their supremacy in Central Asia.[26] The victory of the Arabs should have allowed the Arabs to invade Chinese territory and bring Islam to the Middle Kingdom. However, the political situation in the west of the Islamic empire prevented this. The downfall of the Umayyads and the

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[22] Leslie, *Islam in traditional China*, pp.8-9.

[23] Zhang Xinglang, ibid., vol. IV, pp.60-64; Leslie, ibid., p.31; Chen Yuan, "Huihuijiao Ru Zhongguo Shilue", *Dongfang Zazhi*, 25 (1928), p.118; Bai Shou'i, "Cong Dalousi Zhanyi Shuodao Yisilanjiao...", *Yugong*, 5:11(1936), pp.73-74. There were more than 37 visit by envoys to China. Most of the scholars agree on each.

[24] Leslie, ibid., pp.28-31.

[25] H. Gibb, "Chinese records of the Arabs in central Asia", *Bulletin, School of Oriental and African Studies*, 2 (1923), p.621.

[26] For a detailed study see Jih-ming Chang, *Les Musulmans sous la chine des Tang*, Taipei: Cheng Wen, 1980, chapter 3.

passing of the caliphate to the 'Abbasids indirectly precluded the Arabs' further eastward movement into China.

The Tang records emphasize the good relations between the two courts in Baghdad and Chang'an. The Chinese sources mention that even at the time of An Lushan's rebellion (756-763 AD), the Tang emperor, Suzong (756-79 AD), sought military help from the Arabs and the Central Asians to recover the two capitals which had been lost to the rebels,[27] and Muslim troops were said to have been sent by the Caliph al-Mansur. However, Gibb considers that the Arab troops were independent local government troops operating on their own account.[28] Gibb may be right to assume so, as the despatch of troops to China was not recorded in Arabic annals. This would seem to require corroboration with the local history of Khurasan and other parts of Iran.

Chinese sources also state that in 786-7 AD, the Prime Minister, Li Mi, suggested to the emperor that an alliance with the Arabs and other Central Asian troops be formed against the still powerful Tibetans.[29] The Tang records do not mention whether these Arab or Muslim troops remained in China after the suppression of rebellion, but later Chinese Muslim legends and inscriptions on steles state that the Arab Muslim troops did remain there, settled down and intermarried with Chinese women.[30] Therefore it is generally assumed that descendants of these Arabs formed the nucleus of the Muslim population in northern China.[31] Confirmation of this cannot be found in other sources, however.

It has been suggested that, unlike the sea trade with Persia, direct Sino-Arab sea communication was not established until the 8th century. Whilst the sea route between the South China Sea and the Persian Gulf had been frequently mentioned by Chinese explorers and travellers, hardly any mention of Sino-Arab sea trade is made in either Chinese or Arabic sources.[32] Actually, this is in part due to the fact that, between the 5th and 7th centuries, the Arabs used the Persians as middlemen,

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[27] *Xin Tangshu*, bk 5, pp.150, 153; bk 40, p.1047; bk 217a, pp. 6120-21; bk 225b, p.6416; cf Yule, ibid., vol. I, p.92 Note 1 and E. Bretschneider, *Medieval research from Eastern Asiatic Sources: fragments towards the knowledge and history of Central and Western Asia from 13th to 17th Century*, vol. I, London: Kegan Paul, 1888, p.265.

[28] Gibb, ibid., p.616.

[29] Sima Guang, *Zizhi Tongjian*, Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1956, bk 232, pp.7495, 7502. cf Tazaka Kodo, *Chugoku ni okeru Kaykyo no denrei to sono kotsu*, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1964, vol. I, pp.352-53; Chang, ibid., p.90.

[30] M. Broomhall, *Islam in China, a neglected problem*, London: Morgan & Scott, 1910 pp.27, 64, 69.

[31] F. S. Drake, "Mohammedanism in the Tang Dynasty", *Monumenta Serica*, 8(1943), p.11.

[32] Cf. Chang, ibid., chapter 5.

since the latter had monopolized sea trade at the time.[33] In the Rashidun Caliphate period (632-661 AD) following the downfall of the Sassanid Empire, Muslim Arabs gradually replaced the role of Persians in sea trade with East Asia.

Chinese sources on Posi (Persia) state that, at the beginning of the Umayyad period, Persian merchants still resided in the seaports such as Canton, Yangzhou, Quanzhou and Hainan island. We can thus conclude that Arabs (Muslims) had not yet succeeded in assuming complete control of sea trade. It is reported in the year 758 AD that Dashi and Posi merchants together sacked and burned the city of Canton and fled to sea. There is no information on the religion of these aggressive Persians and Arabs, who may have been pirates sailing between the two waters.[34] The Persians may have been Nestorians, Arab Christians, and not Muslims at all, because at that time there were still non-Muslims Arabs and Persians living in Arabia and the area of Persian Gulf.

The accession of the 'Abbasids to the caliphate and the establishment of Baghdad as the capital brought a new impetus to sea trade to and from the Persian Gulf.[35] Al-Ya'qubi attributed to Caliph al-Mansur the assertion that Baghdad was the centre for trade between Iran and North Africa and also a meeting place for people of East and West.[36] Al-Tabari also recorded al-Mansur's words on this.[37]

Baghdad began to assume greater economic importance. From the assumption of power of the Abbasids, the term Posi Shanren, Persian merchants, gradually disappeared in the Chinese historical accounts. The reasons may be threefold:

(1) Persians who had converted to Islam were identified as Dashi (the term became the general name for Muslims from Central and West Asia);
(2) under the 'Abbasid rule the Arabs began to dominate the Persians not only politically but also economically;
(3) since the sea trade had been stimulated by the Baghdad government, Arab sea traders had outnumbered the Persians. In such cases the Persians would have

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33 J. Sauvaget, ed. *Akhbar as-sin wa al-hind: relation de la Chine et l'Inde*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1948, p.xxxix; Chang, ibid., p.103.

34 *Zizhi Tongjian*, bk. 220, p.7062; J. Gernet, *Le monde chinois*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1972, p.251; Hourani, ibid., p.66.

35 Hourani, ibid., p.64.

36 Al-Ya'qubi, *Kitab al-Buldan*, ed. A. W. Junball, Leiden: J. Brill, 1892, pp. 237, 250; Hourani, ibid., p.64.

37 Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa al-muluk*, vol. I, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden: J. Brill, 1879-1901, p.272. The words are: "This is Tigris; there is no obstacle between us and China; everything on the sea can come to us on it."; also Hourani, ibid., p.64.

had to attach themselves to the Arabs for various activities. However these factors need more detailed study than is possible here.

Because of the booming economy under the early 'Abbasid rule, Muslim travellers and geographers were inspired to explore East Asia for trade. These forays resembled Britian's expeditions to East after the first industrial revolution took place in England. Several Muslim travellers and geographers of this time inform us about China and their counterparts in that country. However, only four of them refer to the Tang period. The earliest Arabic manuscript surviving to us is the so-called *Akhbar al-sin wa al-hind* (Stories of China and India) by an unknown author who collected information from Muslim merchants. This manuscript has been studied and translated into European languages by a number of French scholars.[38] Its importance needs no repetition here.

The work is divided into two parts. The first part is by an unknown Muslim traveller who went to India around 851 AD and obtained information on China from other merchants who had travelled to that country. One of them was called Sulayman. His account gives a vivid picture of the Chinese social, political and economic system which coincides with Chinese historical accounts. This proves that at least he himself was in China for the period and travelled around the country. However, he gives little information on the Muslim community there and only mentions Muslims in Canton (present-day Guangzhou):

> Canton . . . is the seaport of the ships and the centre of Arab Chinese commerce . . . at Canton there is a Muslim upon whom the Chinese leader has bestowed the power to decide conflicts among the Muslims who came to this region; and this is at the express wish of the Chinese sovereign. At the time of festivals it is he who directs the prayers of the Muslims, gives the sermons (khutba) and expresses the good wishes for the well-being of the legal authority which rules Muslims . . . If an Arab or another foreigner is in China he pays the tax on his personal property in order to keep it . . . All those who are in China, Chinese Arabs or others, must link their genealogy to some group whose name they bear.[39]

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[38] J. Sauvaget, ibid.; G. Ferrand, *Relations de voyages et texts geographiques arabes, persans et turks, relatifs à l'Extreme-Orient du VIIe au XVIIIe siecles*, Paris: Geuthner, 1913-14.

[39] Broomhall, ibid., pp.6-8; Yule, ibid., pp.125-128.

Apparently, Arab Muslims in China at that time enjoyed the privileges of free trade and religious freedom. The Tang court's policy was to encourage trade with foreigners, which stimulated the Chinese economy. Foreign traders were treated with courtesy as guests of the Middle Kingdom.[40] This is partially because the Tang royal family was half of Central Asian origin, and as such had no prejudice against foreigners.

The second part of the *Akhbar* was written in about 916 AD by Abu Zayd al-Hassan of Shiraf. This part consists of two accounts. Abu Zayd does not profess to have travelled to China himself but his account incorporates an account of an earlier traveller named Ibn Wahhab who probably went to China in 815 AD, together with his own notes on Sino-Arab trade there from the great rebellion of Huangchao in 878 AD onwards.

Ibn Wahhab went to China in 814 AD from the Persian Gulf. He first landed at Khanfu (Canton). From there he travelled to Khumdan (Chang'an, the then capital). Here he declared himself to be a relative of Prophet Muhammad and succeeded in getting an audience with the Emperor Xianzong (806-821 AD). During the interview, the Emperor showed Ibn Wahhab pictures of the prophets among whom were Noah, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Ibn Wahhab gave a detailed description of the capital but did not mentioned any Muslim community there.[41]

Ibn Wahhab's account lacks reliability and cannot be taken seriously. First, it is doubtful that there existed a picture of Muhammad at that time since, before his death, Muhammad had forbidden his followers to draw his portrait. How could the emperor have possessed this picture, and how could Ibn Wahhab have recognised the prophets' images, especially that of Muhammad? Secondly, it is very unlikely that Ibn Wahhab did not meet any of his co-religionists in Chang'an as the city was more cosmopolitan than Canton in that period. (Chang'an was also a trade centre in north China. Most foreigners had their own concession districts in the city.) There is also a possibility, whether or not Ibn Wahhab had seen the Emperor himself, that his account is exaggerated hearsay. (In classical Muslim writings transmitters of information are always mentioned, but Ibn Wahhab's accounts do not mention any.)

Abu Zayd's own account of the rebellion of Huangchao in 878 AD is borne out by Tang Chinese records. The most important aspect of his account is not the

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[40] Cf Xie Haiping, *Tangdai Liuhua Waiguoren Shenghou Kaoshu*, Taipei: Commercial Press, 1978, pp.208-211.

[41] Dreke, ibid., pp.18-19. For details see Broomhall, ibid., pp.39-46; Yule, ibid., pp.133-134.

rebellion's cause but the devastating effects on Sino-Arab trade. He remarks:

> From these contributions, there arose many unjust dealings with the merchants who traded thither, which, having gathered the force of precedent, there was no grievance, no treatment so bad but they exercised upon the Arabs and masters of the ship. They extorted from the merchants what was uncustomary. They seized upon their effects, and behaved towards them in the method of procedure quite contrary to the ancient usages, and for these things God has punished them by withdrawing his blessing from them in every respect, and particularly by causing the navigation to be forsaken and merchants to return in crowds to Siraf and Oman, pursuant to the infallible orders of the almighty master, whose name be blessed.[42]

During the rebellion, according to Abu Zayd, no fewer than 120,000 Muslims, Christians, Jews and Magians in Canton and other ports were massacred by the rebels. This extremely harsh treatment of foreigners had damaged the Arab sea trade with China. At this time both Tang and 'Abbasid empires were in decline, which little favoured their relations. After the rebellion, direct voyages from the gulf to Canton ceased, and Arab and Chinese traders had to meet at Kalah on the west coast of the Malaccan Peninsula.[43] The resumption of direct Sino-Arab trade in Canton and other ports in south east China had to wait until peace was restored by the Song.

Amongest the work of Arab geographers the *Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik* of 851 AD by Abu al-Qasim 'Ubaydallah gives some information on some ports and cities in China, but again does not mention much about the Muslim communities there:

> Strangers from India are established in the eastern provinces . . . Muslims, who visit this country are often induced to settle for good because of the advantages of the place.[44]

From both Chinese and Arabic sources we learn that Sino-Arab relations were

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[42] Derek, ibid., pp.21-22. cf Hourani, ibid., p.77.

[43] Hourani, ibid., pp.77-78.

[44] Abu Qasim 'Ubaydallah, *Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik*, ed. H. J. De Goege, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1899, p. 70; Yule, ibid., pp.135-137.

mainly diplomatic and commercial. During the Tang period, foreigners flocked into China by land and sea. Of these, Central Asians were in the majority, with which the Arab Muslims were identified. Chinese sources scarcely mention the Muslims' religious life. The Arabs or converted Persian Muslims came to China mainly to do business, rather than to carry out their mission of proselytizing Islam. It has been noted by modern scholars such as Bretschneider and De Thiersant that Muslims in the Tang period, who resided in some large ports and cities, did not mix with the local population. They succeeded in getting concessions from the government and established their communities.[45] De Thiersant quotes from the annals of Canton thus:

> At the beginning of the Tang dynasty there came to Canton a large number of strangers from the kingdoms of Annam, Cambodia, Medina and several other countries. These strangers worshipped Heaven (ie God) and had neither statues, idols nor images in their temples. The kingdom of Medina is close to that of India and it is in this kingdom that the religion of these strangers, which is different to that of Buddha, originated. They do not eat pork or drink wine, and they regard as unclean the flesh of any animal not killed by themselves. They are nowadays called Huihui... Having asked and obtained from the emperor permission to reside in Canton, they built magnificent mansions of a style different to our country. They were very rich and obeyed a chief chosen by themselves.[46]

The Muslim traders came to China by sea and resided in their own quarter and were ruled by their own people. It was probably the same in Chang'an. Muslim diplomatic envoys were similarly allotted a special quarter in Chang'an since the Tang government had a special department dealing with foreigners' properties and religious activities.[47] During the Tang period, various religions flourished everywhere in China, but not Islam. This was because most Muslims who came to China were not missionaries, but merchants or of other professions. Their main purpose in

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[45] E. Bretschneider, *On the knowledge possessed by the ancient Chinese of the Arabs and Arabian colonies*, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1871, p.10.

[46] P. D. De Thiersant, *Le Mahometisme en chine et dans le turkestan oriental*, vol. I, Paris: La Societé Asiatique, 1878, pp.19-20. English translation see T. W. Arnold, Preaching of Islam, London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1913, pp.294-295.

[47] Details see Xie Haiping, ibid., pp.308-322; Xiang Da, *Tangdai Chang'an yu Xiyu Wenming*, Beijing: Sanlian, 1957, pp.89-100.

travelling was to do business rather than to preach their religion.

If we examine the history of Islam during the 'Abbasid period, the development of Islam was confined to the areas in which Muslims were the ruling class and in the majority. Muslim Arabs did not conquer China and Muslims in China were in the minority throughout history. In such circumstances, even though Muslim missionaries intended to preach Islam, they lacked political backing for their activities. The effort of proselytizing would not have borne any fruit. This had to wait until the Mongols conquered China. Muslims were protected by the Mongol rulers and were brought from Islamic countries. Then they formed a very significant element in the Chinese population, and under the Mongol rule, Islam spread rapidly in China.

During the years 843-845 AD, an anti-foreign religious persecution arose because of consolidation of Confucianism by the gentry and court ministers. The proselytising Nestorians and Manichaeans and also the non-proselytising Mazdeans were proscribed. Monasteries, temples and shrines were destroyed and Persian cultural life in China was dimmed and almost extinguished. However, there was no mention of Dashi or Muslims as being involved in these events. This implies that Islam was not preached and had not formed an influential religious group as the others which were probably involved in politics at that time, or at least Islamic religious activities were not organized by the Muslim merchants.

Chinese Muslim accounts of the origin of Chinese Islam

The origin of Islam in China has been confused by Chinese Muslim accounts of religious legends. Three questions have to be posed in discussion of the subject:

(1) Did the alleged despatch of a regular missionary sent by the Prophet to China exist?
(2) Is it possible that some of the Muslim sages mentioned in Chinese sources were Sufis?
(3) Was the forging of inscriptions on steles or tombstones to promote Muslims' status or to boast their religious glory?

There is considerable controversy about the exact date of the first appearance of Islam in China. Chinese Muslim sources are more legendary than historically true. Both Western and Chinese scholars have conducted detailed research on this issue but the conclusions are still unsatisfactory since it was not until after the Song

dynasty that the information originating from oral sources was documented. Unlike the traditional Muslim writings, which usually mention the transmitter of the sources, Chinese historical accounts do not. This creates great confusion. A brief description of the Muslim accounts and modern scholars' studies follows.

According to Chinese sources the earliest date of the appearance of Islam in China is during the Kaihuang period (581-601 AD) of the Sui dynasty. This date is given in "Medina" in the 'Xi Yu Zhuan' chapter of the Minshu (History of Min, Fujian province) which states that during that period Sa Ha Ba (Sahaba), Sa Adi Wo Gesi (Sa'd b. Waqqas)[48] came to preach Islam in China. This information is based on the Chang'an Mosque inscription of 742 AD which was considered to be a 14th century forgery by most modern scholars.[49]

The second possible date occurs during the reign of the Emperor Yangdi, or the Daye period (605-617 AD). This is based on a Datong mosque inscription, which says that the practice of Islam was reported to Emperor Yangdi by some officials who were sent to Central Asia as diplomatic commissioners. It was then that the religion spread into China. This is also regarded as a forgery by the well-known Japanese Islamo-sinologist, K. Tazaka. In fact, the inscription does not mention who introduced Islam to China. It seems that the emperor, after having heard the report about the religion, allowed Islam to spread in China.[50]

Both dates seem not genuine, since Muhammad could not have preached God's message before 617 AD, which was when his mission started. However, some scholars consider that the dating back to the Sui dynasty was due to an erroneous calculation of the Chinese Muslim calendar,[51] which originally followed the Prophet's own lunar calendar with a year of 354 days which ignored intercalary months. In the second year of Hongwu of the Emperor Taizu, 1369 AD, the founder of the Ming dynasty, employed a Muslim chief astronomer to rectify the Chinese calendar and correlate it with the Muslim calendar. By neglecting the intercalary months, the *Hijra* of 622 AD was put back to 599 AD. Broomhall agrees with this

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[48] Judging from the Chinese sounds, the name of Sa'd b. Waqqas was probably transliterated from a Persian source.

[49] Leslie, ibid., pp.70, 154 note 45. Also see Chen Yuan, "Huihuijiao Ru Zhongguo Shilue", *Dongfang Zazhi*, 25:1 (1928), pp.116-17; Sun Min, "Huijiao Chuanru Zhongguo Geshuo Shuping" *Zhongguo Yisilanjiaoshi Cankao Ziliao Xuanbian*, vol. I, Yingchuan: Renmin publisher, 1983, p.113; Tazaka, ibid., p.162.

[50] Tazaka, ibid., pp.167-176;

[51] Deveria, ibid., p. 381; Chen Yuan, ibid., p. 116; I. Mason, "The Mohammedans of China and how they first came", *J of the North China Branch of the R.A.S.*, 60(1929), p.677.

calculation error, and explains:

> The calendar in China is based upon a luni-solar year, the interjection of an extra month every two or three years rectifying the lunar with solar time. A similar arrangement had prevailed in Arabia for some two centuries before Mohammad but the prophet, for some reason or other, altogether prohibited intercalation; so a simple lunar month was reintroduced in Arabia. As the Mohammedan calendar stands today, it consists of 12 lunar months of 29 or 30 days alternately with an intercalary day added to the 12th month at intervals of two or three years, making eleven intercalary days every thirty years. This gives a difference of almost exactly 11 days a year between the Arab lunar and the Chinese luni-solar year, three years a century.[52]

According to the *Minshu* written in the 17th century, during the reign of Wude (618-627 AD) of Emperor Gaozu, four Sahaba of Muhammad were sent to China via sea and preached Islam in Canton, Yangzhou and Quanzhou.[53] This account praises Muhammad's miracle and considers him to be as powerful as the gods in Chinese folk religions. It mentions the two sahaba who preached in Quanzhou and the fact that their tombs in Lingshan became holy shrines because they glowed at night. This seems to be a Sufi tradition as tomb worshipping is one of the characteristics of Sufism. Owing to lack of historical proof, this account cannot be taken too literally.

The source most venerated by Chinese Muslims is that in the anonymous *Huihui Yuanlai*, The origin of Hui (Muslims), also called Xilai Zongpu. The author claims that in Emperor Taizong's reign of the second year of Zhengguan 628 AD, Muhammad sent four Sahaba: Gai Si (Qays), Wu wai Si (?), Ge Xing (Qasim) and Wan Guosi or the so-called Waqqas to preach Islam in China at the request of the Tang emperor. Although Chinese Muslims regard this work as authentic, Westerners such as Mason consider it to be

> "Muslim propaganda, giving imaginary dialogues between the Tang emperor and turbanned man, these being a vehicle for conveying muslim

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[52] M. Broomhall, ibid., p.88.

[53] He Qiaoyuan, "Huang Yuzhi: Lingshan, Quanzhoufu Jinjiangxian", *Minshu, bk 7, quoted in Tazaka, ibid., p.178.*

teaching. It is of very little value as history and better must be regarded as apochryphal."[54]

Another Muslim work by Lan Xu, entitled *Tianfang Zhengxue*, suggests in chapter 7 that the maternal uncle of the Prophet, Wan Geshi, brought the Qur'an to China in the second year of Zhengguan and preached Islam in Chang'an. The Emperor Taizong appreciated his up-right character and his knowledge, therefore ordered a mosque to be built for him. Consequently Islam spread from Chang'an southwards to Jiangning and Canton regions.[55] Later Wan Geshi died on his way back to Arabia, but his corpse was returned to Canton and buried there. His tomb became a holy shrine called Xiangfen (echoing tomb). This account is not convincing, as the miracle of the holy tomb seems also to be a later Sufi legend.

Finally we come to an inscription on a mosque stele composed by a Yuan scholar named Wu Jian. He mentions that in the first year of Shaoxing of the Southern Song dynasty (1131 AD) a Muslim called Na-Zhi-Bu-Mu-Zi-Xi-Lu-Din (Najib Muzahir al-Din?) who came from Sa Ran Wei (Siraf?) by sea to Quanzhou, and built a mosque there. Wu Jian also mentions the Dashiguo (the Muslim Arab state). His account is much sounder than that in the Tang records. His mention of the establishment of the mosque, Qinjing Shi, in Quanzhou in 1131 AD implies that Islam had been introduced by Muslim missionaries for the first time to China.

It is difficult to date the introduction of Islam exactly because there are no convincing, objective and accurate proofs. This would require lengthy study, and might still be a fruitless exercise. Although Leslie's recent research encompasses previous studies and Chinese sources, it is still inconclusive. Sources other than Chinese, such as Persian or Arabic, need to be examined alongside the Chinese ones. It is not unlikely that most Chinese accounts have been taken from Persian sources. Some evidence can be found in the Chinese transliteration of Muslim names because the same Islamic name is pronounced differently in Arabic and Persian due to the difference of the phonetic structure; also, the same Islamic terminology is usually expressed differently in Persian and Arabic. Leslie agrees that Liu Zhi's biography of the Prophet Muhammad was a translation from a Persian work entitled *Tarjamah-i Maudud-i Mustafa*, by al-Kazaruni.[56] Although De Thiersant concludes

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[54] Mason, ibid., p.672; Broomhall, ibid., pp.62-66. cf. Tazaka, ibid., pp.193-237.
[55] Quoted in Tazaka, ibid., p.244; Zhang Xinglang, ibid., p.7.
[56] Leslie, ibid., p.75.

that the first Muslims to arrive in China were Arab merchants in the Tang dynasty,[57] we learn nothing of their religious activities, or whether, whilst carrying out their commercial activities, they also preached Islam in China.

Sino-Arab relations during the Song Dynasty (960-1276 AD)

During the 10th century after the downfall of the Tang dynasty in 906 AD, the Middle Kingdom fell into political chaos.[58] The Han people were no longer politically dominant in the whole of China and were threatened by the nomadic Tartars
from the north. Consequently, in the year of 960 AD, Zhao Kuangyin, the founder of the Song dynasty, who was the commander-in-chief of the royal army of the Later Zhou dynasty (951-59 AD), plotted to overthrow his master and claim the throne.

Although he united the many minor states, he was unable to assume political power to the same extent and over the same territory as in the Tang dynasty. The Song could only wield its authority over that part of China south of the Great Wall. Later they had to retreat to the territory south of the Yangzi valley, as they could not resist and defend the southward expansion of the Khitans and the invasion of the Jurchens.[59] In spite of its political weakness, the Song government, was able, soon after it had become established, to restore diplomatic and trade relations with

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[57] De Thiersant, ibid., p.31.

[58] After the Tang dynasty came the so-called Five Dynasty period for about 53 years. Each dynasty lasted a very short period compared with previous ones. Chinese history recognises the term "Five Dynasties" as an underestimate, since at least ten other independent minor states co-existed with them.

[59] The Khitans were the descendants of the Mongol Xianbei (Tungus), who established the Liao Dynasty ruling the vast territory covering Manchuria, Mongolia and the north China plain. Their rule, which often extended as far as the Yellow River, ended in 1125 AD, and they were driven away by the Jurchen to the West, Xiyu, Central Asia, after a decade of fighting. In Central Asia they were welcomed by the Uygurs, their former vassals, and established a new state in Turkestan known as Qara-Khitai, Xi Liao dynasty, lasting until 1211, which was destroyed by the great Mongol conquerer Ghengis Khan. The Jurchen, also a nomadic Tungusic people from the Amur River region in the far north and the forefathers of the Manchus who conquered China five hundred years later, established their dynasty called Jin in 1125 AD, but were swept away by the Mongols under Ghenghis Khan in 1234 AD.

the Arabs, Persians and South and Central Asians mostly through sea trade routes.[60]

Sino-Arab relations during the South-Song period were conducted mainly by sea, because the land route between the Song and Muslim Central Asia was blocked by the Tartar Khitans, and the Song annals record the very intensive diplomatic relations and trade. Some modern scholars even suggest that Muslims, either Arabs or Persians, played a very significant role in the development of these relations.[61] Since the Song government encouraged foreign trade and offered favourable conditions to the traders, more Muslim merchants were attracted to China, and some diplomatic envoys also became involved in trade. Alternatively, some traders claimed to have been envoys sent by the Caliph to gain more profit from official business with the Song government.

According to the accounts in the *Song Shi* (Song Annals) which are corroborated in other Song sources such as *Song Huiyao* and *Wenxian Tongkao,* the Song court maintained diplomatic relations with at least 32 countries which dispatched a total 213 tributary missions to the imperial court, 35 of which were from the Dashiguo, the Muslim Arab state.[62]. It is very unlikely that these envoys were sent directly from the 'Abbasid court for official diplomatic relations. From the description of the Song annals most of the envoys came to the Song court for commercial purposes. In fact, according to the Chinese sources, there was no direct encounter between the two empires.[63]

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[60] It is suggested that in order to pay the large protection fees to the Khitan and Jurchen in order to maintain peaceful relations, the Song had to develop sea trade to secure more national revenues by taxing traders, thus the Song policy was entirely in the interest of gentry and the trading community closely connected with them. See W. Eberhard, *A History of China,* 2nd ed., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, pp.210-214. We also find in the Song annals that the government had to offer high posts to foreign traders, especially the Arabs and Persians in order to secure their support for the taxation policy. Fu Tongxian, *Zhongguo Huijiao Shi,* Taipei: Commercial Press, 1965, p.34.

[61] Cf. Wang Guanwu, "The Nanhai trade: a study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea", *J. Malayan Branch of R.A.S.*, 31(1958), pp.1-135; Leslie, ibid., pp.58-68; Zhang Xinglang, ibid., vol.VI, pp.439-464.

[62] Tuo Tuo, Song Shi, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1977, book 490, pp. 14118-122; Leslie, ibid., pp. 62-63.

[63] It is suggested that in 966 AD the Emperor Song Taizu dispatched a good will mission to restore relations with those countries in South and West Asia which had had diplomatic relations with the Tang dynasty. One of them was to the 'Abbasid Caliph, al-Muti' to open the perfume trade. See Hajji Y. Chang, "Chinese Muslim mobility in Sung-Liao-Chin period", *J Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs,* 5:1(1984), pp.154-155. Chang uses only Chinese sources in his discussion. For complete reliability it is necessary to check with 'Abbasid records.

It would be difficult to believe Chinese sources when they assert that the 'Abbasid Caliph sent ambassadors to China because at that time the 'Abbasid Caliphate was declining. The Caliphs seemed to be puppets of Turkic sultans (The Buyids and the Seljuqs) and had no de facto power over foreign affairs. It could be that the Song court historians mistook the merchants and envoys sent by the local sultans for 'Abbasid court envoys; or the tributary missions were perhaps private parties organized by influential Muslim merchants who were based in Southeast Asian countries, such as Palem Bang, Champa and Sumatra, and took the opportunity of representing these minor kingdoms at the Song court in order to gain favoured status from the Song government regarding the restoration of Sino-Arab sea trade.

In order to benefit more from import and export, the Song government opened more ports in addition to Canton such as: Quanzhou, Hangzhou, Mingzhou and a further six cities for foreign trade. The government also installed the Office of Superintendent of Merchant Shipping, a treasury administration adopted from the Tang system. This office was called "Shibosi" and its functions were to supervise incoming and outgoing ships, to collect custom duties on foreign and domestic goods, to offer warehouses for storage, and to purchase profitable foreign goods for resale.[64] As a result of the opening of more ports to Foreigners, Canton was no longer the only city where foreign traders could reside to form their communities. Muslim merchants therefore gained more bases in which they could extend their activities, both commercial and religious. Consequently, Quanzhou, Hangzhou and other cities on the southeast coast attracted the settlement of more Muslims, and thus we learn more about them from the local history of those cities. However, we are seldom informed by these sources about the Muslims' religious activities.[65]

The Muslims who came to China for trade were always able to successfully achieve their aim of amassing great wealth. Some of them were even rich enough to donate great amounts of community tax to help the local government in building or repairing the city.[66] Within their communities, Muslim merchants also contributeded

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[64] *Song Huiyao*, s.v. "Shibosi", facsimile of 1936, Taipei: Shijie, 1964, bk 1124, pp.3364-80.

[65] The Song sources on Dashi, Muslims and Islam are no better than those of the Tang. The new information we learn from the Song sources is that more Islamic judges, Qadis, accompanied the envoys to China. This indicates that the Muslim population had increased and more Qadis or imams from Islamic lands were in demand. The Song government also gave autonomy rights to foreign communities. They were governed by their own community leaders who were appointed by the Song court as Fanzhang, Foreign Officials.

[66] Fu Tongxian, ibid., pp. 32-37.

a great deal of financial support to build their mosques. [67] Among the celebrated Muslim businessmen Pu Shougeng is most worthy of mention. He played a remarkable role not only in Song-Yuan dynastic transformation but also in the history of Chinese Islam. The story of Pu has been studied by many scholars.[68]

The various studies of Pu Shougeng disargree on his origin, an Arab, Persian or South Asian. However, all agree that he was a Muslim. His surname Pu is suggested by most scholars to have been derived from Arabic *Abu* or *Bu.*[69] Chinese used to call Muslims Bu so-and-so (or *Abu Fulan* in Arabic), because they mistook the Arabic *Kunya* for a surname.[60] (Chinese put their surname before their given name.) The official new Mongol-Yuan history, *Xin Yuanshi,* which gives very brief biography of Pu Shougeng without mentioning his personal religious faith, states:

> Pu Shougeng, a man of Xiyu, son of Pu Kaizong, helped, with his elder brother Pu Shoucheng, to repel pirates (in 1250-74 AD). According to the *Songshi* book 47, he had been Shiboshi in Quanzhou for 30 years to 1275 AD, monopolising the profit from the Shipping trade. At about this time, he was promoted to be governor-general of Fujian province, whilst retaining his position as Shiboshi. The Song hoped that his control of the Ships would help them against the Mongols. However, in 1276, Bayan, the Mongol general invited the brother of Pu to surrender, which he did towards the end of the year. In 1277, Pu was attacked by the Song army in Quanzhou, but managed to withstand them until support came from the Mongols. His defection to the Mongols was of great significance to the latter, for they had little experience in naval matters. Pu received honours and posts under the Mongols, being appointed Assistant Director (Zuozheng) in Fujian in 1278. His family flourished

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[67] Ibid., pp.43-50; Leslie, ibid., pp.65-67.

[68] The standard works are: Luo Xianlin, *Pusougen Zhuan,* Taipei: Zhongyuan, 1955; Kuwabara Jitsuzou, "On P'u Shou-keng", *Memoire of the Research Depentment of Toyo Bunko,* 2(1928), pp.1-79; 7(1935), pp.1-104.

[69] Jin Jitang, "Huijiao Minzu Shuo", *Yugong, 5:12(1936), p.36. cf Xue Wenpo, "Huihui Xinshi Kao" (Study on Chinese Muslim names), Ningxia Daxue Xuebao,* 1:4(1981), pp. 82-84.

[70] It has been the tradition that the Muslims or non-Muslim Arabs take the *kunya* even before their marriage. They prefer to be called by the *kunya* than by their first name. For the formation of Islamic names see EI, 2nd ed. s.v. "Kunya" and "Ism"; also see A. Schimmel, *Islamic names,* Edinburgh: University Press, 1989, chapter on *Kunya*

during the Yuan period, but lost its favourable position at the beginning of the Ming dynasty.[71]

Chinese Muslim scholars regard the defection of Pu to the Mongols as indirectly helping to pave the way for mass Muslim migration to China penetrating everywhere to create an ideal opportunity for establishing Islam in all walks of life during the Yuan period.[72] We know nothing about Pu's personal devotion to Islam from the available contemporary sources; however, we learn from his genealogical record or Jiapu, family tree, that his family members were very devout Muslims and contributed greatly to the rebuilding of mosques in Quanzhou.[73] However early Chinese Muslim writers such as Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi and Tang Quanyu neglected Pu in their writings. This may cast doubt on Pu's confession. Leslie considers this neglect might be linked to Pu's unpatriotic defection to the Mongols.[74] There must be more reasons for this neglect and further study is needed.

The Song Chinese seemed to have been more curious about foreigners. A few eye-witness accounts of Muslim life, written by the Song writers, still survive. They give vivid picture of Muslim religious worship, eating habits and burial rites. The most familiar accounts of the Dashi can be found in Zhao Rugua's *Zhufan Zhi*. His information was from first-hand sources obtained from Muslim traders in eastern coastal ports, as he was the Shiboshi of Canton for a period.[75] Two other interesting accounts are by Zhou Mi in his *Xuji* on Muslim burial, and Yue Ke in his *Ting Shi* on Muslims in Canton. However, they do not give us concrete information on Islamic preaching in China, in other words, Islam had not taken root during the Song period, in spite of an increase in the Muslim population.

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[71] Ke Shaoshun, *Xin Yuanshi*, Taipei: Institute of Defense, 1961, bk 177, pp.24b-25a. For an English translation see Leslie, ibid., p.66.

[72] Hajji Chang, ibid., p.162.

[73] Luo Xianglin, ibid., pp.103-107.

[74] The main reason might be that his betrayal of the Song disgusted most Han people, who were followers of traditional Confucian morality. During the Ming period the Pu family was facing political discrimination, and was banned from politics, thus the family went into decline and was gradually forgotten. cf Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo Huijiaoshi Yanjiu*, Taipei: Cathay, 1971, pp.134-136. Moreover, Pu was not of the literati, and did not leave any written work. This probably accounts for Muslim scholars' neglect of him.

[75] See F. Hirth and W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua, his work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the 12th and 13th centureis, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, New York: *Dragon Book Reprint Corp, 1960, chapter on Muslims.*

As to the Arabic or Persian sources on Song China there is not much new information. Most of the sources simply copy from earlier sources of the Tang, and mix in a little new but garbled second-hand information. [76] However, Marvazi's work on China, which is based on the lost work of Jayhani, gives a very interesting account. It mentions that some *Talibids*, whilst escaping from Umayyad persecution, came to settle down in north China, probably in the Yellow River basin. It is worth quoting some passages from it:

> The importers to China may not enter the city and most of their business is done in the absence (of the parties). Near the city there is a river, one of the greatest in existence; in the middle of it there is a large island and on it a large castle inhabited by Talibid-'Alid Muslims, who act as middlemen between the Chinese and the caravans and merchants coming to them . . .
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> The reason why the said 'Alids are found on the island is that they are a party of Talibids and had come to Khurasan in the days of the Umayyads and settled there. But when they saw how intent the Umayyads were on finding and destroying them, they escaped safely and started eastwards. They found no foothold in any Islamic country because of fear of pursuit. So they fled to China, and when they reached the banks of the river the patrol, as is the custom, prevented them from crossing, while they had no means of going back. So they said: "Behind us is the sword and before us the sea."
>
> The castle on the island was empty of inhabitants because snakes had grown numerous in it and overrun it. So the 'Alids said; "To endure snakes is easier than to endure swords or be drowned." So they entered the castle and began destroying the snakes and throwing them into the water until a short time they had cleared the castle and settled there. When the Lord of China learnt that (for them) there was no trouble behind them and that they were forced to seek refuge with him he established them in this place and comforted them by granting them means of existence. So they lived in peace and security, begot children and multiplied. They learned Chinese and the languages of other people who visit them, and became their middlemen.[77]

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[76] Leslie, ibid., p.60.

[77] V. Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marvaji on China, the Turks and India*, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1942, p.17.

If Marvaji's account is reliable, it would change the prevalent conception of all Muslims in China as Sunnis. The origin of Chinese Muslims would be clear too. It is stated in the account that the 'Alids learned various languages from the caravan people who mostly came from Central Asia. This sheds the light on the fact that Chinese Islam has indeed been influenced by and coloured with Central Asian Islamic characteristics; in fact, even in our time, Chinese Muslims still retain many Shi'ite practices. This deserves further socio-anthropological research.

Muslims in China under the Mongol Yuan rule (1279-1358 AD)

From the Mongol Yuan dynasty onwards, the information on Muslims provided by Chinese sources is more detailed and reliable. Muslims immigrants to China played a very significant role in the history of the Mongol-Yuan Dynasty and the shaping of Chinese Islam. They were no longer simply foreign traders in China but also elements of the upper class of the Yuan aristocracy. The socio-political strata of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty were classified into four categories:

(1) the Mongols
(2) the Semuren, mainly Central Asians and westerners
(3) Hanren, the Chinese of north China
(4) the Nanren, mainly the Chinese in south China, who were loyal to the Southern Song Dynasty.

Central Asian or non-Chinese Muslims were placed in the second category. Muslims enjoyed much more social, political and economic privileges than other Chinese under the Mongols. Although they were used as scapegoats by the ruling Mongols in political affairs, the latter did provide a suitable seedbed for the spread of Islam in China, and in that way the Muslim population in China increased greatly after the Mongol conquest.

The *Ming Shi* (Annals of the Ming dynasty) records that by the Yuan period Huihui, Muslims, had spread to the four corners of China, all preserving their religion without change.[78] According to the Yuan national census of 1290 AD, the Muslim population had reached about 4 millions. It had increased by 100% compared

[78] *Ming Shi*, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1977, bk 332, p.3755, 3768; Tazaka, ibid., p.598; Jin Jitang, ibid., pp. 37, 41, 44.

with the Song census record of 1110 AD.[79]

During the Tang and Song periods Muslim communities had flourished only in the eastern and southeastern coastal cities. However, after the Mongol conquest of China, the mass Muslim immigration from Central Asia and Islamic lands had gradually developed their communities in the north, northwest and southwest. Islam had thus penetrated into China proper in different directions through either political of commercial activities.

According to some scholars, the Muslim immigrants to north and northwest China were of two sorts, firstly merchants and officials associated with the Mongols and secondly, craftsmen and architects who were conscripted eastwards from Central Asia by the Mongols.[80] The Muslim merchants had long-term trade relations with the Mongols. These can be traced back prior to the rise of Ghenghis Khan.[81] They not only acted as middlemen in trade between the Mongols and other Central Asians but also served as Mongol intelligence agents providing information about Central Asia and Persia. Therefore they indirectly helped the Mongols in conquering Central Asia.[82] Prior to their conquest of the whole of China, the Mongols' reliance on Muslims in military and economic affairs was great.

Muslims, with frequent contacts with and service to the Mongols, probably influenced the Mongols in also religious affairs. Although reliable information on the conversion to Islam is rare in Chinese sources, Rashid al-Din's work on the history of the Mongol Khans contains a passage on many Mongols' conversion to Islam in the north of China.[83]

Another area into which Muslim mass immigration occurred was Yunnan, in south-west China. The establishment of Islam in Yunnan will receive lengthy and detailed discussion later. The introduction of Islam to Yunnan is generally attributed to Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din 'Umar, who came from a distinguished Bukhari family

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[79] Hajji Y Chang, "Muslim encounter with the Mongols...", *JIMMA*, 5:2 (1984), p.290.

[80] M. Rossabi, "Muslims in early Yuan . . . ", *China under the Mongol rule*, ed. J. D. Langlois Jr., Princeton: Univerisity Press, 1981, pp.263-4.

[81] Rossabi. ibid., p.260; Xiao Qiqing, "Xiyuren yu Yuanchu Zhengzhi", *J. of Arts Faculty. Taiwan University*, 1966, p.11.

[82] Rossabi, ibid.

[83] J. Boyle, *The successors of Genghis Khan*, tr. from Persian, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, pp. 323-6; Tazaka, ibid., pp.626-9, 831. Rashid al-Din's account is written from the viewpoint of a Muslim, and may be exaggerated. Further research is needed on Mongolian and other sources, and is beyond the scope of this study.

and was a Mongol loyalist.[84] He had served Ghenghis Khan, Ogodei Khan and Khubilai Khan as a great general in many campaigns and conquests, and was appointed to various significant government posts. In 1252 and 1253AD he helped Khubilai pacify Yunnan and was then appointed governor of this province in 1274.[85] The Muslim immigration to Yunnan took place immediately after Mongol conquest of that province. Khubilai encouraged high- ranking Muslim officials to migrate into this region by offering them lands, handsome financial subsidies and other incentives. The appointment of Sayyid Ajall to this province was a calculated decision. In fact, to put Muslim officials in control under a Muslim loyalist governor was a very effective policy.

Rossabi suggests that the Muslim immigrants to Yunnan came in three waves. The first accompanied Khubilai in his initial conquest of Yunnan; the second reached the region in the years of Khubilai's reign; and the third accompanied Sayyid Ajall's appointment.[86]

It is very interesting that Sayyid Ajall did not intend to impose Islam in Yunnan. According to modern scholars the main objective of his governorship was to build a wealthy colony for the Mongols.[87] Though Sayyid Ajall built mosques, he also built a Confucian temple and schools as well as a Buddhist monastery in 1277 AD This was probably done in order to integrate Yunnan with the rest of China and to sinicise the non-Han people.[88] Sayyid Ajall may have regarded himself as the implementor of the central government's policy, and rather put his Muslim identity aside; or the attitude of "Chinese outdoors, Muslims indoors"[89] directed his administration more to the sinicisation of the natives in Yunnan.

His two sons succeeded him in this office and followed the same policy. The reason for this may be that a local governor such as the Sayyid Ajall had to follow the central government's policy of gradual sinicisation. This is the traditional Confucian concept whereby officials were loyal to the head of the state. This

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[84] A. Vissiere, *Etudes Sino-Muhometanes*, series I, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913, pp.6-7.

[85] Ibid., pp.9-11

[86] Rossabi, ibid., p.289.

[87] Rossabi, ibid., p.290; Leslie, *Islam . . . .*, p. 80.

[88] *Yunnanfu Zhi*, bk 18, p.4; L. C. Goodrich, "Westerners and Central Asians in Yuan China", *Oriente Poliano* (Rome), 1957, p.8.

[89] Leslie, "Assimilation and survival of Muslims in China", *Actes du IIIe Colloque International de Sinologie, 1980*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1983, p.122; cf. R. Israeli, *Muslims in China: a study in cultural confrontation*, London: Curzon, 1980, pp.4-5.

policy of adopting Chinese traditions and trying to integrate the non-Chinese into the Confucianist mode of society can be seen in Khubilai's later rule.

Rossabi further interprets this phenomenon and suggests that the appointment of Sayyid Ajall was due to his lack of commitment to converting people to Islam.[90] Rossabi may be right, but we should look at the history of the spread of Islam, particularly in China. Very few Han Chinese had been converted to any religion, let alone Islam. The mission of preaching Islam in China was in fact carried out by the Sufis after the Yuan period. Most non-Han Muslims had been trying not to be integrated into Han society, and they usually confined themselves to their own communities, for they despised the polytheistic Chinese. According to Islamic doctrines, when Muslims enter the so-called Dar al-Harb, non-Islamic abode, they should protect and defend their people and religion, even to the extent of waging Jihad, if necessary. Sayyid Ajall preferred to protect his religion and people by providing sound religious conditions within their own communities. However he was not from a missionary background, but a sinicized Muslim family. If he had intentionally preached Islam, it might have caused conflict with his career. In such circumstances he could not have administered Yunnan for the sake of Islam.

The development of Islam in China relied on intermarriage to a great extent or the adoption of orphans. However, the greatly increased Muslim population in this region indicated that conversion must have been encouraged, even if not by the government. To discover more, it would be necessary to study further the nature of Islam, the various circumstances in Yunnan during the Yuan period and other factors. One important point is that Sayyid Ajall and his descendants had already been sinicized after a long period of residence in China, and had adopted a dual cultural identity, Islamo-Chinese, which allowed him to compromise between his commitment to Muslim community and central government's policy.

Concerning the Muslims in the eastern coastal cities, we have information from the contemporary Arabic sources from the great Moroccan traveller, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad Shams al-Din, also known as Ibn Battuta. Ibn Battuta and his work have been studied intensively by many Orientalists. There is a disagreement among some scholars on part of the route he took from Hangzhou to Dadu, modern-day Beijing, the capital of the Yuan dynasty. Some scholars consider that this part of

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[90] Ibid.

his journey was a fabrication and that the information was based on hearsay.[91] We shall discuss his accounts regardless of the reliability of his source, for it is another subject of study and the information provided by him is still useful for us here.

Ibn Battuta arrived on the coast of China during the final peaceful period of the Mongol rule. The Yuan emperor at that time was Toghon Temür who had a strong inclination to traditional Confucianist politics and had cultivated reasonably amiable relations with the Han Chinese literati.[92] In his narration Ibn Battuta gives constructive accounts on China, praising China as vast and bounteous, the quality of its silk and porcelain, the excellence of its plums and watermelons, the enormous size of its chickens, and the advantages of its paper money, and above all China as the safest country in which to travel in the world.

However he suffered a degree of culture shock from the Chinese, especially on religious matters. As a Muslim he regarded the Chineses as heathens, worse than the Christians in their rejection of the Almightly Creator and every single one of the prophets. With this pre-occupation of religious bias, when he describes the Muslim communities, he always gives a rather positive image of them.[93]

Ibn Battuta mentions six great cities on his journey from Zaytun (Quanzhou) to Khan-Baliq (Beijing). They were Zaytun, Sinkalan, Ganzhufu, Khansa and Khan-Baliq. Ibn Battuta informs us that in every Chinese city there was a quarter for Muslims in which they had mosques both for Friday services and for other religious and social purposes. He also mentions some eminent Muslims in China. They were Burhan al-Din al-Kazuruni and Sharaf al-Din of Tabriz in Zaytun; Awhad al-Din al-Sinjari in Sinkalan; Qiyam al-Din al-Bushri of Ceuta in Ganzhufu; 'Uthman b. 'Affan al-Misri, builder of the cathedral mosque in Khansa; Afkhar al-Din, the Qadi of Khansa, descendant of 'Uthman b. 'Affan; Burhan al-Din al-Sagharji, Shaykh Sadr al-Jihan, head of all the Muslims of Khan-Baliq. Apart from his mention of

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[91] M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, p.262 note 20; Scholars such as Pelliot, Ferrand and others think Ibn Battuta's route is dubious, but Leslie agrees with Ibn Battuta's account. see idem., *Islam. . .*, pp.81; idem., "The identification of Chinese cities in Arabic and Persian sources", *Paper on Far Eastern History*, 26(1982), pp. 14-15.

[92] J. W. Dardess, *Conquers and Confucians*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1973, chapter 4, "The triumph of Confucian politics"; also see the Mongol rule over China proper in D. Morgan, *The Mongols*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

[93] Yule, Ibid., vol. IV, pp.119-120, 122-23, 127-29, 130-31, 138; cf H. Gibb, tr., *Ibn Battuta: travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-54*, London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd, 1929, p.283ff; Rev. Samuel Lee, tr., *The travels of Ibn Battuta*, London: J. Murray, 1829, pp.207ff.

these religious leaders, Ibn Battuta tells us nothing of Islamic preaching to the Chinese. If Muslim religious leaders had come to China to serve Muslim communities rather than to carry out missions of proselytising Islam, Ibn Battuta would certainly have bosted about it.[94] Despite the paucity of information on Muslim religious activities, the Chinese sources do tell us of the Muslim activities and privileges in politics and the economy, as well as of Muslim contributions to Chinese arts, science and culture. Generally speaking, the Mongol-Yuan dynasty was built by the hands of eminent Muslims for they were employed by the Mongol rulers both to run the state financial affairs and take charge of the military campaigns.

Muslims, having been in the second level of socio-political strata, acted as middlemen between the Mongol rulers and their subjects. The Mongols took advantage of Muslims' economic skills and employed them either officially or unofficially as tax collectors. Among the finance ministers, Ahmad, of Uighur origin, was the most notorious. He held this post for 25 years and was praised by Rashid al-Din for promoting Chinese trade with the Muslim world and presumably for protecting Muslim economic interest within China.[95] In other words, economic power and trade monopoly were in the hands of Muslims. Therefore Ahmad was accused by the Han Chinese of nepotism, exploitation and profiteering.[96] Nevertheless, he did bring a great deal of national revenue to the Yuan treasury. Ahmad's main policy was "to register all eligible taxpayers, to impose state monopolies on certain products, and to increase tax revenues."[97] By means of this imposition, Muslims benefited from the monopolies and were exempted from paying tax whilst the Han Chinese suffered from tax burdens.

The Ortag, the commercial association formed mostly of Muslims and the Mongol elite, also played a significant role in the Yuan economy. Muslims of the Ortags operated a sort of bank. They received loans from the central government or the Mongol aristocrats at a very low interest in order that they could sublend it to finance trade caravans or to Chinese merchants at a much higher level

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[94] This assumption contradicts Ibn Battuta's account on Chinese people's rejection of Islam. If Ibn Battuta's information were drawn from his own experience, he must have witnessed the preaching of Islam in China, but he does not give even the slightest information on this matter. His statement that Chinese rejected Islam must be from hearsay.

[95] Boyle, ibid., p.291.

[96] *Yuan Shi*, s.v. "Ahema (Ahmad)", Beijing: Zhonghua, 1976, bk 250, pp. 4558-63.

[97] Rossabi ibid., p.279.

of interest.[98] The partnership between the Ortag Muslim merchants and the Mongol elite was based on mutual benefit and advantage. The Ortag Muslim merchants were constatly accused of "usuriously exploiting people".[99]

A great number of Muslim military leaders' biographies are recorded in the *Yuan Shi*. These people made their military skills available to the Mongols and assisted them in building the Mongol Khanates. The three significant Mongol expeditions to the West, 1219-25 AD, 1236-42 AD, and 1252-58 AD, would not have been successful without the help of the Arab and Persian Muslims' advanced military techniques.

Their success in conquering the Song was attributed to three eminent Muslim commanders: Bai Yang, Sayyid Ya'qub Bayan, who was of Bahrayni origin from an Arab-Mongol family, [100] and who pacified the Yangzi River basin; Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din 'Umar, whose bringing Yunnan under the Mongol's dominion facilitated the final victory of the Mongols over the Song; and Pu Shougeng who, as mentioned previously, withdrew his support from the Song, thus hastening the collapse of the dynasty and defected to the Mongols.

The importance of the Muslims' political role in Yuan is beyond doubt. Their sophisticated diplomatic skills and experience in running state affairs were invaluable. Throughout the Mongol's realm, the status of Muslims was second only to that of the Mongol rulers themselves. According to the records in the *Yuan Shi*, Muslims occupied a great number of posts both in local and central government. More than 50% of central government and about 60 provincial posts

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[98] The Ortag existed before the Mongol conquest of China. The original purpose of this association was to raise capital for caravants travelling across Eurasia. In their earlier conquests the Mongol nobility used to borrow money from the Ortag merchants, and in return they granted tax-farming privileges to the Ortag Muslims merchants. Later Khubilai Khan set up the system in China after the Mongol conquest. see Rossabi, ibid., p.283, cf. A. L. Udovitch, "Commercial techniques in early Medieval Islamic trade", in D. S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the trade of Asia*, Philadelphia: University Press, 1970, pp. 37-50.

[99] Rossabi, ibid.,k p. 283. Cf Murakami Masatsugu, "Gencho ni Okeru Senfushi to Kandatsu", *Toho Gakuho*, 13:1 (1942), pp.143-96; Yuan Gaofan, "Yuandai Wuoto Guanqian", *Cong Yuandai Mengren Xisujunshi Lun Menggu Wenhua*, Taipei: Commercial Press, 1973, pp.98-111.

[100] Hajji Y. Chang, "Muslim encounter with the Mongols and its varied consequences for Muslims in West Asia and China", JIMMA, 5:2(1984), p.278-80. Also see Yuan Shi, s.v. "Bai Yang", book 27, pp.3099-3116.

were held by the Muslims.[101]

As a result of mass Muslim migration to China, and under the Mongol's rule, more elements of foreign culture and civilization were merged into the Han-Chinese society. There can be no doubt that Chinese culture in Yuan times was enriched by its Islamic counterpart, and became more multi-faceted. Muslims under the Yuan made a great contribution to Chinese culture and civilization, which is summed up in five main areas.[102]

Medicine and pharmacology

Between 1270 and 1322 AD, several Guanghui Si, imperial hospitals, were set up. Muslim doctors were employed to serve in them. In 1292 AD medical academies with Muslim physicians as teachers and researchers were established in Dadu (Beijing) and shandu. Since Islamic medicine was studied, Muslim pharmaceutical texts were translated into Chinese. It is said four volumes of *Huihui Yaofang*, Muslim Prescriptions, in 36 volumes of Ming manuscript still exist.

Astronomy and the calendar

In 1267AD the Persian astronomer, Jamal al-Din brought the science of astronomy to China from the observatory at Maraghen in Azerbayjan, which had been established by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in 1258 AD. Jamal al-Din co-operated with the Chinese astronomer Guo Shoujing to invent a new calendar called "Shoushili" which was used for the next 300 years. In 1271 AD, an institute of Islamic astronomy was established in the capital, with several offices of various ranks and 18 astronomers. In 1284 AD, Muslims took over the main calendar-marking role from the Chinese.

Military engineering

Although the Mongols were good at the military strategy of their time, they

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101 *Yuan Shi*, bks*112*, *113*, *pp.2789-2832* and charts; *Xin Yuanshi*, bk32, p.1 chart 6.

102 Leslie, ibid., pp.34ff; Chen Bolian, *Yisilan Wenhua*, Taipei: Commercial Press, 1972, pp.62-78.

still resorted to Muslim ballistic expertise. Two Muslim military engineers provided great assistance to the Mongol forces in the siege of Fanchen city and Xiangyang in the expeditions against the Southern Song dynasty. They were Isma'il and 'Ala' al-Din, who were sent by Khubilai Khan's nephew Abakha of the Ilkhanate in Persia. They built a mangonel and a catapult, which were capable of hurling huge rocks over a considerable distance. In 1274 AD a special office in charge of arsenal was set up, then expanded in 1281 AD, and further developed with a post of commissioner in 1285.

Architecture

The Mongols imported craftsmen and architects en masse from Muslim Central Asia to build their palaces and other magnificent buildings. Khubilai selected a Muslim named Yehaitie'er (Yahya?) to help in designing his capital at Dadu. In spite of its Chinese style in appearance, the architecture by Yehaitie'er was much appreciated by western travellers such as Marco Polo. During the Yuan period, Muslims constructed mosques and minarets throughout China. The two great mosques in Hangzhou were built by a Shaykh al-Islam, 'Ala' al-Din and a wealthy Egyptian merchant who claimed to be a descendant of the Caliph 'Uthman.'

Language and culture

Due to the intensive East-West communication, Persian was one of the main languages used by the Mongol court. In 1289 AD, Huihui Guozixue, the National Muslim Academy, was established in Dadu to train translators. Muslim teachers were employed to teach the Yi-si-tie-fei language. Sons of aristocrats and the middle class were admitted with full grants to study there. On completion of their studies, they were appointed by the government to various offices. The Yisitiefei language is a myth to modern scholars. Yuan sources do not give a single reference to it. Scholars consider it might be Soghdian, Persian or Arabic script which was the script common to Central Asians. It must have been a kind of language used by the Muslims at that time, otherwise Central Asian Muslim teachers would not have been employed to teach it. Muslims also contributed to map-making, music, arts, crafts, cuisine, games (or sport) and especially literature. Further more comprehensive study of hese contributions is still needed.

Although they were basically Shamanists, the attitude of the Mongol rulers towards religions was generally tolerant. The Mongol Khans gave considerable religious freedom to Muslims. However, some Khans sometimes put restrictions on the ritual slaughter of animals for food and on circumcision.[103] Before Khubilai Khan, who had been enraged by some Muslim merchants offending his authority and promulgated an anti-Muslim edict,[104] the restrictions were rarely enforced. The anti-Muslim law led to a decline in foreign trade, and fewer Muslims came to China on business. Thus, Khubilai Khan was later advised to relax the restrictions in order to attract more business from Muslims.

It was probably due to the Mongols' gradual sinicization that the socio-political status of Muslims receded. In 1311-12 AD the Muslim Qadi post was abrogated, and restricted to a non-legal function only, i.e. simpley dealing with religious matters.[105] In 1321 AD the Islamic academy was also closed down. Finally in 1328 the post of Qadi, Zhangjiao, and its religious function, were completely abolished.[106]

Anti-Islamic law dissatisfied Muslims immensely. By the end of the Mongol rule, several Muslim insurrections broke out;[107] again, Muslims were said to have played a significant role in the revolt to overthrow the Yuan-Mongol rule and in the establishment of the Ming dynasty. After the downfall of the Mongol-Yuan

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[103] Rossabi, ibid., pp.261, 263; V.A. Riasanovsky, Fundamental Principles of Mongol law, Bloomington: Indiana University Press., 1965, p.83.

[104] Boyle, ibid., pp.293-4; *Yuan Shi*, bk 10, pp.217-18; W. Heyd, *Historire du commerce de Levant au moyen age*, vol. 2, trans., F. Raynaud, Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968, p.245.

[105] Tazaka, ibid., pp.750-3, 827-8; J. W. Daress, ibid., p.51; *Yuan Dianzhang*, facsimile of 1898, Taipei: Shijie, 1962, bk53, p.3.

[106] The Qadis and Shaykhs mentioned in Ibn Battuta's accounts were probably local community leaders. They still existed after the official abolition by the Yuan court. They were in fact not responsible to the Yuan court. The post of Qadi which was abolished, was that in the capital. In the rest of China, Muslims communities were still self-governed by their religious leaders.

[107] For the Muslim uprisings see Maejima Shinji, "The Muslims in Ch'uan-chou at the end of the Yuan Dynasty", *MRDTB*, 31 (1973), pp.27-51, and 32 (1974), pp.47-71; Zhang Xinglang, "The rebellion of the Persian Garrison in Ch'uan-chou (AD 1357-1366)", *Monumenta Serica*, 3 (1938), pp.611-27; M. Rossabi, "Muslim and Central Asian revolts", in ed. J. D. Spence & J. E. Wills, *From Ming to Ching: conquest region, and continuity in 17th China*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, pp.169-99; Tazaka, ibid., pp.665-6.

dynasty, the Muslim condition entered a new phase, and Islam gradually put down roots in China and took on a character of its own.

Muslims under the Ming dynasty (1380-1644 AD)

After the downfall of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty, the political status of Muslims in China was gradually lowered to beneath that of the Han Chinese since, under Ming rule, the latter regained control of the state, and revived puritanical Confucianism. Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming dynasty, himself a Han Chinese, sought to legitimize his seizure of power by invoking traditional Confucian doctrine. This he did by cultivating the symbols (ceremony, language, dress) of Confucian rule and by supressing the remnants of the heterodox origins of the Mongol-Yuan regime,[108] one result of which was that foreign males who married Chinese women were forced to take their wives' surnames.[109]

Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to eliminate all foreign elements and influence from Chinese society by means of a so-called "anti-barbarism" policy and, once begun, the process of sinicization was continued by his dynastic successors, such that the Ming dynasty has generally been regarded as an important era of Chinese resurgence. After almost 100 years of adjustment to a Chinese environment during the Mongol-Yuan rule, during which they had to transplant themselves to the so-called *Dar al-Harb* from the Islamic world and had adopted non-Islamic Chinese mores and gradually integrated themselves into Chinese society, Muslims in China now had further to develop their own characteristics in the mainstream of Islam.

Some scholars have suggested that the sole aim of the policy of sinicization was to eliminate foreign cultural elements which would sever the links of Muslims with their co-religionists in other countries since, after the expulsion of the Mongol dynasty, communication with the Islamic lands was virtually cut.[120] This can only be regarded as part of the reason, however, since we learn from

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[108] Ed. Dreye, *Early Ming China, a political history*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982, p.65.

[109] Leslie, ibid. p.106.

[110] T. W. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, 2nd ed., London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1913, p.299; R. Israeli also suggests that during the Yuan period Muslim isolation from the Chinese intellectual currents was broken down during the Ming, thus opening the door to sinicization. See R. Israeli, *Muslims in China*, p.83 and details in chapter 4.

Ming historians that the Ming court maintained its contacts with Central Asian Islamic states.

Scholars who consider that Muslims in China were isolated from their co-religionists elsewhere in the world seem to have ignored the several missions of Fu An (1395-1416 AD) and others sent by the first Ming emperor to Central Asia and other north-west neighbouring countries, which are evidence of the continuity of relations between China and Islamic lands. Enoki has shed some light on these external relations, which are worthy of more detailed study outside the scope of this paper.[111] The missions had both political and economic aims. Whilst the main aim seems to have been to re-establish good relations with the area's former Mongol vassals, to obtain their recognition and to attract rich tributes to the Ming court, a subsidiary motive was probably to obtain information about the situations of these countries for use in subsequent expeditions. (Unfortunately for the Ming, they were never as successful as the Mongols in extending their authority in that area.)

Fu An was sent to Samarkand and Bishbalik, and was detained there on and off for 23 years. During his detention in the Timurid land, he was taken on a tour of the country and neighbouring states. After he had returned to China, he edited a collection of poems, titled *Xiyou Shenglan Shijuan* (Poems written on the curious things seen on a travel to the West), which describes those lands.[112]

Whilst Muslims in China were not completely isolated, the Ming period saw no more mass immigrations of Muslims to China. A new situation emerged in which, having established a religious identity under the Mongol-Yuan, Chinese Muslims now had to assume a social identity as one element of the great Chinese nation, as they began to evolve from "Muslims in China" to "Muslim Chinese" or "Chinese Muslims".

Despite their imposition of Han rule and Confucianism upon non-Han peoples, the Ming rulers had a considerable respect for their Muslim subjects and the Islamic religion. Some Chinese Muslim scholars have assumed the Ming royal family as well as certain of the first Emperor Zhu's prominent generals such as Mu Ying, Tie Xuan and Chang Yucun, who were the architects of the dynasty, to have been

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[111] Kaszuo Enoki, "Fu An's mission to Central Asia", *MRDTB*, 35(1977), pp.219-231.

[112] Further study on Fu An's mission should be done and compared with Timurid history in order to shed light on Sino-Islamic relations. Such study would also shed more light on the Timurid history.

Muslims. They also think that since Zhu Yuanzhang's empress was from the Ma clan, most of whom were Muslims, she might also have been a Muslim. However official historical sources provide no convincing proof whatever of any of these claims, and they are at best conjecture.[113]

At the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Hongwu, foreign religions such as Manichaeiam and Christianity were under threat of proscription in China.[114] Islam was an exception, however, for it was not considered incompatible with Confucianism. Indeed, Emperor Hongwu extended many privileges to the Muslims and their situation improved during the first half of the dynasty. This can be seen from the erection of numerous mosques,[115] and is shown by the *Hundred Character Inscription of Eulogy of the Prophet Muhammad* in several mosques, which has been ascribed to Emperor Hongwu himself. The edict says:

> At the beginning of the Universe, as appointed by Heaven, the great sage lived in the Far-west and taught his people a new religion. The sage, of highest virtue, love and kindness, discovered and recited the Sacred Book Tianjing (Al-Qur'an). Leading the other sages, he was sent by Heaven to protect kings and kingdom. He is impartial and upholds justice. The 'White Emperor' from Heaven shows us the right way to go. Pray five times a day. May he give us everlasting peace. The founder of that religion extends a helping hand to all, saves us from distress, sets free the evil spirit, forgives our sins,

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[113] Most Chinese Muslims believe that the Ming royal family were Muslims and practised Islam within the palace. Shaykh Hikman M. D. Ma, former Professor of Turkish Language and Islam in Taiwan has published a book on this issue: [Ma Mingdao, *Mingchao Huangjia Xinyang Kao Chugao* (Primary research on the religious belief of the Ming royal family), Taipei: Chinese Islamic Cultural and educational Foundation, 1985.] He concludes that the founder of the Ming dynasty was indeed a Muslim and adhered to Islamic doctrines during his rule. Prof Ma's work is very interesting, but his interpretation of Ming official records on sensitive points cannot be regarded as scientific, since his stance is Muslim throughout, and he does not produce convincing proof. Moreover he does not elaborate on why a Muslim emperor with the strong backing of his Muslim generals had to eliminate foreign elements such as Muslim customs. This indeed requires further objective research.

[114] Tazaka, ibid., pp.857, 874.

[115] Leslie, ibid., p.106; Fu Tongxian gives more details on the mosques which were built and repaired during the first emperor's rule; ibid., pp.109-111.

conquers deities. Let us all join the Muslims and revere the sage Muhammad.[116]

It is also suggested by Chinese Muslim scholars that, during the Yongle reign, the second Ming emperor, Chenzu, proclaimed in an edict, hung in the Qingjin mosque in Quanzhou, that Mili Hajj (an imam) was to be protected by imperial law from any insult or attack by anyone in the country.[117] The edict explains that this was due to his loyalty to the Ming court and his highly esteemed Confucian morality, though this special treatment should not be taken to mean that the emperor favoured all Muslims.

Of all Ming emperors, the most well-disposed towards Muslims was Wu Zhong. It is said that he was always favourably influenced by his Muslim concubines and eunuchs.[118] Emperor Wu Zhong was born in the year of the Pig and the imperial family name was "Zhu", a homophone of the Chinese word for pig. Wherever the emperor went, his Muslim guards forbade people either to keep pigs or to slaughter them for food.[119] Since the emperor was surrounded by Muslims and favoured them, he even issued an edict to praise Islam:

> The Confucian study can begin things and complete tasks in society, but it is inadequate for penetrating the Spirit or understanding transformations of nature. The study of the Buddhists of Taoists can get close to penetrating the Spirit and understanding transformations, but it cannot comply with the Heaven's decree or reach to the truth. The way of each teaching holds one side only. It is only the teaching of the Pure and True (Islam) which recognises the Lord that can penetrate to the

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[116] Fu Tongxian, ibid., p.91; Jin Jitang, ibid., p.154; Liu Zhi, *Tianfang Zhishen Shilu*, (Annalistic biography of the Prophet of Islam) facsimile of 1778, Beijing: Chinese Islamic Association, 1984, bk20, pp. 358; P. C. Low, "100-character Psalm on Islam by the first Ming Emperor", *Friends of Muslims*, 11:2(1937), p.39. English translation see Leslie, ibid., p.105. The authenticity of this edict is doubtful for it contradicts the emperor's policy on foreign elements in Chinese cultures

[117] Fu Tongxian, ibid., p.92.

[118] It is doubtful that Muslims would serve in the palace as eunuchs. The official records of the imperial household do not clarify that Muslims were employed in the palace as eunuchs.

[119] Fu Tongxian, ibid., pp.92-3; Jin Jitang, ibid., pp.158-9; Tazaka, ibid., pp.884-5, 928.

principle of things, that is why it will last for 10,000 generations and until Heaven falls.[120]

Amongst influences other than political of the Yuan Muslims which continued into Ming times was their talent in astronomy and the drawing up of calendards. In 1382/83 AD Muslims were employed by the court to revise the Islamic calendar which had been adopted in 1368/69 AD based on the date 599 AD (instead of 622 AD) for the Hijra. (This led to the Chinese Muslims' miscalculation of the arrival of Islam in China.) The Yuan imperial bureau of astronomy was renamed as the Qingtianjian and divided into four departments: Astronomy, Clepsydra, Calendar and Islamic Calendar, and a Book of Islamic Astronomy, *Huihui Tianwen Shu*, was written and prefaced by the Shaykh al-Islam named Ma Sa-yi-hei (Shaykh Ma), and Wu Bozong, a Hanlin Academy Jiantao (Supervisor of the Imperial Academy). It has survived to the present day.[121]

Following the exchange of ambassadors between the Ming court and Central Asian countries, it is said that in 1412 the Timurid ruler Shan Rukh Bahadur at Samarkand received the Ming envoys at his court and tried to preach Islam to them, including in his reply an invitation to the emperor to embrace Islam. Two letters from the Shah, one in Arabic with rhetorical embellishments and the other in Persian with a more direct appeal to the emperor, were carried by the Shah's missionary who accompanied the Ming envoys on their return to the Ming court.[122] It is doubtful whether the two letters were ever received by the emperor, however, for there is no such record in the Ming annals. It is also unlikely that the emperor would have embraced Islam, as most Chinese Muslims believe he did, and as certain Western scholars have suggested.[123]

Whereas the Emperor Hongwu sent Fu An and others on overland missions to Islamic lands, the Emperor Yongle despatched Zheng He on sea expeditions.

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[120] Liu Zhi, ibid.; Fu Tongxian, ibid.; cf Tazaka, ibid., pp.882-3. Non-Muslim scholars agree that this is a Muslim forgery. For the English translation of the edict see Leslie, ibid., p.114.

[121] Fu Tongxian, ibid., pp.93-95.

[122] These two letters have been translated into English by Arnold in his book: *The preaching of Islam*, pp.299-302.

[123] Arnold, ibid., p.302; J. T. Zenker, "Das chinesische Reich, nach dem turkischen Khitainame" *ZDMG*, 15 (1861), pp.798-9; Ch. Schefer, "Khitay Namah d'Ali Akbar", Mélanges Orientaux (de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes, Paris), ser. ii. 9 (1883) p.65.

Zheng He and his seven sea voyages have been studied thoroughly by both Chinese and Western Sinologists, although on certain points, no definite conclusions have been reached. Here we shall briefly discuss three of them.

Zheng He was generally regarded as of Muslim origin by most sinologists, both Chinese and Western. His original name was Ma He. He was born into the Hajj Ma clan of Kunyang county in Yunnan. His great-grandfather was named Bayan, a traditional Central Asian Muslim name which has been misunderstood by some Western scholars as a Mongol name. Mills suggests that Bayan was perhaps a member of a Mongol garrison stationed in Yunnan.[124]

The official biography of Zheng He in the *Ming Shi* (Ming Annal) does not mention his origin. Nevertheless, the inscription on his father, Ma Hajj's tombstone indicates that an ancestor of this family came from Central Asia (Xiyu) to settle in Yunnan and married a Chinese Muslim woman, adopting the woman's surname, Ma.[125] There can be no doubt that Zheng He came from a devout Muslim family. Chinese Muslim scholars also argue that Zheng He's family might be the descendants of the Founder of Islam in Yunnan, Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din 'Umar, and he was the sixth generation from Sayyid Ajall.[126] This is not impossible, but we do not have solid evidence for it.

Zheng He was born around 1371 AD. His early education is unknown, but he seemed to have studied military arts, and distinguished himself in quelling a rebellion in Yunnan.[127] According to Zheng He's geneaology, he was a knowledgable person and mastered the doctrines of Confucianism and Menscianism.[128] It was not uncommon for a sinicized Muslim to have studied traditional Confucianism. Most Chinese Muslim authors regard Zheng He as having been given an Islamic education from his early childhood until, at the age of twenty, he entered the service of the Emperor Yongle who was at that time the fourth prince of the Emperor Hongwu and later usurped the throne from his nephew, Emperor Huidi and became the third emperor of the dynasty.

It is also believed that Zheng He might have converted to Buddhism, for he

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124 J. V. Mills, *Ma Huan, Yingyai Shenglan: the overall survey of the ocean's shores (1433)*, Cambridge: University Press, 1970, p.5.

125 See the quote in Fu Tongxian, ibid., p.97.

126 Zheng Hesheng, *Zheng He Yishi Huibian*, Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju, 1978, p.5.

127 P. Pelliot, "Les grands voyages maritimes chinois au debut du XV siècle", T'oung Pao, 30(1933), p.275.

128 Zheng Hesheng, ibid., p.19.

had a Buddhist monk's designation, Fu Shan[129] and often resorted to temples for prayer before setting out to sea. It is not very likely that Zheng He would have become a Buddhist in later life. He may well have respected other religions, especially the dominant Chinese religion, for the people surrounding him would have been mostly non-Muslims, and as a court-appointed leader of the imperial mission, he would not have shown any religious bias against others. Alternatively, the name Fu Shan could have been a corruption by a non-Muslim Chinese of a Muslim name such as Husayn or Hassan.

Another unsettled argument about Zheng He is whether he was a eunuch. Generally he was regarded as a eunuch official by most sinologists for he held the title "Taijian", which has been traditionally interpreted as "Grand Eunuch", Superintendant of the Office of Eunuchs. According to his biography in the *Ming Shi* and other sources, Zheng He was of normal appearance with a tall figure and a very sonorous voice. He was supposed to have entered the military service of Prince Yen, later the third emperor, when he was in his early twenties. It is very unlikely that a castrated young man could have served in the army. Some Chinese scholars have put forward quite convincing arguments to prove Zheng He's non-eunuch identity, by interpreting his official title, Sanbao Taijian, not as grand eunuch, but as that of a regular office in the Ming court.[130]

The significance of Zheng He's seven sea expeditions was principally as a great contribution to the history and technology of navigation, and this has been universally recognized. The aims of these naval expeditions, however, were obscure, for they were not well documented by the official Ming records. Nevertheless, it is likely that Zheng He was merely carrying out Ming court policy, which was to restore Chinese authority over and re-establish relations with those countries which had been vassals of the Mongol-Yuan. Mills sums up most scholars' conclusions thus:

> . . . It seems probable that the emperor (Yong-le) was actuated by a desire to enhance his own personal prestige by a flattering display of might, which would result in a throng of foreign ambassadors seeking audience at his court. He probably wished to re-establish the renown of China as a leading political and cultural state and secure its hegemony over the eastern world by a manifestation of its power and wealth, and he probably also desired to expand overseas commerce, particularly

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[129] Jian Hong, *Admiral Zhenghe*, Taipei: Zhonghua, 1986, p.10.
[130] Zheng Hesheng, ibid., pp.19, 179-80; Hikmah Ma, ibid., pp.59-61.

> with the countries of the occident, since this yielded profit to the treasury, brought prosperity to those engaged in it, and introduced goods badly needed by the court and country, especially since the conquests of Timur Lang [Tamburlaine] had cut the continental silk-route.[131]

For the most part, Mills' assertion is correct, but it should be noted that the policy of expansion was encouraged not only by Emperor Yongle, but had been established by the first emperor.

Being a Muslim, Zheng He had not only brought fresher information to improve Chinese knowledge of Islamic lands, but also left behind useful historical sources on Islam in China. It is suggested that Zheng He himself set up several inscriptions, including a trilingual one in Ceylon in 1409 AD, in Chinese, Tamil, and Persian. There are several Muslim inscriptions by him or linked to his name. One of the most important is the 1430 tablet preserved in Nanjing, written by the Emperor Yongle, concerning the religion of Islam:

> I have received your report that you are going to rebuild the mosque situated on Sanshan street in the city of Nanking which was destroyed by fire, in order to pray and protect the personnel and cargo of expedition. This is your honoured desire, how could I object? You are the court's ambassador to distant regions, once you have made up your mind, how could I destroy your desire? To avoid deficiencies in the craftsmen and materials you need, and thus a delay in the date of completion, you may draw necessary funds from the Nanking Public Inspector's office or the Ministry of works. With the first wind and tide, set out on your expedition. This is my order.[132]

This edict is an ample proof of the esteem in which both Zheng He and those of his faith were held by the emperor.

Written records on the Islamic territories, part of the output from Zheng He's naval expeditions were supplied by some of the interpreters who accompanied him. Among these works, Ma Huan's Yingya Shenglan is a most valuable source of geographical data and is regarded as the most informative among this kind of literature. His accounts are superior to those of previous travellers such as Ibn

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[131] Mills, ibid., p.1.
[132] Leslie, ibid., p.108.

Battuta, Wang Dayuan or Fei Xin.[133]

Ma Huan's work has been studied by numerous Sinologists and the most comprehensive English translation is that of Mills. However, due to lack of information on his life we do not know much about Ma Huan. Western studies are basically conjecture based on the foreword to his work. There is no doubt that Ma Huan was a Muslim, but we cannot be sure whether he was so born or a Han convert. Mills' assertion that Ma Huan adopted Islam at an unknown date and that his informal alias, Shan Qiao (Mountain woodcutter), indicates the humble background of his family, is totally unconvincing. Ma Huan could have been a sincized Muslim, who learned Chinese in later life. Usually Muslims in China learned their religious languages, Persian or Arabic in their childhood, then would learn Chinese in order to seek a career in government offices. Moreover, the fact that he was employed as translator indicates that his first language must have been either Arabic or Persian as he had no problems when he was in Arabic and Persian speaking countries. This was something that Zheng He would have taken advantage of. The informal alias was probably his way of indicating his aspiration for an ascetic mountain life.

Both overland missions and naval expeditions in the Ming dynasty led to the development of trade and diplomatic relations with Central Asian and Southwestern Asian and African countries. We know from accounts scattered throughout the *Ming Shi* and *Ming Shilu* (Records of Ming court) that a great number of merchants and envoys came to China and attended the Ming court. Watanabe has updated Tazaka's chronological list of these ambassadorial and other missions and made a detailed index.[134] According to him, there were no fewer than 129 tribute missions to the Ming court from 131 countries, 88 of them by land and 41 by sea.

It is doubtful that all the missions and ambassadors were genuine officials sent by their rulers. Indeed, it has often been noted that so many merchants came to China from the West to trade, pretending to be ambassadors dispatched by rulers of Western and Central Asian countries. Even the Ming officials made complaints about pseudo-tribute-bearers.[135] In no sense was the contact with Muslim countries

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[133] Mills, ibid., p.44-45.

[134] Watanabe Hiroshi, "An index of embassies and tribute missions from Islamic countries to Ming China (1368-1466) as recorded in the Ming Shih-lu classified according to geographic area", *MRDTB*, 33 (1975), pp.285-347.

[135] Kazuo Enoki, ibid., p.222; also see: Ch. Schefer's partial translation of 'Ali Akbar's *Khitay Namah* in *Melanges Orientaux*, Paris: L'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes, 1883, p.62; and the record of Beneto de Goes reconstructed by Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ficciane*, II, P.413.

interrupted after the downfall of the Mongol Yuan, and Muslims in China were kept well-informed of their co-religionists in other countries. This contrasts strongly with what certain scholars, such as Israeli, suggest; namely, that the severing of contact accelerated the sinification of Chinese Muslims.

Official Ming records supply very little information about Muslims in China; thus, in order to obtain the relevant information we have to resort to personal writings by both Muslims and non-Muslims as well as local gazetteers. This is a painstaking task, and requires separate study.[136] Non-Muslims' accounts on Muslims are not without bias. Matteo Ricci, the well-known contemporary Jesuit missionary in China, observes the Muslim communities:

> . . . the Saracens are everywhere in evidence, and except for some few of them, they are always looked upon as outsiders. Due to their rapid propagation, they have become so numerous that their thousands of families are scattered about in nearly every province and are to be found in nearly every sizeable city. In the cities in which they are numerous they have their own temples (mosques), built at great expense, where their children are circumcised and in which they recite prayers at stated times and hold other religious functions.
>
> So far we have noted up to the present, the Saracens here make no effort to spread their doctrines among others. Save for the fact that they do not eat pork, they live according to Chinese law, are quite ignorant of their own ritual, and looked down upon by the Chinese. At present they are treated as natives and are not held as suspects, like other strangers. In fact, they are admitted to literary studies and to public degrees without discrimination and even to the magistracy. Most Saracens who attain to a Chinese literary degree renounce the law of their ancestors, except the precept forbidding them to eat the flesh of swine. In this observance, however, they really abstain because of a natural abhorrence rather than from any religious motive.[137]

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[136] Leslie has carried out some basic research on this, providing at least superficial picture of the Muslim communities. See ibid., p.112-13.

[137] Matteo Ricci, *China in the 16th century, the Journals of Matteo Ricci: 185-1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher, New York: Columbia University Press, 1953, p.107.

Another observation by a Ming contemporary Muslim traveller, 'Ali Akbar from the Ottoman court, also gives some information about the life of Muslims in China at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. 'Ali Akbar's work, entitled *Khitay-Nameh,* was written in Persian and dedicated to the Ottoman Yavuz Sultan Selim serving the Sultan as part of the information needed for his expansion policy. This work had been neglected by most of the Orientalists, and until the beginning of this century, when it was noticed and studied by the German scholar Kahle and two Turkish Central Asian Sinologists, Togan and Ogil.[138] Only three manuscripts of this work survive and are kept in the Aya Sofia and Suleymaniya libraries in Istanbul. Here is a description of Muslim life in China, which was partially translated by the late French Orientalist, Ch. Schefer:

> Des idolâtres, dit-il, des adorateurs du Veau, des chrétiens et des juifs ont jadis pénétré en Chine et s'y sont établis. Les lois de cet empire permettent à tous ceux qui se présentent venant des différent pays, de s'y fixer après en avoir fait la déclaration. Si ceux qui arrivent ne souscrivent pas tout d'abord à cette condition, et s'ils disent être des marchands ou des ambassadeurs, on ne leur permet pas de résider dans le pays. Le nombre des Musulmans qui, ayant consenti à être les sujets de l'Empereur, ont fixé leur rèsidence dans ses états, est fort considérable. Il y a, assure-t-on, dans la ville de Ken djan fou, trent mille familles musulmanes, et l'empereur a fait construire quatre mosquées a Khan Baligh.
>
> Les Chinois n'ont de sentiments hostiles contre qui que ce soit, sous prétexte de religion; ils ne manifestent à ce sujet aucune inimitié, surtout aux Musulmans, et c'est pour leur croyance qu'ils manifestent le plus de goût et de penchant.
>
> On rapporte que les hauts fonctionnaires présentèrent à l'empereur une requête, pour lui exposer que des milliers de familles musulmanes vivaient au milieu de la population, et y étaient comme l'ivraie au milieu du blé. Ne serait-il pas possible, disaient-ils, de nous de débarrasser. Il

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[138] It has been argued by a Chinese Turcologist that 'Ali Akbar did not himself visit China, and *Khitay-Nameh* was compiled by Akbar adopting accounts from previous works such as Qiyas al-Din al-Naqqas' *Sefername-i Cin* and 'Ali Kushchu's work which is lost. See Lin Yimin, "'Ali Akbar zhi 'Khitay-nama' yu Zhongguo Shiliao de Bijiao Yanjiu", *Dongfang Zazhi*, 3(1978), pp.172-78.

faut remarquer, en outre, ajoutaient-ils, que les Musulmans ne versent aucune somme au trésor. L'empereur fit une réponse en trois points: Mes ancêtres, dit-il, n'ont point agi dans ce sens, comment pourrions-nous ne pas nous conformer à leur conduite? Mon autorité a le droit de s'exercer sur leurs actes publics, mais comment m'est-il possible de m'occuper de leurs sentiments intimes? Plaise au Ciel, dit-il en terminant, que nous puissions jouir du même bonheur qu'eux, et pratiquer L'Islamisme! Certaines actions du Khaqan font supposer qu'il a adopté secrètement les doctrines de L'Islamisme, mais qu'il n'ose en faire publiquement profession.[139]

If Ricci's account is accurate, the Muslims in China had integrated into Chinese society by the end of the Ming dynasty. They took up traditional Chinese education to study the classics and absorbed Confucian philosophy but rejected other religions such as Buddhism and Taoism, which they regarded as idolatrous. This helped the Muslims to achieve a more advanced intellectual level. As a result, the renaissance of Islam in China was instigated, and a great number of Muslim writings on Islam in Chinese appeared from the end of Ming times onwards. Since the integration and religious renaissance occurred in parallel, the Muslims of China thus developed their own religious characteristics, which are quite distinct from those of Muslims in other parts of the world. Later, when they received the impact of Islamic revivalism from outside the country during the Qing dynasty, Islam in China moved into a new phase.

Conclusion

Muslims in China from the Tang to the Ming periods passed through various social status. In the Tang and the Song they were foreign visitors, although some of them did settle down in China and became Chinese subjects. During the Mongol-Yuan period they were rather in controling position in politics and economics, which is much higher than the Han. However, during the Ming, they no longer enjoyed those privileges during the privious dynasties. They had been gradually assimilated

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[139] Ch. Schefer, "Notice sur les relations des peuples musulmans avec les Chinois, . . .", *Centenaire de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes, 1795-1897*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1895, pp.29-30. The emperor mentioned in Akbar's account seems to refer to Emperor Wuzong (r. 1506-22 AD). Cf Leslie, ibid., p. 114.

into the melting pot of Han culture, and social status was equal to that of the Han. Their status changed from "Muslims in China" to "Chinese Muslims". The history of Muslims under Manchu-Qing rule is rather complicated to describe in this historical survey. The Manchus, unlike the Mongols, did not have good relations with the Muslims. During the so-called "High Qing Period", the golden era of Qing rule, Muslims still lived peacefully among their Han Chinese counterparts. However, from the beginning of the 18th century onwards, Muslims suffered more socio-political repression. They thus, broke their silence and rose up to fight for due justice. This led to great revolts that spread over Northwest and Southwest China. These movements either religious or political oriented deserve special attention from modern scholars for thorough studies.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

An Lushan 安祿山
Anxi 安息
Ban Gu 班固
Catone 廣東
Chang'an 長安
Chang Yucun 長玉春
Dashi 大食
Dadu 大都（北京）
Daye 大業
Emperor Wudi 漢武帝
Fanchen 樊城
Fan Ye 范燁
Fu An 傅安
Fujian 福建
Fu Shan 福善
Fei Xin 費信
Gan Ying 甘英
Ganzhou Fu 甘州府（？）
Gaozu 高祖
Guanzhou 廣州
Guo Shoujing 郭守敬
Hainan 海南
Hangzhou 杭州
Hanshu 漢書
Hongwu 洪武
Huihui Guozixue 回回國子學
Huihui Yaofang 回回藥方
Huihui Yuanlai 回回源來
Huangchao 黃巢
Jiapu 家譜
Jurchen 女真
Kaihuang 開皇
Khitan 契丹
Khubilai 忽必烈
Kunyang (Xian) 昆陽縣
Lan Xu 藍煦
Later Zhou 後周
Linshan 靈山
Liu Zhi 劉智
Ma Huan 馬歡
Ma Sa'yihei 馬沙亦黑
Ma Zhu 馬注
Mili Hajj 米里哈智
Mingzhou 明州

Mingshi 明史
Mingshilu 明實錄
Minshu 閔書
Mu Ying 沐英
Ortag 斡脫
Posi 波斯
Pu Shougeng 蒲壽庚
Qingjin Mosquo 清淨寺
Quanzhou 泉州
Saidenchi (Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din) 賽典赤
Shan Qiao 山樵
Shaoxing 紹興
Shiboshi 市舶史
Shibosi 市舶司
Shiji 史記
Shoushili 授時曆
Sima Qian 司馬遷
Song Huiyao 宋會要
Songshi 宋史
Sui 隋
Suzong 肅宗
Taijian 太監
Taizong 太宗
Taizu 太祖
Talas 怛邏斯
Tiaozhi 條支
Tienfang Zhengxue 天方正學
Tie Xuan 鐵玄
Tingshi 程史
Wang Da'yuan 汪大淵
Wei 魏
Wenxian Tongkao 文獻通考
Wu Bozong 吳伯宗
Wu jian 吳鑒
Wude 武德
Wuzong 武宗
Xiangfen 嚮墳
Xiangyang 襄陽
Xianzong 憲宗
Xilai Zongpu 西來宗譜
Xin Yuanshi 新元史
Xiyou Shenglan Shijuan 西遊勝覽詩卷
Xiyu Zhuang 西域傳
Yangdi 煬帝
Yangzhou 揚州
Yehaitie'er 也黑鐵兒
Yingya Shenglan 瀛涯勝覽
Yisitiefei 亦思迭非
Yongle 永樂
Yuanshi 元史
Yue Ke 岳柯
Zengguan 貞觀
Zhang Qian 張騫
Zhangjiao 掌教
Zhao Rugua 趙汝适
Zheng He 鄭和
Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋
Zhufan Zhi 諸蕃誌