

The Great Transformation: Contours of the Sino-Islamic Intellectual Tradition

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Abstract

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During the early modern period, Muslims in China began to embrace the Chinese characteristics of their heritage. Following centuries of cultural and physical division between local inhabitants and Muslim settlers, Arab, Persian, and Central Asian people were slowly assimilating into Chinese society, intermarrying with native people, and gradually forgetting their original languages. The passage of time and their isolation from the Islamic heartland, however, did not prevent these Sino-Muslims from retrieving the Islamic canonical writings that they found essential in learning and teaching their faith. Several scholar-teachers began to incorporate tenets from traditional Chinese education into their promotion of Islamic knowledge. As a result, some Sino-Muslims established an educational network, the scripture hall educational system (*jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育), which utilized an Islamic curriculum made up of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese works.

The *Han Kitab* is the collective name of the corpus of Islamic texts written in Chinese that were produced within this system. Many of the *Han Kitab* texts were produced by a group of self-identified “Confucian Muslim” scholars (*Huiru* 回儒). This literature and the authors that produced it are valuable resources for understanding the role of intellectual networks and literary exchanges in the formation of religious beliefs. This study explores the contours of the Sino-Islamic intellectual tradition through the works of some of its brightest luminaries in order to identify and explicate pivotal transitions in their engagement with the Islamic tradition. Three prominent Sino-Muslim authors are representative of major junctures within the history of Sino-Islamic thought and are used to illustrate discursive transformations within this tradition, Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (1590-1658), Liu Zhi 劉智 (1670-1724), and Ma Dexin 馬德新 (1794-1874). Through an analysis of their writings on the subjects of *pilgrimage*, *scripture*, and *language*, I attempt to respond to several questions: how malleable are religious categories and why are they variously interpreted across time, how do changing historical circumstances affect the interpretation of religious beliefs and practices, how do individuals navigate multiple sources of authority, how do practices inform belief.

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***The Great Transformation:
Contours of the Sino-Islamic Intellectual Tradition
Introduction***

During the middle of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and into the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Muslims in China began to embrace the Chinese characteristics of their heritage. Following centuries of cultural and physical division between local inhabitants and Muslim settlers, Arab, Persian, and Central Asian people were slowly assimilating into Chinese society, intermarrying with native people, and gradually forgetting their original languages.¹ The passage of time and their isolation from the Islamic heartland, however, did not prevent these Sino-Muslims from retrieving the Islamic canonical writings that they found essential in learning and teaching their faith. Several scholar-teachers began to incorporate tenets from traditional Chinese education into their promotion of Islamic knowledge. As a result, some Sino-Muslim literati established an educational system, scripture hall education (*jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育), which utilized an Islamic curriculum made up of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese works.² The *Han Kitab* is the collective name of the corpus of Islamic texts written in Chinese that were produced within this system. Many of the *Han Kitab* texts were produced by a group of self-identified “Confucian Muslim” scholars (*Huiru* 回儒).³ This literature and the

¹ For an outline of the early history of Muslims in China, see Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986); and Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 24-57.

² Scripture hall education is examined in chapter 1. For an introduction, see Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Chinese Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

³ The earliest detection of this identification is from 1680 in the preface to Ma Zhu’s 馬注 (1640-1711) *Compass of Islam* (*Qingzhen zhinan* 清真指南), where 11 scholars were labeled *Huiru*. Later authors continued to use the term *Huiru*. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 143 and 160.

authors that produced it are valuable resources for understanding the intellectual history of the Sino-Muslim elite and the interplay between the traditions of China and Islam.

When we examine the role of Islam from a contemporary vantage point there is a convergence of truths that should inform how we approach the subject. The necessity to study this seemingly peripheral group of Muslims may not be particularly self-evident but warrants our attention for several reasons. Since the 1980s, China's relations with Muslim-majority nations in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are only growing stronger. China will soon surpass the United States in its demand for foreign oil derived from the rich deposits in the Middle East and Central Asia, making Chinese interests in these areas deepen. In connection to this, China serves a major supplier of military technology to Arab regimes, and it is evident that these connections have grown stronger.⁴ These facts ensure that the significance of Chinese-Islamic relations needs to be better understood for years to come. Therefore, any astute analysts of global Islam would benefit from knowledge of the long relationship between Chinese and Islamic civilizations. My research is situated with this broad goal in mind, that an informed appreciation of the historical dialogue between Chinese and Muslim cultures will yield new insights into China's relationship with the Muslim world, both past and present. More narrowly, I am interested in exploring a vernacular Islam that is grounded in the Chinese context but simultaneously articulates universal Muslim aspirations. As a global civilization, with roots in an Arab context, Muslims had to adapt to their changing local environments as

⁴ We can witness these bonds from recent events, such as the Chinese veto of the UN resolution against the Syrian regime in the Winter of 2012. Chinese interests in the region revolve around various national goals, not least though is their desire to limit Turkey's influence in the Middle East. Turkey is home to hundreds of Turkic Uyghur refugees, and has provided the base for several Uyghur organizations calling for an independent "East Turkistan." China wants to keep tight control on this ethnic population that comprises of almost half the population in Xinjiang, China, many of whom would like their own country. For more on Uyghurs in Turkey, see Gardner Bovington, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land* (Columbia University Press, 2010), 138-58; and Yitzhak Shichor, *Ethno-Diplomacy: The Uyghur Hitch in Sino-Turkish Relations* Policy Studies No. 53 (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2009).

they moved throughout Asia, where for hundreds of years up until the present the majority of Muslims have lived. Therefore, this study provides insights into key junctures within the development of Islam as a global religious and cultural phenomenon.

Overall, my goal is to explore the contours of the Sino-Islamic intellectual tradition through the works of some of its brightest luminaries and to identify and explicate pivotal transitions in their engagement with the Islamic tradition. Three prominent Sino-Muslim authors are representative of major junctures within the history of Sino-Islamic thought, Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (1590-1658), Liu Zhi 劉智 (1670-1724), and Ma Dexin 馬德新 (1794-1874), and will be used to illustrate the transformations within this tradition. These figures typify the inaugural, medial and concluding stages of pre-modern Sino-Muslim thought and represent characteristics of Sino-Islamic thought in general. By no means do I mean to assert that they describe all the strategies that Muslims used to understand Islam in the Chinese context; there were numerous others.⁵ However, they can be seen as exemplars of those individuals who chose to couch their Islamic tradition within the cultural and linguistic foundations of imperial China. Therefore, they make up the kernel of this study and from their work I outline the branches of Islamic thought in China.

Wang Daiyu (1590-1658) was the earliest important author within the Sino-Islamic tradition.⁶ He was born in the old Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) capital of Nanjing 南京 and died in the new capital of Beijing 北京, traveling little in between. He claimed

⁵ Lipman outlines various differing approaches of Muslims from Northwest China in *Familiar Strangers*.

⁶ The earliest Islamic theological texts in Chinese, of which there are no extant copies, are the *Investigation of the Teachings of Pure and True* (*Qingzhen jiaokao* 清真教考), the *Lord's Book of Explaining Obstructions* (*Junshu shiyi* 君書釋疑), and the *Teachings of the Arabian Sage* (*Tianfang shengjiao* 天方聖教), all of which are only known from their inclusion in Liu Zhi's 劉智 *Veritable Records of the Most Sagely of Islam* (*Tianfang zhisheng shilu* 天方至聖實錄). Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1981), 21.

his family came from “Arabia” (*Tianfang* 天房) over 300 years before his birth. Wang benefitted from being educated in the local scripture hall education system, which both shaped his thought and profited from his contributions. His works are the oldest extant Chinese texts discussing Islamic theology, philosophy and mysticism and he developed the framework for understanding Islam in the Chinese cultural context. During this initial period of Sino-Islamic scholarship during the seventeenth century, Wang focused on explicating the theological foundations behind Islamic faith and practice. His texts were written in a clear and direct style that focused on a range of subjects, from practical to philosophical in nature.

Liu Zhi was one of the most systematic scholars within the Sino-Islamic tradition. In general, he had a great affection for Neo-Confucianism and Chinese symbolism, portraying Islam as the greatest *dao* 道, or way, among many. Therefore, Islam was not in competition with the Confucian system but could be used as a supplement to it. Liu’s position was due, in part, to his wide reading of various philosophical systems but also to his training within the scripture hall system. Liu was educated in a well established institution in Nanjing that had produced several high level Islamic scholars, including Wang Daiyu. Among them was his teacher and father, Liu Sanjie 劉三傑, who was an accomplished author in his own right. Liu’s father often lamented that there was a lack of accessible Chinese works on Islam and greatly influenced Liu to write in Chinese. In addition to training at his local school, Liu spent eight years travelling throughout China reading an astonishing array of literature: Islamic treatises in Chinese, Arabic and Persian; Buddhist texts; Daoist literature; classical Chinese histories and philosophy; as

well as Western books.⁷ His work covered several categories of Islamic knowledge and presented these discussions in a nuanced convergence of Neo-Confucian and Islamic doctrine. His expositions were written in a highly sophisticated style that used the lexicon of technical Islamic terminology cloaked in Chinese religio-philosophical vocabulary. Liu Zhi represented a highpoint of the Chinese Islamic dialogue, which culminated in the presentation of his work to the Qianlong Emperor 乾隆帝 (1711-1799).⁸

Ma Dexin was the last major Sino-Muslim scholar of pre-modern China and characterized the final shift in Sino-Islamic thought, which maintained a strong literary connection between Chinese and Islamic sources while also emphasizing the importance of a pragmatic and scholarly relationship with the larger Muslim world. Ma was a prolific author, whose literary output covered most of the religious sciences, including instructional materials for students, a record of his *hajj* pilgrimage and the first attempt at a standardized Chinese translation of the Qur'an. During Ma's pilgrimage he spent many years studying in the Middle East. Upon his return, he became the most prominent scholar in southern China and the head cleric at the most important Islamic educational institution in Southern China, the Huilong 回龍 madrasa. He then began writing his works in Arabic and Chinese, often translating his own texts from one language to the other. His theological works explored the Arabic, Persian, and Chinese treatises of his predecessors by commenting, translating, and expanding on their works in a sophisticated Sino-Islamic diction. He was directly influenced by the work of prominent scholars such as Muhyī al-Dīn 'Alī ibn al-Arabī (1165-1240), Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256), 'Azīz

⁷ Liu refers to "Occidental Books" (*xiyang shu* 西洋書), which probably refer to books introduced by the Jesuits who populated Southeast China in eat numbers during the eighteenth century. See James D. Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name: Liu Zhi's Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 7.

⁸ See Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 215-35.

al-Dīn Nasafī (d. ca 700/1300), and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-1492). Ma Dexin’s work illustrated the features of the final trend in pre-modern Sino-Muslim intellectual life, reflecting a holistic approach where Sino-Muslim scholars were in dialogue with both the larger Islamic and Chinese worlds. From his writings, I delineate his importance within the Sino-Islamic tradition by illustrating his singularity and creativity.

Within this investigation greater weight is given to the examination of the life and works of Ma Dexin. There are two motives for concentrating on Ma and thoroughly situating him within the broader context of Sino-Islamic scholarship, the first practical and the later methodological. In general, there is still a great deal of work to be done on Sino-Islamic literary products but of the major pre-modern Sino-Muslim authors there exist almost no western scholarship on Ma’s work or influence. While further work is required to gather a comprehensive picture, the contributions of both Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi have been studied at length and there exists a clear picture of their thoughts and motives.⁹ Ma requires our extensive analysis in order to gather an inclusive picture of how pre-modern Sino-Islamic scholarship developed. Additionally, a conventional life and works project on Ma Dexin and his influence would not be able to carefully outline the nuances of his methodological and theoretical creativity. The Chinese explanation of Islam was created through a dialogical interpretation of various philosophies and beliefs. Ma’s thought, in particular, was built upon the two-hundred-year foundation of his predecessors and, therefore, any attempt to understand his teachings absent from this historical context would be partial and fragmentary. To do justice to Ma’s contribution and explain the context from which his positions were developed it is necessary to

⁹ A systematic study of these authors’ perspectives, which are based on a reading of their entire oeuvre, remains to be constructed. One of the most important contributions toward achieving this goal is Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

outline the trajectory of the Islamic intellectual tradition in China prior to his writing. To show how Ma Dexin was unique within this system, I juxtapose his teachings with those of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi whose work exemplify crucial stages in the development of Chinese Islamic intellectual history.

Through the writings of these three authors and the reception and interpretation of their work by their contemporaries I delineate the major shifts in the intellectual tradition of Sino-Muslims and their importance for understanding Islam in China and the Islamic intellectual traditions in general. The complexity of this objective is heightened by the hybrid quality of these authors' texts, which requires an analysis of various epochs, geographical locations, and languages. Decoding their translation of Islam involves unraveling the mystical and theological interpretation of contested understandings of their faith. It is necessary to explore the intertextuality of the Chinese and Islamic sources that were utilized by these authors in producing new texts and in delineating the dialogues that occurred between these philosophical and religious cultures. Therefore, the diverse meanings of these works will be individually situated within the linguistic, historical, and socio-political contexts that formulated them and sustained their importance amongst multiple generations.

The Limitations of Previous Scholarship and the Necessity of the Present Study

The present study investigates the pre-modern Sino-Islamic intellectual heritage by delineating pivotal transformations within the methodologies of Sino-Muslim writers and their approaches to the Islamic tradition. This is achieved by concentrating on the hybridity of the texts that were written by some of the tradition's most important scholars. This perspective has not been previously studied, as Western scholarship on

Sino-Muslim communities during the late imperial period has focused primarily on the political and physical incorporation of Muslim border territories into the empire.¹⁰ Few have explored the religious aspects of Sino-Muslim life in pre-modern China. Much of the research that has explored Muslims religious thought in China has still situated this topic within the larger framework of conflict or integration in Chinese society.¹¹ Work focusing on Sino-Muslim scholars and intellectual life has dealt predominantly with the social history of Muslims education in China and relied primarily on Sino-centric paradigms for understanding this community. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite's *The Dao of Muhammad* offers substantial historical data for understanding the inner workings and interconnections of the educational network and the scholarly exchange between its constituencies. However, his analysis only covers the intellectual tradition up until the end of the eighteenth century. Also, while Benite's work furnishes us with the context of the intellectual tradition it only occasionally offered an analysis of this movement's content. Only a handful of Western scholars have looked at the content of the intellectual tradition of Sino-Muslims and they have generally limited their analysis to individual texts by the most famous authors.¹² Sachiko Murata's scholarship has been the most comprehensive for understanding the intellectual currents of Sino-Muslim scholars,

¹⁰ See, for example, Peter C. Purdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005).

¹¹ See, especially, Joseph Fletcher, "Central Asian Sufism and Ma Ming-hsin's New Teaching," in *Proceedings of the Fourth East Asian Altaica Conference*, ed. Ch'en Chieh-hsien (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1975), 75-96; Joseph Fletcher, ed. by Jonathan N. Lipman, "The Naqshbandiyya in Northwest China," in *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, ed. Beatrice Manz (London: Variorum, 1995), 1-46; and Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*.

¹² See J. F. Ford, "Some Chinese Muslims of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Asian Affairs* 61 (1974): 144-56; Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*; Lee Cheuk Yin, "Islamic Values in Confucian Terms: Wang Daiyu (ca. 1580-1658) and his *Zhengjiao Zhenquan* (*Genuine Annotation of the Orthodox Teachings*)," in *Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue*, eds. Osman Baker and Cheng Gek Nai (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1996), 75-94; and Isaac Mason, *The Arabian Prophet: A Life of Mohamed from Chinese and Arabic Sources, a Chinese-Moslem Work by Liu Chia-lien* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1921).

providing translations of several key treatises by both Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi.¹³ These are important strides towards creating a comprehensive view of the intellectual currents of Sino-Muslims and further translation and analysis of original compositions is necessary to complete the picture. However, Murata initially approached individual authors ahistorically without addressing the temporal affiliations within the educational network between scholars, students, and officials or the socio-political circumstances within which each author was subsumed.¹⁴ Greater historical contextualization of these authors' works may provide further intellectual antecedents and reveal additional literary influences from the Chinese and Islamic traditions. The wealth of primary sources for understanding the intellectual history of Sino-Muslims has been well documented but many of these texts await systematic study.¹⁵

Scholarship on Ma Dexin, specifically, is scantier. Ma has been introduced to the western audience numerous times in scattered writings but there are no full-length monographs on his life or teachings. Ma is most often described as the primary religious adviser and the leading Islamic scholar during the Panthay Rebellion (1856-73).¹⁶ David

¹³ Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yu's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); and Murata, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*.

¹⁴ Her most recent work amends this limitation by incorporating current research on the historical context of Sino-Islamic scholarship. See Murata, et al., *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, xxii, 3-10.

¹⁵ François Aubin, "Chinese Islam: In Pursuit of its Sources," *Central Asian Survey* 5 no. 2 (1986): 73-80; Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*; Isaac Mason, "Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 56 (1925): 172-215; and Ludmilla Panskaya with Donald Daniel Leslie, *Introduction to Palladi's Chinese Literature of Muslims* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977); Kristian Petersen, "Understanding the Sources of the Sino-Islamic Intellectual Tradition: Review Essay on *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi* and Recent Chinese Literary Treasuries," *Philosophy East and West*, 61, No. 3 (2011): 546-60.

¹⁶ See, for example, David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 4, "The Hui Islamic rebels, led by Ma Dexin and two of his former students..."; Raphael Israeli, *Islam in China: Religion, Ethnicity, Culture, and Politics* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books), 30 n. 74, "Ma Dexin, one of the initial leaders of the Muslim Rebellion in Yunnan..."; and Liu Kwang-Ching and Richard J. Smith, "The Military Challenge: The Northwest and the Coast," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, eds. John K.

Atwill's *The Chinese Sultanate* is the most detailed work on this uprising but Ma's precise role and activities during this period remain obscure. In general, we seldom hear in detail what it meant to be the leading scholar of the time nor do we learn about the content of Ma's teaching beyond the titles of some his books. Historians often transmit the official Qing portrait of Ma as a "rebel" without deconstructing how this image was formulated or exploring the dynamism of Ma's breadth of knowledge. From a cursory reading of secondary literature, Ma is often depicted as another "revivalist" who was fighting foreign (i.e. Qing) occupation in the name of God.¹⁷ However, this is far from the message that is detailed in his treatises, and the picture is much more complex than it is often portrayed. I would argue that this tendency to hastily label Ma simply as a rebel is due to a shallow reading of sources.¹⁸ Once we explore the diversity and complexity of his writings in relation to his activities we find a more nuanced relationship between theory and praxis. Therefore, a thorough contextualization of social, cultural, political, and intellectual factors will yield the most fruitful results.

Chinese scholars writing in English have filled in the gaps in a few instances. Lin Chang-Kuan outlined Ma's early life and pilgrimage and inventoried thirty-seven of Ma's

Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 213, "Ma Ju-lung's capitulation had the blessing of Ma Te-hsin (1794-1874), a respected religious leader...".

¹⁷ Raphael Israeli exemplifies this characterization of Ma Dexin. See Israeli, *Islam in China*, 126. "Muslim disaffection in nineteenth-century China was universal and generated millenarian cravings... including Ma Dexin, who played a prominent part in the revivalist movement of nineteenth-century Chinese Islam." He associated Ma's career with concurrent movements, such as the Wahhabi, Neo-Sufis and the Sudanese Mahdists. The writings and activities of Ma Dexin and his students should be situated within the framework of religious revivalism and Islamic reform in both China and the broader Islamic world. This will be pursued in a future project entitled, *Heirs of Tradition, Authors of Originality: Islam South of the Clouds*, which explores Sino-Muslim activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in reaction to a globalizing world at the cusp of modernity.

¹⁸ A limited reading of sources can easily lead to an inaccurate or incomplete representation of an individual scholar. For example, see a similarly deficient reading or distortion of sources in the portrayal of the famous Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1690). Compare the differing portraits in Basheer Nafi, "Tasawwuf and Reform in Pre-Modern Islamic Culture: In Search of Ibrahim al-Kurani," *Die Welt des Islams* 42 no. 3 (2002): 307-355; and Alexander Knysh, "Ibrahim al-Kurani (d. 1101/1690), an Apologist for *wahdat al-wujud*." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5 no. 1 (1995): 39-47.

works but never detailed the contents of these texts.¹⁹ Wang Jianping has provided the most comprehensive account of Ma's teachings while delineating the history of Islam in Yunnan.²⁰ Wang presents several of Ma's statements on various aspects of Muslim life in Southern China and utilizes him as the representative Muslim voice of the late imperial period. Despite these contributions, Wang's goals are too far removed from laying out Ma's theological vision to deliver a primary sketch of his teachings.

In contrast to western scholars, Chinese scholars have extensively discussed the contents of Ma Dexin's extant works and have situated him within the scholarly tradition of Sino-Muslims. Ma has been repeatedly recognized as an important figure in Chinese Islamic history by Chinese Islamicists, such as Bai Shouyi 白壽彝, Yu Zhengui 余振貴 and Yang Huaizhong 楊懷中.²¹ The efforts of Yang Guiping 楊桂萍, however, led to a thorough exploration and explanation of Ma Dexin's thought.²² Yang analyzes Ma's political and religious thought by focusing on certain characteristics of his teachings. In *Research on Ma Dexin's Thought (Ma Dexin sixiang yanjiu 馬德新思想研究)*, Yang explores Ma's explication of the similarities and differences between Islamic and Confucian values and concepts, such as humanity (*ren* 仁) and the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). She showed how Ma cultivated a pietistic lifestyle and warned about otiose performance of religious rituals and the dangers of heretical practices associated

¹⁹ Lin Chang-Kuan, "Three Eminent Chinese 'Ulama' of Yunnan," *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 11 no. 1 (1990): 100-17.

²⁰ Wang Jianping, *Concord and Conflict: The Hui Communities of Yunnan Society in a Historical Perspective* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1996).

²¹ In most major Chinese works on Muslim intellectuals Ma Dexin is always prominently highlighted. See Bai Shouyi 白壽彝 ed., *Huizu Renwu zhi 回族人物志 (Records of Muslim Personalities)* 2 vols. (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin chubanshe, 2000), 1552-62; and Yang Huaizhong 楊懷中 and Yu Zhengui 余振貴, eds., *Yisilan Yu Zhongguo Wenhua. 伊斯蘭與中國文化 (Islam and Chinese Culture)* (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1995), 412-9.

²² Yang Guiping 楊桂萍, *Ma Dexin sixiang yanjiu 馬德新思想研究 (A Study of Ma Dexin's Thought)* (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2004).

with Chinese religions. In her discussion, she dedicated a chapter to Ma's appreciation for and appropriation of Islamic mysticism. Yang's work is instrumental for our understanding of Ma's contribution to Islamic thought but is hampered by its tendency to interpret his works through a socialist idealism of political and communal unity. Overall, Yang has outlined many of the features of Ma's intellectual vision and provided an excellent foundation on understanding Ma's role as an Islamic scholar.

Sun Zhenyu 孫振玉 has given us the broadest and most comprehensive picture of Ma Dexin's life and works. He offered the first monograph length analysis of Ma's contribution to Sino-Islamic thought, *Research on Ma Dexin and Islamic Thought (Ma Dexin jiqi Yisilan Sixiang Yanjiu 馬德新及其伊斯蘭思想研究)*.²³ In this study, Sun reconstructed Ma's early life and training, the intellectual influences upon his work and major themes from his writings. This work is noteworthy for its historicizing and contextualizing of Ma's role as both an Islamic scholar and an important figure in Chinese history. Sun outlined Ma's Middle Eastern travels and his pilgrimage and described his role in the Muslim uprising in Yunnan, the Panthay Rebellion. He also delineated several main features of his theological teachings, such as the immortality of the Spirit, the importance of Sages or Prophets (聖人 *Shengren*), and the qualities of this world and the afterworld. More recently, he situated Ma within the framework of the broader Sino-Muslim tradition. Sun's *A Critical Biography of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi (Wang Daiyu Liu Zhi Pingzhuan 王岱輿劉智評傳)* explores the Islamic Neo-Confucian

²³ Sun Zhenyu 孫振玉, *Ma Dexin jiqi Yisilan Sixiang Yanjiu 馬德新及其伊斯蘭思想研究 (Research on Ma Dexin and Islamic Thought)* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou Daxue Chubanshe, 2002).

Philosophy (*huihui lixue* 回回理學) movement of Ming and Qing dynasties scholars.²⁴

He demonstrates the pivotal role Ma played in preserving this system of thought by exploring the works of his predecessors and regulating how they would be interpreted by future generations.

The current lacuna of western studies on Sino-Islamic thought should warrant the present study alone. Western scholarship has addressed the current subject from a general and overarching perspective. This dissertation engages these resources as it offers a comparative analysis of the history of Sino-Islamic thought with a specific focus on Ma Dexin's contribution. In addition, this study is significant for providing an understanding of Ma in the broader Islamic context. Previous works have revealed Ma's contribution to the Sino-Islamic tradition but have not yet charted how Ma was foundational in establishing a new intellectual movement that emphasized both local and global Muslim dialogues. Ma's capacity to shepherd change for incorporating Sino-Muslims in universal Islamic dialogues was indicated through his works and the goals he set for his students. It is this aspect of Ma's work that has been neglected. Ma's oeuvre also marked a distinct transformation within the Islamic intellectual history of Sino-Muslims. However, previous scholarship has not made this or earlier transitions explicit nor delineated their causes and consequences. The contours of the progression and evolution of the intellectual movement are revealed more clearly by surveying Ma's contribution within the broader Sino-Muslim context and comparing it with earlier authors, such as Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi.

²⁴ Sun Zhenyu 孫振玉, *Wang Daiyu Liu Zhi Pingzhuàn* 王岱輿劉智評傳 (*A Critical Biography of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi*) (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 2006).

Methodology and Structure

This examination employs a hybrid approach to this subject, combining textual analysis along with historical contextualization. Textual scholarship focusing on theology alone can almost entirely divorce scholars and their works from the world around them by generally neglecting the historical milieu, which communicated, recorded and displayed beliefs and gave rise to specific religious modes of living. However, critical historicism can often arrest the individual agency and creativity that is unveiled through personal writings. Often, it fails to properly address the nexus of theories that demonstrate how ideas transform over time. Utilizing both methods allows us to map the social and religious contours of the written word and understand cultural formulations of knowledge. Approaching Sino-Islamic authors and their thought within their specific historical context elucidates the world in which they operated and the broader discursive milieu informing and constraining their activities and thought. My reading is guided by the evolution of intellectual currents in the Islamic world and within China by analyzing the development of specific ideas and various modes of thinking from both cultural settings. By exploring the trajectory of their discursive influence, I construct an analysis that explicates ideas and teachings and at the same time situates these concepts within their broader socio-political and religious contexts of the pre-modern world.

In order to determine the intellectual progression of these scholars' theories this study analyzes several types of sources provided in the works of these authors and the *Han Kitab* in general: original theological compositions; translations of Islamic classics; introductions, forewords, and prefaces by members of the educational network; commentaries; and personal and communal histories of the educational system and its constituencies.

Original theological works written by the network's teachers supply ample evidence of the influences of both Chinese and Islamic traditions. Quotations from famous texts reveal the reliance on previous work from both cultural contexts and present the foundational informants for the *Han Kitab* authors. The transformation of concepts, theories, and technical terms between Islamic and Chinese languages and philosophical traditions was delicately approached and masterfully achieved. This illustrates the multi-lingual dialogue that occurred within this body of literature and reveals the qualities of this unique event in both Chinese and Islamic history. All three authors have contributed key works in this regard but each maintained their unique objective and style according to their respective period.

Examining the translations of Islamic classics will expose the complexities of adapting intricate technical concepts from the Islamic idiom into the Chinese lexical and philosophical systems. Determining how specific terms were translated from one system to the other will also uncover how the Sino-Muslim literati understood these multilayered principles. Reworking one specialized vocabulary into another reinforced both ideas while creating a new third understanding for their specific community. Determining the interconnections between these systems is imperative for outlining their intellectual tradition. Both Liu Zhi and Ma Dexin translated Arabic and Persian classics into Chinese providing evidence of the direct interpretation and transformation of ideas and terms, while Wang quoted from the Qur'an, hadith and early treatises.

In nearly every work in the *Han Kitab* another valuable resource is provided: introductions, forewords, and prefaces by members of the educational network. These offer historical contextualization for understanding networks of learning and scholarship by revealing these authors' local constituencies. These prefaces also divulge various

information that is unattainable elsewhere, including the personal character of the authors, titles of texts that are no longer in existence, the institutional role of mosques, pedagogical techniques utilized, and demonstrates how individual authors were valued within the larger community of scholars. These prefaces were also occasionally written by local Chinese officials, and in one instance by the Chinese Emperor. These commentaries reflect the view of the wider Chinese society and demonstrate how Chinese literati perceived the Sino-Muslims' scholarly activity. These too include significant historical details, from an outsider's perspective, about how the Sino-Muslim community worked, studied, and distributed their teachings. Due to the sustained importance of all three authors' works, various reprintings provide a multitude of contextual information, which informs our understanding of their works at various times and places.

Members of the scripture hall education system also produced personal and communal histories of the network and its literary products. These are made available in short biographies or local histories written in prefaces and in works dedicated to sketching the structure, nature, and methodology of the entire educational system. These works provide details on how teachers and students interacted with each other, how they were inspired to produce Chinese texts, and how a specific curriculum informed their understanding. Overall, these sources uncover portraits of various moments within the network's development. These instances will imbue our understanding of the educational system with a detailed account of the material characteristics that formulated the intellectual tradition of the *Han Kitab*. Ma's, Liu's, and Wang's students and colleagues often provided personal information about their personal character or teaching ability in their texts. Their eminence in the educational network also prompted general historians of

the scripture hall system to discuss their importance at length. These sources will help illustrate their significance for understanding Sino-Muslim intellectual life in general.

The history of Sino-Islamic scholarship is traced through a few critical features of Islamic civilization that highlight important aspects of Muslim life in general. I examine several examples in order to explore the dimensions and complexity of intellectual developments, the creation of ideological sentiments and the methodological procedures for arriving at religious convictions or traditional authenticity. These issues will be investigated thematically through the concepts of scripture, sacred space and pilgrimage, and discursive linguistic legitimacy.

In the first chapter, I briefly sketch the historical factors that contributed to the transmission of Islam to China. I then outline how this process of transmission may have shaped the intellectual development of Islamic theology in China and demonstrate how China's unique historical factors produced the distinctive characteristics to create Sino-Islamic scholarship. This chapter situates our authors' lives and works within a clear Islamic and Chinese framework in order to understand their broader contributions to both worlds.

The second chapter focuses on Ma Dexin's literary output and contextualizes his philosophy within his historical conditions and intellectual environment. I examine the general characteristics of his conception of the nature of God, origin and return, religious observance, prayer, and the reconciliation and confluence of Islam and Confucian thought. The life and works of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi are also presented here in an introductory manner to reveal their role in the development of Sino-Islamic scholarship.

Chapters three through five focus on the significance of scripture, religious pilgrimage and sacred space, and linguistic authority, as they have been comprehended in

Sino-Islamic intellectual history. These three categories are representative of universal components from Islamicate societies. Through an analysis of Sino-Muslims' attitudes towards these themes we are able to view Sino-Islamic scholarship in light of the broader Muslim world, thus making this study the basis for comparative inquiry. The final chapters are also intended to demonstrate that in the nineteenth century Sino-Muslims believed that it was necessary to begin greater engagement with the broader Muslim world. Ma Dexin was at the forefront of this movement, and we can see from his works that he wanted to enable Sino-Muslims to be better incorporated into a global Islamic environment. He and his students reveal shifting attitudes within Sino-Islamic scholarship towards scripture, pilgrimage and language, which indicated a growing vision of their involvement and presence in the worldwide Muslim community. Each chapter demonstrates how Ma initiated a differing view of scripture, pilgrimage and discursive linguistic authority, either in their religious import or aggregative quality, intended to encourage Sino-Muslim universal involvement.

In chapter three, I explore the concept of pilgrimage and its importance in religious life. I trace Wang's and Liu's description and support for the *hajj* and then outline Ma's journey throughout the Middle East as he made his own pilgrimage. Ma spent eight years traveling and studying in the Arab world and was the first Chinese pilgrim to record his journey. This chapter analyzes each scholar's opinion and delineates how attitudes towards the pilgrimage and the weight of its promotion shifted over time. Ma Dexin most clearly advocated the importance of performing the pilgrimage and its status as one of the foundational aspects of religious observance. In his *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* (*Chaojin Tuji* 朝覲途記), he intended to demystify the *hajj* for Sino-Muslims while simultaneously asserting the importance of engaging the Arab world. His

precedent enabled Sino-Muslims to acquire both the logistical knowledge of the journey and the determination and resolve for undertaking the pilgrimage. All three authors valued the pilgrimage but we observe that its religious gravity was increasingly given greater prominence as Sino-Muslims were gradually absorbed into a global context.

In the fourth chapter, I consider Sino-Islamic engagement with the Qur'an and the transformation of scriptural readings and methodologies. I examine the authenticity and sacredness of scripture and unravel how this was established within the Sino-Islamic tradition. All three authors were informed and guided by the Qur'anic message but its use and interpretation changed throughout history. Due to imperial policies that limited Sino-Muslim interaction with Muslims abroad linguistic capacity and discursive background were generally absent from the average believer. Therefore, early within the development of Sino-Islamic thought the use of Qur'anic themes was favored over exact translations of its verses. During this period, verses were translated into Chinese within religious treatises but were scattered and limited in application. Later, during the nineteenth century when there was increasing interaction within the global Muslim community, Sino-Muslim authors valued the Qur'an as a totality and attempted to render the entire book in Chinese. Ma Dexin's Qur'an translation, *A Direct Explanation of Treasure of the Mandate of the True Scripture* (*Baoming Zhenjing Zhijie* 寶命真經直解), was the first such attempt at a complete translation. Throughout this chapter, I unravel the methodological motivations of each author's use and rendering of the Qur'an and the broader implications for the Sino-Islamic understanding of Islam and scripture.

In the final chapter, I explore the role of language as it shaped Sino-Islamic scholarship. These authors' works arose within a community that lost the ability to approach the Arabic and Persian textual tradition and thus necessitated the use of Chinese

for the transmission of Islamic knowledge. However, Arabic was ever-present due to its inextricable connection to the Qur'an and its perceived sacredness. The role of Arabic changed as discursive models shifted within Sino-Islamic scholarship. In the nineteenth-century, Ma Dexin initiated the reintroduction of Arabic as an authoritative discourse for approaching Islam in the Chinese context. I survey Ma's Arabic treatises and illustrate the instructive and social role they played for the succeeding generations of Sino-Muslims. Ma assigned an authoritative linguistic discourse to an audience who absorbed its social and intellectual authority through the act of writing in Arabic. The diglossic nature of his works imbued symbolic meaning to his readers, which underlined the rich traditions of both their Muslim and Chinese forefathers. For Ma, the use of Arabic served a dual purpose: foremost it prepared students to gain discursive fluency and engage in global debates pertaining to Islam, and it situated Sino-Muslims within a broader Islamic social and intellectual heritage, symbolically uniting them with their Muslim coreligionists.

***The History in the Development of the Sino-Muslim Community
The Altering Roles of Language, Authority, and Locality
Chapter One***

Introduction

Islam's lengthy history in China began almost concurrently with the birth of the religion. Historical documents long recorded the presence of traders, diplomats and military figures even before the coming of Islam but Chinese Muslims also narrated their own origins in the *Huihui Yuanlai* 回回原來 (*Origins of Muslims*).¹ This repeated story of the coming of Islam imagines the interconnection between the Prophet Muhammad, who sent his delegates to aid the Chinese emperor, and the second Tang emperor Taizong 太宗 (626–49), thus, sowing the seeds of Islam on Chinese soil:

One night the emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty dreamt that a roof beam of his golden palace was collapsing. The roof beam nearly smashed his head, but it was intercepted and pushed back by a man standing to the right hand side of the bed. The man wore a green robe, and a white turban was wound around his head. He had a towel draped over his shoulder and a water kettle in his left hand. He had deep eye sockets, a high nose bridge, and a brown face. Alarmed, the emperor upon waking immediately summoned his counselors. One of them, Xu Mao, knew at once what the problem was: the empire was in danger; this was the meaning of the falling roof beam. The strange man was a Hui, a Muslim from the Western Regions [*xiyu*, i.e. the Islamic lands]. The great Tang Empire needed the Hui people for its defense, he concluded.²

According to the story, the emperor sent a diplomatic mission to the Western Regions and in return a delegation from the companions of the Prophet (*Ṣaḥāba*), led by Sayyid

¹ The *Huihui Yuanlai* was first printed in Nanjing ca.1712 but is found in various reworkings, which each differ in the details of the story. For an analysis and translation of parts of this text, see, Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Chinese Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005) 204-9; Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1910), 62-70; and Li Shujiang and Karl W. Luckert, ed., *Mythology and Folklore of the Hui, A Muslim Chinese People* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 237-8.

² “*Huihui yuanlai (zhengli ben)* 回回原來 (整理本) (*Origins of Muslims (Edited Volume)*,” in *Huizu wenhua lunji* 回族文化論集 (*Collected Essays in Hui Nationality Culture*), ed. Ma Kuangyuan 馬曠源 (Kunming: ZhongguWenlian, 1998), 53-4, translated in Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “From 'Literati' to 'Ulama'-The Origins of Chinese Muslim Nationalist Historiography,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9 (2004): 83.

Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās (*Sahaba Saade Wan Gesi* 撒哈八撒阿的輓葛思),³ the Prophet's maternal uncle, was received in China in order to restore harmony and deliver the message of the Qur'an.

Clearly, these types of stories are myths intended for other purposes than delineating an accurate portrait of historical events. Legends similar to the *Huihui Yuanlai* regarding the arrival of Muslims into China played an important part in developing a unique sense of Sino-Muslim identity. The appearance of these myths, beginning roughly in the fifteenth century, reflected the changing self-perception of Sino-Muslims and their position in the greater Chinese society. They also reflect the historian's relative inability to grasp the depth and diversity of Muslims in China during the first few centuries after the beginning of Islam. Historical records of the Muslim presence in China prior to the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) are scarce and it is unclear when Islam exactly entered China or when it took hold among local inhabitants. We are then required to piece a history together from these snippets of information.

This brief glance at the *Huihui Yuanlai* provides an opportunity to identify the problem in creating a history of Islam in pre-modern China. Muslims were present throughout Chinese history but often operated in sectors of society that neglected to record their activities. This historical vacuum allowed mythic literature to be created in

³ Sayyid ibn Abī Waqqās is also reported to have founded the first mosque in China, the *Huaisheng* 懷聖 (*Cherished Sage*) or *Aṣḥab* (*Companions*) Mosque in Guangzhou, and has a tomb built in his honor nearby, despite being buried in Medina ca. 673-5. For more on Sayyid ibn Abī Waqqās and the *Ṣaḥāba* in China, see Donald Leslie, "The Sahaba Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas in China," in *The Legacy of Islam in China: An International Symposium in Memory of Joseph F. Fletcher*, ed. Dru C. Gladney (unpublished conference volume, Cambridge: John King Fairbank Center, Harvard University, 1989); idem, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986), 74–5; Anthony Garnaut, "Hui Legends of the Companions of the Prophet," *China Heritage Newsletter* no. 5, 2006, http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/articles.php?searchterm=005_legends.inc&issue=005 (retrieved May 16th, 2011); and Haiyun Ma, "The Mythology of Prophet's Ambassadors in China: Histories of Sa'd Waqqas and Gess in Chinese Sources," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 26, no. 3 (2006): 445-52.

order to serve the goals of its constituents. The present chapter considers several episodes of the fragmentary history that are essential to understanding the development of Sino-Islamic scholarship and the shifting contours of this tradition. The establishment of local religious institutions and a unique body of Chinese literature was predicated by the changing attitudes of foreign and local Muslims in relation to political, economic, and cultural policies. As a result, I focus on the transmission of Islam to China as it affected the local intellectual development of Islamic theology. I situate this communication first within the Chinese cultural environment and then the broader Eurasian historical context, focusing on global relationships and interactions across geographical boundaries. Locally, dynastic history shaped the Sino-Muslim community and their scholarly production while the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia provided episodic intellectual nourishment. Understanding our authors and their context from a panoramic perspective provides the best interpretative framework for determining their singularity.

Throughout history, the frontiers of Chinese society where Muslims were often socially and geographically located fluctuated during transfers of political power. Generally speaking, governing policy influenced the Sino-Muslim socio-political circumstances, which in turn shaped the character of Chinese language Islamic scholarship. Sino-Muslims were part of the multilayered landscape that shifted as political leadership alternated. In brief, China went from a huge cosmopolitan empire during the Tang dynasty (618–907); to a small polity laboring for power during the Song period (960-1279); to the Eastern part of the massive and powerful Mongol controlled territory, the Yuan (1271–1368); to a Sino-centric homogenizing power during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644); and finally, to a huge multiethnic empire under the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The character of the political leadership and their ruling policies had an

influential effect of Sino-Muslims and commanded the orientation of the local Muslim communities.

The Historical Legacy of Dynastic Policy

The creation of the scripture hall education system (*jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育), which provided the framework for the genesis of the *Han Kitab* literature, is a direct product of its historical circumstances during the sixteenth century. The participants in the scripture hall system and the authors of the *Han Kitab* texts viewed their activities as the recovery of a lost heritage of Islamic knowledge. The erosion of Islam in China was directly related to the social and cultural infrastructure of Chinese society, which was generally enacted and reinforced through imperial policy. The late appearance of vernacular and localized literary interpretations of Islam, beginning only in the seventeenth century, was due to the division between Chinese and Muslim communities through the Yuan dynasty. It was not until the mid-Ming dynasty that the Muslim and Chinese cultural spheres began to intermingle. It was through the inclusion of Chinese as a discursive Islamic language and the development of an official system to spread localized Islamic knowledge that the *Han Kitab* literature began to take shape. The Sino-Muslim intellectual elite of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties bypassed the social isolation of past generations and developed productive systems for combining their Islamic and Chinese heritages through the production of religious knowledge. This chapter offers vignettes of significant situations and settings of Islamic importance in China, which help us grasp the multiple factors that led to the production of Sino-Islamic texts. The historical legacy of imperial constraints shaped the reconstruction of the Islamic tradition in China, and, therefore, our understanding of the histories of Muslims

in the region will further illuminate the elements of Sino-Islamic scholarship and the *Han Kitab* literature in particular.⁴

Tang Dynasty (618-907)

Outside of the legendary encounters between the companions of the Prophet and the Chinese Emperor, there are few documented accounts of Arab and Persian travelers in the East. In early Chinese histories Arabs and Persians were called *dashi* 大食 and *bosi* 波斯 respectively. *Dashi* became the standard term most commonly used for Muslims in official Chinese sources from this period until the Yuan Dynasty. However, terminology was fluid and phrases denoting Muslims and their homelands varied across time, therefore, it was not always clear if a *dashi* was necessarily a Muslim in this early period.⁵ Within the first generation of Muhammad's (d. 632) disciples Muslim visitors were probably traveling to China with Arab embassies.⁶ Others came primarily as traders, settling in port cities on the southeast coast of China and along the Silk Road. During this period, we find Muslims beginning to settle in large populations in two main areas, Chang'an 長安 and Quanzhou 泉州. As the capital of the Tang dynasty, Chang'an served as a crucial point along the silk route as a major commercial center. Arab troops and officials remained in China after the An Lushan rebellion of 756,

⁴ Jonathan Lipman asserts we are able to deconstruct the inherent problems of a hegemonic Sino-centric history of China only when we present alternative narratives, which acknowledge the multiplicity of human existence. Therefore, this chapter only attempts to offer some of the conditions that defined Sino-Muslim life and consequently ingrained in the production of Sino-Islamic literature. Altogether, this is not *the* history of the Muslims in China but a few histories of Muslims in China. I mirror Lipman's process of *narrowing*, beginning with this general history and proceeding towards the individual story of Ma Dexin. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, xxxiii-xxxv.

⁵ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 195-6.

⁶ One Chinese source states that the king of the *dashi* sent a pearl as a gift for the Tang emperor in 627. This is probably due to a mistaken character, making the date 785, but could actually refer to an embassy sent by the Prophet himself. Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 36 and 42-55.

establishing a small but significant Muslim population.⁷ On the Southeastern coast of China foreign travelers were arriving en masse in order to trade. According to Chinese and Persian records, as early as 758 Arab and Persian sailors took control of parts of Canton (present day Guangzhou).⁸ Chinese and Arabic sources clearly discuss an Islamic settlement in Canton by 851.⁹ Muslims grew in financial power and by this point Muslims soon were able to sustain their own institutions, supporting extraterritorial rights through the activities of their own Muslim judges.¹⁰ In both regions, Muslims remained detached from Chinese culture and separated from their Chinese neighbors. In fact, they lived physically removed from the larger Chinese society in foreign quarters (*fanfang* 番坊) where they maintained Arabic and Persian languages, as well as their own customs and religious practices. Muslim modes of behavior were also directed by dynastic regulations that prohibited foreigners from intermarrying with Chinese women, buying land, or adopting Chinese culture, such as wearing Chinese clothing. Therefore, foreign identity was regularly preserved and Muslims were perceived by the local Chinese population as “foreign guests” (*fanke* 番客).¹¹ However, Muslims made up a regular part of Chinese society and created institutions for their continued presence. Towards the final years of the Tang, Arab travelers remarked that several mosques were established in

⁷ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 42-55.

⁸ Donald Daniel Leslie, “Arabic Sources,” in *Essays on the Sources for Chinese History*, ed. Donald Daniel Leslie, Colin Mackerras, Gungwu Wang (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 147.

⁹ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 35-7.

¹⁰ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “Follow the White Camel: Islam in China to 1800,” in *New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3, ed. Francis Robinson (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 414.

¹¹ These efforts to segregate foreigners largely failed and the children of those Muslims who did begin to marry Chinese were also seen as outsiders and identified as “native born foreigners” (*tusheng fanke* 土生番客). See Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 195; and idem, “Living with the Chinese: the Muslim Experience in China, T’ang to Ming,” in *Chinese Ideas about Nature and Society: Studies in Honor of Derk Bodde* ed. Charles Le Blanc and Susan Blader (Honk Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1987), 177.

major cities, such as Chang'an (Xi'an)¹², Guangzhou (Canton), Quanzhou, and Hangzhou.¹³ Overall, "Muslims remained sojourners, obvious and clearly designated by state and society; they were granted a measure of legal and administrative autonomy within their carefully delineated settlements, but they were not supposed to mix with the local population."¹⁴ Generally speaking, in these early interactions neither Chinese nor Muslims encouraged cultural exchange and understanding, merely engaging each other for commercial interactions or official governmental responsibilities. Overall, Muslims continued their foreign identities, practices, and traditions throughout this period while Chinese society failed to fully incorporate them as an active component of the cosmopolitan dynasty.¹⁵

Song Dynasty (960-1278)

During the Song Dynasty, Middle Eastern sojourners gradually increased their presence in China, especially in port cities along the Southeast coast. Many settled in China permanently, setting up homes, marrying Chinese wives, and adopting Chinese culture, clothing, and customs.¹⁶ While numerous Muslims learned to speak Chinese and planned to reside on Chinese soil they were still regarded as foreigners by the local

¹² The Great Mosque of Xi'an (*Da Qingzhensi* 大清真寺) probably was not established during the Tang but evidence indicates that the intention was present during this early period. Claude L. Pickens found an undated inscription that refers to a building permit in 705. Claude L. Pickens, "The Great West Mosque of Ch'ang An (Sian)," *Friends of Moslems* 9 no. 3 (1935), 44.

¹³ See, for example, the account in *News of China and India (Akhbār al-Sīn wa al-Hind)* from circa 851. Gabriel Ferrand, *Voyage du marchand arabe Sulaymān en Inde et en Chine* (Paris, 1922), 75-78, and "Sulayman al- Tajir, *Akhbar al-Sin wal-Hind*," in *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China*, trans. S. Maqbul Ahmad (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1989).

¹⁴ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 26.

¹⁵ For a richer description of Islam during the Tang period, see Chang Yung-Ho, *The Development of Chinese Islam During the Tang and Song Dynasties (618-1276 A.D.)* (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1999), F.S. Drake, "Mohammedism in the T'ang Dynasty," *Monumenta Serica* 8 (1943): 1-40, Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 20-39, Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 24-31, Claude L. Pickens, "China and Arabia Prior to the T'ang Dynasty (618 A.D.)," *Muslim World* 32 (1942): 195-211, and Zhang Jun-yan, "Relations Between China and the Arabs in Early Times," *Journal of Oman Studies* 6 (1980): 91-109.

¹⁶ Wealthy merchants were often able to bypass laws prohibiting foreigners from buying houses inside city walls. Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 68.

Chinese population.¹⁷ Travelers' and geographers' accounts of both Chinese and West Asia also increased and it appears Chinese and Arab authors were receiving more reliable information from their local informants.¹⁸ Arab and Persian traders continued their activities in Southeastern port cities, and often served as the couriers through Southeast Asia, transporting Chinese goods to the Middle East and returning. Middle Eastern delegations to China also continued to grow in number.¹⁹ However, very few Muslims had become Chinese subjects by participating in the broader society and it was apparent that neither they nor the Chinese had any goal for their assimilation. Overall, the population of Muslims within China remained small and was concentrated in large commercial cities. They were not thought to be "Chinese" citizens by the local inhabitants and often maintained this separation themselves.²⁰ During the Tang and Song dynasties preservation of language and the relative ease of travel facilitated the maintenance of Muslim identities and networks. During this period Muslims isolated from the larger society and were generally foreign (non-Chinese), not identifying as Sino-Muslim. It was not until the Yuan dynasty that Muslims would begin to be integrated into the fabric of Chinese society more generally.

Yuan Dynasty (1274-1368)²¹

At the end of the thirteenth century dramatic shifts in power would drastically alter Chinese society and the makeup of its human landscape. In 1271, Qubilai Khan (1260-94), the grandson of the great Genghis Khan (d. 1227), established the Yuan

¹⁷ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, chapters 4-7. This is the most complete documentary history of Muslims prior to the Yuan dynasty in English.

¹⁸ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 58-61.

¹⁹ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 61-4.

²⁰ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 28-30.

²¹ For a comprehensive overview of this period, see Morris Rossabi, "The Muslims in the Early Yuän Dynasty," in *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. John Langlois, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 257-295.

Empire in North China. He defeated the last of the remaining Southern Song elite in 1279 and took control of most of what makes up the contemporary borders of the People's Republic of China. The Mongol conquest of Eurasia united various ethnic, religious, and cultural civilizations, which fostered greater interchange among peoples that were previously restrained and limited in their contact. It was during the Yuan dynasty that the greatest influx of Muslims to China occurred. The Mongol rulers employed Muslims from the Middle East and Central Asia as civil servants, court officials, and in various administrative positions.²² They also recruited physicians, astronomers, architects, scientists, geographers, cartographers, soldiers, musicians, ballistic and military engineers, linguists, and others, to serve as specialists for the expanding empire.²³ These specialized professions often required greater interaction between the various ethnic groups living in China, which further tied Muslims to local peoples and geographies. By the end of the Yuan dynasty, the responsibilities of Muslims in government and administration required them to be in close contact with Chinese subjects and become increasingly aware of Chinese customs. However, the Yuan administrative system constructed a stratified social system that distinguished between various classes of people, creating an internal social hierarchy that produce structural animosity between groups of people.²⁴ Overall, the Muslims from West and Central Asia were perceived as

²² James A. Millward, and Peter Purdue, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc, 2004), 44; and Thomas Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in Mongol Eurasia: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²³ Benite, "Follow the White Camel," 417.

²⁴ Many western authors highlight the four tiered class system that was on official Yuan record but descriptions of lived reality seem to demonstrate that this was generally implemented in a strict manner. Elizabeth Endicott-West, "The Yuan Government and Society," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, eds. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 610-15.

collaborators with the oppressive Mongols and exploiters of the Chinese people.²⁵ On the other hand, Mongol rulers sporadically condemned Muslim customs. Qubilai Khan initiated several policies that negatively effected Muslims, including banning circumcision and the ritual slaughter of food for several years. Therefore, during this period Muslim assimilation into Chinese modes of being was not encouraged and they were merely one group among the multiethnic population.

The increasing Muslim population in China developed within both new and existing communities. Southeastern China remained a significant sphere for foreign Muslims and their populations grew under the new administration in several major cities. In the former Southern Song capital, Hangzhou, there was a substantial increase in the local Persian population. Archaeological remains of burial sites and tombstones reveal numerous inscriptions in Persian and Arabic from the late thirteenth century.²⁶ There was also the construction of the Phoenix Mosque (*fenghuangsi* 鳳凰寺) to support the growing number of Muslim inhabitants in 1281, which has been celebrated not only by Muslims but also by Chinese administrators and even the Qianlong emperor (1711-99).²⁷ There was also a sizable growth of Muslims in Quanzhou (know as Zaytun in Arabic). Here too the construction of mosques and the establishment of decorated Muslim cemeteries are evidence of this growth.²⁸ Quanzhou has one of the most substantial

²⁵ Donald Daniel Leslie, "The Mongol Attitude to Jews in China", *Central Asiatic Journal* 39 (1995), 237-241.

²⁶ Arnold Jacque Vissière, "L' Islamisme à Hang-tcheou," *Revue de Monde Musulman* 22 (1913): 1-84.

²⁷ George Lane, "Phoenix Mosque, Hangzhou," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2009), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/phoenix-mosque> (retrieved February 16th, 2011); and Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "China's Earliest Mosques," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67 no. 3 (2008): 342-3.

²⁸ For example, the Sage's Companion Mosque (*Shenyousi* 聖友寺), also known as the Companions (*Aṣḥab*) Mosque. It was the largest of seven mosques in Quanzhou during the Yuan dynasty. It is debated whether it is different from the Qingjing mosque (*Qinjingsi* 清淨寺), first built in 1009 and later restored in 1310. If the Shenyou Mosuque is actually the current construction of the Qingjing mosque then it would

assemblages of Persian and Arabic inscriptions both in gravesites and at architectural features.²⁹ Out of the forty-two gravestone inscriptions surveyed, seven were for women, and three for those who had performed the pilgrimage. According to titles included on twenty-five graves, three individuals were Arab, two were Central Asian, and the remaining nineteen were Persian in origin.³⁰ Muslims travelers and historians also attested to the substantial Muslim populations in Hangzhou and Quanzhou as well as several other cities, including Guangzhou and Kaifeng, and discussed in their writings about China.³¹

Yuan military policy contributed to the growth of Muslim settlement by encouraging veterans to occupy and cultivate depopulated regions of the Yuan dynasty.³² One such area was the newly acquired Southwest China, where rapid development was encouraged in Yunnan province. Under the Mongol regime, administrative skill and might was used to control and civilize the region. The main figure engaged in this transformation was Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Dīn (1211-1279), who is credited with

be the oldest stone mosque in China. See Steinhardt, “China's Earliest Mosques,” 339-41. For evidence of distinct mosques see Chen Dasheng 陈达生, *Islamic Inscriptions of Quanzhou (Quanzhou Yisilanjiao shike 泉州伊斯兰教石刻)* (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1984) 8-14. For general descriptions and history of mosques in China see Wolfgang Franke, “Notes on Some Ancient Chinese Mosques,” in *Documenta Barbarorum, für W. Heissig zum 70*, ed. Klaus Sagaster and Michael Weiers (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983) 111-126; Luo Xiaowei, “China,” in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, ed. Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 209-223; and Sun Dazhang, *Ancient Chinese Architecture: Islamic Buildings*, trans. Z. Guodong and Z. Long (Vienna and New York: Springer-Verlag/Wien, 2003).

²⁹ For more information on early Muslim archeological material, see Wu Wenliang 吳文良, *Religious Inscriptions of Quanzhou (Quanzhou Zongjiao Shike 泉州宗教石刻)* (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2005); Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions*; Richard Pearson, Li Min and Li Guo, “Quanzhou Archaeology: A Brief Review,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 6, no. 1 (2002), 23-58. Currently, Dr. Samuel Lieu is conducting a large-scale archeological project to reconstruct the history of Quanzhou.

³⁰ Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions*, 38-9. Research on Southeast China more generally indicates that the overwhelming majority of inscriptions indicate deceased individuals came from Persia. See Chen Dasheng 陈达生, “Synthetical Study Program on the Islamic Inscriptions on the Southeast Coastland of China,” in *China and the Maritime Silk Route (Zhongguo yu haishang sichou zhi lu 中國與海上絲綢之路)* (Quanzhou: Fujian Publishing House, 1991), 159-182.

³¹ See, for example, Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*, ed. and trans. H.A.R. Gibb (London: Routledge, 1929).

³² Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 34-5.

transforming the nomadic culture into an administrative structure with counties and prefectures, introduce modern transportation infrastructure, irrigation systems, new farming technologies, agricultural development, and Confucian education, among many other advancements.³³ His sons also played a significant role in governing Yunnan and shaping its economic and social development.³⁴ There is a long lineage of Sayyid ‘Ajall’s descendants who hold an elevated status within the Sino-Muslim community because of their extended presence in Yunnan and their authentic Persian ancestry leading back to Muhammad. These citizens of the Yuan Empire played a crucial role in integrating Yunnan into the broader regions of China.³⁵

During the Yuan period, there were several key transitions that gained exceeding importance, which will inform our understanding of some themes in the later *Han Kitab* literature. As we have seen, the Yuan administration employed various specialists for imperial purposes. Muslims filled many of these roles but it was also Islamic knowledge and investigative methods that became essential for the Mongol rulers in their governing of a vast and heavenly populated area. The most relevant Islamic sciences for the empire were astronomy, for calendars and timekeeping, and geography, for mapping new boundaries. Mongols valued Muslims contribution to these fields and created institutions to support their research. The Bureau of Islamic Astronomy (*Huihui sitianjian* 回回司天監) was established in 1271 and employed several exceptional Muslim astronomers,

³³ For an extended assessment of the contributions of Sayyid ‘Ajall, see Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein, *Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Din: A Muslim from Central Asia, Serving the Mongols in China, and Bringing ‘Civilization’ to Yunnan* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1997).

³⁴ For biographies of Sayyid ‘Ajall and some of his descendants see Igor de Rachewiltz et al., eds., *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 466-79, 539-57.

³⁵ Wang Jianping, *Concord and Conflict: the Hui Communities of Yunnan Society in a Historical Perspective* (Stockholm : Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996), 72-3.

including the Persian Jamāl al-Dīn (*Zhamaluding* 札馬刺丁) ibn Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Zaydī al-Bukhārī (d. ca. 1291). Jamāl al-Dīn arrived in China in 1267 and offered the emperor, Qubilai Khan, seven astronomical instruments and an important Persian astronomical handbook, referred to as the *Ten Thousand Year Calendar* (*Wannian li* 萬年曆).³⁶ As the director of the Bureau, he governed the activities of around forty people at any given time, who were primarily investigating a large resource of “western” primary texts, written entirely in Persian.³⁷ Despite the existence of a distinct Muslim institution that operated parallel to the traditional Chinese Astronomical Bureau there was little evidence of direct effect of their efforts upon Chinese procedures and processes. There are also limited records of these astronomers’ activities and findings. The one exception is the *Islamic Calendar* (*Huihui lifa* 回回歷法), or *zīj*³⁸ in Persian, which was either written or compiled by Jamāl al-Dīn himself. While the original text is lost, the *Huihui lifa*, translated in 1383, has been an important astronomical work among Chinese scholars since its inclusion in the *Annals of the Ming Dynasty* (*Mingshi* 明史) in the seventeenth century.³⁹ The collections of the Persian texts accumulated at the Bureau of Islamic Astronomy would become beneficial during the Ming dynasty when they began being translated into Chinese.⁴⁰

³⁶ Benno van Dalen, “Islamic Astronomical Tables in China. The Sources for the *Huihui li*,” in *History of Oriental Astronomy. Proceedings of the Joint Discussion-17 at the 23rd General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union*, ed. S.M. Razaullah Ansari (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2002), 19.

³⁷ There were twenty-three unique titles that were recorded in transliteration based on Persian rather than Arabic, which is determined by grammatical patterns and small variation in terminology. Tasaka Kōdō, “An Aspect of Islam Culture Introduced into China,” *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko* 16 (1957): 75–160.

³⁸ *Zīj* is a generic name for Islamic Astronomical books.

³⁹ Benno van Dalen, “*Zhamaluding*,” in *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Astronomers*, eds. Thomas A. Hockey, F. Jamil Ragep, et al., (Berlin: Springer, 2007) vol. 2, 1262-1263.

⁴⁰ Yabuuchi Kiyoshi, “Islamic Astronomy in China during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties,” trans. and ed. Benno van Dalen, *Historia Scientiarum* 7 (1997): 11–43.

Another critical initiative under the Yuan rulers based on Islamic knowledge and sciences was the effort to have greater understanding of the physical geography of Mongol territory. The creation of cartographic knowledge enabled the Yuan administration to better govern their vast holdings. In 1286, during the later years of Jamāl al-Dīn’s life, he led a project to map the entire Yuan Empire. Understanding the boundaries of this diverse swath of land alleviated some of the difficulties in administering its territory, and this endeavor was highly valued by the Mongol rulers. He worked with translators to produce the *Record of Great Unity of the Great Yuan* (*Dayuan dayi tongzhi* 大元大一統誌), a geographical survey of the entire Yuan Empire. Overall, it was the largest cartographical compendium of any Chinese empire, consisting of 755 volumes. It was presented to the emperor in 1291 and finally printed in 1347, however, only the introduction of this work remains.⁴¹

Finally, during the Mongol conquest of Eurasia (1206–1368) with the integration and blending of various peoples, interpersonal and administrative exchanges required linguistic competency in multiple languages. While Mongolian may be self-evident for understanding the Yuan dynasty it was Chinese and Persian that become the most important for historical documentation and governmental management.⁴² The Mongol government officially recognized all three languages but Persian, called *Huihuihua* 回回話, was also the *lingua franca* among Muslims.⁴³ In 1289, Qubilai Khan established a

⁴¹ Dalen, “*Zhamaluding*,” 1263.

⁴² For the Mongol historian the challenge is determining what language will become central to one’s approach. David Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2nd ed. (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 6-7.

⁴³ Leslie argues that Persian was already established as a common language among foreigners by the Song dynasty. Donald Daniel Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: the Jewish Community of Kaifeng* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 118-9.

national college in Beijing dedicated to the study of Muslim languages.⁴⁴ Many graduates were employed as interpreters and worked alongside administrators. Others served as translators after completion and worked on making Persian medical and scientific knowledge available to the broader Chinese literate population.⁴⁵

Overall, many key features of Muslim life in China underwent increased development during the Yuan period, such as the influx of Muslims, the increased usage of Persian, the integration of Islamic sciences, especially astronomy and geography, mosque construction, and Muslim migration and creation of new communities. Muslims were generally foreign in origin and maintained their native identity, including culture, language, and religion. The Mongol system paired with the ease of travel and the continuation of traditional networks enabled Muslims to remain distinct from the Han Chinese. Yuan institutions facilitated the social spacing between Muslims and Chinese and reinforced Muslim superiority over them under the Mongols.⁴⁶ During the Ming Dynasty these factors will be completely turned around and Muslim assimilation into Chinese culture will begin to rapidly increase.

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

It was during the Ming Dynasty that we witness the most transformative circumstances that led to the formation of a distinctly Chinese vision and expression of Islam in the *Han Kitab* literature.⁴⁷ Acculturation to Chinese society and culture,

⁴⁴ Huang Shijian, “Chinese-Iranian Relations VIII: Persian language and literature in China,” *Encyclopedia Iranica* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publisher, 1992), 446.

⁴⁵ Huang Shijian, “The Persian Language in China during the Yuan Dynasty,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 34 (1986): 83-95

⁴⁶ Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 194.

⁴⁷ This notion has been repeatedly echoed in Western scholarship through the corresponding notion that, during the Ming, we can begin to speak of “Chinese Muslims” rather than “Muslims in China.” For the most recent expression see Benite, “Follow the White Camel,” 421.

detachment from traditional networks of learning, and the loss of linguistic skills in Arabic and Persian, all greatly contributed to the reformulation of Islam through Chinese vocabulary and symbolism. After the Ming forces took power, there was a revival of Han chauvinism and an attempt to restore Chinese culture. Despite the participation by many Muslims in overthrowing the Yuan government, Ming loyalists often viewed Muslims as supporters of Mongol oppression. Initially official policy attempted to isolate the Muslims that remained within Chinese borders by prohibiting them from intermarrying with Chinese women and banning them from speaking Chinese. However, shortly thereafter, the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, instituted laws that were aimed at integrating the Muslim “foreigners” (*yi* 夷).⁴⁸ The emperor’s new laws encouraged assimilation by requiring Muslims to take on Chinese names but many retained their Arabic or Persian names within their communities.⁴⁹ Common names such as Maḥmūd and Muḥammad were rendered as Ma 馬.⁵⁰ Material culture also began to change: Muslims began to wear Chinese attire, build Chinese style architecture, and follow Chinese cultural practices. This process was reinforced by laws creating Chinese family structures, codified in *The Great Ming Code* (*Daming lu* 大明律), completed in 1397, which decrees:

Mongols and Central Asians (Semu people *semuren* 色目人) shall marry with Chinese persons. They shall not marry within their own race. Any violations shall be punished by eighty strokes of beating with the heavy stick, and both the men and women shall be enslaved by the government.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Often translated and understood by the Chinese as “barbarian.” However, many of the foreigners had lived in China for decades or even generations. Despite this fact, they were still seen as “other” by Han Chinese.

⁴⁹ Tsai Yuan-Lin, “Sufism in Wang Daiyu’s San Yi (the Threefold of Oneness) Theory-the Advent of a Creative Dialogue between Islam and Confucianism,” Unpublished paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, November 20-23, 2004.

⁵⁰ Benite, “Follow the White Camel,” 421.

⁵¹ Jiang Yonglin, *The Great Ming Code: Da Ming lü* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 88.

Generations of these families appeared more and more outwardly “Chinese.” Local born Muslim children of these mixed families became fluent in Chinese, went by Chinese names, and were seemingly indistinguishable from other Han residents.⁵² Later during the Ming period, several Muslims achieved high levels of power in the administrative system, obtaining *juren* 舉人 and *jinshi* 進士 degrees, after excelling in the civil service exam, or becoming magistrates, education officials, and military figures.⁵³ These developments had profound effects on the religious character of the community.

However, the Ming Dynasty sponsored a number of projects that championed the accomplishments of Muslims. The government sponsored a number of foreign explorations and sustained trade through out sea routes. Most notable among these individuals was admiral Zheng He 鄭和 (1371-1433), also known by his Islamic name, Ḥajjī Maḥmūd Shams al-Dīn, the Muslim eunuch who led seven expeditions throughout Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. He led fleets of 48 to 317 ships and up to 28,000 crewmembers, and provided some of the first Chinese accounts of many geographical regions and different societies, including Mecca.⁵⁴ Despite these grandiose imperial ventures, the Ming government only permitted foreign travel through official avenues. Individuals were limited from traveling abroad; requiring traditional networks of trade activity to fall under the supervision of the official tributary system.⁵⁵ The suspension of established circulation patterns of people, thoughts, and materials isolated

⁵² Lee Cheuk Yin, “Islamic Values in Confucian Terms: Wang Daiyu (ca. 1580-1658) and his *Zhengjiao Zhenquan* (*Genuine Annotation of the Orthodox Teachings*),” in *Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue*, eds. Osman Baker and Cheng Gek Nai (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1996), 78.

⁵³ Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 120-1. For example, in 1661, Ma Shijun came in first in the *jinshi* examination and met with the emperor.

⁵⁴ See J.V.G. Mills, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores' (1433)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

⁵⁵ Joseph Fletcher, “China and Central Asia, 13-68-1884,” in *Chinese World Order*, ed. John Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 207-8.

Muslims in China from their coreligionists in Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and further abroad.⁵⁶ These policies also contributed to the fading use of Arabic and Persian languages by the general populace of Sino-Muslims. One result of this seclusion from the broader Muslim world was the construction of many new mosques, which were led by local religious leaders (*Ahong* 阿訇, Persian *ākhūnd*). Some of these mosques even claim to be sponsored by the emperor himself, as in the case of the mosque in the new Ming capital of Nanjing.⁵⁷ Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang's successor, Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360–1424), also sponsored the renovation of several mosques throughout China.⁵⁸ These new localized religious settings allowed Muslims to transmit practical Islamic knowledge, such as the recitation of daily Arabic prayers and ritual activity. However, it failed to yield effective means for producing learned scholars of traditional Islamic knowledge.

Overall, following generations of integration, isolation from traditional networks of Muslim interaction, and the loss of linguistic skills in Arabic and Persian, the ability to master fields in the Islamic sciences diminished. In general, people were unable to go on pilgrimage to Mecca or study abroad in centers of Islamic learning, thus leading to the fact that many religious leaders were incapable of interpreting traditional authoritative Islamic sources.⁵⁹ For many of the native born “foreign” children their Chinese identity and participation in Confucian culture eclipsed their Islamic character. Chinese Confucian literati education often took precedence over Islamic learning in Arabic and Persian. As these tensions escalated, many Sino-Muslims grew apprehensive about the role of Islam and level of authenticity in China. The fading understanding of Islamic

⁵⁶ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 46.

⁵⁷ This attribution is according to a stele at the mosque. Translated in P.C. Low, “100-Character Psalm on Islam by the First Ming Emperor,” *Friends of Moslems* 11 no. 2 (1937): 39.

⁵⁸ Benite, “Follow the White Camel,” 422.

⁵⁹ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 73.

knowledge motivated many Sino-Muslims to search for new methods for preserving their tradition within their circumstances.

The most significant development that would later have a direct effect on the creation of Islamic texts in Chinese was the establishment of the Scripture Hall (*jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育) education system. The Scripture Hall system was developed to counter the negative intellectual effects of assimilation within the larger Chinese culture and society on Islamic learning. Concerns about the loss of their foreign heritage was the impetus for constructing an indigenous structure and process for preserving Islamic knowledge that would produce learned Muslim scholars. We will see that one the direct products of the Scripture Hall system was Chinese language Islamic texts, the *Han Kitab*. The intellectual environment fostered in this framework that would provide the institutional infrastructure for writing about Islam in Chinese.

The apprehensions and worries about the state of Islam in China during the later part of the Ming Dynasty are reflected in the life story of the founder of the Scripture Hall system, Hu Dengzhou 胡登洲 (ca. 1522-97).⁶⁰ Hu was from the city of Wei 魏, outside of Xi'an in Shaanxi province. Like many Sino-Muslims of the time he was educated in the Confucian Classics, which would prepare him for a civil service career. However, Hu also was pursuing his own training in Islam at his local mosque. Within time he found himself disappointed with the effectiveness of the dialogical method that was used by the resident religious leader at his mosque. He felt that he was unable to fully penetrate the meaning of the Islamic scriptures and lacked an authentic understanding of the religion. These circumstances motivated Hu to seek a more

⁶⁰ He was also known as Grand Teacher Hu (Taishi 胡太師), by his style name (*zi* 子) Hu Puzhao 胡普照 and his Islamic name Muḥammad ‘Ibrāhīm Iliyās.

traditional Islamic education abroad in centers of learning. He spent several years in Central Asia and finally arrived in Mecca where he studied for many years. Upon Hu's return he intended to renovate the institutional structures in his local area in order to allow many more Sino-Muslims to have access to Islamic classics. The numerous books that he brought back from his travels enabled him to establish a systematic and accessible program for obtaining this knowledge.⁶¹ One of the main challenges for Sino-Muslims at this time was their difficulty in acquiring Islamic texts. After a long process of assimilation and isolation from Muslims outside of Ming borders "...there was a shortage of books [and] learned men were few and far between and the transmission and interpretation [of the texts] were not clear."⁶² Hu provided this necessary key for opening up Islamic knowledge in the late Ming Dynasty to Sino-Muslims. His return marked an important advancement by providing the textual resources for establishing a sense of religious authenticity and authority within Chinese borders.

However, texts alone would not make the Islamic tradition accessible, especially to a general community who had largely lost the capability to read Arabic and Persian. What made Hu's new system significant was the pedagogical structures he put in place, such as the establishment of a set curriculum, financial support, including room, board, and study materials, and, most importantly, the use of Chinese as a language of instruction.⁶³ Hu's new school mirrored many of the *madrasas* (religious schools) he visited throughout Muslim communities. However, his center drastically differed because

⁶¹ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 39-42.

⁶² Zhao Can 趙燦, *Jingxue xi chuan pu* 經學系傳譜 (*Genealogy of the Transmission and Lineage of Classical Learning*), quoted in Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 41. This catalogue, written circa 1677, narrates the success of the scripture hall education system, and outlines the scholastic history of the system, including teachers, students, curriculum, literary output, and the establishment of mosque schools.

⁶³ A few students even lived with Hu in his home on a work-study program. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 50.

“in addition to books in Arabic and Persian, Chinese Muslims made use of books written in Chinese (both Islamic and non-Islamic, including the Chinese classics and official histories). This trend grew more pronounced with time.”⁶⁴ The inclusion of Chinese was one of the central features of late-Ming Islamic learning, which would be the direct catalyst for the *Han Kitab* texts. Many of the average students were only articulate in Chinese and had no access to these news texts. These lower level students studied a Qur’ānic primer (*haiting* 亥聽, Arabic *khatm*), containing two dozen or so passages, and an elementary Islamic textbook (*zaxue* 雜學, *Diverse Studies*), covering prayers, ablutions, faith, worship, fasting, marriage, funerals, and festivals. These teaching tools also used a Chinese phonetic transliteration system to represent the original orthography of Arabic and Persian passages.⁶⁵ More advanced students followed a curriculum made up of fourteen courses, eight in Arabic and six in Persian.⁶⁶ The linguistic flexibility of the new system paired with the systematic program of study made Hu’s pedagogical advances capable of being easily reproduced throughout China by the graduating students who had traveled to Northwest China to study with him. Within a few generations Hu’s school was being replicated in cities with substantial Muslim populations, and was especially successful in Nanjing. It was here that the Scripture Hall framework became the most prosperous in terms of significant teachers, numbers of students, and production of texts.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 75.

⁶⁵ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 50.

⁶⁶ Michael Dillon, *China’s Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1999) 37.

⁶⁷ Nanjing was one of the most eminent centers of the Scripture Hall system, producing both Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi. Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 21.

Nanjing was a large intellectual and commercial center with a prominent literati culture, including numerous *jinshi* degree holders, and wealthy Chinese educated Muslims.⁶⁸ The Muslim communities in Southeast China were well integrated into these plural societies and the educational network served as a means for connecting previously unassociated individuals.⁶⁹ In Nanjing the Muslim teachers emphasized the similarities between Islam and traditional Chinese philosophical principles in their instruction, which led to the duplication of this interpretation and reproduction of rendering in texts. The *Han Kitab* literature grew out of this intellectual environment and directly engaged it. Chinese language Islamic texts were utilized within the system to make advanced Islamic teaches accessible to the highly Sinicized Muslims of Southeast China. Their linguistic limitations failed to provide them direct access to Arabic and Persian texts from the Middle East but the *Han Kitab* works provided this knowledge in an intelligible form and through recognizable expressions.

Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

Initially, most of the limiting Ming dynasty legislation towards Muslims was maintained as the new Qing leaders attempted to establish their control over the large geographical borders. However, when the Qing had effectively contained their inherited domain they began to expand further east and west. After 1684, when they seized Taiwan, travel policies were dissolved making foreign travel available for the Sino-Muslim populace and, thus, resuming participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca and

⁶⁸ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 21-2.

⁶⁹ This high level of integration contrasts with the social pattern for the Muslim communities of Northwest and Southwest China, where Muslims often lived in large secluded rural communities. See Jonathan Lipman, "Patchwork Society, Network Society: A Study of Sino-Muslim Communities," in *Islam in Asia Vol. II*, ed. Raphael Israeli (Boulder: Westview Press), 1984.

restoring previous intra-Muslim communication and connections.⁷⁰ As more and more Muslims studied and traveled abroad they brought back with them new interpretations of Islam, many of which were connected to global Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqah*). Brotherhoods were most popular amongst Northwest Sino-Muslims and pilgrimage to the Arabian Peninsula exposed many pilgrims to new interpretations of Islam.⁷¹ In Yunnan province, Sino-Muslims reinitiated traditional commercial and social ties with Southeast Asia.⁷² Also, connections with Indian Sufi masters influenced brotherhood activity in Southwest Yunnan province, especially the Qalandariya (*Gelandai* 格蘭岱).⁷³ What is important for this study is to note that the porous borders of the Qing Empire reestablished traditional networks of travel and learning, which led Sino-Muslims to pursue these prior connections in the present context. This travel enabled them to witness contemporary trends within in the global Muslim community, which would then inform their own understanding of Islam and lead to a reformation of their own thought and practice.

According to Qing official imperial history, Sufi brotherhoods were the catalyst for several Muslims revolts or uprising.⁷⁴ Muslims were repeatedly portrayed as inherently violent or radically different from the Han Chinese and the Qing elite.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Ma Tong 馬通, *Zhongguo Yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilue* 中国伊斯兰教派与门宦制度史略 (*A Brief History of the Sects and menhuan Organizations of Chinese Islam*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 3rd ed., 2000), 115-6.

⁷¹ The ongoing transitions within Sufi practice are witnessed most clearly in the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order in China. See Joseph Fletcher, ed. Jonathan N. Lipman, “The Naqshbandiyya in Northwest China,” in *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, ed. Beatrice Manz (London: Variorum, 1995), 1-46.

⁷² David Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 43-6.

⁷³ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 81.

⁷⁴ The most comprehensive study of Muslim rebellions is Bai Shouyi 白壽彝 ed., *Huimin qiyi* 回民起義 (*Righteous Uprisings of the Hui People*) (Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguang, 1953).

⁷⁵ Jonathan Lipman, “‘A Fierce and Brutal People’: On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law,” in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, eds. Pamela Crossley, Donald Sutton, and Helen Siu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 83-110.

However, the expansionist policies of Qing emperors, especially the Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661-1722) and Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736-96) emperors, greatly contributed to the unrest.⁷⁶ Further, internal sectarian disputes over Islamic principles and practices were often settled in imperial courts instead of within Islamic legal settings. This became the catalyst for several occasions of violence because the Qing government took the side of one faction or another.⁷⁷ Therefore, these revolts were not representative of a homogeneous Muslim population fighting against imperial powers and put Muslim against Muslim in the fighting.⁷⁸ The two largest Muslim movements during the Qing period were the Dungan Revolt (1862-1877) in Xinjiang province and the Panthay Rebellion (1856-1873) in Yunnan province,⁷⁹ each establishing an Islamic State.⁸⁰ These two campaigns, along with numerous other localized events,⁸¹ demonstrate that during the nineteenth century Sino-Muslims generally viewed the Qing imperial government as an oppressive political regime that failed to sufficiently provide structural means for instituting Islam. We will see that Sino-Muslims began to relate more with their Muslims coreligionists abroad than with their multiethnic neighbors as ease of travel and linguistic skills in foreign languages improved. Often, the Qing were seen as a colonial power by Sino-Muslims, much like the British, Dutch, or French powers who were governing large Muslim communities found in other parts of Asia and Africa.

⁷⁶ See Perdue, *China Marches West*.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Lipman, "Sufism in the Chinese Courts-Islam and Qing Law in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, eds. Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 553-75.

⁷⁸ See Fletcher, "The Naqshbandiyya in Northwest China."

⁷⁹ Ma Dexin played a role in the Panthay rebellion as it occurred during the later years of his life. His position in the movement will be examined within the context of his life more generally in chapter 2.

⁸⁰ The Qing military was also dealing with the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) in Southeast China. See Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1996).

⁸¹ For events in Shaanxi, Gansu and Qinghai see Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 103-66.

Modern Islam

Sino-Muslims associated with the *Han Kitab* tradition and Scripture Hall system were coming in greater contact with Muslim abroad during the mid-nineteenth century, exemplified in this study by Ma Dexin. To understand the increased dialogue between Sino-Muslims and their global partners we should briefly look at the intellectual currents happening in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The beginning of the modern period is generally characterized by the interaction between Muslims and the West, which mainly occurred through colonial encounters and Muslim reactions to them. Muslim responses ranged from complete rejection of Western values, violent resistance, conciliation and application of new modalities of change, and cooperation and collaboration with Europeans.⁸² Valuations of the relationship between the inherited Islamic tradition and the features of a globalizing world, including social, political, and technological advances, varied among differing Muslim communities. However, the dawn of the modern period was characterized by the navigation between traditionalism and modes of revival, renewal, and reform.

Many western observers have highlighted that Muslims during this period Muslims stressed allegiance to the obedience of outward religious practice (*sharī‘ah*), had a renewed interest in authoritative scriptural sources, especially the *hadith*, and favored personal independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) of the tradition rather than the uncritical imitation (*taqlīd*) of figures from the tradition.⁸³ These motivations are clear in the thoughts of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792) who promoted a

⁸² For an overview of revivalist thinkers and movements, see John Voll, “Foundations for Renewal and Reform: Islamic Movements in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 509-49.

⁸³ The most detailed account is John Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

scripturalist fundamentalism reading of tradition, which was his effort to return to an original Islam that was practiced by Muhammad and his companions.⁸⁴ All innovation (*bid'ah*) that was developed over time should be removed from Islamic practices, such as the celebration of Muhammad's birthday (*mawlid*), the visitation of saints' shrines and tombs (*ziyārah*), and the oral recitation of God's names (*dhikr*). While his innovative interpretation of Islam was not well received by his intellectual contemporaries he did gain the support of a powerful local ruler in the Arabian Peninsula, Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd (d. 1765). This collaboration afforded 'Abd al-Wahhāb's teachings a sustained audience and eventually their reception grew more widespread in the Middle East and abroad in the nineteenth century.⁸⁵ The Wahhābi movement contributed to the confluence of Islamization, the norming of Muslim beliefs and practices with perceived notions of orthodoxy, and Arabization, which viewed an authoritative Islamic tradition being solely situated in an Arab Islamic context. The general trend of returning to primary Arabic Islamic sources, the Qur'an and hadith, instead of relying on local interpretations and explanations of Islam was a new evolution in the tradition that was cloaked in ideas of the retrieval of original authority. However, this move undercut historical notions of the transmission of knowledge and elevated personal interpretation over developments created collectively by generations of scholars. These modern developments in Islamic thought had a lasting effect on Sino-Muslims that are visible in our Sino-Muslim representatives.

⁸⁴ For an outline of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's life, thought, and influence, see David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (I.B. Tauris, 2006); and Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 45-74.

⁸⁵ For some supporters of this perspective, see Rudolph Peters, "Ijtihad and Taqlid in Eigtheenth and Nineteenth Century Islam," *Die Welt des Islam* 20 (1981): 131-45.

As we examine the role of pilgrimage, scripture, and language in Sino-Islamic thought we will witness the effects of global developments in modern Islam. By the nineteenth century, advances in transportation and the freedom of Sino-Muslims to go abroad increased their encounters with other foreign Muslims. Exposure to scripturalist tendencies and the return to primary sacred texts directly influenced how Sino-Muslims understood religious authority and its sources. Ma Dexin and his successors pursued a similar mode of training whereby Sino-Muslims would become proficient in the Arabic language, have comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'an, and cooperate with their coreligionists abroad.

Overall, both the local and global historical circumstances shaped the evolution of Islam in China. The Mongols greatly increased the Muslim populace and settled new areas that would later become centers of Islamic learning. They were supporters of the Islamic sciences, especially astronomy and geography, and contributed to the expansion and continued importance of the Persian language outside of Central Asia. Policies of isolation and integration created by the Ming rulers expedited Muslim assimilation and adoption of Chinese language and culture. This was one of the direct impetuses for creating Chinese language Islamic schools, the Scripture Hall system, which in turn would be foundational in the production of Chinese language texts, the *Han Kitab*. Qing expansion and internal colonial activity combined with the growing tensions between Muslims and rulers heightened the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim. While conflict often was derived from internal Muslim disputes about Islamic principles and practices the Qing defended one faction over another, ultimately creating a division between the Qing and Muslim “rebels.” The expanding network of interactions between Muslims abroad during the modern period also fostered this insider/outside mentality,

which contributed to the strengthening of a pan-Islamic identity and the desire to foster a sense of a global Muslim community. The desire to reflect a perceived universal Muslim identity encouraged Sino-Muslims to actively engage Muslims abroad through participation in travel, study, and pilgrimage. They simultaneously attempted to develop their capability to access authentic Islamic scriptural materials in Arabic and comprehensively understand foundational texts like the Qur'an. We will see that attitudes towards these features of Islam, pilgrimage, scripture, and language, were shaped by the period authors were writing in. However, before we look at the topics in great detail let us first briefly introduce the life and work Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi, and Ma Dexin.

***The Legacy of Discourses in Dialogue
History and Thought in the Shaping of Sino-Muslim Intellectuals
Chapter Two***

The historical development of Islam in China and the unique cultural and intellectual Sino-Islamic identity that was well formulated by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) directly influenced how Muslim scholars discussed Islam in their local Chinese context. Ma Dexin (1794-1874) wrote in a period when he was greatly immersed in the rich traditions of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese Islamic texts, which each had their own distinctive discursive formula for presenting Islamic teachings. The Sino-Islamic system was shaped in large part by the establishment of scripture hall education (*jingtang jiaoyu*), which led to production of *Han Kitab* texts and the self perception of a group of “Confucian Muslim” scholars (*Huiru*). Ma viewed himself within this tradition and continued to contribute to it through his numerous Chinese writings. However, he also viewed himself within an Arabic Islamic discursive system, which he became increasingly familiar with during his study abroad. The parallel deference Ma paid to these intellectual traditions was shaped by his own maturation within the local Chinese context, as well as the intimate relationship he had with the work of his predecessors. This chapter focuses on Ma Dexin’s personal narrative and how this history shaped his writings. First, I sketch a brief portrait of his Sino-Islamic intellectual forefathers, Wang Daiyu (1590-1658) and Liu Zhi (1670-1724), and their major works, which accentuate the original features of Ma’s intellectual development. Following this, I outline Ma’s textual output and trace his general theories on the nature of God, faith, religious observance, and prayer. This situates our specific study of the role of pilgrimage, scripture, and language in Sino-Islamic thought that is the subject of the remainder of the study within the wider context of prominent Sino-Islamic scholars.

Wang Daiyu (1590-1658)

Wang Daiyu was the earliest important author to write about Islam using the Chinese language. He was influential in developing an initial Sino-Islamic discourse, which presented Islam in a clear and simple language that would be easily understood by educated Chinese-speaking Muslims of the time. Little is known about Wang Daiyu's personal life, even his date of birth and death are uncertain.¹ He was born in the rich cultural center, Nanjing 南京, during the Wanli era 萬曆 (1573-1619) and died in the Qing capital, Beijing 北京, sometime in the Shunzhi period 順治 (1644-1661).² Within Sino-Islamic literature, and within his own works, Wang was referred to as the Elder of Islam (*zhenhui laoren* 真回老人).³ He reported that his ancestors were originally from “Arabia” (*Tianfang* 天房) and they had been living in China for 300 years.⁴ He proudly announced that one of his ancestors was an astronomer who brought tribute to the emperor during the Ming Hongwu era 洪武 (1368-98), who subsequently appointed him as the Directorate of Astronomy (*qintian jian* 欽天監) after he corrected errors in

¹ There are several Chinese biographies of Wang Daiyu but they are all based on his own autobiographical account presented at the beginning of his first book, *Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮 (*True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching*). Wang Daiyu 王岱輿, “Zixu 自敘 (Author's Preface),” in *Zhengjiao zhenquan, Qingzhen daxue, Xizhen zhengda* 正教真詮, 請真大學, 希真正答 (*True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching, Great Learning of Islam, Orthodox Responses on the Rare Truth*), ed. Yu Zhengui 余振貴 (Reprinted-Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1987), 16-17.

² Lee, “Islamic Values in Confucian Terms.” Wang's birthdate is uncertain. Murata puts it around 1590, while Benite posits 1570. Modern Chinese scholars presume it could have been between 1573 to as late as 1619. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 19; and Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 134.

³ This could also be translated as the Elder of the Muslims but it seems to be a combination of *qingzhen* 清真 (Islam) and *huihui* 回回 (Muslim). This also evokes the image of the *shaikh* or *pir*, meaning “old man,” employed to refer to the teacher and especially a Sufi master. Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 134; and Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 19.

⁴ Wang, “Zixu,” 16; Joseph Ford, “Some Chinese Muslims of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Asian Affairs* 5 no. 2 (1974): 145.

the calendar and contributed to the Chinese conception of astronomy.⁵ The family settled in Nanjing and established permanent residency there.⁶ Nanjing, the new Ming capital under emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 1368-1398), was a lively cosmopolitan city with prosperous intellectual and religious communities.⁷ Muslims constitute a significant percentage of the city's population and were in constant contact with various communities of people in this environment and exposed to several religious and philosophical perspectives. Nanjing continued to be a vibrant center of cultural diversity during Wang's upbringing in the early seventeenth century and his pioneering work reflected this blending of cultural influences.

Wang Daiyu received a traditional Islamic education and it should be presumed that he was trained in the manner of most Muslim scholars, in Arabic and Persian languages, studying Qur'an, Hadith literature, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), along with Sufism (*tasawwuf*).⁸ At twenty, Wang began studying literary Chinese because he never received a formal education in the Chinese classics as a youth and probably learned to read and write Chinese in the scripture hall system in Nanjing.⁹ At thirty, he wrote, "I was so ashamed of my stupidity and smallness that I started to read

⁵ Technical knowledge of the heavens was important to the imperial government because it allowed the emperor to organize economic, political, and religious rituals, which symbolically affirmed his role as the "Son of Heaven" (*tianzi* 天子). The Directorate of Astronomy was the bureau responsible for these calculations and was dominated by Muslims during the Yuan and the early Ming Dynasties, when it was taken over by Jesuit missionaries. For a further discussion see Benjamin A. Elman, *On their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 61-106.

⁶ Wang, "Zixu," 16.

⁷ The imperial government was moved to Beijing 北京 by emperor Yongle 永樂 (r. 1402-1424) in 1414-1415 and was officially made the capital in 1421.

⁸ These influences and linguistic sources are reflected in Wang's writings, which presented his familiarity with various topics derived from multiple Islam sciences. However, we do not have cited sources or certificates (*ijāzah*) that verify his training. This was the norm rather than the exception within Chinese Islamic educational practices.

⁹ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 135.

[Chinese] books on metaphysics and history.”¹⁰ Then Wang began “...reading books on nature and principle (i.e. Neo-Confucianism) and history, and branching off into works of the various schools of philosophy.”¹¹ Wang sought to understand local Chinese traditions in order to guide Confucian-educated Sino-Muslims who were mistaken about Islam and welcomed heterodox Chinese philosophies. In a preface to one of his works, Wang’s student commented, “My teacher Wang Daiyu had mastered the four teachings and had studied all the doctrines of the various schools.”¹² All the while, Wang continued his study of traditional Islamic sources of knowledge. He lamented about his Muslim neighbors and colleagues, “...as I broadened my knowledge I discovered views which were erroneous, perverse, mutually contradictory, and as different from the Muslim religion as night from day.”¹³ Wang’s concern for the well being of his fellow Sino-Muslims inspired him to write his interpretation of Islam and present it in a manner that would be accessible to Muslims who had undertaken a traditional Chinese education in preparation for civil service, those who understood the Confucian classics but misunderstood the principles of Islam. Wang achieved his goal of synthesizing Islam and Confucianism for the means of clarifying their differences and elevating Islam as the superior tradition.

Wang Daiyu was the fifth generation of the scripture hall students and was taught by Ma Junshi 馬君實 (1600-1680), one of the earliest Nanjing natives to travel to Northwest China in order to become a teacher in the scripture hall system. In Nanjing, Ma Junshi initially received a Confucian education and obtained a semi-official position,

¹⁰ Wang, “Zixu,” 16. Quoted from Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 20.

¹¹ Wang, “Zixu,” 16.

¹² Wang, *Zhengjiao Zhenquan*, 3. Quoted from Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 21.

¹³ Wang, “Zixu,” 16. Quoted from Ford, “Some Chinese Muslims,” 146.

mingjing 明經.¹⁴ Later, he traveled to Ningxia 寧夏 to study with Zhuangyuan Zhang 狀元張 and on his return was appointed successor of the other native Nanjing teacher, Ma Zhenwu 馬真吾 (b. ca. 1600), and inherited his large following.¹⁵ During Wang Daiyu's ascent as a teacher, the use of Chinese texts in Islamic education, especially in Nanjing, was significant. Later in 1645, he moved to the new capital in Beijing where he became the tutor of a wealthy Muslim merchant, Ma Siyuan 馬思遠, who sponsored Wang's teaching and writing.¹⁶ Wang's days were spent in dialogue and debate with students, ordinary believers, and Muslim scholars, as well as the non-Muslim intelligentsia, including literati, Buddhist monks and Daoist priests, about Islamic principles and how they related to the Chinese traditions.¹⁷ The most famous of these arguments was with the abbot of Iron Mountain Buddhist monastery 鐵山寺 in 1650. When the abbot heard of Wang's great skill in polemics he began a multi-day debate with him. However, he soon realized the inadequacy of his knowledge and ultimately became Wang's student.¹⁸ From these various exchanges between scholar, converts, and antagonists Wang began to construct a formalized presentation of his teachings on the major principles of Islam. Wang remembered: "Of those superior men who willingly

¹⁴ This title was one of several categories of which local authorities nominated individuals to be considered for official positions. Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 333.

¹⁵ *Zhuangyuan* 狀元 is a title given to a top candidate in the palace examination that was adopted by Muslim intellectuals where several teachers were referred to by this epithet. Zhang Shaoshan 張少山 was his given name but he was also referred to as *Zhuangyuan Baba* 狀元爸爸 (Prominent Elder). Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 50-6.

¹⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 21.

¹⁷ Lee, "Islamic Values in Confucian Terms," 83.

¹⁸ This story seems to originate much later and is first found in the anonymous work *Daiyu Wang Gong Tan Dao* 岱興王公談道 (*The Way of Discussion of Master Wang Daiyu*), published as an appendix to the 1927 edition of the *Huihui Yuanlai* 回回原來 (*Origins of the Muslims*). It is most certainly hagiographical and meant to be polemic in nature. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 21 plus notes; and Mason, "Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature," 194, n. 165.

submitted, every one regretted that there existed no complete guidebook to the Correct Teaching [Islam]. So whenever I had been among them, I went home and noted down what had been said.”¹⁹ Wang’s personal interactions informed how he presented Islam and became the basis for his writings. His role as a teacher is reflected in the structure, presentation, approach, and content of Wang’s works. Wang spent his final years teaching at the Sanlihe 三里河 school (in modern Beijing) where he was buried.²⁰

Literary Output

Wang Daiyu’s style and content indicate that his major objective was clarifying the Islam for readers who were generally confused about Islamic teachings. He explicitly expressed that he wanted to help his colleagues comprehend their religion and “save them from the mistakes” he had heard in the classroom.²¹ In general, Wang’s writing was short and explanatory, which in accordance with his role as a teacher and reflective of a dialogical teaching method. Ma Junshi also added that Wang was well known for both his scholarly dexterity and his ability to answer any question in a friendly and kind manner, even if he had to repeat himself.²² Overall, due to the nature of the scripture hall education and Wang’s own training and intended audience his works employed a Chinese lexicon, which would be clear and comprehensible to the Chinese-speaking, educated Muslims of Nanjing and later Beijing. Wang was not trying to create “a basic curriculum for Sino-Muslim schools in general, nor was he trying to develop a systematic explanation of Muslim thought and philosophy.”²³ It seems obvious that his work was not necessarily intended to have an extremely broad audience and was originally created to

¹⁹ Wang, “Zixu,” 16. Quoted from Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 76.

²⁰ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 136.

²¹ Wang, “Zixu,” 17. Quoted from Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 136.

²² Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 135.

²³ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 136.

further the development of Wang’s students and closest colleagues.²⁴ The exegetical nature of much of Wang’s writing reinforces this argument. He repeatedly started a section with translated quotations from the Qur’an and Ḥadith, followed by his own commentary on a number of basic principles, indicating that his writings were directly influenced by questions directed at him while teaching.²⁵ As Lipman has observed, Wang “certainly did not intend to toady or to flatter the Confucians, but he nevertheless wrote his treatise in a self-consciously Confucian vocabulary.”²⁶ This was in part because Wang wanted to give Chinese readers access to classic Islamic treatises from the Arabic and Persian traditions.²⁷ However, he ultimately employed Neo-Confucian rhetoric and philosophical discourse in order to criticize some of its inherent theories, thus, justifying Islam.²⁸ Despite Wang’s initial motivations and limited content, his work established much of the terminology that would be employed by later *Han Kitab* authors and served as an archetype for his literary heirs.

The *True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching* (*Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮), published in 1642, was Wang’s first work and also his most important. Here Wang covered many foundational principles of the Islamic perspective on human nature, God, theology, law, cosmology and moral behavior. The text itself is divided into two volumes, each consisting of twenty sections. The first section was philosophically oriented and was concerned with the nature of God, the origin of humans, the role of prophets, angels and *jinn* (spiritual beings), human nature, and various levels of spiritual reality. The second

²⁴ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 136-7.

²⁵ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 136.

²⁶ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 77.

²⁷ Sachiko Murata, “Sufi Texts in Chinese,” in *The Heritage of Sufism: Late Classical Sufism (1501-1750)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 380.

²⁸ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 79.

section concentrated on the relationship between belief and practice and covered the five pillars of Islam, following God's will, annihilation of the self, afterlife awarded to believers, and practical questions on proper Muslim reaction to common Chinese practices.²⁹ Wang was primarily concerned with projecting a certain cosmological perspective on reality. He delineated why one should behave and think in a particular way, which was based on an Islamic theological foundation as it is explicated by traditional Islamic sciences.³⁰

Orthodox Responses on the Rare Truth (*Xizhen zhengda* 希真正答), published in 1658 by Wang's pupils, presented roughly two hundred interactions in a question and answer format between Wang and various interlocutors. In this work, Wang responded to questions from Muslims, both scholars and unlearned, as well as Buddhists, Daoists, and Neo-Confucian literati. These accounts range from a single question and short response to long expositions with several rejoinders.

Wang's last important treatise was his undated *Great Learning of Islam* (*Qingzhen daxue* 請真大學).³¹ Wang consciously selected this title, reminiscent of the short chapter in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) called the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學), to suggest significant similarities between Islam and Confucianism.³² Wang's *Great Learning* was made up of an introduction, three main sections, and a long conclusion. His

²⁹ Murata provides a brief summary of each chapter. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 43-60.

³⁰ *True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching* included an *Addendum* (*Shengyu* 剩語), which presented Wang's debate with a Buddhist monk who converts to Islam. Murata notes that the foremost Japanese scholar on Islam in China, Tazaka Kodo, questioned its authenticity because this interaction was inconsistent with the rest of Wang's work. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 21-2.

³¹ Wang's authorship of this text has been contested due to its shift in literary style and polemic content but it has been traditionally attributed to him. There is no preface that indicates Wang as the writer but there is a note stating that the "Elder of Islam," i.e. Wang Daiyu, commented on the text. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 78-9.

³² The Song Dynasty scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) codified the Confucian canon and made the *Great Learning* paramount in Confucian scholasticism, designating it one of the Four Books.

work and the original Confucian *Great Learning* differ in their orientation, as Wang emphasized the theological implications of the social principles that are explored in the original. By employing the framework of the Confucian *Great Learning*, Wang acknowledged its utility, but then went on to assert that the necessary relationship of these principles is to God, one's origin, and the afterlife. This work was principally concerned with the topic of *tawhīd* or the assertion of God's unity.³³

Altogether, Wang's works critically engaged the philosophical systems of his day, either in his literary style or by examining the similarities and differences between them and Islam. His works are the oldest extent Chinese texts discussing Islamic theology, philosophy and mysticism and he developed a framework for understanding Islam in the Chinese cultural context. During this initial period Wang focused on explicating the theological foundations behind Islamic faith and practice. His texts were written in a clear and direct style that focused on a range of subjects, from practical to philosophical in nature. Ultimately, however, Wang also needed to demonstrate that Islam was superior to these local viewpoints that were widespread.

Liu Zhi (1670-1724)

Many consider Liu Zhi the most productive and creative of all the *Han Kitab* authors. His influence has certainly been influential both within the Sino-Muslim community but also among their non-Muslim neighbors. He was born into serendipitous scholarly circumstances, which all but insured his intellectual productivity. Raised within a scholarly family in Nanjing, he had an early education within the scripture hall school there. Nanjing was very prominent and well established center of Sino-Islamic learning

³³ For a discussion and an English translation of the *Qingzhen daxue* see Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 69-112.

and had produced several important Islamic scholars, including Wang Daiyu. Liu's two most important teachers were his father, Liu Sanjie 劉三傑, and Yuan Ruqi 袁汝椅 (b. ca. 1640). Yuan Ruqi was the son of the eminent preacher and teacher Yuan Shengzhi 袁盛之 (b. ca. 1620), who originally established the Yuan Mosque (*Yuansi* 袁寺) in Nanjing.³⁴ The Yuan family was very influential in establishing Islamic studies within the area and the Yuan mosque produced numerous significant scholars.³⁵ In this setting Liu must have studied Arabic and Persian languages as well as traditional Islamic sciences.³⁶ He also studied Chinese because at fifteen he began a rigorous study of Confucian classical texts for eight years. He then dedicated six years to Islamic books in Arabic and Persian. In an exceptional show of Liu's uniqueness he then spent three years studying Buddhist texts and one year reading Daoist texts. Liu Zhi spent eighteen years under the tutelage of Yuan and his father and then set out to engage his Sino-Muslim associates throughout China.³⁷

While Wang Daiyu lived most of his life in Nanjing and only later moved to Beijing, Liu traveled fairly extensively throughout China. His travels were influential in terms of material, intellectual, and social success. Along the route, Liu gathered rare texts that would inform his work, such as the Persian biography of the Prophet that would later be the basis of his own narrative of Muhammad's life. He also met various scholars with whom he debated and deliberated about the principles of Islam.³⁸ Finally, he made pragmatic connections that would help motivate and support him through his work, as he

³⁴ Murata, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, 4-5.

³⁵ Yuan Guozuo 袁國做 (b. 1717), Yuan Ruqi's grandson, played an important role in editing and republishing Liu Zhi's writings in the 1770s. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 56-7.

³⁶ The precise curriculum of his early education is not recorded.

³⁷ Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*, 5-10.

³⁸ Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*, 10.

did when he gained the support of an influential Muslim, Hei Mingfeng 黑鳴鳳 (1662-1722).³⁹ This transitional period was transformative in shaping Liu Zhi as a scholar, rather than being just a student of Islam. From these journeys he was driven to express Islam in his own voice, which reflected the Sino-Islamic character of his Nanjing intellectual heritage. At thirty-three Liu began writing and would come to shape much of the discourse on Islam in Chinese language.⁴⁰

Literary Output

While the Yuan family played an important role in educating young Liu it was his father's legacy that loomed over his intellectual potential. The lack of accessible Chinese works on Islam greatly concerned Liu's father, which in turn influenced Liu to write about Islam in Chinese. Overall, Liu put all of his scholarly interests in dialogue to produce texts written in a highly sophisticated style. They combined Neo-Confucian and Chinese symbolism with the lexicon of technical Islamic terminology. His discourse on Islam was cloaked in Chinese religio-philosophical vocabulary and presented Confucianism and Islam not in conflict but as complimentary systems, one purely ethical and the other deriving moral behavior from a divine source.

Liu Zhi was one of the most systematic authors in the *Han Kitab* literature with an expansive body of texts that covered an array of subjects. He addressed numerous topics in his writings from the principles of faith, ritualized practice, mysticism, and the meaning of Arabic letters. However, Liu was most well known for his *Tianfang* 天方 trilogy, which methodically outlined the underlying structure of Islam. These three lengthy works covered issues of faith, practice, and the greatest human model as

³⁹ Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 152-3.

⁴⁰ Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*, 5-10.

exemplified in the Prophet Muhammad. The first in the series was *Metaphysics of Islam* (*Tianfang Xingli* 天方性理), completed in 1704, followed by *Rituals of Islam* (*Tianfang Dianli* 天方典禮), finished in 1710, and finally the *Veritable Record of the Most Sagely of Islam* (*Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu* 天方至聖實錄), written in 1724. In his final work in this series, Liu described the intent of the three works: “The *Dianli* is a book that explains the Teaching (*jiao* 教). The *Xingli* is a book that explains the Way (*dao* 道). This edition, the *Zhisheng* [*Shi*]lu, is intended to explain the origin of the sources of the Teaching and the Way.”⁴¹ In this schema, the teaching is the worldly manifestation of the original way and, thus, enables one to understand how to return to God, which is the original source.

Arguably, Liu Zhi’s most sophisticated and significant work was *Metaphysics of Islam*. The content presents a traditional description of issues related to faith and covered the main principles of the religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*), the unity of God (*tawḥīd*), prophecy (*nubuwwa*), and the return (*ma’ād*) or end times. The title of the *Tianfang xingli* is complex because it alludes to several things simultaneously. Nature (*xing* 性) and principle (*li* 理) are two foundational features of Neo-Confucian thought, and, in fact, it is often referred to as the school of nature and principle (*xingli xue* 性理學).⁴² Like his predecessor Wang Daiyu’s *Great Learning of Islam*, the title of this work suggests a synthesis of Chinese and Islamic thought. The *Tianfang xingli* consists of an introduction, a short analysis, and five very long chapters that are each divided into a number of

⁴¹ James Frankel, “Uncontrived Concord: The Eclectic Sources and Syncretic Theories of Liu Zhi, a Chinese Muslim Scholar,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 1 (2009): 48.

⁴² Sachiko Murata even suggests possibly translating the title of the *Tianfang xingli* as *Islamic Neo-Confucianism*. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 25

subsections. The second portion, the *Root Scripture* (*benjing* 本經), serves as a prolegomenon, which introduces and presents the material that is explored in the various sections of the remaining chapters. Ten diagrams that illustrate the cosmological and theological components of the text follow the *Root Scripture*.⁴³ The main five chapters then develop these concepts with the aid of twelve further diagrams, totaling seventy in all.⁴⁴

The *Root Scripture* is also significant because it is one of the only Sino-Islamic texts that revealed its sources. Recorded in the prefaces to both the *Tianfang xingli* (1704) and the *Tianfang dianli* (1710) are bibliographic references to the Arabic and Persian texts that Liu employed to write his work. The two lists contain around 66 individual sources, providing the title of each work in Chinese transliteration and translation but with no accompanying original title in Arabic or Persian.⁴⁵ Several of the most influential works were translated into Chinese, especially Persian Sufi texts. The *Root Scripture* cites several sources repeatedly: Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's (d. 1256) *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (*Mirṣād al-'ibād min al-madba' ila'l-ma'ād*), 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī's (d. ca. 1300) *The Furthest Goal* (*Maqṣad-i aqṣā*), and 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī's (1414-1492) *Rays of the Flashes* (*Ashī' 'at al-lama'āt*) and *Gleams* (*Lawā'ih*); and 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's (d. 1355) *The Standpoints in the Science of Theology* (*al-Mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām*). Liu himself translated *Gleams* (*Lawā'ih*) under the title

⁴³ Diagrams showing the relationship between the various elements of the cosmos is not uncommon in Islamic texts and Liu's diagrams are very reminiscent of those found in Ibn al-'Arabī's work.

⁴⁴ For a complete translation and discussion of the *Tianfang xingli*, consult Murata, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*.

⁴⁵ These texts have been catalogued in Donald Daniel Leslie and M. Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih," *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982): 78-104.

Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm (Zhenjing zhaowei 真境昭微).⁴⁶ This was significant because from these references we are able to determine the Arabic and Persian sources that informed Sino-Muslim scholars. Therefore, Liu's contribution to the preservation of the Sino-Islamic tradition was also substantial.

The main objective of Liu Zhi's *Rituals of Islam* was to delineate the practical and ritualized practices of Islam. This work is divided into twenty chapters of varying length. The first three chapters serve as an introduction or summary of the formative principles discussed in the *Tianfang xingli*, such as God's unicity, creation, prophets, and the role of Muhammad. The successive chapters focus on specific aspects of lived practice and relational hierarchies and interactions. He detailed the five pillars of Islam: the verbal testimony of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage; the ritual slaughter of animals; the five relationships (*wulun* 五倫); congregational prayer; marriage; and funerals. Overall the text is arranged around subheadings, often with close translation of Qur'anic passages, which are explained at length by Liu. While his primary concern was rectifying practice among his Sino-Muslim community Liu often detailed the theological or mystical aspects behind performing certain personal or relational activities.⁴⁷ The *Tianfang dianli* was also solely recognized among *Han Kitab* works to be included in the *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries (Siku quanshu 四庫全書)*, the official Qing compendium of Chinese texts collected under the Qianlong Emperor 乾隆帝 (1711-99).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ For an English translation of Liu Zhi's *Zhenjing Zhaowei* see, Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 113-210.

⁴⁷ The *Tianfang dianli* is studied at length in Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*.

⁴⁸ The *Tianfang dianli* received critical comments despite being included in this collection. Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*, 51-5.

Liu Zhi completed his comprehensive teaching on the core elements of Islam when he wrote the *Veritable Record of the Most Sagely of Islam*. This text presented Muhammad as a sage and demonstrated that there was no necessary physical and temporal proximity for sagehood. Liu wrote a thorough narrative of Muhammad's life and revealed how he should be understood as a complete model for conduct and the messenger of orthodox knowledge. Due to the rich detail in Liu's description and the expansiveness of his work he was able to elaborate on many particulars in the life of the Prophet that were not addressed by earlier Sino-Muslim authors. Liu's *Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu* is presented as a "translation" of a western scripture (*xijing* 西經), and was based on a Persian biography of Muhammad, titled *Tarjuma-i Mawlūd-i Muṣṭafa'*, which was written in Arabic by Sa'īd al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Kāzarūnī (d. 1357) and translated into Persian by his son, 'Afīf.⁴⁹ Liu wrote an earlier Chinese biography of Muhammad but feared it was insufficient after discussing it with some colleagues. It was then that he came across this Persian text, and believed the discovery as a sign from God, and commenced his *Veritable Records*.⁵⁰

Liu Zhi's writings were popular long after his death and have been reprinted on a number of occasions. The *Tiangfang* trilogy represents the height of Sino-Islamic scholarship. All three of these works were intended to be in dialogue: "These books are three and at the same time one. They are like stepping up the stairs, going into the hall,

⁴⁹ The notion of translation in many of the *Han Kitab* texts was a flexible process. In order to acquire a wider audience and greater prestige, authors would often claim that their original compositions stemmed from an Arabic or Persian original. Françoise Aubin noted, "Sometimes such originals are imaginary; but even when these actually exist...the alleged translation implies a total rewriting and remodeling in order to translate the philosophical notions and concepts of Sufism into an acceptable Chinese mode of thought. From this, an original literature has resulted, one unknown to Islamic specialists for want of being studied by Sinologists." See Françoise Aubin, "Tasawwuf (In Chinese Islam)," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Vol. 10 (Brill: Leiden, Netherlands), 337-9.

⁵⁰ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 151-3.

and entering the inner chamber.”⁵¹ Here he evoked Confucius’ language to delineate the tripartite division of the dimensions of his Islamic vision.⁵² Liu’s works were intended to inform the reader how to properly practice (stairs), develop a proper understanding and belief in an Islamic cosmological perspective (hall), and return to God as the origin (inner chamber).⁵³ Altogether, these works reflected Liu’s traditional perspective on the role of Islam through an innovative and highly stylized arrangement. He creatively blended the distinct lexicon of the Chinese intellectual tradition with specialized terminology from Arabic and Persian to present a uniquely Sino-Islamic portrait of Islam.

Ma Dexin (1794-1874)

Ma Dexin too was born into fortuitous conditions, being raised in a religious family in Dali, Yunnan in Southwest China. He was also a descendent of the great Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) Muslim governor of Yunnan, Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-din Umar al-Bukhari (1211-79), in the 21st generation.⁵⁴ This genealogical connection validated his lofty ancestry within the family of the Prophet Muhammad, which confirmed his spiritual inheritance and brought him great authority within the Sino-Islamic community. His early education mirrored that of many Sino-Muslim students of the time, which included study in the dialogical reading of texts with a local elder at a local religious institution or mosque. Later in life, Ma traveled to established religious centers within the Scripture Hall system for further training. His student Ma Anli 馬安禮 (d. 1899) reported:

⁵¹ Murata, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, 9.

⁵² The reference is to *Analects* 11.15, which reads: “The Master was heard to remark, ‘What is Zilu doing in my school, playing the zither the way he does?’ After this, the disciples began treating Zilu in a disrespectful manner. The Master reproved them, saying, ‘Although Zilu has not yet entered the inner chamber, he has at least ascended to the reception hall.’” Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 116.

⁵³ Murata, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, 9.

⁵⁴ Bai, *Huizu Renwu zhi*, 1552.

Old Master Fuchu was brought up in Yu 榆 [Contemporary Dali 大理] and received some knowledge transmitted from his father. Naturally he possessed extraordinary resolve and he embarked on a long journey to Shaanxi 陝西 and extensively read the canonical scriptures (*jingji* 經籍) with deep feelings of admiration for the customs handed down from Muhammad.⁵⁵

In 1834, at the age of forty, Ma traveled to Shaanxi to study in an important Scripture Hall center. When he arrived Ma was already proficient in Arabic and Persian from his previous training in Yunnan where Chinese language Islamic instruction was not widespread.⁵⁶ However, here he commenced his study of literary Chinese in order to follow the Scripture Hall model.⁵⁷ He studied under Master Zhou Laoye 周老爺 (1770-1850), the 4th generation disciple of Hu Dengzhou.⁵⁸ Master Zhou played a central role in reestablishing the Scripture Hall structure in Northwest China, and established his own Shaanxi school of thought (*Shaanxi xuepai* 陝西學派). In the early nineteenth century, Muslims from various strains of Islamic revivalism in China, especially Sufi brotherhoods, ridiculed the use Chinese language for Islamic instruction and the inclusion of classical Confucian learning. Zhou established a strong following in Xi'an including several hundreds of students and produced eight great disciples who would continue the distinctive qualities of the Scripture Hall method, Ma Dexin being the only one from South China.⁵⁹ Ma pursued advanced textual study under Master Zhou for nearly eight

⁵⁵ Ma Anli, “Xu 序 (Preface),” in Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Sidian Yaohui* 四典要會 (*Essence of the Four Canons*), 1859, in Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 ed., *Ma Fuchu yizhu xuan* 馬復初遺著選 (*A Selection of Ma Fuchu's Posthumous Writings*) (Hong Kong: Guoji Huaren Chubanshe, 2003), 4-5.

⁵⁶ Sino-Muslims still favored Persian sources in Yunnan.

⁵⁷ Ding Rong 丁蓉, “Ma Dexin Chaojin Tuji Yanjiu 馬德新朝覲途記研究 (Research on Ma Dexin's Record of the Pilgrimage Journey),” *Zhongshan daxue yanjiushengxue kan* 中山大學研究生學刊 (*National Sun Yat-sen University Graduate Student Journal*), 28 no. 3 (2008): 61, and Lin, “Three Eminent Chinese ‘Ulama.’”

⁵⁸ Bai, *Huizu Renwu zhi*, 1552.

⁵⁹ Huang Dengwu 黃登武, and Ma Xiaoping 馬小平, *Zhongguo Jingtang Jiaoyu yu Shanxue Ahong* 中國經堂教育與陝學阿訇 (*Chinese Scripture Hall Education and Shaanxi School Religious Leaders*) (Gansu Sheng Pingliang Xian Shi : Huang Dengwu, 2010), 24.

years (1834-1841) but still believed he had not grasped the essence of the Islamic teachings.

In 1841, Ma set off for the pilgrimage leaving through Burma via an old spice route and headed across the Indian Ocean with a stay in Calcutta. He stopped in Yemen, Jeddah, visited Mecca and Medina, traveled to Cairo twice, where he studied in al-Azhar for at least half a year, met the Sultan in Constantinople, where he was granted permission to tour the imperial palace, spent some time in Damascus, and finally lived in Jerusalem for half a year. Ma Anli explained:

He made pilgrimage to the heavenly court (*diting* 帝庭) to contemplate the traditional customs and good governance of the ancient sages. Over an eight year period, he studied directly with famous worthies (*xian* 賢) and erudite scholars, deepening his knowledge in the study of nature (*xing* 性) and mandate (*ming* 命). Upon returning, he closed his doors in order to examine and rectify [his understanding of Islam]. He joined together that which he obtained in Arabia and that which was possessed in the ancient collected canons of the eastern lands.⁶⁰

Altogether, Ma spent 8 years traveling throughout the Middle East, finally returning in 1849 at the age of fifty-five years old. Ma's exceptional pilgrimage to the heartlands of Islam brought him great prestige among Sino-Muslims, who regarded him as the foremost scholar of the time.

Upon his homecoming Ma became the head cleric in Huilong 回龍, which became the main educational site in Southwest China. At this point, Ma began teaching and gaining a strong following of disciples from throughout Yunnan. While Ma always referred to himself as a student of Islam (*tianfang xueren* 天方學人) because of his elevated reputation most Sino-Muslims referred to him as Old Baba (*lao baba* 老巴巴). Ma's teaching program incorporated the structure and systems of the Scripture Hall

⁶⁰ Ma Anli, "Preface," 14.

School from Shaanxi while simultaneously introducing a systematic Arabic curriculum. This new parallel linguistic method, referred to as equally stressing Arabic and Chinese (*Ahan bingzhong* 阿漢並重), equally valued the Chinese and Islamic intellectual heritages like no other school before and required students to become proficient in both traditions. This system, which was quickly dubbed the Yunnan school of thought (*Yunnan xuepai* 雲南學派), became very popular and attracted students from throughout China.⁶¹ Ma produced two important students who became very well-known scholars in their right, Ma Lianyuan 馬聯元 (1841-1903) and Ma Anli 馬安禮 (d. 1899). Both of these figures preserved Ma Dexin's strategy for emphasizing an equal authority between Chinese and Arabic sources for understanding the Islamic tradition.

During the final years of Ma Dexin's life there was an ongoing conflict between Yunnanese Muslims and the Qing military, the Panthay Rebellion (1856-1873).⁶² This was an uprising in western Yunnan province led by Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 (1823–1872), which eventually established an Islamic state called Kingdom of Southern Peace (*Pingnan Guo* 平南國) with its capital in Dali. Ma was not one of the political or military leaders in the rebellion.⁶³ However, he was the most eminent religious leader in Southwest China and actually taught several of the leading military officers who took part in the clashes. Ma's precise role in the ongoing conflict is not well documented but Qing officials monitored him. They knew that he was an important religious figure and

⁶¹ Huang and Ma, *Zhongguo Jingtang Jiaoyu*, 27-8.

⁶² The conflict was called the Panthay Rebellion in western accounts based on a Burmese word for Yunnan Muslims. This term was not known or used in China where the movement was named after the leader Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 (1823–1872), the Du Wenxiu Uprising (*Du Wenxiu qiyi* 杜文秀起義). For the history of this designation see Lin Chang-Kuan, "The Etymological History of Panthay-Chinese Yunnanese Muslims" *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12 no. 2 (1991): 346-354. For a detailed history of the events leading up to the rebellion and the successive years of the Islamic state, see Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*.

⁶³ Bai, *Huizu Renwu zhi*, 1556.

officially recognized him as the head of Yunnan's Muslim affairs.⁶⁴ He communicated messages between neighboring communities of Muslims within Yunnan as the Qing military moved across the province, brutally crushing the rebels. His activities enabled Sino-Muslims to act quickly and both escape and combat the Qing aggression.⁶⁵ On occasion, he fostered the opposition of the Qing military. As Qing forces advanced on the Sultanate's capital he informed Du Wenxiu that, "I have already secretly ordered my disciples Ma [Rulong] 馬如龍 as the Grand Commander of the Three Directions with Ma Rong 馬榮 as second in command ...to launch a rearguard attack from their base in Yimen."⁶⁶ In other instances, Ma advocated the ceasing of violence and the killing of Sino-Muslims.⁶⁷ For a moment, in 1863, Ma Dexin held the title King of Southern Peace (*Pingnan Wang* 平南王) but this position was soon quashed by an opposing Muslim leader. Ma was then constrained to Dali for the remainder for the rebellion.⁶⁸ In 1874, after the Qing took control of Yunnan, the Qing governor-general accused Ma Dexin of attempting to incite unrest and had him executed.⁶⁹

Literary Output

Later in his life Ma Dexin settled in Kunming 昆明 and dedicated himself to writing, becoming the leading intellectual in the *Han Kitab* tradition of the nineteenth century. He was distinctive among scholars of his time because he attempted to preserve the Sino-Islamic tradition produced in the *Han Kitab* literature, but also recognized the importance of Arabic language instruction and learning for his students who would live

⁶⁴ Ma Dexin refused Qing civil titles that they offered him because he did not want to be associated with the dynastic government. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 108 and 125.

⁶⁵ Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 101.

⁶⁶ Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 118.

⁶⁷ Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 154.

⁶⁸ Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 128-30.

⁶⁹ Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 188.

in a global Islamic world. Altogether, he authored around forty literary works, written in Arabic and Chinese, which covered various religious sciences and pedagogical disciplines. The anatomy of Ma's works are structured in three different ways. Many of his works were written directly in Arabic. However, the title pages of all of his works are given in Chinese, whether in transliteration or translation, even in texts that contain no other Chinese in them. Other compositions were written entirely in Chinese. Ma Dexin was knowledgeable in the Chinese literary tradition and could read and write Chinese but often Chinese language works attributed to him were scribed by his disciple Ma Anli. Several of these are understood to be the Chinese translation of Ma's Arabic original composition. The third structure that Ma employed was the dual use of Arabic and Chinese within a single text. He accomplished this in various ways. Most often Ma included technical Arabic terminology or proper names in his work and presented these terms first in Arabic script, then Chinese transliteration, and finally Chinese translation. Other bilingual texts were more complex and included parallel compositions on the same subject matter within a single text, through poly-directional rendering of complex registers of vocabulary. Before we cover some of Ma Dexin's teachings let me briefly introduce some of his most influential texts.

Ma's work covered a variety of subjects and both preserved the Sino-Islamic tradition of his predecessors and reintroduced a standard global Arabic discourse through the production of new texts. In many books, Ma highlighted the work of earlier *Han Kitab* authors and commented on their works. One such project focused on offering new editions of classic Sino-Islamic works. In 1864, Ma published two texts, *The Commentary on the Compass of Islam* (*Qingzhen Zhinan Yaoyan* 清真指南要言), and *The Essential Record of The True Explanation*, (*Zhanchuan Yaolu* 真詮要錄). These

were edited and abridged versions of Wang Daiyu's *True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching* (*Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮), the inaugural text in the *Han Kitab*, and Ma Zhu's 馬注 (1640-1711) encyclopedic volume *Compass of Islam* (*Qingzhen Zhinan* 清真指南), which was written by Yunnan's first great Muslim scholar and Ma Dexin's ancestor. In 1867, Ma published *Exegesis of Metaphysics of Islam* (*Tianfang Xingli zhushi* 天方性理注釋), which offered his reflections on Liu Zhi's most influential work, *Metaphysics of Islam* (*Tianfang Xingli* 天方性理).

Ma Dexin not only revered the early scholarship done by *Han Kitab* authors but in a similar method he employed motifs from traditional China to depict the creeds of his religion. In most of his Chinese treatises he employed the distinct Chinese discourse of Neo-Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist terminology to explain key principles in understanding matter of faith and practice. Minor works covering these topics include *The Highest Praise in Worshipping Heaven* (*Zutian Dazan Zhenjing* 祝天大贊真經), *Tenets to Revive the World* (*Xingshi Zhen* 醒世箴), *The Purpose of Nature and Mandate* (*Xingming Zongzhi* 性命宗旨), and *Essential Discourse on Returning to God* (*Huigui Yaoyu* 會歸要語). *A General Summary of the Great Transformation* (*Dahua zonggui* 大化總歸) dealt with these principles in a more comprehensive manner. Ma also focused on developing rigorous educational tools for Sino-Muslims. In *Beneficent Illustration of Ritual and Prayer* (*Lifa Qi'ai* 禮法啟愛) and *Islamic Codes for Primary Education* (*Tianfang Mengyin Ge* 天方蒙引歌) he outlined the orthopraxis of Islam and focused on the sources and foundations of Islam that would prepare young students to excel in their future studies. In other texts he revived the tradition of Islamic sciences and explained

geography and astronomy in compositions such as *Description of the World* (*Huanyu Shuyao* 寰宇述要) and *Sources of the Islamic Calendar* (*Tiangfang Liyuan* 天方曆源). He also translated Persian classics into Chinese to enable his disciples to have access to authoritative Islamic knowledge. In *Completing the Path of the Way* (*Daoxing Jiuqing* 道行究竟), Ma rendered ‘Azīz al-dīn Nasafī’s (d. ca 700/1300) famous book, *The Furthest Goal* (*Maqṣad-i aqṣā*), using the symbolism of Neo-Confucianism.⁷⁰

The other major strain of work in Ma’s literary production was the creation of numerous Arabic texts, which again covered various topics, with titles such as *The Story of Adam* (*Qiṣat Adam*), *Secrets of the Return* (*Asrār al-Ma’ād*), *Lies of the Christians* (*Akādhib al-Naṣāra*), *Islamic Admonitions* (*al-Naṣā’ih al-Islāmiyya*), *Yearning* (*Mushtāq*), *Stimuli* (*Munabihāt*), *Complete* (*Kāmil*), and *The Definite* (*al-Muhkam*). These treatises were aimed at advancing knowledge of Islam in its mother language and making it accessible to this distant community. Others, like *Verification of Prayer* (*Tahqīq al-Ṣalāt*), *Logic* (*Manṭiq*), *Consistent Grammar* (*al-Naḥw al-Mutasiq*), *Consistent Morphology* (*al-Ṣarf al-Mutasiq*), were intended to prepare Muslims to engage with the broader Arab speaking Muslim world. In fact, several of Ma’s own texts became part of his curriculum for students based on his *Ahan bingzhong* method and utilization of texts.⁷¹

⁷⁰ There are two other translations of this text, which could be written by the same author. The first, *The Scripture of Studying the Truth* (*Yan Zhen Jing* 研真經) was translated by She Yunshan 舍蘊善 in 1679. The second is an undated copy attributed to Po Nachi 破納痴, which is possibly She Yunshan’s penname, as *The Outline of the Way Returning to the Truth* (*Gui Zhen Biyao* 歸真必要).

⁷¹ In the Yunnan school of Scripture Hall education (*Yunnan xuepa*) Ma Dexin used his own texts to teach about Islam, including many Arabic texts, *Verification of Prayer* (*Tahqīq al-Salat*), *Stimuli* (*Munabbihāt*), *Secrets of the Return* (*Asrār al-Ma’ād*), *Islamic Admonitions* (*al-Naṣā’ih al-Islāmiyya*), *Lies of the Christians* (*Akādhib al-Naṣāra*), *Yearning* (*Mushtāq*), *Complete* (*Kāmil*), *The Definite* (*al-Muhkam*), *Logic* (*Manṭiq*), *Consistent Grammar* (*al-Naḥw al-Mutasiq*), and *Consistent Morphology* (*al-Ṣarf al-Mutasiq*). He also used several of his own Chinese texts, *Arabian Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Erleibi chunqiu* 爾勒壁春

Ma Dexin's contribution to the intellectual landscape of nineteenth century China both continued the local strategies of previous authors while heralding new methodologies for including Sino-Muslims in international dialogues concerning Islam. During this period of maturation, Ma intended a triad of goals, initially, to provide a clear and straightforward outline of Islam in Chinese; then, explain the depths of Islam through the technical Sino-Islamic vocabulary; and finally, enable future Sino-Muslims to participate with the larger Muslim world by providing both the tools for understanding and communicating with them and firsthand knowledge of the manner in which Islam was expressed through Arabic. Therefore, Ma simultaneously elaborated on the techniques of earlier *Han Kitab* authors while developing his own procedures for teaching and explaining Islam. He used Chinese and its symbolism because he believed it captured the true essence of Islam without contradicting its inherent claims. However, he also maintained that Arabic was equally valuable, if not more, in both its utility for describing his religion and the opportunities it would provide for his disciples. Before moving to the specific topics of pilgrimage, the Qur'an, and the use of Arabic it will be useful to get a brief portrait of Ma Dexin's thoughts more generally.

Ma wrote several works that became highly regarded by his successors, demonstrated by both the recurrence of republication and reference to them in later contexts. One of his most important works was *Essence of the Four Canons (Sidian Yaohui 四典要會)*. In this treatise, he carefully delineated the Islamic tenets of faith and practice and displayed their theological foundations, all steeped in the Sino-Islamic

秋), *Beneficent Illustration of Ritual and Prayer (Lifa Qi'ai 禮法啟愛)*, *Completing the Path of the Way (Daoxing Jiuqing 道行究竟)*, *Sources of the Islamic Calendar (Tiangfang Liyuan 天方曆源)*, *Neo-Confucian Compromise (Lixue Zhezong 理學折衷)*, *Description of the World (Huanyu Shuyao 寰宇述要)*. Yang and Yu, *Yisilan Yu Zhongguo Wenhua*, 413-4.

vocabulary of the *Han Kitab*. Ma also described his pilgrimage to Mecca in *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* (*Chaojin Tuji* 朝覲途記), which outlined his incredible tour of the Middle East and attempted to demystified the *hajj* for future Chinese pilgrims. Finally, In *A Direct Explanation of the Treasured Mandate of the True Scripture* (*Baoming Zhenjing Zhijie* 寶命真經直解) Ma made the first concerted effort to translate the entire Qur'an into Chinese in order to make it accessible to the local audience. However, Ma was only able to translate the first five chapters before his death.

Ma Dexin's Intellectual Contributions

Ma Dexin's most famous text, *Essence of the Four Canons* (*Sidian Yaohui*), provides the essential features of his teachings. Its contents cover faith and practice, the nature of God and the Cosmos, and the resurrection and final judgment, among many other things. Ma's goal in this text was to make these central doctrines within Islam accessible to the Chinese reading audience who, as he perceived, had misunderstood how to be Muslims. Ma laments the general hesitation to implement Islamic teachings in China and the inability to properly understand the basic principles. He explains:

Shallow meaning is clear and intelligible, deep principle is difficult to know. And yet we have not exercised the learning of Islam (*tianfang*) to change what is difficult to know. I am afraid that everyone mistakenly recognizes this principle. Therefore, I employ Chinese to translate it [i.e. Islam].⁷²

Ma was generally troubled by what he perceived to be the level of religious knowledge among his Sino-Muslim neighbors. He presented a traditional interpretation of Islam as an orthodox vision of the religion and also outlined what he believed to be heterodox.

The Nature of God

⁷² Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Sidian Yaohui* 四典要會 (*Essence of the Four Canons*), 1859, in Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 ed., *Ma Fuchu yizhu xuan* 馬復初遺著選 (*A Selection of Ma Fuchu's Posthumous Writings*) (Hong Kong: Guoji Huaren Chubanshe, 2003), 3.

One of the main features of Ma’s teachings was his attention to delineating a proper understanding of God. This topic was central to any discussion of Islamic theology, and Ma followed many earlier Muslim authors in his description of God. Ma aimed to demonstrate the relationship between God and His creation in relation to absolute and conditional existence. His discussion employed a number of terms familiar with preexisting Chinese frameworks but reassigned their meaning as he constructed a portrait of the Islamic worldview. Foremost in this description is the assertion of oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), “The certain and real lack falsehood, it is called True. The singular and separate stands alone, it is called One.”⁷³ He attested that God is one despite being perceived in two ways, in His Essence (*dhāt*), which is unknowable, and through His Attributes (*ṣifāt*). He explains: “The Enumerated One (*shuyi* 數一) is the seed of heaven, earth, and the myriad things. The Real One (*zhenyi* 真一) then is the Lord of the world and myriad things.”⁷⁴ Here, Ma asserted the unicity of God while pointing to the manner in which He unveils Himself to creation. The Real One is God in His Essence while He manifests reality through His attributes, which is understood as the Enumerated One. Ma expanded these categories, “Only the Real One then constitutes autogenous (*ziran* 自然) Being (*you* 有). Outside of the Real One, everything that has form or lacks form, they all constitute Illusory (*huan* 幻) Being.”⁷⁵ While it may seem that Being is divided it is in fact on a continuum of reality, where Real Being is the source and Illusory Being is the product.

How many are there which are Being? It does not exceed two extreme points: Real Being and illusory Being. Real Being is the Being of autogeneity (*ziran*).

⁷³ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 6.

⁷⁴ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 7.

⁷⁵ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 6.

This is called original Being and it is not obtained and not possessed. Illusory Being is the Being of transformation and production.⁷⁶

Altogether, we learn that the notion of God's Essence (*dhāt*), the Real One (*zhenyi*), is expressed as an undifferentiated Being that is self-existing and self-arising. His Essence is ultimately unknowable, as Ma eluding to by quoting the Confucian classic, the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhongyong* 中庸), "Yet in its furthest reaches, there is that which even a sage does not know."⁷⁷ Creation is the process of that Being through God's Attributes (*ṣifāt*), His role as the Enumerated One (*shuyi*), where Being is experienced conditionally through the imaginal world.⁷⁸

After delineating how God as both Lord and Creator is linked to His creation Ma also relates how this process is expressed in Neo-Confucian and Daoist thought. He explains: "Non-Being, by means of comparison, is that which is difficult to explain in words. All the schools of thought put forward that which is the Non-Ultimate (*wuji* 無極) and Supreme Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) is called the oneness of enumeration."⁷⁹ The terms Non-Ultimate and Supreme Ultimate were well known and essential to both the Neo-Confucian and philosophical Daoist systems. Zhou Dunyi's 周敦頤 (1017-1073) *Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (*Taiji Tushuo* 太極圖說) blended Confucian ethics with creative structures of production from Daoist thought. His short treatise was canonized when it was placed at the head of *Reflections on Things at Hand*

⁷⁶ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 6.

⁷⁷ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 18.

⁷⁸ Ma is highlighting the necessity of the imagination (*khayāl*) for its capacity to understand the nature of God as both immanent (*tashbīh*) and transcendent (*tanzīh*). Illusory Being (*huanyou* 幻有), in this case, is everything that is not God's Essence, creation, and must be experienced through imagery or as an imaginal world (not imaginary). For more on this notion, see Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁷⁹ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 6.

(*Jinsilu* 近思錄), which became the authoritative text within Neo-Confucian thought from the time of its compiler, the great Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). Zhou's vision of the relationship between *wuji* and *taiji* are parallel to Ma's understanding of the unfolding of creation.

Wuji and yet *Taiji*! *Taiji* in activity generates *yang* 陽; yet at the limit of activity it is still. In stillness it generates *yin* 陰; yet at the limit of stillness it is also active. Activity and stillness alternate; each the basis of the other. In distinguishing yin and yang, the Two Modes are thereby established.⁸⁰

Ma associated this process of exchange and production completely within Illusory Being as the consequence of the Enumerated One. He further explains this delicate distinction between God's Essence and Attributes in relation to the *Way* (*dao* 道):

They say, 'The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth. The named is the mother of the myriad things.' This is also the oneness of enumeration. The Enumerated One is the seed of heaven, earth, and the myriad things. The Real One then is the Lord of the world and myriad things.⁸¹

Here, Ma quotes the opening passage of Laozi's 老子 *Daodejing* 道德經 to evoke the transformative process of natural change in the imaginal world. The Enumerated One shapes the world while the Real One serves as the source of creation. The opening line of the *Daodejing*, which would be implicitly present for most readers of these lines, begins, "The Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way; The name that can be named is not the constant name." These words come closer to the qualities of God's Essence and Ma describes the Real One in similar manner:

Therefore, as for the singular Reality, it is Reality unique without partner, it is venerable unique without partner, it is great unique without partner, it is substance unique without partner, and it is function unique without partner. That which is

⁸⁰ Joseph Adler, "Zhou Dunyi: The Metaphysics and Practice of Sagehood," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, ed. WM. Theodore deBary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 673.

⁸¹ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 6.

called separately and exclusively One is unique and exceeds heaven, earth, and the myriad things.⁸²

Ma clearly distinguishes God as source and how He should be understood as product of creation. God is independent and transcendent while being simultaneously essential and ingrained in the cosmos. This paradox is comprehensible in view of God's power to disclose Himself, the Enumerated One, while remaining unknowable in His Essence. The difficulties of understanding this relationship require faith in the veracity of God's revelation.

Faith

Ma Dexin's *Essence of the Four Canons* clearly positions faith (*xin* 信, *imān*) as central to the Islamic tradition. He relates this attitude by beginning the *Sidian Yaohui* with the six articles of faith according to the hadith of Gabriel, which has repeatedly been employed by Muslims to teach their religion.⁸³ Ma explains:

The body is not cultivated from a heart that is not correct, submission is not sincere from faith that is not true. Therefore, faith constitutes the root of all the good meritorious acts. And the six tenets constitute the essence and serve as the source of faith. Faith in the True Lord, faith in the heavenly spirits, faith in the true scriptures, faith in predestination, and faith in resurrection.⁸⁴

Ma clearly understood these six principles, faith in God, Angels, earlier scriptures and messengers, final judgment (*al-Qiyāmah*), and predetermination (*qadar*), and believed they were essential in formulating a proper knowledge of the tradition. Faith in these

⁸² Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 6.

⁸³ The hadith of Gabriel is one of the most famous sources of the Islamic tradition. In it Gabriel questions Muhammad about submission (*islām*), faith (*imān*), and doing what is beautiful (*ihsān*). When Muhammad provides Gabriel with satisfactory responses he leaves. Afterwards, Muhammad asks his companions if they knew who the questioner was and told them it was the angel Gabriel who "came to teach them their religion" (*'atākum yu'allimukum dīnakum*). Vincent J. Cornell, "Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: The Relationship between Faith and Practice in Islam" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John Esposito (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75-77.

⁸⁴ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 3.

principles leads to proper practice and Ma intricately bound action to faith and described how they inform each other. He continues:

The orthodox way (*dao*) of what is required of humans is the utmost. Faith and submission is the origin of what is required and that is it. Faith constitutes the substance of submission and submission constitutes the function of faith. Faith without submission is insincere faith. Submission without faith is dishonest submission.⁸⁵

His overall description of faith demonstrated how sincerity was essential to actualizing one's convictions. Faith and acts were joined and informed each other.

After a general introduction describing the foundations and necessity of faith, Ma wrote individual chapters on the different articles of faith. In most of these chapters, he began by announcing his affirmations of these articles of faith and testified to his belief in angels, earlier messages, and earlier prophets. He announces, "I have faith in the True Lord who created the heavenly immortals (*tianxian* 天仙), which others call heavenly spirits (*tianshen* 天神),"⁸⁶ "I have faith in the True Lord who sent down the scriptures,"⁸⁷ and "I have faith in the True Lord who commissioned the sages."⁸⁸ All of these concepts would appear familiar in the Chinese context. There were various sages and worthies who had dispensed knowledge throughout Chinese history, numerous scriptures that individuals interacted with, and scores of celestial beings both benevolent and malicious whom interacted with Chinese people. Ma also declared his belief in the concept of predetermination or fate, "I have faith in the good and evil existing in predestination."⁸⁹ This idea of destiny would also be readily accepted in the Chinese environment where *karma* (*ye* 業) influenced understandings of one's future for the

⁸⁵ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 3.

⁸⁶ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 9.

⁸⁷ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 11.

⁸⁸ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 13.

⁸⁹ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 16.

broader society. Interestingly, Ma did not begin his sections on God and the resurrection in this manner. This was, by Ma's own admission, due to the general inability to comprehend these new notions, "According to numerous people, it seems that it is difficult to have faith in what is perceived [in relation to resurrection]." ⁹⁰ As Ma did elsewhere in the *Essence of the Four Canons*, he strove to clearly explain Islam in an accessible and intelligible manner. In no other Chinese religious tradition was there a concept of resurrection so it was difficult for Sinicized Muslims to comprehend this belief. Ma explains:

Resurrection is to be born again. Namely, the body is already perishing and the True Lord causes it to return to its original form and joins together with the original spirit for eternal life, where one does not die. In this particular case, the perishing body is brought back to life. ⁹¹

Ma regarded a proper understanding of the resurrection essential to proper faith. He concludes that, "Resurrection is the fruit of heavenly principle." Altogether, Ma's traditional presentation of faith reflected both the proficiency of his audience and his views on orthodoxy. He followed long held understandings of the articles of faith and presented them in an uncomplicated way. Ma also stressed the relationship between faith and acts, he argues, "...submission to the teachings is that which serves as the principle of faith." ⁹² Ritual worship and religious performance also played a central role in Ma's perspective, which for him were exemplified through the five pillars.

Practice

Ritual observance constituted the formalized physical submission to God that Ma saw as central to being a good Muslim. The centrality of the five pillars of Islam (*arkān al-islām* or *arkān al-dīn* meaning pillars of the religion) has long been understood as the

⁹⁰ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 14.

⁹¹ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 14.

⁹² Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 3

foundation of religious praxis and the standard of orthopraxy.⁹³ Ma was in complete agreement with this position and continually stressed their performance. He asserts, “The five meritorious acts are all regarded as the orthodox system of regulations.”⁹⁴ From this system one can please God and ultimately gain nearness to Him. Ma explains:

Regarding ceremony, the sages transmitted to everyone the laws of bodily practice. Thereby one can abandon all passions and desires, sever all influences and obstructions, and by means of established bowing, prostrating, kneeling, and equivalent ceremonies seek the bodily return to the way of Reality. The prophets received this law from the True Lord and everyone observes it by means of seeking nearness to the True Lord.⁹⁵

Through bodily submission one practices the religiously legal obligations God provided for dissolving hindrances along the path to union with Him. The path furnished through the five pillars leads back to God, “The five meritorious acts are, namely, these five. If one is near to the way of the Lord then they return to the gate of the Lord.”⁹⁶ However, completely abiding by these instructions is difficult and not everyone is able to adhere to their performance. Ma claims, in regards to the five pillars: “Those who complete it are sages, those who observe it are worthies, those who are diligent in it are knowledgeable, those who negligent of it are foolish, and those who waste it are disobedient.”⁹⁷ The physical actualization of faith and belief reaffirms personal convictions and commitment to God. The daily bodily remembrance of prayer continually maintains this dedication; Ma taught: “Among the five meritorious acts ceremony is regarded as the most essential.

⁹³ A hadith attests to this importance: “Islam has been built upon five things - on testifying that there is no god save God, and that Muhammad is His Messenger; on performing prayer; on giving the alms; pilgrimage to the House; and on fasting during Ramadan.” Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*. Volume 1, Book 2, Number 8. For a discussion on the development of the conceptualization of “pillars” (*arkān*) see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “Arkān,” in *Essays on Islamic Civilization presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. Donald Little (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 303-16, reprinted in idem, *On Understanding Islam: Selected Studies* (The Hague and New York: Mouton, 1981), 162-74.

⁹⁴ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 26.

⁹⁵ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 20.

⁹⁶ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 22.

⁹⁷ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 21.

As for ceremony, one is not able to abandon it for a moment.”⁹⁸ Thus, performance was the crucial aspect of proscribed service and the guiding principle for observance.

However, Ma indicated that practice could not be devoid of sincere intentions, “The five meritorious acts cannot lack sincerity and respect.”⁹⁹ Deeds done without the correct objective would not only be deficient of value but could lead to further ignorance of God’s message and deviation from the path. Ma advises:

If we maintain and observe the true meritorious acts then we honor the clear mandate of the True Lord. If we embody the utmost sage’s observance then we each exhaust it for the sake of being a servant of ceremony. It is incorrect to use it to seek worldly blessings. Some erroneously hope to become an immortal or a Buddha. By no means should one rely on doing good in hopes of a reward or stopping evil in fear of punishment. Nevertheless, there is reward in doing good and there is punishment in causing evil. This is a definite principle.¹⁰⁰

Performing acts of duty in hope for material gain or in fear of punishment detract from the reverence given to God’s commands and show a lack of appreciation for God’s mercy. Therefore, one’s deeds should be focused on God because He the sustainer of life and not because He can punish. When intentions are sincere then one’s behaviors demonstrate their object of attentiveness. Ma elaborated on this point: “Learning is not honorable unless one recognizes the Lord. Meritorious acts are not honorable unless one serves the Lord. Ritual is not venerable unless one reveres the Lord.”¹⁰¹ An outwardly display of positive intentions will in themselves reveal qualities of honor and respect and, thus, inform personal conduct in all aspects of life. Overall, it is through the five pillars that one is situated in the larger community and adheres to what God commanded and how this mandate was embodied through the example of Muhammad.

⁹⁸ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 22.

⁹⁹ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 20-1.

¹⁰¹ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 22.

Despite the fact that the five pillars played such a crucial role in the lives of Muslims since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, religious leaders in China that Ma encountered failed to stress the importance of ritual performance. Ma took great issue with the notion that “True” Islam was achieved when the essence of the five pillars was obtained by transcending them. He laments: “There are those who completely abandon the five meritorious acts. They erroneously say that what they transmit and practice are inner meritorious acts, which illuminates the heart and completes the meritorious acts of nature.”¹⁰² Here, Ma was probably referring to charismatic spiritual teachers who promoted mystical ideas about the relationship between the individual and the divine. Sufi brotherhoods were present in Yunnan for centuries and challenged Ma’s conception of orthodoxy.¹⁰³ Ma went to great lengths to reject what he saw as unorthodox beliefs and behavior (“heterodoxy” *yiduan* 異端).¹⁰⁴ He witnessed many of his fellow Sino-Muslims failing to perform the obligations because of these false teachings. He explains:

According to them, the image of fasting and worship are ordinary customs and is not the meritorious work of the heart. They are not able to exceed and cast off these conventions. Moreover, as for ablution, they say that it is cleaning, namely, the cleaning of the heart and not the cleaning of the body. As for worship, they say it is respect, namely, respect of the heart and not of bodily matters. As for fasting, they say it is guarding, namely, guarding against all passions and desires and not guarding against eating and beauty. As for pilgrimage they say it is returning, namely, the myriad intentions returning to the Lord and not returning to the native land. As for tax they say it is abandoning namely, abandoning the self and not abandoning profit.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 84.

¹⁰³ Ma Zhu 馬注(1640-1711) in a section of his *Compass of Islam (Qingzhen zhinan 清真指南)* also dealt with the issue of heterodox behavior in late seventeenth-early eighteenth century Yunnan. In the portion entitled *A Through Understanding of the Unorthodox Way (Zuodao tongxiao 左道通曉)*, Ma denounced a group of Qalandariya Sufis who practiced antinomian behavior. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 81.

¹⁰⁴ Ma dedicated an entire section of the *Sidian yaohui* to establishing what he deems correct thought and practice entitled *Examination and Explanation of Orthodoxy and Heresy (Zhengyi kaoshu 正異考述)*. Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 72-94. For a comparison of Confucian and Islamic understandings of heterodoxy see John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy : Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns* (Albany : State University of New York Press,1998).

¹⁰⁵ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 84.

These symbolic interpretations of ritual obligations fail to adhere to the physical performance of Islamic teachings. While Ma in many places focused on the inner transformative power of practice he never excluded the necessity of religious obligations. In reference to the interpretations of the five pillars by these mistaken masters, Ma cautions: “Alas! The sages from the beginning to the end never lost one day of fasting or missed one period of worship. A thousand scriptures and myriad treatises all record the ritual law of fasting and worship.”¹⁰⁶ The precedent established by these authoritative sources affirm the importance of physical practice. And as Ma mentioned, practice that is not informed by faith is misguided. Therefore, he emphasized the paired observance of faith and good deeds.

Altogether, Ma Dexin offered a traditionalist interpretation of Islam that drew attention to both the physical submission to God’s will through ritualistic obligations and sincere faith that motivates one’s intentions towards pleasing God. His many Arabic and Chinese works reflect these fundamental principles and their various attendant doctrines in a multitude of ways. His life and work demonstrate his desire to reassert what he believed to be the essential qualities of Islam. Ma’s return to original sources, both as references for his work but also through his translations of the Qur’an and other texts, combined with his literal return to Islam’s birthplace in the Middle East, reveal that for Sino-Muslims in the late nineteenth century there was a eager longing for a genuine Islam. Ma also promoted this notion through his writing in Arabic and stress on language education that led to pragmatic relationships between Sino-Muslims and their Arabic speaking coreligionists abroad. How Ma differed from earlier Sino-Muslim scholars in

¹⁰⁶ Ma, *Sidian Yaohui*, 84.

relation to pilgrimage, scripture, and the use of language will be explored at length in the following chapters and formulate the remainder of this study.

Conclusion

While all three authors, in many ways, presented a similar traditional interpretation of Islam they differed in vary degrees of emphasis. They all strove to provide a clear outline of Islam in Chinese language and imagery, which would be accessible to the local audience. These accounts varied in detail and focus but all revolved around core principles of the nature of God, the world, and humankind's position within this relationship. They all utilized and developed a specific Sino-Islamic lexis, which transformed the definitions of certain words and expanded their meanings to possess simultaneous interpretations within differing philosophical systems. However, there were various discursive differences within the work of Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi, and Ma Dexin. These reflect their training and exposure to various interpretations of Islam. I argue that many of these differences were influenced by their specific historical circumstances within China. Changing social and intellectual developments in the local context, such as increasing sophistication of students or growing populations of participants in Islamic education, pressed scholars to refine their presentation of the religion. The other important factor that affected the shifting nature of Sino-Islamic scholarship among these three authors was geographical propinquity and spatial perceptions. In the case of Wang, Liu, and Ma the theological scope and intentional discourses of their work alter in relation to their perceived religious geographies and communal engagement. Wang had a limited connection to the broader Muslim community, as he remained stationed in Nanjing and Beijing, which made him write for his direct audience of students and peers.

Liu traveled widely throughout China and sought the scholarly approval of his Sino-Muslim peers. His work reflected a more comprehensive vision of Sino-Islamic scholarship, which situated his work within an ongoing dialogue of scholars writing in Chinese about Islam. Ma envisioned himself as a participant of the global Muslim community and contributed to it. His travels took him throughout most of the Muslim world and his writing reflected his perception of a united community of Muslims that were linked through linguistic bonds and sacred cosmographies, thus connecting them both physically and intellectually. His work was aimed at his local Chinese audience but for means of global participation, achieved through greater linguistic capability in Arabic and further knowledge of the Qur'an. These differences will become much clearer as we look specifically at the topics of the pilgrimage, the use of the Qur'an, and the importance of Arabic in the following chapters.

Roots and Routes of the Hajj Pilgrimage: Belief, Practice, and Performance
Chapter Three

Seek knowledge even if in China, for verily, seeking
knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim.¹

This oft-quoted hadith purports that it is incumbent upon every Muslim to seek knowledge, even if it is as far as China. However, for the Muslim communities living in China, knowledge was intrinsically linked to their spiritual homeland, Mecca, and necessarily sought within it. This search for wisdom extended, in part, from a clear promotion for and performance of the *hajj* pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was one feature of Muslim religiosity that formulated a sense of belonging and authenticity within the broader Muslim community. This chapter explores the concept of pilgrimage and its importance for the Sino-Muslim community during the pre-modern period. For this community, the *hajj* embodied several central characteristics of religious substance. Most broadly, the pilgrimage conveyed a sense of communal identification, which transferred Muslims' collective memory or cultural heritage, brought with it religious and social authority, and united Muslims under the banner of Islam as a unified congregation. Advocacy for the pilgrimage or participation in it allowed Muslims at the geographic periphery of the Islamic world to feel their centrality within the Muslim community. Their physical distance from the sacred heart of Islamic geography did not limit them from connecting with their coreligionists through their perceptions, beliefs, or practices.

This chapter delineates the changing attitudes towards the *hajj* through Wang Daiyu's, Liu Zhi's and Ma Dexin's works. All three authors regarded highly and cherished the pilgrimage as a religious duty but it is clear that its significance was given

¹ "Seek knowledge even if in China, for verily, seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim." The Hadith is generally considered weak (*da'if*). Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1997), 9:369.

greater weight by authors in each successive generation. As Sino-Muslims were gradually absorbed into a global context, the *hajj* was increasingly underlined in writings as an indispensable and obligatory observance of Islamic practice. I analyze each scholar's positions and examine how their approaches situated the *hajj* within their broader discourses. I trace Wang's and Liu's description and support for the *hajj* and then outline Ma's journey throughout the Middle East as he made his own pilgrimage. Their views were not the only voices regarding the *hajj*, and a number of other Sino-Muslims performed the pilgrimage, but these three authors are representative of attitudes that were reflected in Sino-Islamic scholarship in general and the *Han Kitab* specifically. Overall, the perception of the *hajj* changed from a symbol of true belief, to a potential critical practice, and finally as an essential observance and religious duty. Wang Daiyu outlined the theological foundations of the pilgrimage and its role as a link to the time of creation and union with God. Liu Zhi underlined the physical practice of potential pilgrims when he stressed the ceremonial and experiential aspects of the pilgrimage by detailing the practices associated it. Ma Dexin emphasized the performance aspect of the journey itself while arguing for its ability to rectify and renew religious understanding and asserting its doctrinal necessity.

Pilgrimage and the Hajj

Several theoretical notions developed within the various fields shape and inform my understanding of the role of pilgrimage. These revolve around concepts of semiosis, motion, dwelling, space, belonging, nostalgia, memory, and authenticity. Let us briefly explore the notion of pilgrimage in general in order to contextualize our discussion on the *hajj* and demonstrate the larger role it played in the religious lives of Sino-Muslims.

Pilgrimage both represents and evokes a number of social, political, and religious sentiments through its performance and invocation. For the individual pilgrim, a journey is given meaning through the potential for personal spiritual transformation, elevation of social status, or the declaration of fidelity and allegiance to a sacred power or temporal polity. Pilgrimage can also unite communities by eliminating conventional differences of social standing, gender, and race. Through a given semiotic perception one constantly reacts to their environment by interpreting the signs provided through a religious system and the historical circumstances of a given tradition. The character of meaning relates to symbolic forms and activities that perpetually direct interactions and affect the formation of religious values. At the level of individual experience, perception is inseparable from socially constructed meaning, its historical character, and its expressive configurations. The ritualization of specific activity establishes the grounds for demarcating the character of meaning. In order to understand these activities, the pilgrim seeks to ascribe ontological significance for the externality of relationships, events, and actions. The pilgrimage journey is shaped through these individual systems of meaning and the pilgrim understands their actions and beliefs through these various significations. The interrelations of symbols and meanings frame and motivate pilgrim behavior and action, thus giving extended substance to activity. Meaning is thus captured and inscribed in experience, observation, participation or remembering. The communication, representation and translation of these meanings offer us an opportunity to analyze these complex or hybrid cultural phenomena. This enables us to construct an integrative framework for deciphering specific semiotic perception and meaning and the particular modalities through which meaning is transcribed.

One of the inherent elements of pilgrimage that steepens it with meaning is the notion of movement. There are various motions that imbue meaning into the actions of a pilgrim. The forms of motion can be embodied, envisioned, psychological or metaphorical. This makes pilgrimage an innately “kinetic ritual.”² Mobile performances contain both the journey and the goal of the pilgrimage in order to transform the participant through various stages of meaning. The embodiment of action is saturated with the symbols and beliefs that are ascribed to these religious behaviors. Psychologically, the pilgrim can be elevated either in their religious consciousness or perceived spiritual state. After the pilgrimage the movement back to temporal reality brings with it a notion of inner transformation that cannot be withdrawn despite finishing the action. Victor Turner pointed out that “It is true that the pilgrim returns to his former mundane existence, but it is commonly believed that he has made a spiritual step forward.”³ Symbolically, the pilgrim has moved from a shallow state to a higher elevated condition, spiritually, socially, or politically. These metaphorical representations are derived from the socially constructed *weltanschauungs* of the given religion, society or culture. Within these specific worldviews the pilgrim is able to make sense of their journey through the various aspects of their life.

While the pilgrim literally moves through space and time to a physical location, this site is also transported from the mundane to a sanctified position. These places are sacredly charged as they are conceptually constructed through a religious tradition. Pilgrimage sites become the loci of divine reciprocity between the pilgrim and the object of their worship. This is constructed through metaphorical components, which are

² Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), xiii.

³ Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 15.

reconstructed by the actions of the pilgrim through the symbolic renewal of the microcosm or joining with God. While these spaces are relatively fixed in their location, participants are dynamic in their comprehension and presentation of symbols and meanings. The creation of a spiritual geographic heart, an *axis mundi*, and movement to or from it necessarily establishes a non-sacred realm where one generally inhabits or dwells.

Religious meaning and identity can only be established through the movement between the sacred and mundane world as they are constructed through traditions. Orientation is constantly reaffirmed through processes of movement between sites of “here” and “there” and between “now” and “then.” Thus, pilgrimage juxtaposes the experiences of movement and emplacement by situating the individual within the dichotomous world of sacred and profane. Thus, in order to read the meaning of spatial orientation we must explore the metaphors of flows, flux, and confluences. Thomas Tweed has carefully delineated the processes comprising the translocative and transtemporal dimensions of religions. The oscillation between place (dwelling) and movement (crossing) establishes the metaphors that extend toward wider sets of theological commitments. Dwelling, or “the kinetics of homemaking,” is the process of orienting individuals in time and space, enabling the religious to situate themselves through levels of the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos.⁴ Movement, or “the kinetics of itinerancy,” lays out the religious routes that fluctuate between provisional stasis and spatial crossings, including terrestrial, corporeal, and cosmic.⁵ The pilgrimage then can “map the contours of the terrestrial,” and “orient devotees temporally and

⁴ Thomas Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 97.

⁵ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 123.

spatially by creating cosmogonies and teleographies that represent the origin and destiny of the universe.”⁶ This religious map prescribes the routes of ritual commitments that elevate their action. The mandatory quality of the prescribed rituals qualifies their authenticity and establishes their authority for ingraining meaning. These routes “conjoin to create institutional networks that, in turn, prescribe, transmit, and transform tropes, beliefs, values, emotions, artifacts, and rituals.”⁷

Movement to and from the sacred axis, or the creation of a dwelling space and paradisaical domain, elicits a longing for that which has been established through a tradition. A sense of nostalgia for this space compels one symbolically to associate with the sacred world that was previously established. Nostalgia manifests itself as a sensation of yearning, indicated in its Greek roots, *nostos*, meaning “to return home,” and *algos*, “pain.”⁸ It can be defined as a “wistful or excessive sentimental, sometimes abnormal, yearning to return somewhere or to some past period or irrecoverable condition.”⁹ Pilgrims do not create the teleographies of ritual spaces but participate in collective actions using universal maps to navigate the routes back to this primeval home. The authentic sacred site is displaced in time and space and spatially located in an intangible place, which is continually renewed through religious meaning and reaffirmed by oscillation between the two realms. Access to the sacred remains unachievable without the subjective experience of dwelling outside of it. Nostalgia impregnates the world with

⁶ Tweed subcategorizes the cosmos into geographies, or “terrestrial space”; cosmographies, “the structure of the entire universe”; cosmogonies, “representations of the origin of the universe”; and teleographies, the ultimate objects or aims of existence, the most distant and ultimate horizons of human life. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 113-6.

⁷ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 69.

⁸ For a history of the term “nostalgia,” see Linda Hutcheon, “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern,” *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*, *Studies in Comparative Literature* 30 (2000): 189-207.

⁹ J. M. Fritzman, “The Future of Nostalgia and the Time of the Sublime,” *Clio* 23 no. 2 (1994): 167.

meaning and the notions of otherworldliness and pilgrimage allows one to access the locus of divinity and punctuates existence with the sacred.

The meanings created through pilgrimage are affiliated with this cosmography and are maintained through the collective memory of the community. Nostalgic representation can thus be substituted for historical consciousness.¹⁰ The nostalgic semiotic economy develops a longing for that which the pilgrim or collective memory created and maintains. The process of mapping space and creating routes for navigating the cosmos thus constructs collective identities and imagines degrees of social distance by drawing boundaries. Nostalgia is more than the remembering of the past; it attaches supplementary meaning to history by recovering or ingraining its significance. Pilgrimage, as a spatial practice, bridges our existence between our everyday world and the nostalgized past by designating the boundaries of identify and communal history, thus prescribing how one positions themselves within their social, cultural and religious geographies.

The *hajj* pilgrimage, in particular, directs a metaphorical return to the origins of Islam in order to satisfy the nostalgic yearning to transcend the mundane and become closer to God. Movement through the temporal world transforms the pilgrim as they approach the sacred environs of the holy city of Mecca. The ritual observances conducted during the pilgrimage ingrain activity with religious meaning bringing with them personal spiritual transformation and social elevation. The significance of the *hajj* for the individual is underlined by their physical and symbolic integration with the larger Muslim community. Overall, the pilgrimage reestablishes the pilgrim's commitment to Islam, renews their communal bonds, reshapes their personal outlook, and reconstructs

¹⁰ Dai Jinhua, "Imagined Nostalgia," trans. Judy T. H. Chen, *boundary 2* 24 no. 3 (1997): 148.

their perceived societal status. These changes were as true for Chinese pilgrims as they would be for an Anatolian, a Bukharan, a Jakartan, or a Fulani Muslim.

The *hajj* pilgrimage has its origins in the story of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), his son ‘Ismā‘īl (Ishmael) and his wife Hājar (Hagar). Ibrāhīm’s wife Sārah was not pleased with his relationship with Hājar and her son ‘Ismā‘īl so God ordered Ibrāhīm to take them away. They traveled in search of the place of God’s house and eventually Hājar and ‘Ismā‘īl were stranded in the desert. ‘Ismā‘īl became thirsty so Hājar went looking for water and ran back and forth between the hills of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwah. When she returned to ‘Ismā‘īl he had scratched the ground and discovered the waters of *zamzam*. Ibrāhīm responded to God’s mercy by exclaiming, “O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer.” (14:37) Ibrāhīm was also the builder of the Ka‘bah where it was established that the ritual observances should take place.

Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). ...And remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (With this prayer): Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing. (2:125-7)

This narrative outlined the mythic beginnings of the *hajj* and the origination of several rituals. Most of the details of the origination of the *hajj* and the Ka‘bah come from secondary sources, such as hadith and histories.

Religiously, the *hajj* was established as one of the five pillars of Islam (*arkān al-islām* or *arkān al-dīn* meaning pillars of the religion).¹¹ A hadith demonstrates its early

¹¹ On the “pillars” (*arkān*) of Islam, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “Arkān,” in *Essays on Islamic Civilization presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. Donald Little (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 303-16, reprinted in

and central importance for Islamic faith: “Islam has been built upon five things - on testifying that there is no god save God, and that Muhammad is His Messenger; on performing prayer; on giving the alms; pilgrimage to the House; and on fasting during Ramadan.”¹² Sino-Muslims have always valued this requirement and there were numerous pilgrims from China throughout the generations. Although, Ma Dexin was the earliest to transmit a full record of his pilgrimage journey, we have brief accounts of the environs of Mecca from earlier Chinese travelers.

Pilgrimage from China

Ma Huan and Mecca

One of the earliest historical descriptions of Mecca from a Chinese perspective was the account of Ma Huan 馬歡 (1380-1460) in his *Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores* (*Yingya shenglan* 瀛涯勝覽).¹³ Ma was an official translator for three expeditions of the famed Muslim admiral Zheng He 鄭和 (1371–1435). There is little biographical info on Ma but we can surmise that he was trained in the Chinese classics as a young man as evident from his quotations of classicisms.¹⁴ Later in life he converted to Islam and became fluent in Arabic and Persian. These linguistic skills qualified him to be

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *On Understanding Islam: Selected Studies* (The Hague and New York: Mouton, 1981), 162-74.

¹² Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*. Volume 1, Book 2, Number 8.

¹³ For an introduction and complete translation see, J.V.G. Mills, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores' (1433)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). See also J.J.L. Duyvendak, *Ma Huan Re-examined* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1933); Andrew D.W. Forbes, “Ma Huan,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Vol. 15 (Brill: Leiden, Netherlands), 849–850; Paul Pelliot, “Les Grands Voyages Maritimes Chinois au debut du XVe siecle,” *T'oung Pao* 30 (1933): 237-452; Paul Pelliot, “Notes Additionnelles sur Tcheng Houo et sur ses Voyages,” *T'oung Pao* 31 (1935): 274-314; Paul Pelliot, “Encore a Propos des Voyages de Tchend Houo,” *T'oung Pao* 32 (1936): 210-22.

¹⁴ However, Duyvendak thought otherwise arguing the *Yingya shenglan* was “written in an almost colloquial style by an unlearned Mohammedan.” Duyvendak, *Ma Huan Re-examined*, 9.

appointed as a translator and interpreter for Zheng's journeys. Ma joined the crew for the fourth expedition, which was the first to go beyond South Asia into the Persian Gulf. For this journey, Zheng commanded sixty-three ships with 28,560 men. Overall, in several trips between 1413 and 1431, they traveled through the Malay archipelago, Sri Lanka, South India, and as far as the Strait of Hormuz. At each locale Ma explored the local environs and recorded his impressions. He continued to do this for his subsequent two journeys, later compiling from his notes a prosaic register of the peoples, sites and commodities of each location.

Ma did not join Zheng He on his fifth expedition for an unknown reason but accompanied him on the sixth. This voyage consisted of 41 ships and moved on to Aden ('*Aden*) and Zafar (*Dhafār*) in Yemen. During the seventh and final journey the company's explorations were recorded in the greatest detail. The fleet consisted of over one hundred ships and 27,550 men were employed. They left Nanjing in 1431 and returned two years later. This journey brought the sailors to East Africa and further along the Arabian Peninsula. Ma, along with six other Muslims emissaries, traveled to Mecca and remained there for approximately three months. Upon his return Ma diligently compiled his accounts of the twenty countries he visited and produced the *Overall Survey*, which was finally published in 1451.

Ma's portrait of Mecca and its environs was detailed but often incorrect or peculiar in its descriptions.¹⁵ Ma told us that from Calcutta one would travel for three months before arriving in Jeddah (*zhida* 秩達). To get to Mecca (*mojia* 默伽) he

¹⁵ For example, Ma incorrectly situated the Zamzam well near the Prophet's tomb rather than in Mecca. Duyvendak was suspicious of this and other statements, believing that Ma possibly never visited the Hijaz and constructed his account on stories from travelers he met throughout the journey. Duyvendak, *Ma Huan Re-examined*, 73.

directed one to go east but you do, in fact, head west. From Mecca he suggested that the Kab'ah (*kai'apen* 愷阿哏) was more than half a day's journey away instead of situating it at the heart of the city. He then described the features of the mosque, including the gates, accurate measurements and lengths, and the Black covering (*kiswah*). However, he noted that there were two black lions guarding the door, which are not otherwise attested.¹⁶ From Mecca, Ma directed individuals to head west for one day to reach Medina (*modina* 焉底納), when one would need to head north for several days. Here he described the tomb of Mohammad (*mahama* 馬哈嘛), where “right down to the present day a bright light rises day and night from the top of the grave and penetrates into the clouds.”¹⁷ Ma described more mundane features of the environment, such as the weather, food and livestock, language, currency, and commodities. He viewed the people of Arabia in a favorable light recalling:

They profess the Muslim religion. A holy man first expounded and spread the doctrine of his teaching in this country, and right down to the present day the people of the country all observe the regulations of the doctrine in their actions, not daring to commit the slightest transgression.¹⁸

In general, Ma's account is straightforward, unemotional and laconic. However, he seems to show his idealization of the sacred center, as much as his affinity for the real population of Mecca, but reveals no particular personal familiarity with the city or its holy sites.

¹⁶ He may have been referring to the black stone at the corner of the Kab'ah (*al-hajar al-aswad*) but it is rather unlikely he could confuse this for two lions. Mills, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan*, 175.

¹⁷ Mills, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan*, 177.

¹⁸ Mills, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan*, 173-4.

Ma's *Overall Survey* was one text in the large corpus of expedition and geographical works written in the Chinese during the Ming dynasty.¹⁹ It would have had very modest circulation among the general public and it probably was not likely to be accessible to most Muslims. While it is evident from the *Overall Survey* that Ma revered Mecca his treatise was not evangelic in nature nor intended to inspire other Muslims to perform the pilgrimage or travel to the Middle East. In fact there is no specific mention of the *hajj* or its importance. Overall, we can see that Mecca was already understood as an important religious center during the pre-modern period. However, while Ma Huan's work provided us with an early description of Mecca and its environs it does so without any religious intentions motivating the work. We will see that Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi and Ma Dexin created their works with much more forethought and purpose, intending to illustrate, motivate, and authenticate the importance of the *hajj*.

Wang Daiyu and the Hajj Pilgrimage

Wang Daiyu was the Sino-Muslim to write about the *hajj* pilgrimage as a religious duty and rewarding spiritual exercise. Wang's discussion of the pilgrimage was concise in length and modest in detail. His overall message was one of faith in the benefits of the pilgrimage and the sacred geography it established. He delineated the theological implications of performing the *hajj* and the establishment of God's house, the

¹⁹ Fei Xin 費信 (b. 1388), also a Muslim, wrote a travelogue entitled *Description of the Starry Raft* (*Xincha Shenlan* 星槎勝覽) about his travels on Zheng He's third, fifth and seventh journeys. This is thought to be largely based on Ma Huan's *Overall Survey*. Gong Zhen 鞏珍 also accompanied Zheng He on his travels and wrote *Record of Countries in the Western Ocean* (*Xiyang fanguo zhi* 西洋番國誌). See Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006); Pelliot, "Les Grands Voyages;" and W.W. Rockhill, "Notes on the relations and trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the coast of the Indian Ocean during the fourteenth century," *T'oung Pao* 15: Part 1, (1914): 419-447; Part 2, (1914): 61-159, 236-271, 374-392, 435-467, 604-626.

Kab’ah, at the time of creation. While never personally going on the *hajj*, he stressed the direct harm of neglecting it and emphasized the transformative qualities it can provide for a believer.

The Pillars of Virtue in Chinese Culture

Wang directly explored the *hajj* in a chapter entitled the “Five Constant virtues (*wuchang* 五常)” in his *True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching (Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮). This was the first chapter of the second half of the book, which often dealt more with practical matters of religious praxis than theological discussions. Here Wang assigned a recognizable and esteemed status to the five pillars of Islam within the Chinese context. The five constant virtues were reproduced from traditional Confucian ethical values and virtues: humaneness/benevolence (*ren* 仁), righteousness/morality (*yi* 義), ritual/propriety (*li* 禮), wisdom/knowledge (*zhi* 智) and integrity/faithfulness (*xin* 信). These were cardinal principles in the Confucian philosophical tradition that when followed would make the world operate as a unitive whole. The foundation for this perspective was initially laid out by Confucius and Mencius and replicated throughout the generations by later authors.²⁰ Wang masterfully linked the primary actions of Islamic religious commitment with the moral dispositions of traditional Chinese thought. This method both accentuated the importance of the five

²⁰ For further discussion on the five constant virtues in the Confucian context, see Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006); Philip J Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000); Shun, Kwong-loi, “Ren 仁 and Li 禮 in the Analects,” in *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 53-72; Li Chenyang, “Li as Cultural Grammar: On the Relation Between Li and Ren in Confucius’ Analects,” *Philosophy East and West* 57 no. 3 (2007): 311-329; Daniel K. Gardner, *Zhu Xi’s Reading of the Analects: Canon, Commentary, and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); and John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).

pillars from the Islamic perspective while appropriating the authority of Confucian ideology within this specific semiotic framework.

Wang began his discussion by delineating the five principles within their Islamic context. “The five constant virtues of the orthodox teaching are God’s clear command. Namely, the five constant virtues are remembrance (*nian* 念),²¹ giving (*shi* 施), fasting (*jie* 戒)²², worship (*bai* 拜), and gathering (*ju* 聚).”²³ The remainder of this comparatively long chapter of the *Zhengjiao zhenquan* outlined the nature of the five pillars and sketched their theological foundations and import. He explained, “the last meritorious act is called gathering. Gathering together is called a covenant (*yue* 約). A complete covenant is called faith (*xin* 信).”²⁴ Here, Wang demonstrated the significance of the *hajj* for pilgrims. In performing the *hajj*, each pilgrim completes their individual covenant with God and reaffirms their faith. The *hajj* is typically the culmination of a life of religious observance and Wang stressed its capacity for demonstrating the faith of an observant.

The Covenant and Cosmography

²¹ *Nian* 念, can mean both “to remember, or meditate” and to “recite or invoke aloud.” Wang’s employment of this term allows him to convey the dual sense of the *shahadah* as a vocal articulation of one’s belief in God and His prophet and the sense that the *shahadah* is repeated during every prayer and theoretically should be a constant reminder of one’s faith in God. This character was also used to render the Sanskrit term *smṛti*, meaning the attentiveness of Buddhist practice that is usually translated as mindfulness, in Chinese Buddhist texts.

²² Wang employed an interesting term here to evoke the notion of fasting. *Jie* 戒 means to guard against. In the *Analects* “Confucius said, “There are three things which the superior man guards against. In youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust. When he is strong and the physical powers are full of vigor, he guards against quarrelsomeness. When he is old, and the animal powers are decayed, he guards against covetousness” (16:7). This term is also used to denote a regulation in Buddhism. The five precepts (*wujie* 五戒) are the foundation of Buddhist lay practice undertaken by all followers, which are do not take life, do not steal, do not engage in sexual misconduct, do not lie, and do not take intoxicants.

²³ Wang Daiyu 王岱輿, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, *Qingzhen daxue*, *Xizhen zhengda* 正教真詮，請真大學，希真正答 (*True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching, Great Learning of Islam, Orthodox Responses on the Rare Truth*), ed. Yu Zhengui 余振貴 (Reprinted-Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1987), 82.

²⁴ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 87.

God's covenant (*mīthāq* and '*ahd*') is both personal and communal (Q 2:40, 3:81, 3:112, 5:7, 33:7).²⁵ Individually, personal commitment to obey God's commands is verified by the confirmation that His acts are not capricious or arbitrary (Q 6:164, 17:15). Wang related one's personal covenant and commitment to faith with the communal covenant established through the relationship between God and creation through Adam.

When the beginning itself began to open up the human ancestor descended to the Heavenly Square. The Heavenly Square lies precisely at the center of the four poles, just as a state has a ruler, and the body has a heart. How the shadows cast by the sun can confirm this! Afterwards, the human ancestor, Adam (*adan* 阿丹), obeyed the True Lord's clear command and then possessed the orthodox teaching.²⁶

This relationship established Adam's pivotal role as the bearer of God's trust (*amāna*) (Q 33:72) and the establishment of the Kab'ah as the center of God's sacred geography. The Kab'ah is both the terrestrial nucleus of the cosmos but also its most crucial organ or leader. By returning to this central axis the faithful proclaim their allegiance and fidelity to God and continue to fulfill their obligation of the covenant.

In Wang's explanation, the obligation to return to the Kab'ah to perform the *hajj* was established during creation and Adam disseminated this duty.

The imperial command of the human ancestor, Adam, expounded and propagated to the masses that one time in all of one's life they should go on pilgrimage to the Heavenly Square. One should part with what one loves and leave home. Continuously, in the past and present, we mutually inherit the traces of the orthodox teaching because we do not forget the experience of the foundation of coming.²⁷

The movement from the profane world to the sacred center reinforces the principles of the religion. The pilgrim inherits the legacy of those believers who previously returned

²⁵ For further discussion on the concept of a covenant, see Gerhard Bowering, "Covenant," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 464-7; and Rosalind Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Qur'an: God's Arguments* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1-24.

²⁶ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 87.

²⁷ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 87.

and they will continue to fortify faith for future pilgrims. Wang explained that during the *hajj* the pilgrim would also be inwardly transformed.

Arriving at this space one travels to His courtyard building and does not see their former person. During the pilgrimage experience of the Heavenly Square one returns to consider the original Lord and the self opens up and begins to awaken. What is this that creates and transforms heaven and earth?²⁸

This spiritual change positions the pilgrim within their communal and cosmographical environments by generating a feeling of belonging to both a community of believers and a sacred cosmos ingrained with purpose and meaning. Wang demonstrated that the theological motivations for the process of returning established within the *hajj* verify the foundations of Islam and locate the intersection of God’s interaction with humankind at the Kab’ah. The individual and communal aspects of the covenant between God and creation are reestablished with each pilgrim and the sacred center of the cosmos is confirmed.

Embodying the Five Pillars

Finally, Wang presented the *hajj* as the quintessence of the five pillars and asserted its crucial importance for Islamic praxis. He declared, “This orthodox teaching of gathering is the faith of the congregation; it covers the five constant virtues of the orthodox teaching.”²⁹ For Wang, performing the pilgrimage demonstrated the believer’s commitment and dedication to fulfill their duties as a Muslim and encompassed the deeds actualized through their declaration of faith (*shahādah*), giving of alms (*zakāt*), daily prayer (*salāt*), and fasting during Ramaḍān (*ṣawm*). He also argued for the importance of completing the *hajj* and not regarding it as a supplementary requirement. He viewed

²⁸ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 87.

²⁹ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 87.

pilgrimage as an essential aspect of Islam that was the foundation of the Islamic *dao* 道 (or path). He cautioned:

In general, when one knows this path but does not observe and adhere to it, their transgressions are increased doubly, and their heart is even more confused. Namely, it is like being able to eat yet not digesting. Surely they are stagnant and not comfortable. Not only do they lack benefit but they turn back to transferring harm. Are they not able to stop and reflect?³⁰

Wang condemned those who did not observe this duty because of its difficulty to accomplish or the abundance of resources it required. He understood pilgrimage to be an integral part of the primary practices of Islam and thought that not performing it would be a grave detriment to their personal salvation and communal fellowship.

In general, Wang situated the pilgrimage as a paramount practice that embodied the qualities of the other pillars of faith and personally transformed the believer from their former self. He greatly valued the *hajj* because it enabled Muslims to actualize their covenant with God and return to the heart of their sacred geography. He also likened the five pillars to the five constant virtues of the Confucian tradition, bringing authenticity and authority to Islamic practices in the Chinese setting with this description. Ironically, Wang never performed the pilgrimage himself. There is no discussion about why he did not go the Mecca but we know that his activities were very localized, living most of his life in Nanjing and moving to Beijing towards the end of his life.

What we can glean from Wang's treatment of the pilgrimage and his personal activities are that the *hajj* was seen as essential to religious observance and personal redemption but difficult to realize. Even Wang himself never went on *hajj* despite his clear criticism of those who did not perform this ritual. This may be why Wang stressed

³⁰ This final passage is reminiscent of the constant guidance given in the Qur'an for humankind to reflect (3:190-1; 10:24; 30:21; 34:46; 35:28; 39:27-8; 39:42; 45:13), and the concern for those who do not reflect (7:184; 30:8). Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 87.

the theological underpinnings of the pilgrimage and symbolic dimensions of the Kab'ah's cosmography and connection to creation and Adam. Wang discussed the pilgrimage from the perspective of belief because for him, and the Sino-Muslim community he was addressing, the most essential feature of their Muslim identity was belief in the principles of the religion. He wanted to clearly define what he interpreted as the traditional features of the religion even if their ideal was not achievable in practice. Therefore, Wang defined Islam as a series of beliefs that when followed situated the adherent as an observant Muslim. This indicates that for the Sino-Muslim community in Southeast China in the mid-seventeenth century the pilgrimage was a foundation of their belief rather than a critical aspect of religious practice. In this regard, the concept of the pilgrimage generated a sacred geography that instilled life with purpose for a community who understood the signs of God. The believer would reflect on their desire to return to the Kab'ah and understood the *hajj* as a symbol of their future union with God and the fulfillment of His covenant.

Liu Zhi and the Hajj Pilgrimage

Liu Zhi also viewed the *hajj* as both a personal transformative experience and a religious responsibility of utmost importance. He discussed the pilgrimage at length in his *Tianfang dianli* and outlined each phase of the pilgrimage rites performed during the *hajj*. Liu clarified the theological and liturgical aspects of the *hajj* in order to bolster a strong faith in its benefit, established the Kab'ah's sacred geography, and urged all believers to perform the pilgrimage. However, he simultaneously set forth acceptable reasons for not performing the pilgrimage and methods for gaining equivalent merit when not going on *hajj*. Therefore, similar to Wang, he emphasized the doctrinal foundations and

transformative rewards of the *hajj* but he did not belabor its necessity. He creatively demonstrated Sino-Muslims' ability to perform obligatory observances and identify with the larger Muslim community while remaining geographically isolated from them.

Meritorious Acts and Chinese Culture

Like Wang, Liu discussed the pilgrimage within a broader discussion of the five pillars of Islam, however he referred to them as the five meritorious acts (*wugong* 五功), emphasizing their somatic quality rather than their ethical grounding as virtues. He declared, “To reverently admire the five meritorious acts is the completion of the way of Heaven.”³¹ Here too, Liu bonded Islamic practices with admirable and exemplary behavior within the Chinese context. *Gong* 功, or meritorious acts, was a concept developed in the medieval Daoist tradition, adapted in Buddhist sources and popularized during late imperial China, when Liu was writing, through *Ledgers of Merits and Demerits* (*Gongguo ge* 功過格).³² These were used to define and measure meritorious acts in order to help individuals determine what behaviors should be performed to accumulate positive merit and direct their fate to an advantageous end.³³ Therefore, Liu skillfully tied the five compulsory observances of Islam with the moral ethics of Confucianism, the accumulation of good and removing of evil of Daoism, and the Buddhist concept of *karma*. This method captured the authority of these traditions on

³¹ Liu Zhi 劉智, *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 (*Rituals of Islam*), in *Qingzhen Dadian* 清真大典, vol. 15, (*The Great Canon of Islam*) (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), 63.

³² For a further discussion, see Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

³³ These ledgers were catalogs of moral actions, which were supposed to be filled in after daily self-examination. The earliest types of ledgers functioned in a religious context by Daoist priests marking positive and negative actions after self-reflection. These were adopted by Buddhists and closely related to the belief in supernatural retribution of good and evil. Later *gongguo ge* promoted morality in political, social, and intellectual contexts, and was practiced by many scholars and officials in tandem with Neo-Confucian methods of self-cultivation.

behalf of Islamic practices by associating them with recognizable and admirable actions within the Chinese setting.

His discussion of the pilgrimage reflected his overall view of the five pillars as means to achieve union with God. He wondered:

How is the body to be rectified? The five affairs of the Sage’s teaching are these: Remembrance, by which one knows the place of coming home; propriety, by which one practices on the path of coming home; setting aside, by which one releases oneself from loves; fasting, by which one cuts oneself off from things; and assembly, by which one goes home to the Real.³⁴

These actions enable the believer to enact their individual religiosity through embodied practices. The pilgrimage completes that commitment, as Liu declared, “Once in a lifetime, one makes pilgrimage to the Heavenly Tower in order to realize the true aspiration that one is sincerely inclined towards.”³⁵ Through pilgrimage the participant can join in the communal establishment of meaning through which the actions of the pilgrim reflect certain spiritual, social and political significance. In this regard, Liu’s analysis, like Wang’s before him, outlined the transformative power of the *hajj* for individual pilgrims. He maintained that:

As for the pilgrimage, one goes from distant to near and from outer to inner, returning to the position of knowing the original substance (*benti* 本體). The external aspect of the pilgrimage maintains the traces of swiftly moving one’s feet, but the internal aspect makes the pilgrim one with the substance of the True Lord (*zhenzai* 真宰) without leaving a trace. How could there be anything that surpasses these meritorious works of cultivating the Way?³⁶

Liu’s explanation regarded the physical movement from one’s mundane setting to the sacred center as a symbol for the internal change that occurred as one approached God through the cosmographical hub positioned at the Kab’ah. Pilgrimage was given utmost

³⁴ Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick, and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 484.

³⁵ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 63.

³⁶ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 84.

theological import by Liu because, out of the five pillars, it most clearly demonstrated the internal progress of the believer through the completion of each ritual action performed during the *hajj*, which was ingrained with added religious meanings.

Sacred cosmos

Liu also echoed Wang's discussion of the Kab'ah as the center of a sacred geography. In the beginning of the *Tianfang dianli* Liu declared, "A western proverb says, 'The earth is like a millstone.' The heavenly square is the navel of the millstone. As for its shape, the four sides are all below because this land is the axis of Heaven and Earth. Therefore, all places are drawn to it."³⁷ This description situated the Kab'ah as the nucleus of creation, from which all life is sustained as if they were connected as an embryo. The Kab'ah then connects humankind to the origin of this creation and allows them to return to this source. As Liu began his direct examination of the pilgrimage, he again asserted the Kab'ah's centrality in the universe as the center of the cosmos and the origin of creation.

The Heavenly Tower is none other than the hall of pilgrimage, also called the Heavenly House (*tianfang* 天房) (Heavenly Square *tianfang* 天方 or *Ka'ba* (*ke'erbai* 克而白)). The Creator (*zaowu* 造物) constructed it as a place to which people in all places would make pilgrimage. It is located in Mecca (*moke* 墨克) in Arabia. Mecca is really the ancestral land for everything under Heaven. The Heavenly Square is exactly at the correct position of Heaven and Earth. Located at the center of the whole earth, Mecca is also located at the center of Arabia. Thus, the pilgrimage hall also resides in the center of Mecca. Therefore, it is the direction of pilgrimage in all places. It is as if it is the heart of the four limbs of pilgrimage. It is the place that people must accept a personal investigation as pilgrims, returning to the place of the beginning of human life.³⁸

Here Liu described a cosmic world made up of a temporal environment that is pierced by a locus of divine creation. Returning to the Kab'ah allowed pilgrims to reconnect with this power underlying creation. Throughout his discussion, Liu reiterated many of the

³⁷ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 60.

³⁸ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 104.

arguments that Wang had previously laid out. Liu clearly outlined the theological conditions for understanding the role of the *hajj* for situating the Kab'ah as a physical access point to the sacred. He also explained how participating in it internally transforms the individual.

Practice and Ritual

Liu also continued the discussion of the *hajj* to include several other details of the rituals associated with the pilgrimage. Where he diverged the most in his methods from other Sino-Muslim authors was his considerable explanation of the practices that were associated with the pilgrimage. The bulk of the examination in the *Tianfang dianli* focused on the order and performance of the pilgrimage rituals. This perspective is significant because in addition to belief in the efficacy of the pilgrimage, Liu thought that knowledge of the ritual practices would reinforce the believer's efforts to perform the *hajj* themselves. Therefore, Liu took the discussion one step further than Wang by explicating the details of how one would perform the *hajj* and why each of those processes symbolized deeper religious meaning and were important for spiritual growth.

The structure of Liu's analysis listed the significant moments of the pilgrimage in chronological order. He would make a statement and then spend a few lines to several paragraphs explaining the reasons and logic behind each assertion. He began with preparations that should be made by the pilgrim before they even started traveling. He warned, "The journey's route extends a far distance and preparations must be made in advance. The journey is more than one to two years. If one has the ability they must go

there.”³⁹ He continued to explain the responsibilities to perform immediately before entering the sacred precinct. The headings of the following few sections read:

Thus, upon reaching the gate, one adopts prohibitions.

One first cleans oneself and bathes.

One changes one's clothing and wears fragrance.

Pray and convey a declaration.

One should recite the confession (*shahada*).

Upon entering the state of the prohibitions (*jie* 戒): one reveals the top of one's head; exposes one's feet; does not wear yellow or purple clothing; does not wear anything containing an odor; does not smell fragrant fruit; does not wash the head; does not cut or shave one's hair; does not trim one's moustache; does not clip one's fingernails; does not wear any decorations; and does not kill any living spirit.

One wears the clothing of the consecrated state of the prohibitions.⁴⁰

In explaining each of these items, Liu went into great detail describing the way one should act and think, how things should look, and the minutia for each necessary object or action. Then he took the reader through each step of the pilgrimage journey by outlining the meanings behind the acts. He described the various circumambulations, preparing of sacrificial animals, the activities at Arafat and Mina, the stonings, ritual sacrifice, and visiting of Muhammad's tomb. This comprehensive description was intended to give the pilgrim a firm foundation in their understanding of the various implications of the *hajj*. It could also be used a pilgrimage manual for those undertaking the *hajj*.

Substitution of pilgrimage

Despite this detailed description and compelling recommendation in favor of performing the pilgrimage Liu Zhi was also never able to go on the *hajj*. While he traveled widely throughout China, he was never able to voyage past its borders nor does he explain why he was unable to go the Mecca. This makes his passionate endorsement

³⁹ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 104.

⁴⁰ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 104-5.

for the *hajj* more interesting. How was he able to reconcile this disparity and mitigate his personal foundering? As we saw earlier, Liu directly instructed his readers to perform the pilgrimage. He went into great detail to insist on the necessity of Muslim participation and the transformative results it provided for pilgrims. In a section titled “Through pilgrimage, one restores the mandate and returns to the truth,” He explained:

If a person’s remembrance of their longing for home is deep, then their remembrance of their devotion to the way is shallow. The command to perform the pilgrimage causes one to commence a journey to an outermost frontier, leaving their passions and desires, in order to approach the original source. Therefore, the pilgrim must part with what they love and leave home on a rugged trek after which they visit this realm. Then, those who cultivate the way must also overcome and depart from selfishness. Thereafter, one may return to the truth by diligently cultivating ascetic practices. In this manner, one borrows the palpability of the pilgrimage in order to open up to the meaning of pilgrimage’s impalpability.⁴¹

This perspective demonstrated that even in the midst of dire circumstances one should perform the pilgrimage. Neither distance nor attachment to family or wealth should impede one’s participation in this key observance. However, at the conclusion of his pilgrimage chapter, Liu discussed at length the reasons why Muslims do not have to go on the *hajj*. One section sets forth, “The Scripture says, ‘Believers must perform the pilgrimage. If the road is arduous it is permissible to wait.’⁴² A tradition (*chaun* 傳) says, ‘When one is blocked, or is in hardship, has no kin or friends, or is disabled, then they are permitted not to go on pilgrimage.’”⁴³ These justifications for not performing the

⁴¹ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 84.

⁴² This is a paraphrase of *Qur'an* 2:196: “Complete the pilgrimages, major and minor, for the sake of God. If you are prevented [from doing so], then [send] whatever offering for sacrifice you can afford, and do not shave your heads until the offering has reached the place of sacrifice. If any of you is ill, or has an ailment of the scalp, he should compensate by fasting, or feeding the poor, or offering sacrifice. When you are in safety, anyone wishing to take a break between the minor pilgrimage and the major one must make whatever offering he can afford. If he lacks the means, he should fast for three days during the pilgrimage, and seven days on his return, making ten days in all. This applies to those whose household is not near the Sacred Mosque. Always be mindful of God, and be aware that He is stern in His retribution.”

⁴³ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 109.

pilgrimage are commonly held positions in Muslim societies and Liu is not uncommon in his explanation. He continued to clarify:

In general, all believers should go on the pilgrimage in order to complete the five meritorious acts commanded by the True Lord. However, if the journey is too difficult or obstructed, or one does not possess traveling expenses, or father and mother are living, or one is crippled by illness, then it is permitted not to go on the pilgrimage.⁴⁴

Therefore, Muslims need not go on pilgrimage for number of reasons related to themselves or those who rely on them in some manner. We do not know the circumstances for Liu not going on *hajj* but can assume that with his critical analysis and encouragement for participation that it was related to one of the preceding reasons.

However, Liu did not leave the discussion at that. He employed a creative rhetorical interpretation in his treatment of the duty to perform the *hajj*. His intentions behind stressing the importance of ritual practice became clear in Liu's work as his discussion unfolded. Through ritual performance Sino-Muslims are able to participate in the community of Muslims despite their remote position from the sacred center. Ritual activity enabled this community to be in contact with the community and God through the meaningful sense of belonging rituals created. For those who were unable to return to the Kab'ah they could rely on other rituals to cooperate in the observance. In this regard, Liu asserted that,

Qurbān (*guerbang* 古而邦) and pilgrimage have the same meaning. Altogether, they are intended to seek closeness to the Lord. However, while the pilgrimage is the ceremony of personally visiting the Heavenly House, *Qurbān* is for people from a far distance, who cannot reach the Heavenly House and is a ceremony that is practiced everywhere. Therefore, their ceremonial rules are more or less the same.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 109.

⁴⁵ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 111.

Qurbān is celebrated at the end of the *hajj* during *‘Eīd al-’Aḏḏhā* to commemorate Ibrāhīm’s willingness to sacrifice his son ‘Ismā‘īl. Through the celebration of *Qurbān* and the sacrificing of a sheep Sino-Muslims were able to demonstrate their desire to participate in the *hajj* even if they were obstructed in some way from participating in it. Liu’s justification for this ritual substitution was derived from the Qur’an, where it says, “Complete the pilgrimages, major and minor, for the sake of God. If you are prevented [from doing so], then [send] whatever offering for sacrifice you can afford” (2:196). Liu highlighted this point to compensate for Sino-Muslims who were generally too distant to perform the *hajj*. By making the *Qurbān* sacrifice equivalent in merit with the pilgrimage, Liu presented his readers the means for understanding their relationship to God and the Muslim community without culpability for contravening one of the pillars.

Liu also likened the pilgrimage ritual to more common activities that a much broader population of Sino-Muslims could partake in. These activities extended moral and ethical merit to familiar relationships and deeds. He maintained,

Father and Mother are the origin of one's birth. Morning and evening one should visit one's parents. This is the pilgrimage of residing at home. Worthies and erudite individuals are the origin of thoroughly understanding the teachings. Morning and evening one should intimate with them. This is the pilgrimage of residing at a natural position. The heart is the origin a hundred affairs. Examine and investigate it while in motion and at rest. This is the pilgrimage of oneself. The Lord Ruler (*zhuzai* 主宰) is the root origin of the myriad transformations. Within the mouth silently invoke Him, within the heart praise and extol Him. This is the pilgrimage of the most earnest. Generally, most people are unable to go on pilgrimage to the heavenly square; but they can observe these several things. They are also able to have the merits and achievements of personally going on pilgrimage to the heavenly square.⁴⁶

Here, Liu’s unique perspective is revealed in full. While participation in the pilgrimage would be most desirable, and knowledge and belief in its benefits are essential to spiritual

⁴⁶ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 109.

development, sincere intentions produce equal merit from quotidian behavior to that of the *hajj*. Liu derived this perspective from a reading of Qur’anic passages that elevate sincerity (7:29, 40:14, 98:5) and hadith such as the opening passage of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which reads, “I heard God’s Apostle saying, “The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended.”⁴⁷ Liu extrapolated this concept to extend to his local community who would not easily be able to perform the pilgrimage but would feel connected to the larger Muslim community through their ritual participation. Their sincere deeds would be judged based on their intention and not the fact they were not able to perform one of the five pillars. Therefore, this method enabled Sino-Muslims to both feel secure with their personal redemption and their communal belonging.

Overall, Liu Zhi emphasized the theological and practical aspects of the *hajj* while simultaneously advocating for participation in it and alleviating regret for not being able to do so. He outlined a cosmic geography revolving around the Kab’ah and demonstrated how believers could participate in returning to that sacred center. However, he also established how those who were unable to go to Mecca could gain equal merit for their intentions to go on *hajj* and performing alternative rituals. This ritual exchange reveals that for Liu the meaning ingrained in the *hajj* could be attained through other processes. Therefore, an authentic and authoritative expression of faith was present in other meaningful religious activities that could be performed at any time and in any

⁴⁷ There is also an *ḥadīth qudsī* that was repeated often: “If My servant intends good deed, then I count it for him as a good deed, even if he does not carry it out. And if he does carry it out, then I count it for him as ten like unto it.” This is included in Hammām b. Munabbih’s *Ṣaḥīḥah*, Muslim b. al-Hajjāj’s *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, al-Nawawī’s *Arba‘ūn*, Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Mishkāt al-anwār*, and al-Madanī’s *al-Iṭḥāfāt al-sanīyah fī al-aḥādīth al-qudsīyah*.

location. This enabled Sino-Muslims to feel that they belonged to the broader Muslim community despite their inability to return to the Kab'ah.

Ma Dexin and the Hajj Pilgrimage

Ma Dexin most clearly advocated the importance of performing the pilgrimage and its status as one of the foundational aspects of religious observance. He viewed the *hajj* as both personally transformational and religiously obligated, like his predecessors, but also believed it was individually attainable and doctrinally rectifying. He discussed the pilgrimage directly in his *Scripture of Bright Virtue* (*Mingde jing* 明德經) and his *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* (*Chaojin Tuji* 朝覲途記), as well intermittently throughout the rest of his writings. In the *Scripture of Bright Virtue*, Ma described the liturgical aspects of the pilgrimage, echoing Liu's treatment of the *hajj* in the *Tianfang dianli*. In the *Mingde jing* he laid out the physical geography of the Meccan religious environment and the stages of passing through it. While he reiterated the importance of the *hajj*, he did not distinguish it from the other pillars of faith and allow it to be abandoned. He urged all believers to go on the pilgrimage and enumerated the conditions that necessitated the journey, in contrast to Liu's attention to factors that permitted believers to neglect its performance. This discursive shift promoted the notion that all Muslims should perform the *hajj* rather than identifying acceptable reasons for not performing the pilgrimage. In *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey*, Ma mapped out the physical realities of the entire journey from China to the Middle East. In it he intended to demystify the *hajj* for Sino-Muslims while simultaneously asserting the importance of the pilgrimage as an essential Islamic observance. Overall, he understood the pilgrimage as

means for engaging the broader Muslim world and a vehicle for gaining what he perceived as a traditional interpretation of Islam. By detailing the particulars of the voyage he enabled Sino-Muslims to acquire both the logistical knowledge of the journey and the determination and resolve for undertaking the pilgrimage.

Islamic Practices in China

Ma addressed the *hajj* directly in a chapter entitled Pilgrimage (*chaojin* 朝規) from his *Scripture of Bright Virtue*. This text was transmitted to us through one of Ma's foremost disciples, Ma Anli 馬安禮 (d. 1899). It is one of the chapters in the second portion of the text called *Opening Love for Ritual and Law* (*Lifa Qi'ai* 禮法啟愛). The short section reflected the earlier discussions by Wang and Liu in that it addressed more legal and theological conditions or explanations of performing the *hajj*. Overall, the discussion is prosaic in style and pragmatic in tone. He presents foreign names in transliterated Chinese next to the Arabic original word. Ma's treatment of the pilgrimage in the *Mingde jing* was situated differently from those of Wang and Liu. The pilgrimage was discussed in the broader context of ritualistic activity as it can be broadly conceived of in the Islamic context. Therefore, the *hajj* was treated in the same setting as wedding ceremonies, burial rituals, divorce, ablution and other acts of observance. The shift in discursive procedures indicated that by the time Ma was writing most Muslims who would be reading his texts understood the importance of the *hajj*, both as a necessary observance that was ethically compelling and one that would produce beneficial merit.

Obligation and Observance

The content of Ma's *Mingde jing* was reminiscent of Liu's *Tianfang dianli*. It dealt primarily with the legal conditions of the pilgrimage and the traditional behaviors

associated with the various stages of the ritual. He described how one ritually prepared themselves for the *hajj*, the clothing they wear, and permissible and prohibited activities and items. Throughout his narration, Ma outlined the geographical routes within the Meccan sanctuary and referred to several specific locations. For example, he declared, “Taking the oath (*shoujie* 受戒)⁴⁸ of the pilgrimage ceremony, one stays at Arafat (*erleifate* 爾勒法特, ‘*Arafāt*). ...Arriving at *muzdalifah* (*muzideleifa* 母資德勒法, *muzdalifah*) one halts.”⁴⁹ In many ways this made his explanation reliable for understanding the journey. His real life experience gave him authority in his outline of ritual observances. Each leg of the ceremonies was detailed until the completion of the pilgrimage. Finally, he explained, “At Mina (*mile* 彌勒, *mitā* – misspelled in Arabic) one emits from the right point. Together they (pilgrims) recite the word in praise. The pilgrimage is completed with a measure of hair and the breaking of prohibitions.”⁵⁰ The physicality of the description in the *Mingde jing* enabled Muslims to both understand their obligations and imagine themselves in the Meccan surroundings. In general, Ma highlighted the importance of the religious journey as an integral component of faith and practice. He instructed, “Visitation (*jiyalei* 擠呀勒, *ziyāra*) is the travel of the orthodox pilgrimage. It all belongs to the Lord’s regulations.”⁵¹ Here he emphasized that religious travel was part of the path of God’s directives. The *hajj* being the most essential but also the most difficult to complete made it extraordinary but still compulsory. He related, “In all of

⁴⁸ In a Buddhist context, *shoujie* 受戒 means to take the precepts and be initiated into monkhood.

⁴⁹ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Mingde jing* 明德經 (*Scripture of Bright Virtue*), in Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 ed., *Ma Fuchu yizhu xuan* 馬復初遺著選 (*A Selection of Ma Fuchu’s Posthumous Writings*) (Hong Kong: Guoji Huaren Chubanshe, 2003), 484.

⁵⁰ Ma, *Mingdejing*, 484.

⁵¹ Ma, *Mingdejing*, 484.

one's life one only has to go one time.”⁵² Ma relayed the significance of the pilgrimage by outlining the liturgical details of the pilgrimage and bringing them to life through his experiential description. Knowledge of each facet and feature of the *hajj* equipped the believer with the tools to enact and actualize their religious journey.

The *Scripture of Bright Virtue* also most clearly asserted that the pilgrimage was not a peripheral activity of secondary importance. The *hajj* was set as one of the cardinal observances of the Islamic tradition and Ma believed it should be understood in this manner and followed in accordance. The most revealing point on the importance of the *hajj* was from Ma's opening passage where he specified who was required to perform the pilgrimage.

As for the ceremony of pilgrimage, it is for good believers (*mumin* 穆民) who are twelve years old or above, those in good health and lacking illness, who have traveling expenses, sufficient strength, have a steed, and is one who has practical miscellaneous things, or who is rich and has much to spare, or whose house expenses are sufficient.⁵³

Ma was clear in his promotion of the *hajj* as a required practice for Muslims. He asserted that Sino-Muslims should not be remiss when considering the pilgrimage. Unlike, Wang and Liu, he was direct in defining who was obliged to perform the pilgrimage rather than stating, “If one is able, he must go there.” Ma delineated who should be able to go on *hajj* and, therefore, established who should perform the pilgrimage. The contrast in Ma's and Liu's respective arguments for who was required to go on *hajj* or who was able to refrain from going marked their distinctive perspectives. The explicit contrast between these cataphatic and apophatic approaches to religious duty demonstrated that Ma was the most forthright of these authors in stipulating the observance of the pilgrimage. Liu clearly

⁵² Ma, *Mingdejing*, 483.

⁵³ Ma, *Mingdejing*, 483.

drafted several possibilities for overlooking this duty while Ma outlined measures that encompassed a much larger portion of the Sino-Muslim population. For Ma, the *hajj* was a tangible experience that he felt many more Sino-Muslims could carry out. For that reason, he illustrated that it should be thought of in the same vein as the other pillars of Islam and actualized by faithful Muslims (*mumin* 穆民).

A Pilgrimage Journey

Ma Dexin was the first Chinese pilgrim to record his *hajj* journey. His pilgrimage was extensive in its geographical exploration and extended in duration. He began his pilgrimage in 1841 and spent a total of eight years traveling throughout the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Upon his return he became the most prominent scholar in southern China and began writing. His travel journal, *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey*, was completed upon his return in 1849. He originally wrote it in Arabic but the original manuscript has since been lost. However, Ma Anli translated the text into Chinese making it accessible to the broader Sino-Muslim population in 1861.⁵⁴ The *Chaojin Tuji* was comparatively long in relation to many of Ma's theological works. In it Ma rarely reflected on his personal emotions or spiritual advancements but chose to describe in detail the characteristics of the pilgrimage journey itself. Along the way he described the places, lengths of time, and approximate distances between locations. The narrative was markedly formal, laconic, and impersonal. It outlined each juncture of the journey and detailed the practical and advantageous features of travel. Throughout, foreign words for people, places and ideas were translated into Chinese, transliterated with Chinese

⁵⁴ Wood blocks of Ma Anli's translation were produced in the same year. Ding Rong 丁蓉, "Ma Dexin Chaojin Tuji Yanjiu 馬德新朝覲途記研究 (Research on Ma Dexin's *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey*)," *Zhongshan daxue yanjiushengxue kan* 中山大學研究生學刊 (*National Sun Yat-sen University Graduate Student Journal*), 28 no. 3 (2008): 60.

characters, and written in Arabic. He also noted the date of each phase of his trip in both the western Islamic calendar (*al-taqwīm al-hijrī*) and in the Qing dynasty Daoguang reign period.

The choice to focus on the particular features of his travels and the places he visited rather than the experiential sentiments he gained or emotions he felt along the way is revealing in several ways. By removing himself from the experience Ma demonstrated what every pilgrim might encounter. This enabled any Sino-Muslim to imagine how their own pilgrimage might unfold. While Ma Dexin was an exceptional figure this text eclipsed his unparalleled knowledge and remarkable achievements in favor of the stages of a journey to the Middle East. Additionally, these details provided the logistical knowledge for pilgrims to embark on their own *hajj*. This text provided the lengths of time a pilgrim would require, locations where individuals could stay, and detailed descriptions of the features of the holy city Mecca and the Sacred Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*). Further, by withholding his personal feelings from his trip he was able to encourage others, and renew or sustain their determination to begin their own pilgrimage. Certainly Ma had troubled times or reservations about his travels but we are acutely unaware of them from a reading of *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey*. Removing these elements from Ma's text, which would make it more of a personal diary rather than a travel journal, made his goal of encouraging other Sino-Muslims to make the pilgrimage much more effective and compelling.

The Journey

Ma set off for the pilgrimage leaving through Rangoon, Burma via an old spice route. Yunnanese traders had been exchanging goods along this route for hundreds of years, covering the eastern frontiers of Tibet, through Burma, Thailand, Laos and North

Vietnam, and including the southern Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou and Guangxi. Along this first phase of the journey Ma traveled alongside merchants, often by foot, stopping at various smaller cities and villages. He would travel for several days at a time, sometimes for over a week, before stopping for several days to recover and interact with the local community. He often pointed out the features of the local Muslim community describing the abundance of believers in the Hanafī system, and a few from the Shāfi‘ī system. In Ava, the capital of Burma, Ma lived for almost three weeks and met with the king before his final departure. He then arrived in Rangoon and spent five months living there waiting for a proper ship to take him to the Middle East. From the port of Rangoon Ma headed out for Mecca by sea.

Ma’s sea travel was often rough. He reported that the Indian Ocean was extremely stormy and the wind did not cooperate with them. This forced Ma to live on the ship for 40 days often for periods of half a month before being able to reach a location. He finally reached Calcutta where he resided for four months. He described this city as being adorned with great buildings where the walls were decorated with engravings. At the time, Calcutta was both a cultural and commercial hub and Ma also described its bustling industry. He outlined a religious landscape that was made up in large part of Muslims, some who he described as people of *Rāfidah*, which was an Iranian Shi’a community. He also recalled that there were number of Wahhābi Muslims in the area. In general, Ma seemed to appreciate the Muslim community of Calcutta and their dedication to preserving their religion through textual reproduction. He made specific note of the high level of publishing of sacred scriptures and religious texts. After his Indian sojourn Ma boarded “The Will of Solomon” (*shā’ Sulaymān*) heading southwest to round Cape Comorin and aiming towards Arabia. After a long journey Ma eventually arrived in

Yemen at the port city of Aden. Here Ma visited the shrine of Sayyīd Abū Bakr al-‘Aydārūs (d. 1509).⁵⁵ He then stopped briefly in Mocha and Hudaydah before heading to Jeddah. From here Ma began his final phase before approaching Mecca. He traveled two nights by camel and by horse and donkeys for one night and finally as dawn began to emanate, he reached Mecca.

The Heavenly Square and the Sacred Environment

Ma went into great detail describing the characteristics of the Ka‘bah and its environs. He illustrated its shape, length, height, and the cardinal direction of each of its sides.⁵⁶ He then detailed its adornments, such as the brocade curtain covering it (*kiswah*), the Ka‘bah’s entrance, and the black stone surrounded by a silver frame (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*). He related that, “At approximately twenty steps in the front of the holy court there is Abraham’s position, which was his stepping stone for building the Ka‘bah. This stone is above his footprint.”⁵⁷ He told of the ancient wall formed like a bow with its height reaching a person’s chest, called *ḥijr Isma‘il*, where some say is the location of the tomb where he is buried. He also designated the sites where religious leaders were positioned in order to make legal rulings on ritual observance and spiritual matters.⁵⁸ Ma

⁵⁵ On al-‘Aydārūs ,see Esther Peskes, “Der Heilige und die Dimensionen seiner Macht. Abu Bakr al-‘Aydarus. (gest. 1509) und die Saiyid-Sufis von Hadramawt (The Saint and the Dimensions of His Power. Abu Bakr al-‘Aydarus (d. 1509) and the Sayyid Sufis of Hadramawt),” *Quaderni Studia Arabica* 13 (1995): 41-72.

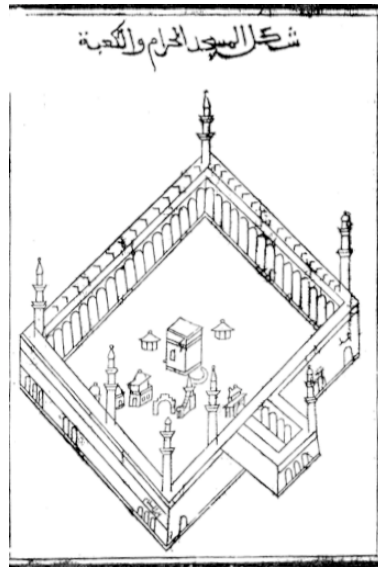
⁵⁶ Each corner of the Ka‘bah faces one of the cardinal directions. The Black Stone is located in the eastern corner while the northern, western and southern corners are known as *Ruknu l-‘Irāqī* (Iraqi Corner), *Ruknu sh-Shāmī* (Levantine Corner) and *Ruknu l-Yamanī* (Yemeni Corner) respectively, "the Iraqi corner".

⁵⁷ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Chaojin Tuji 朝覲途記 (Record of the Pilgrimage Journey)* in in Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 ed., *A Selection of Ma Fuchu’s Posthumous Writings (Ma Fuchu yizhu xuan 馬復初遺著選)* (Hong Kong: Guoji Huaren Chubanshe, 2003), 350.

⁵⁸ The three little buildings previously situated on the exterior of the circumambulation pathway (*maṭāf*) vanished in the modern period. Such buildings housed the religious leaders of the four main legal schools during the prayers. The largest building (*maḳām* or *muṣallā ḥanaḫī*) was northwest of the Ka‘ba in front of the *Hijr*; the Hanbalī was to the southeast, the Mālikī to the southwest and the Shāfi‘is used the Zamzam well building. Their disappearance was not only to provide some open space but also because the diversification of religious rulings has become of secondary importance to many Muslims. A.J. Wensinck, “Ka‘ba,” in in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Brill: Leiden, Netherlands, 1927), 584-92.

also catalogued at great length the names and positions of the numerous gates to the Sacred Mosque.⁵⁹ He ended his description stating, “the sacred courtyard has seven towers to announce the rites (i.e. minarets).”⁶⁰ Finally, Ma sketched a portrait of the Sacred Mosque with all of the details he previously described entitled, *The Form of the Sacred Mosque and Ka‘bah*.

The Form of the Sacred Mosque and Ka‘bah



Ma’s travels did not end in Mecca though. He explored the celebrated sites of the area such as the birthplace of the Prophet and the battlegrounds of Badr, among others, before heading to Medina. Here he again provides a description of the distances between the two cities, how he traveled and the places he visited within. Most completely he

⁵⁹ The entrances he listed are the gate of ‘Alī (*erli* 爾里), the gate of ‘Abbās (爾波士), the gate of the Prophet (*nabī, naibngyi* 迺並倚), the gate of Peace (*salām, seluemu* 色略母), the gate of the Path (*darā, dulaibai* 堵賴白), the gate of Increase (*ziyādat, yeyade* 野呀德), the gate of the Pole (*qutbī, 故推補 gutuibu*), the gate of Extension (*bāṣṭiyat, boxituiye* 波洗退葉), the Ancient gate (‘*atīqah, ertigai* 爾梯改), the Pilgrimage gate (‘*umrah, ermulei* 爾母勒), the gate of Abraham (*Ibrāhīm, yibulaxin* 以補喇欣), the Farewell gate (*widā’, weidaer* 委大爾), the gate of *ajyād (tuyade* 土呀德), the gate of Refuge (*takīyah, taikengye* 泰硜葉), the gate of Compassion (*rahmah, leiqiamai* 勒洽買), the gate of Purity (*ṣafā, suiibo* 隋博), the gate of ‘Um Hāni (*yunmuhe* 蘊母呵), and the gate of the Dhow (*baghlah, baienlai* 白恩賴). Ma, *Chaojin Tuji*, 350.

⁶⁰ Ma, *Chaojin Tuji*, 350.

explained Muhammad's tomb in the Mosque of the Prophet (*al-Masjid al-Nabawi*). He discussed the architecture, the religious institutions, and positions and practices of those people paying respect to the Prophet.

The precision in his description of the Ka'bah, the Sacred Mosque and the Prophet's tomb is essential to his overall mission of demystifying the *hajj* for Sino-Muslims. Through a thorough examination and mapping of the Sacred Mosque Sino-Muslims were able to become as familiar with it as they were with their local mosque. The intersubjectivity between Ma Dexin and his reader facilitated the domestication of the spiritual axis of the cosmos centered in Mecca, thus making it simultaneously native and foreign or home and abroad for the reader. This catalyzed the deconstruction of Sino-Muslim alienation from the broader Muslim world and began the process of eliminating self-perceived social, financial, and geographic obstructions and limitations. Ma's *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* also helped remove anxieties and fortify hopes of Muslim as they returned to their religious homeland.

Middle Eastern Expedition

The remainder of Ma's travels through the Middle East was extensive. Throughout *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* Ma continued to demarcate locations large and small; distances; time lengths; points of interest; and cultural, economic, political, and religious customs and circumstances of the places he visited. For example, in Egypt he noted the general prosperity under the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī Pāshā (*muhanmode erli* 母罕默德爾里). He recalled, "This king has tremendous courage and wisdom and was a good administrator. The Egyptian government renovated the tombs, established

and amassed goods, and increased every class [of people].”⁶¹ The considerable number of Muslims throughout Egypt and the overall religious enthusiasm of its subjects further impressed him. He noted the majestic beauty and grandeur of al-Azhar Mosque (*jāmi' al-Azhar*, *mierazixie* 米耳阿茲偕) and the many disciples of holy people (*shengmen* 聖門). He visited the graves and tombs of such notable Muslims as “the great worthy (*daxian* 大賢)” [Imam] al-Shāfi‘ī (767-820) (*shafeier* 沙菲爾), “the great worthy” Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursī (d. 1288) (*ebailaierboshi* 額白來爾波士), and “the revered (*zunzhe* 尊者)” Muḥammad al-Būṣīrī’s (1211-94) (*muhamode busuili* 母哈默德補雖里), as well as Galen of Pergamon (129-216) (*jālīnūs*, *zhoulinushi* 卓裡努士) and Ptolemy (90-c. 168) (*baṭalīmūs*, *tuanlimushi* 白團裡穆士).

Before heading home to China Ma visited the Sultan in Constantinople, where he was granted permission to visit the imperial palace, spent some time in Damascus, returned to Egypt, lived in Jerusalem for half a year, and studied Astronomy and Geography in Southeast Asia. It is hard to say what kind of circulation this text had either in Southwestern China or beyond but there are several manuscript copies available and the text was reprinted in modern editions up until this day possibly indicating a significant readership.

The *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* asserted the significance of the pilgrimage as a necessary and obtainable Islamic observance. Ma also eliminated the uncertainty and wonder about the *hajj* by mapping the physical terrain and delineating the logistical details for Chinese pilgrims. He deromanticized the pilgrimage and eliminated the unknown extraordinary and exceptional characteristics from the *hajj*, thus making it

⁶¹ Ma, *Chaojin Tuji*, 351.

tenable for Sino-Muslims to carry out. It is evident that Ma believed the pilgrimage journey was a valuable method to explore the rich Islamic history of his predecessors and engage his contemporary coreligionists. Altogether, *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* demonstrated that the pilgrimage was a means for engaging the broader Muslim world and a channel for doctrinal exchange and dialogue. This text, more than any other, offered a new perspective on the pilgrimage from the Chinese vantage point by detailing the particulars of the voyage, which provided both logistical knowledge and inspiration to embark on the journey.

Ideological Reformation

For all Muslims, the pilgrimage was a monumental event both spiritually and socially. There can be both an inner and outer transformation that reflected how pilgrims viewed the world and situated themselves within it. *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* was consistent with pilgrimage accounts that arose in the face of colonial presences and the expanding limits of community within a globalizing world. Pilgrimage travel writing became a prominent genre beginning in the eighteenth century, but, similar to Ma's work, most accounts were concentrated on the details of travel as opposed to autobiographical in nature.⁶² However, Ma revealed his individual metamorphosis in some of his writings and allowed us to glimpse at his feelings towards the personally intimate change that happens as a result of performing the *ḥajj*. One of the long-term effects of Ma's pilgrimage experience was the shift in his interpretive viewpoint. This period of his life was transformative for his doctrinal beliefs and his encounters with Middle Eastern Muslims certainly shaped his interpretation of Islam.

⁶² Fragner demonstrated this transition with the Persian context and Matheson and Milner explores this theme in the Malay context. See Bert G. Fragner, *Persische Memoirenliteratur als Quelle zur neueren Geschichte Irans* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1979); and Virginia Matheson and A.C. Milner, *Perceptions of the Hajj. Five Malay Texts* (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian, 1984).

Overall, Ma's work was characterized by a strong literary connection between Chinese and Islamic sources and it emphasized the importance of a pragmatic relationship with the larger Muslim world. These broader goals were evident in *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* and teased out through his writings in general. Ma made his reliance on and deference to the traditional Islamic sources evident as a source for his explanation of Islam. In particular, in his major work, the *Essence of the Four Canons* (*Sidian Yaohui* 會四典要), his student Ma Anli informs us that his knowledge gained on the pilgrimage journey enabled Ma Dexin to explicate the tenets of Islam:

He made pilgrimage to the heavenly court (*diting* 帝庭) to contemplate the traditional customs and good governance of the ancient sages (*xiansheng* 先聖). Over an eight year a period, he studied directly with famous worthies (*xian* 賢) and erudite scholars, deepening his knowledge in the study of nature (*xing* 性) and mandate (*ming* 命). Upon returning, he closed his doors in order to examine and rectify [his understanding of Islam]. He joined together that which he obtained in Arabia and that which was possessed in the ancient collected canons of the eastern lands. He uncovered the essence [of Islam] by drawing out and gathering. This constitutes what is bound in the chapters of this book and serves as a kindness to my companions.⁶³

From this passage we see that the convictions and customs that Ma developed before his pilgrimage needed to be reexamined after his exposure to the currents of Islamic thought in the Middle East. The experiential knowledge he gained from his trip combined with his intellectual training produced the fruits of his literary output. Therefore, Ma was directly influenced by the pilgrimage and it shaped how he understood the Islamic tradition and transformed his theological grounding.

Through his works Ma tried to encourage his followers to regard the pilgrimage as a consequential religious obligation that should be comparable to daily prayer or

⁶³ Ma Anli, "Xu 序 (Preface)," in Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Sidian Yaohui* 四典要會 (*Essence of the Four Canons*), 1859, in Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 ed., *Ma Fuchu yizhu xuan* 馬復初遺著選 (*A Selection of Ma Fuchu's Posthumous Writings*) (Hong Kong: Guoji Huaren Chubanshe, 2003), 14.

fasting. Simultaneously, Ma asserted the importance of the dialogue between Sino-Muslims and the broader Muslim world. We find that it was through his Middle Eastern encounter that Ma rectified his religious opinions and began to understand the significance of Islam's foundational observances. He explained his experience in *Essence of the Four Canons*;

Arriving in Arabia, I asked a scholar named Isma'il (*yisimoenlai* 以斯莫恩來) "In this land is there one who transmits the true way (*dao* 道), shining (upon it) by means of investigation?"

He answered, "Do you consider the five meritorious acts (*wugong* 五功), which everyone performs, as a falsehood? That which the Prophet gave to his disciples to perform are the five meritorious acts. That which the four famous worthies (*xian* 賢), and the millions of learned worthies (*xian* 賢) observe are the five meritorious acts. That which a thousand scriptures and myriad canons publish are also the five meritorious acts. How can this not be the true way (*dao* 道)? Contemporary scholars and many thousands of this land invariably regard them as an effort. Is it only you who consider them to be petty?"

I said, "I do not dare to look at them as petty. But I hear each scripture speak of the three paths of the vehicle of principle (*lisheng* 理乘), the vehicle of the way (*daosheng* 道乘), and the vehicle of truth (*zhensheng* 真乘). I gaze at the Truth and rise to enter it."

He said, "Yes, but shallow people make the truth shallow; deep people make the truth deep. If small people do it, then it is small; if great people do it, then it is great. Generally, there is nothing beyond the five meritorious acts. Moreover, as for shining (upon it) by means of investigation, even if there is the brightness of the sun, what is its benefit for blind eyes?"

I heard these words and felt deeply ashamed, knowing that my views on this were not enough. I requested that he add to the lesson.

He said, "Among that which is commanded, in the end, must be obtained. Among that which is not commanded, excise what lacks an imperative. If other things seek you then it is easy, but if you seek other things then it is difficult. Furthermore, the five meritorious acts are considered that, which the True Lord commanded, and I distinguish them as that which should be observed. The vehicle of the way and the vehicle of truth are not what the Lord commanded. Therefore, they are acts that I add myself and they are supplementary acts."⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Sidian Yaohui* 四典要會 (*Essence of the Four Canons*), 1859, in Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 ed., *Ma Fuchu yizhu xuan* 馬復初遺著選 (*A Selection of Ma Fuchu's Posthumous Writings*) (Hong Kong: Guoji Huaren Chubanshe, 2003), 83.

This clearly established that Ma was resolute in his position and was determined to cultivate a stronger adherence to the five pillars among Sino-Muslims including the *hajj*. In this regard, the *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* simplified the orchestration and execution of the pilgrimage by taking pilgrims through the entire journey and disclosing the obstacles one may encounter. This precedent enabled Sino-Muslims to acquire both the logistical knowledge of the journey and the determination and resolve for undertaking the journey.

Overall, Ma Dexin created the most complete picture of the *hajj* for the Sino-Muslim audience. He delineated the details involved in orchestrating and executing a pilgrimage journey, provided the ritual requirements from a legalistic and terrestrial standpoint, and demonstrated the transformative power of the pilgrimage experience from his own perspective. The *Scripture of Bright Virtue* clearly outlined the individual observances of the pilgrimage enabling believers to enact their faith in embodied practice. It also established that numerous Sino-Muslims should be qualified in both their individual and familial lives to undertake the *hajj*. He attempted to modify the position that Sino-Muslims could forgo their pilgrimage duty because of their relative remoteness. His personal observance of the *hajj* and realization of religious travel set a precedent for others to follow. Ma's description of his *hajj* pilgrimage provided a valuable tool for Sino-Muslims who would embark on the journey for themselves. *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* alleviated the anxieties and concerns of Muslims and stressed the importance of greater engagement with the broader Muslim world. It encouraged others to return to their spiritual homeland and reestablish an understanding of faith and practice. The presentation of analytic details combined with the lack of intimate personal sentiments from Ma allowed readers to experience the pilgrimage journey in vivid detail

while interweaving their own emotive qualities to it. They could imagine how they would experience each phase of the pilgrimage through the clear illustration delineated in the *Chaojin tuji*. Finally, he showed that the experiences gained during the journey would reshape personal understanding and faith in Islam. The rich literary history of earlier Muslims could provide established understandings of Islam once one was exposed to their teachings during their travel. He aimed at inspiring others to commence their own journey while simultaneously outlining the tangible factors for embarking on such a trip. These strategies established a strong framework for understanding why the pilgrimage was important and how one could overcome their specific circumstances to undertake the journey.

Conclusions

All three authors treated the *hajj* as an important activity that embodied deep theological meaning and brought with it rich communal and individual results. The pilgrimage connected Sino-Muslims to the larger Muslim world, both physically in the Meccan setting and symbolically as part of the *umma*. It also represented characteristics of the origins of the cosmos and exemplified features of the collective memory of the Muslim community thus communicating a sense of communal identification. Finally, it produced religious and social authority, and authentication for individuals and their interpretation of Islam, either by elevating one's status as a teacher or renewing an individual's personal commitment through sincere action. For Wang Daiyu, the pilgrimage was a principle of faith and a symbolic ritual for understanding one's place in the cosmos. However, he showed little determination on insisting that Sino-Muslims embark on an actual journey to the Kab'ah and never went on *hajj* himself. Liu reiterated

these cosmographical notions but also delineated the bodily manifestation of these theological ideals. His description added a layer of meaning to the pilgrimage by detailing each specific action one undertook during the *hajj* ritual. However, he too never went to Mecca and cataloged various reasons why one could omit the observance of this ritual. These justifications for neglecting the pilgrimage accentuated that Sino-Muslims had unique circumstances for embarking on the *hajj* and they could be validated in their omission of its performance. Ma Dexin promoted the pilgrimage as an Islamic principle with theological and spiritual meaning but also as an example of religious duty to be performed by all Muslims. His own pilgrimage experience qualified his promotion of the *hajj*. His emphasis on the benefits of the pilgrimage was not merely theoretical but embodied and experienced personally. This gave his account greater weight in the eyes of many Sino- Muslims. Through his explanation of the religious journey he evoked a longing for a Mecca centered devotional center and promoted sectarian unity among Muslims and pan-Islamic sentiments that brought Sino-Muslims into the broader *umma*. The scholarly treatment of the *hajj* by these authors transformed from an inward personal commitment to an outward physical movement through time and space. As Sino-Muslims became more immersed in a globalizing world their fidelity to perform the *hajj* became greater, thus, creating new patterns of religious exchange and interaction.

The Treasure of the Heavenly Scripture: Engaging the Qur'an in China
Chapter Four

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّعَالِمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

你應當趨向正教，（並謹守）真主所賦予人的本性。真主所創造的，是不容變更的；這才是正教，但人們大半不知道。

And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors; most surely there are signs in this for the learned.

Qur'an 30:22

While there are several Western treatments of the Chinese Qur'an there has been surprisingly little in-depth discussion of translation methods by pre-modern Sino-Muslims.¹ The Qur'an played a significant role in shaping Sino-Islamic scholarship and the Sino-Muslim authors thoroughly engaged the Arabic scripture from the inception of their works in the seventeenth century. Early *Han Kitab* authors' contributions to the rendering of the Qur'an in Chinese influenced subsequent translations through the twentieth century when full translations of the holy book were first completed. Therefore, it is essential to begin an analysis of the significance of the Qur'an in China with some of the earliest Sino-Muslim authors who transformed the rendering of the Qur'an within

¹ Several authors have described the development and reception of Chinese Qur'an translations in modern China, for example, Jin Yijiu, "The Qur'an in China," *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17 (1982), 95-101; Raphael Israeli, "Translation as Exegesis: The Opening Sūra of the Qur'an in Chinese," in *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought, and Society: A Festschrift in Honour of Anthony H. Johns*, ed. Peter G. Riddell (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), 81-103; Françoise Aubin, "Les Traductions du Coran en Chinois," *Etudes Orientales/Dirasat Sharqiya* 13-14 (1994), 81-88; Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (Columbia University Press, 1953), 195-8; Ivo Spira, *Chinese Translations of the Qur'an: A Close Reading of Selected Passages* (MA Thesis: Oslo University, 2005); Samuel M. Zwemer, "Translations of the Koran," *The Moslem World* (1915), 244-261; Na Guochang 纳国昌, "Gulanjing zai Zhongguo 《古兰经》在中国 (The Qur'an in China)," *Zhongguo Musilin 中国穆斯林 (Chinese Muslims)*, 3 (2004), 5-7; Zhao Guojun 赵国军, "Gulanjing zai woguo deliuchuan, fanyi jiqi yanjiu 《古兰经》在我国的流传、翻译及其研究 (The Spread, Translation and Study of the Koran in China)," *Gansu shehui kexue 甘肃社会科学 (Gansu Social Sciences)* no. 3 (2004), 250-5.

Sino-Islamic thought. Failing to recognize their importance in this process would deny their significance and obscure their influence on later translations.

This chapter offers an analysis of the Qur'an in the works of Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (1590-1658), Liu Zhi 劉智 (1670-1724), and Ma Dexin 馬德新 (1794-1874). Wang's, Liu's, and Ma's work were representative of transitional periods within the Sino-Islamic intellectual tradition and they reveal how the Sino-Muslims' engagement with the Qur'an changed over time. Each author translated and used the Qur'an in different manners, while simultaneously building on the work of the predecessors. This was due to their individualized methodological approach to scripture, paired with their particular historical circumstances and specific discursive settings. From a reading of their engagement with the Qur'an, we see that over time Sino-Muslims gradually moved from the use of approximate thematic renditions of Qur'anic sentiments to a clear intention to offer the entire Qur'an to the Sino-Muslim community.

Overall, Wang revealed foundational Qur'anic beliefs without feeling bound to the particularities of presenting a precise translation. He loosely adapted passages of the Qur'an and on occasion translated the same passage in various ways. For him, the Qur'an was the source of foundational religious knowledge that he was able to present more clearly to his readers through his own prose. Wang's texts were intended to reach Sino-Muslims who at the time were not sufficiently literate in Arabic and Persian sources. Wang believed that a direct exploration of the Qur'an for these novice students was far too complex and explaining the kernel of its teachings was more appropriate for their religious sensibilities.

Liu presented both accurate and symbolic renditions of the Qur'an based on the

theological or liturgical discursive setting. When he wanted to convey the principles behind broader teachings he evoked Qur'anic themes or motifs and included these concepts in his writings on belief, leaving behind only a scriptural residue of terms or phrases. Liu translated passages in a precise manner when he wanted to elicit the scriptural authority of the Qur'an in discussing ritual activity. In his estimation, the Qur'an was the basis of both personal faith, which could be conveyed through a conceptual gloss, and obligated action, which required a direct rendering. During this medial period of intellectual development, Sino-Muslims within the scripture hall system regularly studied Chinese, Arabic and Persian texts. Therefore, Liu assumed some knowledge of the Qur'an in his writings when exploring theology and relied on its legalistic authority for issues of practice. Consequently, advanced students who were conversant in the three teachings of China and the classic sources of Islam could most appreciate Liu's internal dialogue.

Ma favored a holistic presentation that was systematic and faithful to the original Qur'anic model. This approach outlined not only the content of the Qur'an but also its rich and complicated literary unfolding. Ma revealed the non-linear narrative of the Qur'an by closely following the sequential development of its first four chapters. This presentation provided Chinese readers with a thoroughly complex text that was true to its Arabic origins. Ma believed the Qur'an should be available in its entirety because it was a revealed text that had intention and meaning in both its content and form. Presenting Sino-Muslims with only fragments of the Qur'an was a disservice to their understanding of Islam. Ma approached the Qur'an as a single ensemble because the Qur'anic narrative, teachings, structural progression, and distinctive idiosyncrasies all have religious significance and benefit the reader. Ma's determination to provide a complete translation

of the Qur'an reflects his overall goal for enabling Sino-Muslims to participate in the global Muslim community. During the nineteenth century the Muslim world was expanding intellectually and shrinking geographically. Sino-Muslims were able to travel to the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia on a much more regular basis and access various intellectual debates through the production and transmission of texts. Therefore, greater knowledge of the content and structure of the Qur'an equipped ambitious Sino-Muslims to engage their coreligionists more broadly in these discussions. Ma hoped to supply one piece of the puzzle for Sino-Muslims to become enveloped within this broader tradition.

Qur'an in China

The Qur'an had a long history in China but it was not until the development of *Han Kitab* literature that it was ever rendered into Chinese. It is not my purpose, nor do I have the room here, to delineate a complete history of the Qur'an in China.² However, a brief outline will contextualize its presence for our purposes. Muslims traveled to China as early as the late seventh century, and presumably the Qur'an accompanied these early visitors and became increasingly relevant for Sino-Muslim communities as they matured throughout the centuries. However, it was not until the Mongol conquest of Eurasia (1206–1368) that a significant and sustained Muslim community in China emerges in the written sources. Muslim inscriptions from Southern China attest to the physical presence of the Qur'an from as early as the twelfth century and growing in frequency through the fourteenth century. During this time, Arabic inscriptions of Qur'anic verses were

² For the most comprehensive history of the Qur'an in China, see Lin Song 林松, *Gulanjing zai Zhongguo* 《古兰经》在中国 (*The Qur'an in China*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 2007).

produced on grave stele and architecture.³ We find the majority of the inscriptions in Quanzhou (known as Zaytun in Arabic), a major port city on the eastern coast of China. Muslim travelers and merchants or those who intermarried with Chinese and remained in China permanently were buried in an Islamic cemetery near the Qingjing mosque (*Qinjingsi* 清淨寺), first built in 1009. One of the most popular inscriptions for headstones was verse 28:88, “Everything is perishing except for His face.”⁴ In the *Qinjingsi ji* 清淨寺記 (*Record of the Qingjing Mosque*), the history of the Quanzhou mosque written in 1350, the author Wu Jian 吳鑿 indicated that at this time Muslims copied the Qur’an in three styles: the seal character style, by regular hand and in cursive script.⁵ The oldest known Qur’an manuscript in China, dated 1318, is currently housed in the Dongsu Mosque in Beijing.⁶ Historical circumstances during the Ming dynasty, such as forced intermarriage and limited travel abroad, accelerated Muslim assimilation into Chinese society, requiring Muslims to rely more and more on Chinese language and thus leading to Sino-Islamic interpretation.

The engagement with the Qur’an through a Chinese lens was concurrent with the development of Sino-Islamic scholarship in the scripture hall system beginning in the late sixteenth century. Despite initial hesitations to approach the Qur’an through Chinese

³ For more information on early Muslim archeological material, see Wu Wenliang 吳文良, *Quanzhou Zongjiao Shike* 泉州宗教石刻 (*Religious Inscriptions of Quanzhou*) (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2005); Chen Dasheng 陈达生, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao shike* 泉州伊斯兰教石刻 (*Islamic Inscriptions of Quanzhou*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1984); Richard Pearson, Li Min and Li Guo, “Quanzhou Archaeology: A Brief Review,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 6, no. 1 (2002), 23-58.

⁴ Anthony Garnaut, “The Stones of Zayton Speak,” *China Heritage Newsletter* no. 5, 2006, http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?searchterm=005_zayton.inc&issue=005 (retrieved May 16th, 2011).

⁵ Jin Yijiu, “The Qur’an in China,” 98; and Yang Xiaochun 杨晓春, “Yuandai wujian 《qingjing siji》 xiangguan wenti de taolun 元代吴鑿《清淨寺记》相关问题的讨论 (Discussions on *Record of the Qingjing Mosque* Written by Wu Jian of the Yuan Dynasty),” *Beifang minzu daxue xuebao* 北方民族大学学报 (*Journal of Northern Nationalities University*) 10, no. 5 (2010): 44-50.

⁶ Mozafar Bakhtvar, “China,” in *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, ed. Geoffrey Roper (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994), 81.

language it was not immune to translation within the *Han Kitab* works. Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi and Ma Dexin all rendered the Qur'an into Chinese and translations of the scripture became increasingly central in Sino-Islamic works with each successive generation. Overall, the history of translation of the Qur'an into Chinese can be divided into three separate thematic categories: extract translation, partial translation, and whole translation.⁷

Extract translations integrated individual translated verses of the Qur'an into the works of a particular author. Usually these verses were used to contextualize a given idea or bring a sense of authority to a statement. Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi both utilized the extract method within their writings to convey the meaning of the Qur'an.⁸ These authors combined the activity of translation with their own writing and commentary. However, they certainly did not translate the Qur'an with the intention of providing a portrait of its overall message. Rather, they rendered individual verses when necessary to substantiate their interpretation of Islamic thought.

Partial translation began in the late nineteenth century and was used for practical purposes of memorizing the Qur'an or understanding its content. The first of this type was phonetic transliteration of the Arabic with Chinese characters. This structure was used to aid students in Qur'anic recitation without the need for a teacher present. The other type of partial translation was formed with an extended Chinese translation and commentary on individual passages. Generally, partial translations were longer than extract translations and included consecutive verses or entire chapters of the Qur'an. These differed from the extract translations in that the commentary was intended to

⁷ Jin, "The Qur'an in China," 98-101.

⁸ Another later example of this method was Ma Liyuan's 馬聯元 *Interpretation of Qur'anic Verses* (*Haiting Chiayi* 孩聽解譯) published in 1900.

elucidate the complexity of the Qur’anic verses, as opposed to justifying individual statements with Qur’anic attestations. Here, the Qur’an was at the forefront of study and the translation was intended to reveal its context, structure, message and arguments, while the commentary provided an explanation of these components. Whole translations began with the work of Ma Dexin and continue into the present day. Ma’s translation was the first concerted effort to produce a complete translation of the Qur’an. Whole translations offered an accurate rendering of the Arabic without commentary or interpretation. They were intended to reveal some of the depth of the Qur’anic narrative to an audience that lacked the ability to access the Qur’an in its original Arabic. The first complete translation of the Qur’an was by Li Tiezheng 李鐵錚, a non-Muslim, entitled *Kelanjing* 可蘭經, published in Beijing in 1927. This was followed by another non-Muslim translation, the *Hanyi Gulanjing* 漢譯古蘭經, by Ji Juemi 姬覺彌, in 1931. Both of these translations were thought to be inadequate by the Sino-Muslim community and were largely ignored. The first Muslim translation was done in 1932 by Wang Jingzhai 王靜齋, a graduate of al-Azhar in Cairo, entitled *Gulanjing yijie* 古蘭經譯解, and revised in 1943 and 1946.⁹ The most popular translation of the Qur’an up until the present day is the *Gulanjing* 古蘭經 by another al-Azhar trained scholar, Ma Jian 馬堅 (1906-1978), partly published between 1949-1951 and in its entirety in 1981.¹⁰ Ma

⁹ Successive translation were made up into the nineties including: Liu Jinbiao’s 劉錦標 *Kelanjing Hanyifuzhuan* 可蘭經漢譯付傳 (Beijing, 1943); Wang Jingzhai’s 王靜齋 *Gulanjing Yijie* 古蘭經譯解 (Shanghai, 1946); Yang Zhongming’s 楊仲明 *Gulanjing Dayi* 古蘭經大意 (Beijing, 1947); Shi Zizhou 時子周 revised Wang Jingzhai’s translation as *Gulanjing Gouyu Yijie* 古蘭經國語譯解 (Taiwan, 1958); Lin Song’s 林松 *Gulanjing yunyi* 古蘭經韻譯 (Ningxia, 1988); Tong Daozhong’s 仝道章 *Gulanjing* 古蘭經 (Jiangsu, 1989); and most recently Shen Xiazhun’s 沈遐淮, *Qingzhen xilu – Gulanjing xinyi* 清真溪流 – 古蘭經新譯 (Taipei, 1996). For an analysis of Chinese modern translations of the Qur’an, see Spira, *Chinese Translations*, especially 18-22.

¹⁰ Ma Jian’s translation is available online in both traditional Chinese

Dexin's work set the stage for these scholars who were trained in the Middle East and fluent in Arabic. His precedent and example created effective criterion for translating the Qur'an in its entirety. His reintroduction of Arabic and promotion of Middle Eastern engagement set the stage for Sino-Muslim scholars to study at international Islamic institutions and participate in religious debates.

Problems and Possibilities in Qur'anic Translation

Several obstacles faced anyone who wanted to render the Qur'an in Chinese. The glyphic nature of Chinese characters lacked the exact precision of a syllabary that could communicate Arabic names and terms in a transliterated form. While the most common terms, such as Allah and Muhammad, found standard renditions early on, this linguistic deficiency led to various transliterations for more technical vocabulary.¹¹ A more important task for the Chinese translator was rendering the Arabic content of the Qur'an in an intelligible and meaningful manner for the Chinese audience. Most Sino-Muslims knew only a smattering of Arabic that would be used in ritual prayer. However, many would be well acquainted with the religio-philosophical worldview of their Chinese cultural environment. The interpreters' mission then was to be both faithful to the Arabic and reveal the essence of its Qur'anic meaning while simultaneously yielding a portrait that reflected the nuances of Chinese discourse.

Another inherent challenge were the internal Muslim debates over the

(<http://www.miraclesofthequran.com/cn/kitap/MKQINDEX.HTM>) and simplified Chinese (http://www.norislam.com/quran_chinese/majian/index.htm). For the importance of Ma Jian and his translation, see Ma Haiyun, "Patriotic and Pious Muslim Intellectuals in Modern China: The Case of Ma Jian," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23, no. 3 (2006): 54-70.

¹¹ The concepts of God and Muhammad were most commonly translated as "True Lord" (*zhenzhu* 真主) or "True Lord" (*zhenzai* 真宰) and "Utmost Sage" (*zhisheng* 至聖). For a thorough discussion on the importance of representing Muhammad as a sage in the Chinese context, see Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Chinese Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 163-181.

permissibility of translating the Qur'an.¹² For many readers, the Qur'an was intended to be an *Arabic* Qur'an. This is repeatedly revealed in the scripture; "These are the verses of the Scripture that makes things clear. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you [people] may understand" (12:1-2); "So We have sent down the Qur'an to give judgment in the Arabic language" (13:37); and "We have sent the Qur'an down in the Arabic tongue and given all kinds of warnings in it, so that they may beware or take heed" (20:113).¹³ A general understanding was that the Qur'an was God's exact speech and thus holy in and of itself, which led many Muslims to argue that it cannot and should not be translated into any language.¹⁴ For the Sino-Muslim community the debate oscillated between providing renditions of the Qur'an that could enlighten the local Chinese speaking community or only approaching the Qur'an in Arabic. While translating the Qur'an would provide a palpable source for Sino-Muslims to comprehend Islamic faith, translation has the potential of varying greatly and could lead to a multitude of interpretations. As for the Qur'an in the Chinese context, it was observed that:

While the Book had one Arabic canonical version, which was universally recognized, like the canons in other faiths, different translations of the Qur'an into Chinese necessarily produce various meanings thereof, with all attending difficulties of interpretation and relevance.¹⁵

Each translation highlighted differing agendas through the choice of vocabulary and individual approaches to religious understanding. I demonstrate below how terminology

¹² For an examination of some of these debates and problems, see Mahmoud Ayoub, "Translating the Meanings of the Qur'an: Traditional Opinions and Modern Debates," *Afkar/Inquiry* 3, no. 5 (1986): 34–39; Fazlur Rahman, "Translating the Qur'an," *Religion and Literature* 20, no. 1 (1988): 23-30; and Abdel Moneim A. Hosni, "On Translating the Quran (An Introductory Essay)," *Journal of King Saud University* 2, no. 2 (1990): 93-134.

¹³ See also verses 26:192-6, 39:28, 41:3, 41:44, 42:7, 43:3, and 46:12.

¹⁴ This notion is underlined by the title of A.J. Arberry's English "translation" of the Qur'an, titled *The Koran Interpreted: A Translation*.

¹⁵ Raphael Israeli, "Translation as Exegesis: The Opening Sura of the Quran in Chinese," in *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society – A Festschrift in Honour of Anthony H. Johns*, ed. Peter Riddell and Tony Street (Brill, Leiden and New York, 1997), 84.

and discursive setting affected how the Qur'an was translated and for what purposes it was used.

The dilemma whether to translate the Qur'an into the local language or maintain its sacred but inaccessible nature was a universal problem for non-Arab Muslims.¹⁶ Ultimately, in a literary setting with a well-established textual tradition, such as China, authors employed the terminology from their inherited indigenous tradition in order to make the Qur'an relevant and intelligible to the local audience. The translation was necessarily a syncretic melding of the local tradition and an interpretation of Islam. Luckily, the Qur'an easily adapted into foreign environments because of its interpretive fluidity.¹⁷ In China, the process of acculturation was self-conscious among the highly educated translators. Like other non-Arab authors, they underscored the close resemblances between Islam and their local tradition while raising Islam above the latter. This process was extremely complicated and required great philosophical and linguistic skill from the author. However, making the Qur'an accessible to the local audience was one of the key accomplishments of the Sino-Islamic translators.

¹⁶ Similar debates have occurred in other non-Arabic speaking communities. See, for example, M. Brett Wilson, "The First Translations of the Qur'an in Modern Turkey," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 3 (2009): 419-435; Annemarie Schimmel, "Translations and Commentaries of the Qur'an in Sindhi Language," *Oriens* 16 (1963): 224-43; Mofakkkhar Hussain Khan, "A History of Bengali Translations of the Holy Qur'an" *Muslim World* 72 (1982): 129-136; Mofakkkhar Hussain Khan "Translations of the Holy Qur'an in the African Languages" *Muslim World* 77 (1987): 250-258; Hassan Ma'ayergi, "Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Qur'an into Minority Languages: The Case of Africa" *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 14 (1994): 156-80; Consuelo López-Morillas, "The Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'an," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17 (2006): 255-94; and Anthony H. Johns, "The Qur'an in the Malay World: Reflections on Abd al-Ra'uf of Singkel (1615-1693)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (1998): 120-145.

¹⁷ The Qur'an, unlike Christian or Jewish scriptures, was primarily an oral text, which may lend to its adaptability. The various aspects of the orality of the Qur'an and its relation to "scriptures" was explored most thoroughly by William Graham. This topic was initiated in William Graham, "Qur'an as Spoken Word: An Islamic Contribution to the Understanding of Scripture," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 23-40, 206-215; and came to fruition in William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Wang Daiyu

Wang Daiyu's direct treatment of the Qur'an was far from comprehensive, despite him telling us that in the composition of his *True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching* (*Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮), "the ideas all come from the Holy Scripture."¹⁸ Wang translated the Qur'an in over thirty instances throughout his *True Explanation* and over a dozen times in his other works. From these passages two conclusions can be drawn: Wang was inconsistent when designating scriptural sources and often interchanged hadith for Qur'anic passages; and he was sometimes vague or indistinct in his translation of Qur'anic passages.

Citing Scriptural Sources

For all Sino-Islamic scholars referring to the Qur'an was essential to their religious authority and clarification of their beliefs. The term most commonly used to refer to the Qur'an was scripture (*jing* 經). The designation *jing* was used throughout Chinese history in a variety of contexts to designate a celebrated text, traditionally understood as "classics," as in the record of ancient sages, in the Confucian or pre-Confucian context. The earliest *jing* were considered part of the famous Confucian Four Books and Five Classics (*sishu wujing* 四書五經), such as the *Classic of Changes* (*yijing* 易經), the *Classic of History* (*shujing* 書經), the *Classic of Odes* (*shijing* 詩經). Other important early *jing* include the *Classic of Music* (*yuejing* 樂經), *Classic of Filial Piety* (*xiaojing* 孝經), *Classic of Law* (*fajing* 法經), as well as Daoist classics, like the *Classic of the Way and Virtue* (*daodejing* 道德經). The Qur'an was also referred to as the "Heavenly Scripture" (*tianjing* 天經), "True Scripture" (*zhenjing* 真經) or even "True

¹⁸ Jin, "The Qur'an in China," 99.

Word” (*zhenyan* 真言), earlier used for a Sanskrit mantra. Muslim adaptation of the Qur’an in the Chinese cultural setting followed the path of other foreign religions.¹⁹ For all of these religions the difficulty was transforming the idea of a holy scripture in a textual tradition that was ethically grounded and lacked the concept of God. Fortunately, by the time the *Han Kitab* authors were writing, the conception of sacred scripture with all its accompanying implications was well established within the contexts of Buddhist, Christian and Daoists. Therefore, God’s words as they were transmitted through the prophet Muhammad and recorded throughout the generations encompassed the Chinese understanding of the Qur’an as a *jing* containing the teachings of the utmost sage of Arabia.

Wang quoted the Qur’an by beginning with the phrase “the scripture says” (*jingyun* 經云 or *jingyue* 經曰) to introduce individual verses.²⁰ However, one key characteristic of Wang’s application of the term *jing* is that he often used it to cite non-Qur’anic passages. In all the following instances he used *jing* to quote hadith and in a few instances well-known expressions. Wang quoted a number of famous hadith, such as the

¹⁹ For example, Buddhism was the first foreign religion to enter China and transfer its intellectual tradition into the Chinese cultural setting. Buddhist scriptures in China began to be translated in 148 by An Shigao 安世高 (d. 168) and this tradition flourished in the works of Kumārajīva/Jiumoluoshen 鳩摩羅什 (344-413). The Chinese translation of the Buddhist corpus was referred to as “All the Scriptures” (*yiqie jing* 一切經) as early as the fourth century, indicating there were numerous *jing* to form a canon of literature. In the Buddhist context, *jing* were sūtras but also a variety of other types of texts and, therefore, reflected the Confucian notion of a text containing the records of ancient sages rather than limited in a scriptural sense. For further discussion on Buddhist transmission to and translation in China, see Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Erik Zürcher, “A new look at the earliest Chinese Buddhist texts,” in *From Benares to Beijing, Essays on Buddhism and Chinese Religion*, ed. Gregory Schopen and Koichi Shinohara (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1991), 277-300; and Jan Nattier, *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations: Texts from the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms Periods* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University, 2008).

²⁰ Muslim authors would have been conscious of the close similarity between “the scripture says” (*jingyue* 經曰) and earlier texts that used “the master said” (*ziyue* 子曰), referring to Confucius. However, we shouldn't assume a calculated intention to liken the Qur’an to Confucius since *yue* 曰 was commonly used to introduce quotations from both individuals and texts throughout pre-modern Chinese writings.

ḥadīth qudsī, “My heavens and My earth embrace me not Me not, but the heart of My servant with faith does embrace me,” which he translated as “Heaven and Earth are not able to encompass the True Lord, only the heart of the correct person can [encompass Him].”²¹ He also used the famed Hidden Treasure hadith, “I was a hidden treasure but was not known, so I created the creatures that I might be known.”²² Wang again used *jing* to introduce it, “The Real Lord manifested His great power when He created heaven and earth. Heaven and earth have no power. He wanted to manifest Himself, and He created the Human Ultimate.”²³ He quoted the hadith “God was, and nothing was with Him,” rendering it as “the Real Lord is the Original Being, the Unique One, and at root nothing is with Him.”²⁴ As a final example, he added, “you must die before you die,” recalling the famous “Die before you die” hadith.²⁵ Additionally, on a few other occasions Wang used *jing* to render sayings that came from sources outside of canonical writings altogether. For instance, he expressed “Wine is the key to all evils.”²⁶ Rather than being a reference to specific hadith this is an allusion to the term *umm al-khabā’ith* (mother of loathsome things), which ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (d. 656) attributed to the quality of wine.²⁷

Wang’s unsystematic qualification of passages as being derived from scripture (*jing*) is unclear. While hadith can be understood as a scriptural body of authoritative

²¹ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 58.

²² This hadith was found very early on in the work of Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) but became popular through Ibn al-‘Arabī’s writings. According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, this hadith, “is sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) on he basis of unveiling but not established (*thābit*) by way of transmission (*naql*),” i.e. it was not found in the traditional collections. William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 131 and 250-2; and Kiki Kennedy-Day, *Books of Definition in Islamic Philosophy: The Limits of Words* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 149.

²³ Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yu’s Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih’s Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 105-6 and 223, n. 38.

²⁴ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 105-6 and 223, n. 38.

²⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 91 and 221, n. 19.

²⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 57.

²⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 59.

²⁷ Referenced by Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb al-Nasā’ī (d. 915) in his *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*. See Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 217, n. 31.

texts, Wang usually qualified specific hadith by introducing them with the phrase the “Sage” or “Utmost Sage said” (*sheng* 聖 or *zhisheng yun* 至聖云). The designation of *jing* for these certain passages could be for several reasons. The principle of parsimony would have us determine that Wang simply thought that these expressions were Qur’anic verses. However, Wang’s general aptitude for Islamic learning requires further investigation. One hadith that Wang quoted in his work related, “This world is the field of the afterworld.”²⁸ This is his translation of “This world is a tillage for the hereafter” as it was quoted in *The Path of God’s Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (*Mirṣād al-‘ibād min al-madba’ ila’l-ma’ād*), by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256).²⁹ This could be an indication that Wang used *jing* to designate passages that he took directly from other physical texts that he had access to. The *Mirṣād* was very popular among Muslims in seventeenth century China, being part of the traditional curriculum and translated into Chinese very early.³⁰ In these cases Wang used *jing* to designate the larger body of collected Islamic classics that were transmitted to China and not necessarily limited to the Qur’an and hadith collections. By extension, it demonstrated that Wang believed that the essence of the Prophetic message, in both its revealed Qur’anic sense and its embodied teaching through the example of the Prophet Muhammad, were equivalent in their importance. This body of Islamic knowledge, whether expressed through the Qur’an, hadith, or through the words of other learned scholars, revealed the principles of Islam that Wang considered scripturally authoritative, hence earning them that designation.

²⁸ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 60 and 217, n. 34.

²⁹ Hamid Algar, *The Path of God’s Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1982), 93.

³⁰ The *Mirṣād* was translated as *The Essentials of the Return to Truth* (*Guizhen yaodao yiyi* 歸真要道譯義) by Wu Zixian 伍子先 in 1651. This text was so popular that several people created their own translations, under different titles, to use in the scripture hall. However, all references in later Chinese Islamic texts employ Wu’s title, *Guizhen yaodao*, to designate this book. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 127, n. 20.

Qur’anic Location – Accuracy and Significance

Wang always recalled the Qur’an in the context of larger explanations of practical or theological arguments, often beginning with a verse and teasing out its meaning. For example, when explaining the nature of God’s Being in relation to the created things Wang quoted verse 3:18 saying, “The Real Lord witnesses Himself; there is no being but the being of the Real Lord.”³¹ The original verse is nearly identical, “God witnesses that there is no god but He.” Again, in a discussion on God’s celestial, corporeal and scriptural mercies Wang questioned, “Why do you not reflect upon what is in yourself? (Qur’an 30:8)”³² Here he alluded to the fact that humankind is regularly unable to perceive God’s signs even though their own identities are manifestations of God’s creation. Then why, he wondered, “Do they not reflect in themselves?” as the Arabic says. These are among the few instances where Wang was careful to translate the passage in an exact manner and capture both the linguistic features of the verse and the implications of its theological content.

However, Wang more often attempted to encompass the key message of a verse he translated and circumvent details that did not express the passage’s overall meaning. For example, in the chapter entitled *Accepting or Rejecting (qushe 取舍)*, Wang explains the proper relationship between our conditional reality and of God’s unlimited reality. When we recognize that nothing exists outside of God’s Being then we know the correct correlation between God and His creation. To emphasize this reality Wang begins with his translation of verse 28:88, stating, “The myriad things are decaying, only that

³¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 86 and 221, n. 8.

³² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 58.

belonging to the True Lord lacks decay.”³³ Here we can see that Wang translated the verse closely but did not attempt to be precise in his rendition. The original passage reads, “Everything is perishing except for His face.” In this instance, Wang embodied the implications of this verse by highlighting the fact that everything is contingent on God’s existence and that all things are in a constant state of decay, while ignoring the detail of God’s face.

In another instance, Wang did not translate the verse verbatim but made it intelligible in the Chinese context. He related, “The Real Lord did not create humans and spirits for themselves. Rather, the creation of humans and spirits is for the sake of recognizing the Lord at the origin.”³⁴ Wang’s translation captured the sense of the original Arabic but extends it linguistically to clarify its meaning, “And I created not the *jinn* and humankind except that they should worship Me” (Q 51:56). He also rendered worship (*ya ‘budūn*) as recognize (*ren* 認), extending the meaning of spiritual reverence to a knowledge based acknowledgment of reality, which would make sense to philosophically trained Chinese scholars.

Wang generally offered the kernel of Qur’anic passages when making translations rather than feeling obligated to provide a clear and equivalent rendering of the Arabic. This method reflected Wang’s objective to present Islamic teachings in a clear and concise manner for an audience of Sino-Muslims with limited religious education. He preferred transferring the Qur’an into the Chinese cultural setting by utilizing its religio-philosophical symbolism and characteristics rather than attempting to render the particularities of the Arabic Qur’an.

³³ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 102.

³⁴ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 106 and 223, n. 41.

Conflation and Reiteration

The final unique feature of Wang’s treatment of the Qur’an was twofold. First, Wang sometimes conflated passages of the Qur’an into a gestalt of their meaning. For example, he said, “The joy of the Real Lord is entrusted to the joy of parents and children.”³⁵ This assertion most closely resembles the Qur’anic verse “And show kindness to parents and near of kin” (*wabi’l-wālidayni ihsānan wa thī al-qurba*) (Qur’an 2:83, 6:151). However, it evokes several other verses that embody these sentiments, such as “We have enjoined on humankind being kind to their parents” (*wa wassayna al-insāna bi wālidayhi husnan*) (Qur’an 29:8); “We have enjoined on humankind kindness to their parents” (*wa wassayna al-insāna bi wālidayhi ihsānan*) (46:15); and “show kindness to your parents” (*wa bi’l-wālidayni ihsānan*) (Qur’an 17:23). While these verses are almost identical there are small semantic differences in the Arabic that slightly alter their meaning and it appears that all of the verses could have informed Wang’s rendition.

Wang also translated a single verse in a number of ways. In his *Orthodox Responses on the Rare Truth* Wang used verse 67:2 on two occasions to answer questions from guests.³⁶ The Qur’anic verse reads, “Who has created death and life that He may test you and reveal which of you is best in deeds.” In the first instance Wang said, “The Real Lord created and transformed the life and death of humans specifically to test whether or not they have loyalty and filial piety.”³⁷ In this first instance, Wang related one’s loyalty (*zhong* 忠) to God to the Confucian virtue of filial piety (*xiao* 孝). These two terms were often paired together in Confucian contexts and commonly stressed in

³⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 56.

³⁶ These differences could also be attributed to the collator, Wu Liancheng 伍連城, who compiled Wang’s sayings in the *Orthodox Responses*. If we trust the accuracy of his compilation of these dictums with any amount of certainty then we must examine them with some scrutiny.

³⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 45-6.

Chinese social life, hence situating one's duty to God in a recognizable cultural reference. Traditional commentators most often understood *zhong* as loyalty through which one exhausted oneself completely to a given responsibility. Wang's clever use of this term also elicited the sense of dutifulness, which can be derived from the *Analects* alone. In the *Analects*, Confucius (*kongfuzi* 孔夫子) (551-479 BC) described *zhong* as the quality of serving a ruler without the supposition of compensation but solely on the basis of fulfilling one's role as a servant.³⁸ Therefore, Wang submitted the notion of performing obligations, as they were ritually and morally prescribed by God.³⁹ The latter term, *xiao*, is explained most thoroughly in the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*xiaojing* 孝經), one of the thirteen Confucian classics (*shisan jing* 十三經) written circa 400 B.C.E., which is attributed to Confucius. In this text, *xiao* is located at the paramount position of ethical behavior and leads to further personal growth. "It is family reverence (*xiao*), said the Master, that is the root of excellence, and whence education itself is born."⁴⁰ *Xiao* is explained as the relational activity of love and respect that situates the individual for sustaining designated roles of association. These relationships were explained further in by Mencius (*Mengzi* 孟子) (372-289 B.C.E.), in the theory of the five relationships (*wulun* 五倫), "The relation of father and children is one of love, ruler and minister is one of righteousness, husband and wife is one of distinction, elder and younger is one of

³⁸ See *Analects*, 3.19 and 5.19.

³⁹ Ultimately, Confucius introduced *zhong* as the crux of his teaching. See *Analects* 4.15: "The Master said, "Zengzi! All that I teach (*dao* 道) is unified by one guiding principle." Zengzi answered, "Yes." After the Master left, the other disciples asked, "What did he mean by that?" Zengzi said, "All of what the Master teaches amounts to nothing more than loyalty (*zhong* 忠), tempered by sympathetic understanding (*shu* 恕)." Edward Gilman Slingerland, "Kongzi (Confucius) The Analects," in *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden (Seven Bridges Press, 2001), 11.

⁴⁰ Henry Rosemont Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 105.

precedence, and that between friends is one of trust.”⁴¹ Wang’s employment of *xiao* in this translation was intended to underscore the necessity to uphold ethical and moral behavior in all relational affairs when enacting their faith from a Chinese philosophical perspective.

He later repeated verse 67:2, translating it differently, “The Real Lord created and transformed life and death to test and examine among you people who will have deeds of loyalty.”⁴² The variation between these two translations is slight but significant. In the second translation, Wang associated humankind’s ability to be successful in life’s trials to their deeds, thus highlighting the Islamic principles of ethical behavior (*adab*) and virtuous character (*akhlāq*). *Adab* most broadly relates to knowledge, customs, prescribed etiquette, moral conduct, and courtesy. In Islamic mysticism, individual behaviors were highly developed and became codes of conduct (plural *ādāb*). Sufi sheikhs produced a substantial literature of manuals, which extensively outlined precise directives for pietistic practice and personal demeanor, referred to as the *ādāb al-ṣūfiyya* (conduct of the Sufis) or *ādāb al-murīdīn* (conduct of the novice).⁴³ *Akhlāq* also covers a broad range of meanings including behavior, character traits, ethics, and morality, and is often interchangeable with *adab* in some literature. Overall, it typifies a high moral disposition and demands the assimilation of virtues and character traits. Wang evokes the notion of cultivating virtue, which in turn motivates all personal behavior towards morality. *Adab*

⁴¹ Mengzi 3A4, Bryan W. Van Norden, “Mengzi (Mencius),” in *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 128.

⁴² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 46.

⁴³ For a discussion of *adab* in Islamic mysticism, see Gerhard Böwering, “The *adab* literature of classical Sufism. Anṣārī’s code of conduct,” in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara D. Metcalf (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1984), 61–71; Francesco Gabrieli, “Adab,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 175-176; Ira Lapidus, “Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of Adab and the Nature of Religious Fulfillment in Islam,” in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 38-45; and Erik S. Ohlander, “Adab, in Ṣūfism” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009), 40-3.

and *akhlāq* reflect the principles of moral and ethical behavior while providing their proper applications through virtuous action from an Islamic position.

Wang cited the same verse a third time in his *Great Learning of Islam*, “Creation of this life and death is at root for the sake of experiencing who are the loyal and faithful among you.”⁴⁴ In this version Wang equated loyalty with being faithful (*xin* 信), another Confucian virtue. In the Confucian tradition *xin* was the one of the five constant virtues (*wu chang* 五常), which also included benevolence (*ren* 仁), righteousness (*yi* 義), propriety (*li* 禮), and wisdom (*zhi* 智). The character’s two parts, a person (*ren* 人) and speech (*yan* 言), convey the meaning of keeping one’s word. Confucius explained, “Faithfulness comes close to rightness, in that your word can be counted upon” (*Lunyu* 1:13). In this sense, one is faithful, sincere, truthful, and trustworthy, when he has demonstrated his ability to maintain fidelity to his word. For Wang, acting upon personal commitments is directed by a sense of morality and righteousness, which is provided through Islam. Therefore, for Sino-Muslims reading Wang’s work, this translation resonated with their sense of religiosity in addition to their philosophical sensibilities. The individual’s engaged commitment to perform religious and fraternal obligations should be ingrained with the virtues of reciprocity and empathy. In all of these renditions Wang stressed that God was in control of humankind’s life and death and they were created so that He could test the obedience of His believers, either in faith or deeds.

Both of these techniques demonstrate that Wang believed that direct uniform examples of the Qur’an in Chinese were peripheral and extraneous to understanding the kernel of the Qur’anic message. While he sometimes attempted to render verses in a

⁴⁴ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 107-8 and 223, n. 45.

precise manner he more often chose passages that expressed principles of Islamic doctrine within the context he was trying to convey. Therefore, for Wang the Qur'an and other scriptural (*jing*) forms of knowledge were the sources of authority and verification and not necessarily sacrosanct in and of themselves when translated into Chinese. If Wang considered Chinese translations of passages to be equivalent to the word of God, as most Muslims conceive of them in the original Arabic, then he would have been much clearer in his designation of verses and more consistent in his translation of the same verse, as in the case of Qur'an 67:2. This demonstrates that Wang believed the religious benefit of verses was most valuable for his audience and not knowledge of the Qur'anic text in a direct and accurate form itself.

Overall, Wang Daiyu was the first individual to approach and address how, when and why the Qur'an should be rendered in Chinese. Within his writings, the Qur'an was valued as the source of revealed wisdom and the foundation for other scriptural forms of knowledge, as in the records of the words and deeds of Muhammad as the embodiment of its message, and scholars grounded in canonical teachings. Wang's methods suggest two possible currents in this early stage of the Sino-Islamic intellectual tradition. Neither potential conclusion is entirely observable from Wang's texts alone, nor are they mutually exclusive to one another. It is likely that there was a range of intellectual capacities and knowledge bases among Wang's readers and students and he was attempting to reach all of them. Firstly, the lack of a comprehensive analysis of the Qur'an and Wang's somewhat unsystematic approach to Qur'anic translation suggest that he believed that a complete portrait of the Qur'anic narrative was ill suited for the Sinicized Muslim audience. At this early stage the general audience of Chinese readers that Wang addressed may have inadequately understood Islamic principles in general.

Therefore, he felt that the Qur'an itself was not essential to illuminate their limited understanding and an explanation of beliefs and practices were more consequential for their religious comprehension. He trusted that an account of the complex nature of the Qur'an, including the formulation of its arguments, would be missed on them due to the difficulty in understanding the multifaceted narrative it outlined. Another suggestion from Wang's writings was that for advanced Muslims, the Arabic Qur'an would still have been actively studied within academic circles and the need for a Chinese version of its whole or parts was not necessary. Those who were familiar with the Qur'an would have been able to glean the elucidation of its core principles from Wang's exposition. And similar to treatises developing in the Arab speaking world, the Qur'an was used to underscore or direct a discussion as opposed to authors' direct engagement with it. Overall, Wang chose not to deliver the Qur'an in a comprehensive manner because neither of his audiences would benefit from such a presentation. Therefore, he used the Qur'an to inform his own understanding of Islam, and transmit its teachings through his own writings rather than submitting the Qur'an in its totality.

Liu Zhi

Liu Zhi had a systematic and thorough approach to the Qur'an. He quoted from the Qur'an throughout his teaching and we can see that he had a deep and intimate understanding of it. As Jin has observed, Liu "quoted and rendered freely excerpts from the Qur'an in his books without making a close translation. In his own words, what he had done was just "to convey the meaning."⁴⁵ However, my reading suggests that Liu offered both clear direct translations in addition to approximate adaptations of certain

⁴⁵ Jin, "The Qur'an in China," 99.

verses. Further, Liu employed rich allusions to Qur’anic themes throughout his writings without making direct reference to the scripture. Liu’s unique contribution to the Chinese understanding of the Qur’an was derived from his sophisticated methodology and theory of translation. Several differences between Liu and Wang Daiyu are evident from a reading of the Qur’an within Liu’s writing on theology and practice. First, Liu made a clearer distinction between the Qur’an and other canonical writings, such as hadith, when citing his sources. Also, Liu’s methodology for the translation of verses of the Qur’an was applied differently dependent on the discursive context of his overall theme.

In terms of classification, Liu followed the practice of Wang and other early scholars by prefacing his Qur’anic citations with established phrase “the scripture says” (*jingyun* 經云 or *jingyue* 經曰). In contrast to Wang, Liu was much more consistent in classifying what he determined to be Qur’anic and extra-Qur’anic sources. When Liu recalled passages from the hadith literature he too used the “Sage” or “Utmost Sage said” (*sheng* 聖 or *zhisheng yun* 至聖云). It seems by the time of Liu’s generation these designations became standardized for referencing canonical scriptural materials in Chinese writings, and Ma Dexin and others continued to use these designations for classifying Qur’an and hadith.

Liu covered an array of topics in his numerous compositions and for each theme he approached the Qur’an in a slightly different manner. Liu employed the Qur’an differently in his writing and we can outline three distinct methods corresponding to his theological works, liturgical texts, and translations. From an examination of the use of the Qur’an in these types of treatises we see that he translated it according to thematic context. In theological works, such as his *Metaphysics of Islam*, he alluded to larger

Qur'anic narratives rather than translating verses in an exact mode. In his *Rituals of Islam* he utilized short direct renderings of Qur'anic verses that directed Islamic practice or provided the theological foundations for religious observance. Finally, in translations of earlier Islamic works, such as *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (*Zhenjing zhaowei* 真境昭微), Liu attempted to follow both the semantic structure and doctrinal import of given verses in his translations.

Metaphysics of Islam (Tianfang xingli 天方性理)

In *Metaphysics of Islam*, Liu did not often make explicit use of the Qur'an for explaining Islamic principles, citing it specifically only once. Generally, he alluded to Qur'anic themes rather than translating particular verses. While he listed the Qur'an as a primary source, its influence may be taken more as an indication of his personal verification of its truth rather than a source of direct reference.⁴⁶ In this work, Liu relies heavily on a number of popular Sufi texts, which he cites regularly. When he does invoke the Qur'an in the *Tianfang xingli* he does so to illuminate a larger thematic issue that he was trying to explicate. For example, in a discussion on the nature of humankind's spiritual composition and capacity for transformation Liu evokes the famous light verse (*ayat an-nūr*) of the Qur'an (24:35). He declares, "The real light is like a lamp."⁴⁷ While Liu does not quote anything specific from the original verse, those familiar with the Qur'an would immediately be drawn into a recognizable and established theological context on the character of humanity. The original reads:

God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp—the lamp in a glass, and the glass as it were a glittering

⁴⁶ The Qur'an is the first source listed in Liu Zhi's bibliographies for both the *Tianfang xingli* and the *Tianfang dianli*. See Donald Daniel Leslie and M. Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih," *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982): 78-104.

⁴⁷ Murata, *The Sage Learning*, 436 and 438-9, n. 6.

star. [The lamp is] kindled from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost shine, even if fire did not touch it. Light upon light—God guides to His light whomsoever He will (Qur'an 24:35).

Liu maintained *ayat an-nūr*'s symbolism throughout this chapter called “Diagram of the Great Completion of the Human Ultimate,” incorporating all of the lamp’s apparatus, such as the wick, oil, reservoir, and shade. These features represented the human potential, as yet completely unrealized, to receive the light of God in order to be illuminated. Liu explains:

Humans have the five sense organs, the bodily body, the five awarenesses, the heart, wisdom, nature, and virtue, all of which are the apparatus of the subtlety. These are similar to the wick, oil, reservoir, and shade of a lamp. As long as the lamp’s wick, oil, reservoir, and shade do not fully realize their subtlety, the lamp also will not fully realize its subtlety. As long as the subtlety of the wick, oil, reservoir, and shade of humans is not fully realized, the lamp of the real light will not be manifest in the apparatus of the subtlety.⁴⁸

Here we can see that Liu’s discussion was fully couched in a Qur’anic context without making specific translation of the verse itself or calling its attention. He never explicitly mentions the Qur’anic verse or subsequent exegetical discourse of earlier Muslims.

Despite this fact, the Qur’anic context is entirely visible to those familiar with the text. This passage, among others, demonstrates that Liu used Qur’anic verses very loosely in a theological context and relied on their imagery and credal tropes to encapsulate their meaning.

In another discussion, Liu recalled the Prophet Muhammad’s ascension (*mi’rāj*) and night journey (*isrā’*) in relation to the individual spiritual movement to and from God. Early in the *Tianfang xingli* he explained, “‘When the worlds of the two arcs are united,’

⁴⁸ Murata, *Sage Learning*, 436. Liu also uses this imagery in the prolegomenon of the *Tianfang xingli* entitled the Root Scripture (*benjing* 本經). See Murata, *The Sage Learning*, 132-43.

they go back to the fullness of the round form.”⁴⁹ This quotation is a paraphrase of Qur'an 53:9 and its meaning became clearer under the chapter entitled “Diagram of the Ascent and Descent, the Coming and the Going Back.” In that chapter, Liu explained, “When the worlds of the two arcs were united, he went back to the utmost nearness.”⁵⁰ The original is similar to his translation but is used to establish his larger theological discussion, “So he was the measure of two bows or closer still” (Qur'an 53:8). While many commentators discussed Muhammad’s night journey in association with his exalted position and nearness to God, Liu used this verse to explain one’s personal ability to attain nearness to God. Liu explained its significance in understanding one’s own journey to God, “The two arcs are the coming and descent, which make one arc, and the going and coming back, which make the other arc. When the descent and the ascent have been completed, the worlds of the two arcs are united.”⁵¹ Therefore, both the macrocosm and microcosm bring about completion of God’s creation in the individual believer. Again, this demonstrated that Liu’s use of Qur’anic motifs was unfettered by the implementation of direct translation. Instead, Liu’s central goal was integrating thematic imagery into his theological discussions and situating his discourse in a clearly recognizable Qur’anic context.

Rituals of Islam (Tianfang dianli 天方典禮)

Liu’s use of the Qur’an in his *Rituals of Islam* was often rather different. Here he cited the Qur’an on numerous occasions and attempted to make clear and concise translations of its passages. He utilized short direct renderings of Qur’anic verses that directed Islamic practice or provided the theological foundations for religious observance.

⁴⁹ Murata, *Sage Learning*, 134.

⁵⁰ Murata, *Sage Learning*, 431.

⁵¹ Ibid.

For instance, he declared, “O you who believe, when they declare the ritual on the day of gathering, hasten to remember the Lord, putting aside your business. This is better for you if you understood.”⁵² The original is almost exactly the same, “O you who believe! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hasten to the remembrance of God, and leave your business. That is best for you, if you only knew” (Qur'an 62:9). On another occasion he exclaimed, “All of you, ritually worship (pray)! Strive with devotion to observe the middle”⁵³ closely resembling the verse, “Take care to do your prayers, including the middle prayer, and stand before God in devotion” (Qur'an 2:238). A final example asserted, “You People, show gratitude to the Lord and both of your parents,”⁵⁴ which is a translation of “Be grateful to Me and your parents” (Qur'an 31:14). From all of these passages we can determine that Liu utilized the Qur'an in a liturgical context to specify how one should behave. Here he used an exact translation in order to possess the authority of the Qur'anic commandments while explaining their principles. The difference between these and verses in a theological setting was that because they were directives related to action and not belief Liu had to appeal to Qur'an as a sacred mandate that was unassailable to human interpretation. Belief (*imān*) in God is achievable outside of the specific Qur'anic worldview, as we can see from the examples of previous prophets, such as Abraham or Jesus. However, due to historical circumstances, the Qur'an finalized how one should act, or submit (*islām*), to God's commands. Therefore, it was clever of Liu to use both faithful and precise translations for issues concerning religious observance in conjunction with detailed glosses of Qur'anic concepts when speaking of matters concerning faith and belief.

⁵² Liu Zhi 劉智, *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 (*Rituals of Islam*), in *Qingzhen Dadian* 清真大典, vol. 15, (*The Great Canon of Islam*) (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), 171.

⁵³ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 115.

⁵⁴ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 198.

Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm (Zhenjing zhaowei 真境昭微)

In the final category, translation of earlier Islamic works, Liu seemed to apply a close rendering of the Arabic Qur'an but also adapted the text where he felt necessary, primarily through omission. Liu translated a short work of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-1492) entitled *Lawā'ih (Gleams)*. The *Lawā'ih* was a mix of prose and poetry that explicated the teachings of the school of Ibn al-Arabī. The most conspicuous general characteristic of Liu's translation of the *Lawā'ih* was his hesitation to provide an interpretation of Jāmī's poetry. He almost always omitted all of the lyrical verse of the original Persian treatise with the accompanying Qur'anic passages. Liu's text, *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm (Zhenjing zhaowei 真境昭微)*, maintained the high level of philosophical discourse throughout and was peppered with Qur'anic verses to justify the discussion. The perpetual modification of Sino-Islamic translations of Arabic and Persian Islamic texts was routine and Liu's *Zhenjing zhaowei* was emblematic of these Chinese renderings in general.⁵⁵

The *Lawā'ih* had fewer than ten references to the Qur'an, often using it to heighten the poetic symbolism of Jāmī's theological exploration. For example, Jāmī explained "O man of the journey, 'asserting unity' in the Sufi's terms is to deliver the heart from attending to others. This intimation of the birds' final stations have I voiced for you, if you understand the 'language of the birds' (Qur'an 27:16)".⁵⁶ Here, as he did elsewhere, Liu ignored the poetic explication of the discussion altogether in favor of highlighting the theological underpinnings of God's unity (*tawhīd*) through a prosaic model. Consequently, Liu excluded the prosody of the Persian original and the attending

⁵⁵ For a discussion on the nature of Sino-Islamic translation, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 31-5.

⁵⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 150.

Qur'anic allusions and references. Liu's treatment of the Qur'an in the *Zhenjing zhaowei* demonstrated that he did not feel that the Qur'anic pronouncements included in the original treatise were essential in transmitting the text's theological import.⁵⁷ This method echoed his approach to the Qur'an in his own theological works where he only alluded to the scriptural foundations of his discussions. Therefore, Liu's translation was constructed without the poetic lyricism of Jāmī's *Lawā'ih* and resulted in the exclusion of a few direct verses and associated Qur'anic imagery. For Liu, the poetry with the accompanying Qur'anic references was seen as auxiliary to the kernel of the message, which for him was located in the theoretical parlance of the philosopher.

When Liu did include the Qur'anic verses cited by Jāmī he reproduced his methodological approach from his liturgical works by clearly relaying the syntax and thrust of a given passage. In almost every case, Liu was faithful to the original presentation of the Qur'an in his translation. The opening gleam began with the verse "God does not put two hearts within a man's breast" (Qur'an 33:4) in order to justify the directive to wholeheartedly love God. Liu rendered this "The Real Lord did not give humans two hearts in their bellies."⁵⁸ Later Liu exactly replicated the verse "Surely God is wealthy beyond the worlds" (Qur'an 29:6) as "Only the Real Lord is wealthy beyond the ten thousand worlds" in his discussion of the perfection of creation.⁵⁹ Lastly, when delineating the nature of one's actions Liu translated "God created you and what you do" (Qur'an 37:96) as "The Real Lord transforms you and what you do."⁶⁰ All of these examples accurately corresponded to the Arabic original of the Qur'an. Further, Liu's manner of translation corresponded to the general technique of Liu's treatises on

⁵⁷ Liu also omitted Qur'anic verses 2:138, 33:4, 50:15, 55:29, and 57:3 from his translation.

⁵⁸ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 137.

⁵⁹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 163

⁶⁰ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 199.

orthopraxis, which was precise and systematic. However, Liu's omission of various verses demonstrated that he simultaneously applied his methodology from his theological works. Translation of original Islamic treatises in Liu's writings was unique because it allowed for his creative participation while maintaining his loyalty to the original piece.

The interpretative creativity of Liu Zhi is clearly demonstrated through his engagement with the Qur'an. His ability to render and make the Qur'an intelligible in a variety of discursive settings reveals his intellectual strengths and original talent. The diversity of his Qur'anic application also signals a high level of capabilities in the audience he was addressing, one that would understand rich allusion to the Qur'an in addition to the direct translation of its verses. His approach to the application and translation of the Qur'an was fluid and varied based on the liturgical or theological context. The role of the Qur'an in his writings served both as spiritual inspiration for personal belief and as a definitive authority for ceremonial or pietistic practice. Therefore, the Qur'an served to clarify ritualistic activity through its direct pronouncements and nourish principles of faith through vivid symbolism. For Liu, the thematic setting shaped whether he applied translational clarity by means of an exact rendering of the Qur'an or resorted to metaphor and allegory using Qur'anic themes and motifs. Liu depended on Qur'anic teachings rather than precise Qur'anic passages when concerning objects of faith. On the other hand, when exploring the external behavior and activity of humans, Liu translated verses in a literal and explicit way in order to elicit the scriptural authority of the Qur'an. The Qur'an operated as the foundation of both obligatory conduct and individual belief. Regarding personal faith, Liu conveyed the Qur'anic import through thematic invocations, while presenting direct translations in relation to activity. The combined circumstances of Liu's flexible interpretive approach

and the fertile scholastic environment provided the conditions for a rich scope of Qur’anic interpretation.

Ma Dexin

Among Ma Dexin’s many contributions to Sino-Islamic scholarship, one of the most significant for later generations was the first concerted effort to translate the Qur’an in its entirety. Ma’s edition owed its production to the patronage of Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 (1823-1872), ruler of an Islamic state in Yunnan (1856–1873), who sponsored the first engraving and printing of the Qur’an in 1862.⁶¹ Ma translated the Qur’an as he wrote other works and was ultimately only able to finish twenty volumes that were left incomplete. From the twenty volumes, only five sets of woodblocks were saved from fire, and the four translated chapters of the Qur’an therein were published posthumously, entitled *A Direct Explanation of Treasured Mandate of the True Scripture* (*Baoming zhenjing zhjie* 寶命真經直解) or occasionally *Chinese Translation of Treasured Mandate of the True Scripture* (*Hanyi baoming zhenjing* 漢譯寶命真經).⁶² Overall, Ma’s translation was very systematic and he generally attempted to be faithful to the diction of the original verses. His effort to try and provide a full Chinese translation that was equivalent to the Arabic original demonstrates that he believed the Qur’an in and of itself was valuable for all Muslims to have access to. It was not only the principles derived from the text but the words themselves that benefitted believers.

The Opening of a Chinese Qur’an

Ma began his translation with the *bismala* and continued with the Qur’an’s

⁶¹ Aubin, “Les Traductions du Coran en Chinois,” 81; and Jin, “The Qur’an in China,” 98.

⁶² Jin, “The Qur’an in China,” 100.

opening chapter, *sūrat al-fātiḥa*. Instead of translating the title of the chapter Ma transliterated its name in order to maintain its original properties, *fadihai* 發諦海.⁶³

(1) I recite the most beneficent, the most intimate, the True Lord's (*zhenzai* 真宰) name and begin. (2) This praise all returns to the most revered and respected (*zhizun* 至尊), He transforms and nourishes all the worlds. (3) The most beneficent, the most intimate, (4) controller of the true world. (5) Serve alone the most revered and respected, and only look for the most revered and respected one's assistance. (6) Indeed! Most revered and respected one lead your foolish servant to the straight path (正路). (7) As for the straight path, the True Lord specially entrusts a great responsibility, not for those who excessively transgress, also not for those who do not turn back.⁶⁴

Ma was careful to follow the flow of the Arabic Qur'an but was also attentive to most of the linguistic details of the verses. Additionally, he was able to skillfully integrate elements of classical Chinese learning into his rendition, thus making it accessible and meaningful for both the student of Islam and the Chinese scholar.

Throughout his translation Ma referred to God as the True Lord (*zhenzai* 真宰), a term derived from Zhuangzi's 莊子 (369-286 BC) treatise of the same name, an early philosophical Daoist prosateur, whose work was broadly read by all Chinese, and whose symbolism was widely adapted in literary works since the 4th century BC, including *Han Kitab* authors. Zhuangzi claimed:

If there were no other, there would be no I. If there were no I, there would be nothing to apprehend the other. – This is near the mark, but I do not know what causes it to be so. It seems as though there is a True Ruler (*zhenzai*), but there is no particular evidence for Her. We may have faith in Her ability to function, but cannot see Her form. She has attributes but is without form.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ma repeated this technique in translating the title of chapter three, The Cow (*al-Baqara*), rendering it as *baigelai* 白格賴.

⁶⁴ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Baoming zhenjing zhjie* 寶命真經直解 (*A Direct Explanation of Treasured Mandate of the True Scripture*), in *Qingzhen Dadian* 清真大典 (*The Great Canon of Islam*) vol. 7 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), 26.

⁶⁵ Victor Mair, *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), 13.

Much of Zhuangzi’s philosophy was adapted in Sino-Islamic works to express the principles of Islam. Here we see that his conception of a True Lord coincided with the Islamic understanding of a powerful overseer who is tangibly non-existent in Himself but necessary for existence.

The epithet “most revered and respected” (*zhizun* 至尊) is also derived from the native Chinese tradition. *Zun* 尊 is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term *ārya* in the sense of noble or exalted, which was used in the early translations of Buddhist scriptures. In this body of literature the Buddha was often referred to as the world honored one (*shizun* 世尊) (equivalent to the Sanskrit *lokajyeṣṭha*), the great holy and world honored one (*dasheng shizun* 大聖世尊), the great holy and honored one (*dashengzun* 大聖尊), and the great holy and most honored one (*dasheng zhizun* 大聖至尊).⁶⁶ Again, Ma adopted terminology from the Buddhist tradition that would be recognizable to Chinese intellectuals and useful for conceptual comparisons.

In discussing the straight path (*sirāt al-mustaqīm*), Ma used an equivalent term *zhenglu* 正路, orthodox, correct or straight path. Mencius (*Mengzi* 孟子 (372-289 BC), the most celebrated Confucian scholar after Confucius himself, discussed the *zhenglu* in his discourse on proper action. He explained, “Benevolence is man’s peaceful abode and rightness his proper path (*zhenglu*). It is indeed lamentable for anyone not to live in his peaceful abode and not follow his proper path (*zhenglu*).”⁶⁷ Mencius’ words rang true for Ma who embraced them for transmitting the gravity of following God’s way. And for

⁶⁶ The honorific *zun* was used in numerous ways to refer to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and scriptures. The word appears over a hundred times in the classic western resource on Chinese Buddhist linguistics, William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: With Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1937).

⁶⁷ D.C. Lau, *Mencius: A Bilingual Edition* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003) 159-61.

anyone familiar with the Chinese classics, Mencius' proper path (*zhenglu*) would arouse a complete notion of a life of benevolence and righteousness. This would convey corresponding Islamic principles of virtuous and ethically moral action, which would thereby be significant in both the Chinese and Islamic contexts.

Perspicuity and Precision

Ma continued his careful rendering of the Qur'an throughout the remaining four chapters we possess. He infused his translation with Chinese religio-philosophical tropes thus appealing to the intellectual sensibilities of the literate Muslim population in late imperial China while simultaneously providing a broader avenue for accessing Islamic scripture. Throughout his translation Ma attempted to hold close to the linguistic composition and thematic meaning of the Qur'an. This method furnished readers with the closest portrait of the Qur'an available to the Chinese reader. Overall, Ma's comprehensive translation supplied Sino-Muslims with the all-encompassing nature of the Qur'an in its authentic, though seemingly irregular, form and design. It was thus replete with admonitions to nonbelievers, demonstrations of God's power, and promise of His rewards.

Unbelievers – Quran 2:6-7 and 2:17-20

Belief (*imān*) is of utmost importance to Muslims. Accordingly, those who have a firm belief in God and the principles of Islam, performing righteous deeds, need not fear the wrath of God. However, Ma's direct translation of verses 2:6-7 demonstrates that the unbelievers will receive their retribution.

Indeed, those who are opposed to the circulation of faith, even if you warn them, or cast them away, it is one (in the same), they do not have faith. The True Lord seals their hearts, and obstructs their ears and eyes, and they shall encounter an

extreme punishment. (2:6-7)⁶⁸

Those who choose not to believe or who have lost the capacity to believe are destined for God's punishment. God bestows belief in God only if He wills it.⁶⁹ Those who cannot believe are in a state of bewilderment that affects all of their abilities. In verses 2:17-20 Ma presented the condition of those unbelievers.

Fire is all around those people when Heaven suddenly eliminates its splendor and discards it (the fire), they exist in deep darkness where one cannot see therein. Their ears are unable to hear, their mouth is unable to speak, their eyes are unable to see; thereupon they are misled and not able to return. Or it is as if they suddenly encounter a huge rain sent down by Heaven, within it is a dark haze with thunder and lightning, being in shock of the thunder crash, they use their fingers to fill their ears, fearing they will meet their death. The lightning nearly dazzles their eyes, when they see the brightness then they move, when they meet darkness then they stop. If the True Lord desired He could eliminate their vision and hearing, surely He can eliminate them. Sincerely! The True Lord is the utmost power over the myriad things. (2:17-20)⁷⁰

The unbelievers' inability to "see" or "hear" the truth of the Qur'anic message leads them away from the path to salvation. Sight, hearing and speech are metonyms for humankind's capacity to discern between good and evil, thus, contributing to their moral character and responsibility. God's refusal to eliminate these people, despite His power to do so, reveals His compassion for them, in hope that they may recognize the truth and mend their ways. Therefore, with the revelation of the Qur'an, Muhammad's message

⁶⁸ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 26. The Arabic edition of the Qur'an is rendered: "As for those who disbelieve, it makes no difference whether you warn them or not: they will not believe. God has sealed their hearts and their ears, and their eyes are covered. They will have great torment" (2:6-7).

⁶⁹ See also Qur'an 45:23 and 57:16.

⁷⁰ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 26. The Arabic edition of the Qur'an is rendered: "They are like people who [labour to] kindle a fire: when it lights up everything around them, God takes away all their light, leaving them in utter darkness, unable to see—deaf, dumb, and blind: they will never return. Or [like people who, under] a cloudburst from the sky, with its darkness, thunder, and lightning, put their fingers into their ears to keep out the thunder-claps for fear of death— God surrounds the disbelievers. The lightning almost snatches away their sight: whenever it flashes on them they walk on and when darkness falls around them they stand still. If God so willed, He could take away their hearing and sight: God has power over everything" (2:17-20).

became the final scriptural disclosure, thus, requiring belief in its teachings.⁷¹ Ultimately, the Sino-Muslim community must stay firmly committed to belief in God despite their cultural and societal impediments to upholding their religious convictions.

Patience and Prayer – Quran 2:24 and 2:153

In the face of tribulations believers must remain steadfast in their faith. While life may appear difficult, in reality, existence consists of a series of trials where God tests individuals.⁷² However, no individual will be stretched beyond his or her capacity.⁷³ The key exercise to maintain one's faith is patience (*ṣabr*) and God promised that those who practice patience will be in His favor.⁷⁴ Ma revealed the importance of this quality in his translation of verse 2:153. “Oh you people who are believers (*xinshi* 信士)!⁷⁵ By means of patience (*renru* 忍辱) and the true meritorious act (*zhengong* 真功)⁷⁶, one seeks help from Heaven. As for those who are patient, surely they possess Heaven reciprocally” (2:153).⁷⁷ He also rendered verse 2:45, explaining that one should “Seek help by employing the virtue of patience (*ren* 忍) and observing the meritorious act (*gong* 功)” (2:45).⁷⁸ In this translation, *ṣabr* is likened to patience, forbearance and forgiveness

⁷¹ See, for example, Qur'an 47: 25: “Those who return to unbelief after God's guidance has been revealed to them, are seduced by Satan and inspired by him.”

⁷² See, for example, Qur'an 2:155: “You who believe, seek help through patience and prayer, for God is with the patient,” and Qur'an 47:31: “We shall test you to see which of you strive your hardest and are patient.”

⁷³ See, for example, Qur'an 2:286: “God does not burden any soul with more than it can bear: each gains whatever good it has done, and suffers its bad.”

⁷⁴ See for example Qur'an 8:46: “Be patient: God is with the patient.”

⁷⁵ The phrase *xinshi* 信士 was originally used in the Buddhist context for the Sanskrit and Pali word *upāsaka/upāsikā* (masculine and feminine), which was a lay devotee who had undertaken certain vows but did not become a monk or nun. In the Islamic context it was used to designate *al-mu'minūn*, the believers. This notion was reiterated in Ma Jian's 馬堅 translation of chapter 23, The Believers (*al-mu'minūn*), which he rendered as *xinshi* 信士.

⁷⁶ The same *gong* 功, or meritorious acts, we explored in chapter 3.

⁷⁷ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 30. The Arabic edition of the Qur'an is rendered: “You who believe, seek help through steadfastness and prayer, for God is with the steadfast” (2:153).

⁷⁸ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 27. The Arabic edition of the Qur'an is rendered: “Seek help with patience and

(*kṣānti* in Sanskrit) as it is understood in the Buddhist *Pāramitās* (*boluomiduo* 波罗蜜多), the perfections or virtues of the Bodhisattva. Additionally, in both of these passages patience is paired with prayer (*ṣalāt*), which Ma translates as a meritorious act (*gong* 功), thus linking prayer with moral ethical behavior in the Chinese context. Patience is reinforced through persistent reflection and supplication, which circumscribes the necessary steps in the cultivation of virtues. Overcoming personal obstacles or misconduct will be rewarded when they are achieved through the combination of perseverance in the face of hurdles and prayer.⁷⁹ Accordingly, one must follow the teachings of Islam in the example of the Prophet in order to receive God’s favor.

Dīn and Dao – Quran 2:132, 2:193, 2:256 and 3:19

Dīn is the Arabic term generally used to encompass the theological and operational characteristics that make up what we understand to be the tradition of Islam. It may be most familiar to the Western reader through the Qur’anic dictum, *lā ikrāha fī al-dīn*, commonly translated as, “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256). The opaque meaning of the English word “religion” does not correspond exactly with the word *dīn* and the complexities of this term are observable from its etymology.⁸⁰ The root meaning of the word is to obey, to be submissive, to serve;⁸¹ and is closely related to the word *dayn*, which means debt.⁸² In this understanding one who is indebted to someone must submit to his or her instructions, and conversely, submitting to someone is

prayer” (2:45).

⁷⁹ See for example Qur’an 11:11: “Not so those who are patient and do good deeds: they will have forgiveness and a great reward.”

⁸⁰ The word *dīn* appears more than 90 times in the Qur’an. Haddad suggests 94 times while Abu-Hamdiyyah suggests 91 times. See Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, “The Conception of the Term *Dīn* in the Qur’an,” *Muslim World* 64 (1974): 114; and Mohammad Abu-Hamdiyyah, *The Qur’an - An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2000), 31.

⁸¹ See Qur’an 3:19, “Religion, in God’s eyes, is submission (*islām*) [devotion to Him alone].”

⁸² The words *dīn* and *dayn* are written the same way in Arabic.

acknowledging one's obligation to fulfill a debt to them. Accordingly, *dīn* can mean obedience, abasement, devotion, submission;⁸³ religion, in the sense that one serves God and believes in His unity;⁸⁴ following a particular law, statute, or ordinance; an inherited system of rites and ceremonies;⁸⁵ custom, habit; way, course, mode of activity; or management of affairs. The Qur'anic vision presents the believer with the religion of truth (*dīn al-ḥaqq*)⁸⁶ and an Abrahamic religion (*dīn Ibrāhīm*).⁸⁷ The meanings of *dīn* can also express repayment, requital, recompense, retaliation, a reckoning, and the Day of Reckoning.⁸⁸ As is evident from this brief discussion, the term *dīn* has a polysemic array of connotations.⁸⁹ The difficulty of translating *dīn* as "religion" are further complicated when we examine the Chinese translation of the term.

For this well-known verse, "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256), Ma rendered it as, "The way (*dao* 道) lacks compulsion. Wrong and right are self-evident, do not believe in evil demons, only those who obey the True Lord, firmly hold the secure rope, which lacks breaking off. The True Lord is the original hearer, the original

⁸³ See Qur'an 7:29: "Devote your religion entirely to Him," and Qur'an 39:3: "True devotion is due to God alone," and Qur'an 5:3: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen as your religion submission (*islām*) [total devotion to God]."

⁸⁴ See Qur'an 30:30: "So [Prophet] as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to the religion. This is the natural disposition God instilled in mankind— there is no altering God's creation— and this is the right religion, though most people do not realize it."

⁸⁵ See Qur'an 42:13: "In matters of faith, He has laid down for you [people] the same commandment that He gave Noah, which We have revealed to you [Muhammad] and which We enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus: 'Uphold the faith and do not divide into factions within it'— what you [Prophet] call upon the idolaters to do is hard for them; God chooses whoever He pleases for Himself and guides towards Himself those who turn to Him."

⁸⁶ See Qur'an 48:28: "It was He who sent His Messenger, with guidance and the religion of Truth, for him to show that it is above all [false] religion." See also Qur'an 9:33 and 61:9.

⁸⁷ See Qur'an 22:78: "Strive hard for God as is His due: He has chosen you and placed no hardship in your religion, the faith of your forefather Abraham."

⁸⁸ See Qur'an 1:4: "Master of the Day of Judgement (*yawm al-dīn*)."

⁸⁹ For an extended discussion on the term *dīn*, see Abu-Hamdiyyah, *The Qur'an*, 31-5; Louis Gardet, "Dīn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 293-6; Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic weltanschauung* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2002), 239-53; Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 1994), xxvii-xxxii; and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Mentor Books, 1964), 90-4, 99-100, and 287-90.

knower.” (2:256)⁹⁰ *Dao* is also a complex and loaded term that has been perpetually reinterpreted throughout history. Etymologically, *dao* consists of two parts, *chuo* 道, meaning go, and *shou* 首, meaning head, signifying the head going or leading the way.⁹¹ In pre-Han philosophical discourse it meant way, path, road, guide, or lead.⁹² For example, in the *Analects*, *dao* is a guiding principle, pattern, formula, or teaching, which is central to some action or behavior, lending towards societal or personal transformation.⁹³ Confucius explained that his *dao* consisted of observing loyalty (*zhong* 忠) combined with consideration or understanding (*shu* 恕).⁹⁴ He positioned *dao* as his leading principle, “Set your heart upon the way (*dao*), rely upon virtue (*de*), lean upon benevolence (*ren*), and explore widely in your cultivation of the arts.”⁹⁵ Mencius continued to elaborate on the *dao*, describing it as the proper manner of activity in the pattern of ancient sages.⁹⁶ Further, *dao* was also descriptive of natural activity, such as the *dao* of water,⁹⁷ the *dao* of Heaven,⁹⁸ or the *dao* of humans.⁹⁹ In early philosophical

⁹⁰ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 33. The Arabic edition of the Qur’an is rendered: “There is no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error, so whoever rejects false gods and believes in God has grasped the firmest hand-hold, one that will never break. God is all hearing and all knowing.” (2:256)

⁹¹ Robert Eno, “Cook Ding’s Dao and the Limits of Philosophy,” in *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, ed. Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 129-30 and 145, n. 9-10.

⁹² Yang Qingzhong, “On the Dao in the Commentary of the Book of Change,” *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 4 (2006): 572-93.

⁹³ Leo K. C. Cheung, “The Unification of Dao and Ren in the Analects,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31, no. 3 (2004): 313-327; and Bryan W. Van Norden, “The Dao of Kongzi,” *Asian Philosophy: An International Journal of the Philosophical Traditions of the East* 12, no. 3 (2002): 157-71. In Japanese, it was also traditionally used to signify a way, art, or tradition, as in *Shintō* (神道), the way of the gods, *Aikidō* (合気道), the way of harmonious spirit, *Jūdō* (柔道), the gentle way, or *Kendō* (剣道), the way of the sword

⁹⁴ Review passage 4.15 from *Analects* in note 39 above.

⁹⁵ Slingerland, “Kongzi (Confucius) The Analects,” 20.

⁹⁶ As in, the *dao* of Confucius, Mozi, or Yao and Shun (3A4, 3A5, 3B9). See Franklin Perkins, “Following Nature with Mengzi or Zhuangzi,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2005): 327-340.

⁹⁷ *Mengzi* 6B11: “In dealing with water, Yu followed the *dao* of water. Hence he emptied the water into the four seas.” Lau, *Mencius*, 281.

⁹⁸ *Mengzi* 7B24: “The sage in relation to the Way of Heaven.” Van Norden, “*Mengzi* (Mencius),” 151.

⁹⁹ *Mengzi* 3A3: “The Odes say ‘In the daytime they go for grass, At night they make it into ropes. They hasten to repair the roof; then they begin sowing the crops.’ This is the *dao* of the common people.” Lau,

Daoist texts, the term was unclear, carrying a variety of connotations. The *Daodejing* declares that the *dao* is nameless,¹⁰⁰ ineffable,¹⁰¹ empty,¹⁰² indistinct,¹⁰³ and natural.¹⁰⁴ The *dao* is a productive force,¹⁰⁵ eternal without beginning or end,¹⁰⁶ which is the source of creation,¹⁰⁷ arising before Heaven and earth,¹⁰⁸ producing and sustaining beings,¹⁰⁹ by generating the One, and, thus, leading to the multiplicity of the creation.¹¹⁰ The *dao* is something underlying the transformation of creation, the process regulating the spontaneous cycle of the cosmos, and the basis for natural order itself. If the individual can harness this organic activity they will embody the *dao* and act in accordance with it.¹¹¹ Therefore, the *dao* encompass the dual understanding of both source and process in

Mencius, 105; and *Mengzi* 3A4: “It is the way of people that if they are full of food, have warm clothes, and live in comfort, but are without instruction, then they come close to being animals.” Van Norden, “*Mengzi (Mencius)*,” 128.

¹⁰⁰ See *Daodejing*, 1: “A Way that can be followed is not a constant Way. A name that can be named is not a constant name. Nameless, it is the beginning of Heaven and earth; Named, it is the mother of the myriad creatures.” Philip J. Ivanhoe, “*Laozi (“The Daodejing”)*,” in *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 159. See also *Daodejing*, 25, 32, 37 and 41.

¹⁰¹ See *Daodejing*, 14: “Looked for but not seen, its name is ‘minute.’ Listened for but not heard, its name is ‘rarified.’ Grabbed for but not gotten, its name is ‘subtle.’ These three cannot be perfectly explained, and so are confused and regarded as one. Its top is not clear or bright, Its bottom is not obscure or dark. Trailing off without end, it cannot be named. It returns to its home, back before there were things. This is called the formless form, the image of no thing. This is called the confused and indistinct. Greet it and you will not see its head; Follow it and you will not see its tail.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 165.

¹⁰² See *Daodejing*, 4: “The Way is like an empty vessel; No use could ever fill it up.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 161.

¹⁰³ See *Daodejing*, 21: “As for the Way, it is vague and elusive.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 169.

¹⁰⁴ See *Daodejing*, 25: “The Way models itself on what is natural.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 171.

¹⁰⁵ See *Daodejing*, 4: “It (*dao*) seems to be the ancestor of the myriad creatures.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 161.

¹⁰⁶ See *Daodejing*, 14: “Its top is not clear or bright, Its bottom is not obscure or dark. Trailing off without end, it cannot be named. It returns to its home, back before there were things.³² This is called the formless form, the image of no thing.³³ This is called the confused and indistinct. Greet it and you will not see its head; Follow it and you will not see its tail.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 165.

¹⁰⁷ See *Daodejing*, 25: “One can regard it (*dao*) as the mother of Heaven and earth.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 171.

¹⁰⁸ See *Daodejing*, 1: “Nameless, it is the beginning of Heaven and earth.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 159. See also *Daodejing*, 25.

¹⁰⁹ See *Daodejing*, 34: “The myriad creatures rely upon it for life, and it turns none of them away. When its work is done it claims no merit. It clothes and nourishes the myriad creatures, but does not lord it over them.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 176. See also *Daodejing*, 51.

¹¹⁰ See *Daodejing*, 42: “The Way produces the One. The One produces two. Two produces three. Three produces the myriad creatures.” Ivanhoe, “*Laozi*,” 180.

¹¹¹ For an extended discussion on the term *dao*, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 12-15; Cheng Chung-Ying, “Dao (Tao): The Way,” in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Antonio S. Cua (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 202-5; Robert G. Henrick, “The *Dao* and the Field: Exploring an Analogy,” in *Teaching*

the operation of the cosmos.

Ma encountered the term *dīn* on five instances in his translation of the Qur'an.¹¹² He repeated his rendering of *dīn* as *dao* in verse 2:193, “The way (*dao* 道) returns to the True.”¹¹³ The original Arabic reads, “The religion belongs to God (*wa yakūn al-dīn Allāh*).” Later, in verse 3:19, “Religion (*al-dīn*), in God’s eyes, is submission (*islām*) [devotion to Him alone],” Ma translated the passage, “The way (*dao*) is the guideline of the True Lord’s teaching. It is only pure and true.”¹¹⁴ This general direction was also duplicated in verse 2:132 but the direct correlation between Arabic and Chinese terminology is more fluid. Ma rendered the passage, “Oh sons! Originally, the True Lord favored the multitudes with a special gift of the orthodox teaching (*zhengjiao* 正教). Die after you undertake hearing the way (*dao* 道).”¹¹⁵ On this occasion, in the excerpt “Verily, God has chosen [your] religion for you (*inna Allāh iṣṭafā lakum al-dīn*),” Ma equated *al-dīn* with the orthodox teaching (*zhengjiao* 正教). Here, Ma was much more direct in his delineation of Islam as a specific tradition. *Zhengjiao* delimited his discussion to a particular way (*dao*), which he understood as being transmitted through time after its revelation from God. You will remember that Wang Daiyu employed the same term,

the Daode jing, ed. Gary D. DeAngelis and Warren G. Frisina (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 31-47; Livia Kohn, *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 11-32; Isabelle Robinet, “The Diverse Interpretations of the Laozi,” in *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi*, ed. Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of NY Press, 1999), 127-59; and Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 3-5. For the various interpretations of the *dao* in religious Daoism, see Russell Kirkland, “Dao,” in *The Encyclopedia Of Taoism*, vol. 1, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (London: Routledge, 2008), 304-9; and Livia Kohn, *God of the Dao: Lord Lao in History and Myth* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1998).

¹¹² Ma rendered the phrase “Day of Judgement (*yawm al-dīn*),” from Qur’an 1:4, as “controller of the true world (*gangwei zhenshi* 綱維真世).” In this case, he did not use the term *dao* because the passage does not reflect the broader conception of *dīn* as a path, tradition, or religion.

¹¹³ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 31.

¹¹⁴ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 35.

¹¹⁵ Ma, *Baoming zhenjing*, 29.

zhengjiao, in the title of his famous text, *Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮, to indicate the religion Islam. In the second portion of verse 2:132, “Therefore, die not unless you are those who have surrendered (*falā tamūtun illā wa antum muslimūn*),” Ma used *dao* to evoke the meaning of being a *muslimūn*. One who has submitted (*muslim*) to God’s pronouncement of beliefs and practices was governed by a way (*dao*) in the broad sense of a teaching. Accordingly, Ma identified being a Muslim was following a particular *dao*, which he equated with Islam, what he called the orthodox teaching (*zhengjiao*).

Ma saw *dīn* and *dao* as parallel concepts, the simultaneous patterned evolving and orchestration of the cosmos. Each directed the organic and natural behaviors of people in accordance with the unfolding of creation. By following the patterns of *dīn* and *dao* individuals act in harmony with the universe, thus, submitting to God’s natural world and following its way or mode of activity. The natural order of the trodden path makes itself apparent as the cosmos unfolds in continual disclosure of the divine. Therefore, individual awareness of the world, whether it is from a Chinese or Islamic perspective, was in tune with God’s creation and the principles guiding the universe. Overall, for Ma, both *dīn* and *dao* represent the inherited system of natural behavior that is accord with God’s ineffable productive force. If one obeys these patterns and devotes himself or herself to these teachings and formulas they will be guided and led along the worn path of ancient sages and prophets leading towards societal and personal transformation.

These passages show that Ma ventured to accurately transmit both the meaning and form of the Arabic Qur’an. Ma was able to outline the Qur’anic arguments and themes as they unfolded within their original narrative structure and formation. Compared to earlier authors this brought an authentic reading of scripture to the Sino-Muslim audience. In general, reading the Qur’an in a sequential fashion provides a

number of challenges for comprehension because of its irregular narrative pattern due to the long duration of revealed passages. However, Ma's translation provided a comprehensive picture of what the Qur'an is, a non-linear, irregular chronicle, which explores numerous seemingly unrelated topics in a single chapter.

He presented the Qur'an with all its complexities and idiosyncrasies allowing Sino-Muslims to directly approach the text within its original structural context. Therefore, Ma's translation revealed the non-linear and multileveled nature of the Qur'an, which is obscured and imperceptible in works that explicated the theological or mystical meanings of certain passages. Thus, Ma ingrained his translation of the Qur'an with a notion of sacredness in and of itself by the very nature of its structure and methods.

Challenges and Peculiarities

One of the merits of translating the Qur'an as a totality is that it presented Ma, and thereby the audience, with characteristics that would not have arisen for earlier authors who selectively plucked appropriate verses for their discussions. Some of these unique Qur'anic features appear to have been problematic for authors adapting the Arabic language into Chinese. While we should not underestimate the weight of Ma's contribution to the understanding of the Chinese Qur'an we need to recognize and unravel these intertextual quandaries in order to assess his successes in greater detail.

Mystical Letters

One of the unique features of Ma's translation was the introduction of the mysterious letters. He attempted to render the disconnected letters at the head of some chapters ("isolated letters" *al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa'āt*, "opening letters" *al-ḥurūf al-fawātiḥ*,

and “openings of the chapters” *fawātiḥ as-sūr*).¹¹⁶ These letters ranged from two to five letters and stood before twenty-nine chapters. There were various explanations for their presence, such as they were mystical signs with symbolic meaning, a mnemonic device, means of ordering chapters, or initials of editors. However, there was never a consensus on their meaning within this exegetical tradition.¹¹⁷ Chapter two and three of the Qur’an are headed by the letters ‘*Alif Lām Mīm*. In line with Ma’s vision of presenting a complete view of the Qur’anic message he rendered these as *ailifu* 艾立福 *lia’amu* 倆阿穆 *miyimu* 密一穆. This choice suggests that Ma believed that not only the internal meanings of the text but also the words themselves carried salvific virtues for the Sino-Muslim audience. The transliterated form of the letters would not necessarily carry the sacred relevance for believers because they were not in Arabic but it did offer a total portrait of what the Qur’an set forth for the Arabic audience. Additionally, Ma’s translations enabled Sino-Muslims to encounter the capacity of the Qur’an for transforming individuals in a multitude of ways.

In the Name of God

One of the structural and theological anomalies found within Ma’s translation is his treatment of the *bismala*. The *bismala* is a noun that is used to refer to the phrase *Bismi’llāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi* (In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful), which is recited at the beginning of every chapter of the Qur’an except the ninth.

Muslims also often recite it before they perform many daily actions, such as eating, or

¹¹⁶ Keith Massey, “Mysterious Letters,” in *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*, vol. iii: J-O, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), 472.

¹¹⁷ These letters have been discussed throughout the ages, most notably by Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (838–923), Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī (1149–1210), Ibn Kathīr (1301–1373), and Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī (c. 1445–1505). For a further discussion on the *al-ḥurūf al-muqatta’āt*, see James A. Bellamy, “The Mysterious Letters of the Koran: Old Abbreviations of the Basmalah,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93, no. 3, (1973): 267–285; and Keith Massey, “A New Investigation into the “Mystery Letters” of the Qur’an” *Arabica* 43, no. 3 (1996): 497–501.

significant events. While translating the first four chapters of the Qur'an Ma approached the *bismala* in various ways. We have already seen how he rendered the *bismala* in the opening chapter of the Qur'an. "I recite the most beneficent, the most intimate, the True Lord's name and begin (吾誦至仁至親，真宰之名而起)." Ma repeated this rendering in the second chapter of his translation. However, he completely retranslated the *bismala* in chapter three, "Honor and respect God's (*anla* 安喇) revered name, the greatest benevolence, the greatest compassion (遵奉大仁大慈安喇尊名)." Even more peculiar was that Ma did not include the *bismala* at the head of chapter four. Why he would change his translation and fail to include the *bismala* in another chapter is unclear. One could conjecture that because this translation was still in process Ma was undecided how he should render such an essential passage at the time of his death. There could also have been complications in the transcribing and printing process that caused discrepancies within the source text as it was being made available for a broader audience. It is difficult to determine exactly why these discrepancies exist since we have no clear understanding of how the text was written and published nor do we know the state of completion of individual translated chapters.

Theologically there are differences in his two translations. Regrettably, closer examination does not explain his exclusion of the *bismala* in chapter four for theological reasons. The main components of the *bismala* are the designation of God by His name (*Bismi'llāhi*) and the enumeration of His attributes, the compassionate (*al-rahīmān*) and the merciful (*al-rahīm*). Ma employed two strategies for naming God. In the first he used a conventional phrase used throughout *Han Kitab* texts to designate God, True Lord (*zhenzai* 真宰). We have already seen how this term was derived from the philosophical

works of Zhuangzi. Ma, and earlier Sino-Islamic scholars, appropriated the cultural implications of this term by appealing to the philosophical sensibilities of many of their Chinese readers. In the second translation, Ma attempted to render the Arabic word *Allāh* in a transliterated form using Chinese characters, *anla* 安喇. *Allāh* has been understood by many Muslims to be the proper name of God and thus untranslatable. However, it was used in pre-Islamic Arabia to mean the God, *al-ilāh*, and is used by Arabic speaking Christians to refer to God.¹¹⁸ In English it is also translated as God. Ma tried to maintain the more universally appealing aspect of the word *Allāh* by transliterating it. Language could serve as a unifier in connecting Muslims to their coreligionists for a community that was generally removed from the broader Muslim world. Ma enabled Sino-Muslims to identify with all Muslims by preserving, as closely as possible, the original nature of God's all-encompassing epithet *Allāh*. This also reflected Ma's opinion that Arabic was the primary means for understanding the nature of God. God self-designated Himself *Allāh* and should thus be approached in that way. Sino-Muslims should also understand Him through His name *Allāh*. These two methods reflect Ma's oscillating attitudes towards being Muslim in China. He simultaneously asserted the importance of the Arabic discursive heritage all Muslims inherited while sustaining and confirming the significance of the Sino-Islamic tradition.

Ma also employed a number of terms that carried a heavy intellectual history with them. The most important term was the notion of *ren* 仁, which he used in both translations of the *bismala* to rephrase the notion of compassion. *Ren*, which has been rendered as humaneness, benevolence, compassion, human-heartedness, humanity, love,

¹¹⁸ For a discussion on the use of *Allāh* in English and the associated problems of using it in English parlance, see Murata and Chittick, *Vision of Islam*, 45-47.

altruism, goodness, and kindness, is the central Confucian virtue and has been reinterpreted and explained for generations. The character itself is composed of two components, *ren* 仁 has a *ren* 人 (person) and a *er* 二 (two), thus meaning at root the relationship between two people. *Ren* was the principal quality of the five constant virtues (*wu chang* 五常). In the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) of Confucius (*Kongzi* 孔子) (551-479 BCE) the word *ren* appeared over a hundred times but he never formally defined it. Generally speaking, Confucius explained how to embody *ren*, how to avoid moving away from it and what a person of *ren* would do.¹¹⁹ For example he described *ren* as being slow or modest in speech (12.3), to be resolute and firm (13.27), to be possessed of courage (14.4), to be free from worry (9.29), to delight in mountains (6.23), to subdue the self and return to propriety (12.1), to be respectful, tolerant, trustworthy, diligent, and kind (17.5), and to love others (12.22).¹²⁰ Mencius (*Mengzi* 孟子) (372-289 BCE) echoed Confucius' explanation of *ren*. He explained, “*ren* is being a human. To bring them (all things) into harmony is the Way” (7B: 16); “The heart of compassion is the sprout of *ren*” (2A: 6); “*ren* is people's peaceful abode” (4a: 10); and “A person of *ren* has no enemies in the world” (7B: 3). As a final example of the importance of *ren*, one of the inaugurators of Neo-Confucianism Cheng Hao 程顥 (1033-1107) famously added, “The man of *ren* forms one body with all things without any differentiation. Righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness are all [expressions of] *ren*.”¹²¹ Ma Dexin was acutely aware of

¹¹⁹ See for example *Analects* passages 1.3, 1.6, 4.7, 4.2, 4.3, 6.20, 6.21, 9.28, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.22, 13.19, 13.27, 14.5, 14.30, 15.9, 17.6, 17.17, and 19.6. For a further discussion on the relationship between action and benevolence see Li Chenyang, “Li as Cultural Grammar: On the Relation between *Li* and *Ren* in Confucius' *Analects*,” *Philosophy East and West* 57, no. 3 (2007): 311-329; and Philip J. Ivanhoe, “Reweaving the ‘One Thread’ of the *Analects*,” *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 1 (1990): 17-33.

¹²⁰ Daniel Gardner, *Zhu Xi's Reading of the Analects-Canon, Commentary, and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 53.

¹²¹ Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963),

the intellectual history of this term and used it to designate one of the key characteristics of God. He magnified God's disposition by adding the qualifier of being the utmost (*zhi* 至) or greatest (*da* 大) of *ren*. God thus typified the recognizable human virtue of *ren* and magnified this quality to the paramount level. Therefore, Ma explained God in terms of the foremost Confucian ethical quality and depicted Him as the principal holder and exemplar of *ren*, thereby raising the character of God above the human realm and requiring belief in Him for proper application of this virtue.

Completing the Qur'an

Ma's translation of the Qur'an was influential because it marked a significant change in the intellectual approaches to the Qur'an and the scriptural consumption of readers. This transition prepared later scholars to conceptualize the utility and benefit of the entire Qur'an rendered in Chinese, thereby creating full translations in the twentieth century. Despite the complexities of the Qur'anic narrative and structure, believers would certainly profit from knowledge of the Qur'an in its entirety. Ma's desire to translate the Qur'an demonstrated that many people were not proficient in Arabic and thus needed to have a Chinese translation of the Qur'an. Beginning soon after his efforts, many other individuals began to translate large sections of the Qur'an to promote knowledge of the Qur'an for its own sake, and not to explore some theological or liturgical principles. Other translators looked to Ma's work as a means for conveying meaning within modern settings. This coincided with the increased use of Arabic instruction within Sino-Muslim education and the broader engagement with the Arabic speaking Muslim world. Firsthand knowledge of the Qur'an would be the basis for much of students learning in Arabic. Ma's Qur'an thus served a dual purpose: it acted as an aid in exploring the contents of the

Qur'an in a familiar linguistic setting, and prepared individuals to delve into the Arabic Qur'an with an established foundation already in place.

Ma's translation of the Qur'an was also exemplary because it attempted to explain Islam in the distinctive Sino-Islamic vocabulary that was developed by authors like Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, and to provide an accurate linguistic rendering of the Qur'an in its original structural context through the translation of entire chapters. Ma expertly intertwined the Sino-Islamic symbolism of his predecessors in conjunction with a direct and accurate translation of the Arabic form and syntax. Therefore, Ma's contribution was essential for a globalizing community of Sino-Muslims who were expanding their linguistic and geographical boundaries in order to participate in contemporary Muslim dialogues.

The Diversity of your Tongues

Altogether, these authors' works reflected the changing historical circumstances of the Sino-Muslim community and the intellectual development within Sino-Islamic thought. The shifting attitudes towards the Qur'an can be understood within the specific discursive settings and varying intellectual environments. During the early stages in the development of *Han Kitab* literature authors were addressing an audience that was rather Sinicized and its ability to access Arabic and Persian Islamic texts in their original language was limited. Wang Daiyu wrote his texts in Chinese and cloaked in classical vocabulary in order to reach Muslim students who had often been trained in traditional Chinese academies but were also determined to learn more about their religion. The structure, content and simplicity of Wang's texts also indicate that he was trying to explain key principles about Islam rather than expound upon esoteric philosophical theories. His limited application of the Qur'an itself demonstrates that the kernel of the

Qur'anic message was more important than direct translation of it for his audience.

By the mid-eighteenth century in southeast China, Sino-Islamic education was well established and *Han Kitab* literature had matured. The scripture hall system simultaneously used Chinese, Arabic and Persian texts, thus making intertextual references and advanced theological arguments the subject of study for advanced students within the system. These factors combined with the creativity and skill of Liu Zhi enabled him to produce sophisticated treatises that utilized the Qur'an in a variety of manners. Sino-Muslim students' familiarity with the Qur'an allowed Liu to allude to its rich palette of themes and motifs without specifically translating its passages when exploring notions of belief. However, due to their confidence in the Qur'an as a legally authoritative scripture Liu also provided detailed renditions of exact verses in discussions of religious practice. The scholastic environment, discursive flexibility, and Liu's own intellectual artistry furnished the appropriate circumstances for a wide spectrum of Qur'anic interaction.

The growing interaction between Muslims throughout the world was heightened during the nineteenth century, which provided the impetus for global Muslim cooperation and exchange. Intellectual dialogue and debate combined with personal association and communication enabled Sino-Muslims to engage their coreligionists in a manner unattainable in previous generations. Ma Dexin's overall vision was to promote this congregational unity of all Muslims by providing his students and readers with practical and intellectual tools that would incorporate them into these conversations. A complete portrait of the Qur'an was a key part of this objective. A comprehensive translation of the Qur'an equipped Sino-Muslims with the essential intellectual apparatus for participation in these discussions. Greater knowledge of the content and structure of the Qur'an,

combined with regular travel to the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and access to texts and the production and transmission of knowledge facilitated Sino-Muslims' involvement in the global Muslim community.

The transition from imprecise renderings of broader thematic elements to calculated and explicit translations of specific passages and then the Qur'an in its entirety showed how attitudes towards the Qur'an and its message evolved. Early Sino-Muslim authors valued the Qur'anic message over its direct rendering in Chinese while later authors also respected the efficacy of the Qur'an as a whole. Translational clarity was favored for deriving religious authority while Qur'anic symbolism was preferred for explaining the principles of faith. Understanding the approaches and attitudes towards the Qur'an by Sino-Muslim authors is essential for grasping the trajectories of Sino-Islamic intellectual history. Failing to recognize these authors' contributions and their specific methodologies limits our understanding of Sino-Islamic thought and the role of the Qur'an in Chinese society. It was apparent that each author built atop the foundation of their intellectual ancestors thus creating a dynamic tradition in dialogue with each other.

Qur'anic engagement is directly related to Sino-Muslim authors' encounter with the Arabic language more generally. All of our authors were fluent in Arabic and used various Arabic texts to inform their writings. The following chapter examines their commitment to incorporating Arabic terminology and writings within their own works. Arabic tied the Sino-Muslim community to the broader Muslim world, and the level of philosophical convergence in the *Han Kitab* texts demonstrates the dynamic and simultaneous nature of these works.

Arabic Discourse, Linguistic Authority, and Islamic Knowledge
Chapter Five

The unique combination of linguistic registers used in the *Han Kitab* literature allowed Sino-Muslim scholars to fashion a new interpretive framework for understanding Islam. The rich semiotic backdrop of the Islamic and Chinese religio-philosophical systems enabled authors to create individual expressions that integrated multiple traditions while remaining true to an Islamic worldview. The Chinese lexicon was replete with organic meaning and was expressively sonorous for articulating the principles of Islam to the Sino-Muslim community. However, these authors' engagement with Arabic was markedly dissimilar. Its use in daily prayers and social activities combined with the importance of the Qur'an established Arabic's perpetual presence within the Chinese cultural sphere. However, its use as a discursive linguistic tool drastically changed throughout the years.

Wang Daiyu's limited engagement with Arabic took shape through his use of key Islamic terms and the names of Islamic personas. However, Arabic terminology was conveyed solely through the use of phonetic transliteration. Overall, Arabic served as a source of authoritative knowledge for Wang and he often relied on its literary heritage to inform his own writings rather than submitting as it as a discourse in itself for the Chinese audience. Liu Zhi continued articulating Arabic terminology and names through transliteration, introducing numerous expressions, but generally wrote primarily in Chinese in his texts. Sustaining and increasing this hybrid lexicon demonstrated that Liu valued Arabic discourse and wanted to present it to the Chinese readers who generally had limited linguistic capabilities in Arabic. Additionally, Liu outlined the theological underpinnings of the Arabic language and introduced the form, sound, and meaning of

individual letters. The movement towards the inclusion of Arabic indicates that it was becoming incorporated into Sino-Islamic discourse and used more widely in scripture hall education in the mid-eighteenth century. Ma Dexin reintroduced Arabic as an authoritative discourse for approaching Islam in the Chinese context. He employed transliteration in several texts but also wrote entirely in Arabic for various compositions. This complete incorporation of Arabic illustrates the importance of the language for Sino-Muslims who were beginning to enter broader debates with their Arabic-speaking coreligionists during the mid-nineteenth century. Ma's goal was to prepare readers to broach Islam from a more universal perspective by communicating the logistics of Arabic and introducing his readers to recurring Islamic debates directly in Arabic. His success was confirmed by the continuation of this Arabic discourse that was maintained by his followers into the twentieth century. This chapter outlines each author's use of Arabic and the guiding principles for their application of it. I trace the shifting motivations that caused them to employ Arabic and determine why they chose to utilize it in their writings.

I argue that the use Arabic became more prominent over time because Sino-Muslims envisioned themselves in a shrinking world where the global Muslim population was establishing greater contact and communication between disparate local communities. Arabic acted as a unifying principle between divergent linguistic and cultural Muslim communities at the level of both theology and practice. It bound them together as a unified group of believers and tied them to an authoritative tradition. Arabic served as a means for social and religious positioning through the posturing of Sino-Islamic discursive models and linguistic revision. Sino-Islamic scholarship joined the perceived orthodox Islamic intellectual tradition through the use of an established

discursive framework when employing Arabic. The use of language legitimized Sino-Muslims' religious authority because Arabization and Islamization were inseparable parts of a single religious ideal. There were various social and religious layers of meaning and symbolic values intertwined with the employment of Arabic. Sino-Muslims authors became custodians of a fourteen hundred year old intellectual heritage by using Arabic and promoting a specific discursive trajectory. This made their worldview traditional in a new manner by simultaneously bestriding their Chinese and Islamic legacies in order to situate themselves in a modern globalizing world.

Wang Daiyu

Wang Daiyu's central role in the development of Sino-Islamic scholarship positioned him as an important figure for our understanding of Chinese texts on Islam. However, he refrained from writing in Arabic altogether. This was understandable within his historical conditions, where Sino-Muslims had generally lost the ability to read Arabic and only used it in ritual or social circumstances. Students of Islam, especially those in the scripture hall system, would have varying levels of Arabic competency but their ability to understand Chinese would be far greater. Therefore, Wang chose to be the pioneer of a new discursive tradition that relied primarily on Chinese as the linguistic conduit for expressing the principles of Islam. By extension, Arabic was degraded as a scholarly language within the Chinese context. Its sacrality was maintained, and Wang certainly appreciated and relied in part on the Arabic intellectual tradition, but the transition to Chinese language literature and religious instruction devalued Arabic's superiority as a favored means for articulating Islamic thought.

Qur'anic Personas

There were, however, a few instances where Wang was required to invoke Arabic terminology or names in order to fully convey his point. When this occurred Wang chose to transliterate the terms with Chinese characters. We have already seen that Wang referred to a few individuals including some of the prophets. The sanctity of the Prophet was an essential component of Islamic belief, and Wang clearly designated his elevated position throughout his works by identifying him as the utmost sage (*zhisheng* 至聖), though in a few instances he explicitly recognized him by name. He stated, for example, “Before creation, the surplus light of the Real Lord made manifest the original chief of the ten thousand sages, who is Muhammad (*muhanmode* 穆罕默德), the root origin of the Non-Ultimate.”¹ Wang also chose to utilize the Arabic epithets of several prophets. While explaining the creation of the cosmos Wang mentioned both Adam (*adan* 阿丹) and Eve (Arabic *Hawwā*, *haowa* 好媧). He described, “The creation of the human ancestor Adam’s form and body is precisely the ancestor of the form and body of the ancient and modern humans.”² He added, “When the human ancestor was sleeping deeply, the Real Lord created his wife from his left rib and named her *Hawwā*’.”³ He further evaluated the qualities of previous prophets such as Solomon (Arabic *Sulaymān*, *shulaimana* 數賴瑪納), Jesus (Arabic *‘Īsā*, *ersa* 爾撒), and Job (Arabic *Ayūb*, *aiyubu* 藹玉卜).

There was the sage Solomon, who arrived at wealth and honor but lacked

¹ Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yu’s Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih’s Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); 58; Wang Daiyu 王岱輿, *Zhengjiao zhenquan, Qingzhen daxue, Xizhen zhengda* 正教真詮，請真大學，希真正答 (*True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching, Great Learning of Islam, Orthodox Responses on the Rare Truth*), ed. Yu Zhengui 余振貴 (Reprinted-Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1987), 24, see also 40.

² Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 27.

³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 62; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan* 27.

disobedience. This is the model for the affirmation of those who have wealth and honor. There was the sage Jesus, who arrived at poverty and difficulties but lacked expressing resentment. This is the model for the affirmation of those who have poverty and difficulties. There was the sage Job, who had many ailments and misfortune but lacked indolence. This is the model for the affirmation of those who have ailments and misfortune.⁴

Elsewhere he related that “There is one great spirit (*shen* 神) named Iblīs (*yibulisi* 以捕哩私), whose deeds are engaged in transgressing the heavenly worthies (*tianxian* 天仙).”⁵

Through these figures Wang delineated patterns of virtue and piety by referring to individual prophets rather than relying on speaking of the general characteristics of sagacity. He also outlined inferior behavior by indicating the antithesis of goodness through the character of Iblīs. Wang clearly defined his interpretation of the faith by clarifying the actions and behaviors of specific Qur’anic personas. Through references to certain individuals Wang conveyed the meaning of all the attending themes and contextual relationships affiliated with those characters. Thereby, he gained further authority in his statements when he could use examples to accentuate his points and verify the qualities of piety and moral behavior.

Words of the Saints

Wang also quoted from several authors and translated their Arabic writings. When he referred to these authors’ works he again transliterated their names. In his discussion of the heart he offered a story, “Someone asked their senior Rābi‘a (*labi’an* 喇必安) saying ‘Do you take pleasure in the Lord?’ She said, ‘That is correct.’ ‘Do you hate the Devil?’ She said ‘No!’ ‘Why is this?’ She said, ‘I only have one heart, how could I

⁴ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 34.

⁵ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 70.

always possess two?”⁶ Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya or Rābi‘a of Baṣra (D. 185/801), a worthy (*xian* 賢) as Wang described her, was one of the most famous woman Sufis.⁷ She is well-known for her absolute devotion of God and the stories narrating her life and thoughts express the intimacy she shared with Him. Through these accounts we can see the basic themes she touched upon: absolute trust in God (*tawakkul*), contentment (*riḍā*), poverty (*faqr*), affirmation of God’s unity (*tawhīd*), and sincerity (*ṣidq*). Later, Wang related another tale, noting the wisdom of ancient worthies. He described, “Someone visited their senior Rābi‘a and thereupon saw birds and beasts gathered around her. At the first instance they all fled avoiding him. The guest asked, “Why do all the animals avoid me?” She replied, “What did you eat today?” The guest said, “I ate meat.” She replied, “How could they not avoid you when you eat their meat?”⁸ Wang utilized Rābi‘a’s expressions to illustrate key Islamic principles and simultaneously reigned in her authority within the Islamic context. He also cited the “sage” (*xiansheng* 先聖) Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. c. 261/875). Bāyazīd, as he was also known, was a famous mystic most well-known as one of the originators of the concept of annihilation (*fanā*) of the self in God. He is also

⁶ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 59. This story is found in the *Memorial of the Friends of God (Tadhkirat al-‘Awliyā’)* by Farīd al-Dīn ‘Attār’s (d. ca. 1230). Here the story goes, “Out of love of the compassionate, I have no occasion for hatred toward Satan. I saw the Prophet in a dream. He said, “Rābi‘a, do you love me?” I said, “O Prophet of God, who is there that doesn’t love you? But love of the Real has so pervaded me that there is no place in my heart for love or hatred of another.” See Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur’an, Mi’raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York : Paulist Press, 1996), 163; and Paul Losensky, *Farid ad-Din ‘Attār’s Memorial of God’s Friends: Lives and Sayings of Sufis* (New York : Paulist Press, 2009), 106.

⁷ For more on Rābi‘a see Margaret Smith, *Muslim Women Mystics: The Life and Work of Rabi’a and Other Women Mystics in Islam* (Oxford: One World, 1994); Rkia Elaroui Cornell, *Early Sufi Women: Dhikr an-niswa al-muta‘abbidāt aṣ-Ṣūfiyyāt* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1999); and Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 151-170.

⁸ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 123. The original narrative reads, “It is related that one day Rabi’a had gone up on a mountain. Wild goats and gazelles gathered around, gazing upon her. Suddenly Hasan Basri appeared. All the animals shied away. When Hasan saw that he was perplexed and said, “Rabi’a, why do they shy away from me when when they were so intimate with you?” Rabi’a said, “what did you eat today?” “Soup.” “You ate their lard. How would they not shy away from you?” Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 160; and Losensky, *Farid ad-Din ‘Attār’s*, 103.

renowned for his ecstatic sayings (*shatḥiyāt*), such as “Glory be to me! How great is my majesty?” (*Subḥānī mā a'zama sha'nī*). When discussing individuals who do good deeds to gain profit or fame instead of from their heart, Wang cited, “Bāyazīd (*bayelaide* 爸野賚德) said, ‘Repentance for mistakes and errors occurs once in a lifetime, but why should repentance for the virtue of endeavor stop at a thousand times?’”⁹ Later, Wang discussed the proper modes of taking and saving in relations to what one needs. He said:

Bāyazīd said, ‘Purity and modesty are deeds of endeavor, and I did them for only three days. On the first day I put away the wealth and nobility of the lodging place, which is this world. On the second day, I put away the glory of the eternal abode, which is the next world. On the third day, I put away myself, which is no-I.’¹⁰

These quotations demonstrate that Wang personally valued the literary heritage he inherited and utilized it to inform his own discussions of Islam. Again, referencing these well-known mystics brought with it the authority of the Arabic originals they were drawn from.

Nomenclature

Finally, Wang employed a number of Arabic terms throughout his writings. The Arabic terminology that Wang used was generally well-known expressions that shaped the basics of Islam. Wang explained the relationship between God, creation and humankind using several critical Arabic expressions, *tawḥīd* (*taoheide* 討黑德), the assertion of God’s unity; *ittihād* (*yitihade* 一體哈德), union; *wahdat* (*wahadete* 完哈德特), oneness; and *imān* (*yimana* 以媽納), belief. When he referred to this terminology he did not give expansive descriptions of their meaning but rather glossed them within the broader context of his discussions. This indicates that among Wang’s intended audience

⁹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 58; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 114.

¹⁰ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 57; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 104.

individuals would have been familiar with these terms in at least the most basic level of recognition.

In his discussion of how to understand the unity of God within the multiplicity of existence Wang said, “This stage is called *tawhīd* (which means ‘practicing one’). When you reach this station, only then can you trace the activity of the Real Lord, though it is not possible to grasp everything.”¹¹ A true understanding of *tawhīd* enables one to view the unfolding world and be aware of its actual operations. While the world may appear to be multiple everything relies on God for its existence and therefore is part of the unicity of God. Once individuals recognize the unity of God then they can begin to grasp the qualities of creation despite God’s Essence (*dhāt*) being unknowable. Before people can understand God in His entirety they must reach a level of union (*ittiḥād*), in the sense that they are only one with God because their existence relies on His.¹² Wang explained:

If you have an astonishing awakening, such that you turn your intention and return your heart, this is the beginning discrimination between the newborn and the Original Being and the clear division between the Lord and the servant, none of this depending on your own self. This is ‘attaining one from two.’ Even though the subtle clarity is manifest, unity in union has not yet been reached. This stage is called *ittiḥād* (which means ‘self-one’).¹³

This state is only obtainable by the grace of God. After realizing the transformation of a created being from the creator one can further understand *tawhīd* and its relation to their personal self. The final stage that Wang refers to is a state of oneness, *wahdat*. He proposed:

No matter how much you can delve into the principle and investigate the things: through seeing, hearing, knowledge, and power, you cannot penetrate the Original Being. To do that, self-being must be completely molded. Only then will you gain the subtle clarity of the immediate manifestation of the Root Nature’s movement

¹¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 97; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 239.

¹² See Reynold Nicholson and Georges Anawati, “*Ittiḥād*” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Volume IV, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 282-3.

¹³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 98; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 239.

and quietude. From this moment, everything will become clear, and you will know through the knowledge of the Lord, see through the sight of the Lord, and speak with the tongue of the Lord. This is ‘one from one,’ and it is called *waḥdat* (which means unmixed one).¹⁴

When individuals can surpass their limited self-being they will attain annihilation of the self in God (*fanā’ fī Allāh*). From that position they have achieved union with God and no longer experience the world from a personal perspective. One’s personal journey from the assertion of *tawḥīd* then being graced with the realization of *ittiḥād* before finally achieving *waḥdat* is an advanced spiritual achievement not attained by many. This relationship is complex and required a detailed explanation to outline the ideal of personal perfection. Wang’s use of these key terms demonstrates that there was a linguistic register of Arabic phrases that would be understood by his intended audience.

Wang continued his use of Arabic for another essential principle of Islam, *imān*. *Imān*, or faith, is one of the foundational tenants of Islam and was outlined by Muhammad as one of the core elements of the religion. True faith means to believe in God, His messengers, His books, angels, and the resurrection.¹⁵ Wang explained that *imān* is conferred by the grace of God.

The real solicitude is called *imān*. It is the Real Lord’s movement and quietude showing solicitude to human beings. Hence, with this solicitude, people finally come to recognize the Real Lord correctly and properly. Thus it is called the real solicitude. It is not a reward for effort. The signs of the real solicitude are three: fear and dread, hope and expectation, and real happiness.¹⁶

One must have faith in both the mercy of God but also His power. Then it can become a fixed aspect of one’s being. Wang elaborated:

When you carefully reflect upon all the details, only one affair – *imān* – always is and exists eternally. It neither decreases nor increases. It is the ultimate

¹⁴ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 99; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 240.

¹⁵ The principles of according to the Hadith of Gabriel. For more on this refer to chapter 2.

¹⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 65; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan* 36.

equilibrium and the ultimate truth. It transcends the ten thousand beings and transforms all evils into surrender to it. Indeed, it is the real solicitude.¹⁷

Faith is constant because it is bestowed by God and shapes human behavior by continually necessitating the enactment of beliefs. Faith brings together knowledge and intention through action in righteous and pious behavior. Wang regarded *imān* as an essential concept that Sino-Muslims should understand in the original Arabic because of its central role in Islam.

Overall, it is clear that Wang believed that Arabic was critical for understanding Islam but was not the ideal means for discussing it with his intended audience. While Wang believed the best way to reach the Sino-Muslim congregation of his day was through the medium of Chinese, he still valued Arabic as a mode of elucidating on Islamic beliefs. The necessity of writing in Chinese for a readership that was not fluent in Arabic did not limit Wang from quoting from Arabic sources or using Arabic terminology. His writing indicates that on a few occasions he believed Arabic terms would be more productive in their heuristic value than a Chinese translation. While his audience may not have been able to read Arabic it is clear that he wanted them to know these phrases in their original language. Wang's periodic use of Arabic concepts and names demonstrates that there was a general parlance used by Wang and his audience that was peppered by key Arabic terms. The use of these terms without a thorough explanation indicates that his works were intended for an audience who would be familiar with such vocabulary. This linguistic register marks the hybridity of the scholarly language used in the early Sino-Islamic context. However, the absence of Arabic characters and the reliance on transliteration indicates that his readership would not have

¹⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 66; and Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 36.

the linguistic capability to decipher the terms directly. This early stage required a phonetic reliance on linguistic parallels and most probably was supported through extensive oral teaching.

Liu Zhi

Liu Zhi also highly valued the Arabic Islamic tradition and utilized it to inform his discussions of the religion. However, Liu rarely used Arabic to discuss Islamic theology or orthopraxy. He generally followed Wang's method of transliterating key terminology, places and people but greatly increased the application of these words. Additionally, Liu wrote two bibliographies that cataloged the Arabic works he referenced while writing his texts, listed in both a transliterated form and translated version. He also wrote an explanation of Arabic letters intended to demonstrate the theological import of their creation. This work also made a key shift in methodology by including Arabic words instead of transliterated interpretations of them. Liu Zhi's writings indicate that Arabic was becoming more important for the participants in the Sino-Islamic tradition. His recurrent use of various Arabic terms, the citation of specific texts, and the inclusion of Arabic in his writings indicated that Sino-Muslims were actively engaged with Arabic resources. Liu Zhi was the zenith of Chinese Islamic scholarship but a closer examination reveals that his audience was also participating in a broader discourse that included Arabic. Liu's various methods for approaching Arabic demonstrates that he was addressing a readership who anticipated discursive nomenclature that incorporated Arabic terminology, personas and texts.

Liu was well aware of the linguistic hurdles he would have to overcome.

However, he was also mindful of the benefits and necessity of including Arabic. In his introduction to the *Rituals of Islam* he discussed these challenges. He explained:

This book uses Islamic speech but uses Chinese to translate and come to (their meaning). In it there are things that can be translated and there are some that cannot be translated. As for recounting affairs and explaining doctrines (*daoli* 道理), these can all be translated. As for names of people and places these cannot all be translated. For instance, in the “Original Teaching” chapter there are a number of sages’ names, and in the “Pilgrimage” chapter there are mountain and city names, all which cannot be translated. Among these, there are still occasions where using translation does not grasp the meaning entirely and I reproduce the form. In such instances, the two types of translation methods are combined and are employed simultaneously. For instance, one term is *mu’min* (*mumin* 穆民), which is the laudatory title for Muslims, I translate it as “gentleman” (*junzi* 君子), or as “believer” (*xinshi* 信士), or as “follower” (*shunzhe* 順者). None of these translations is far off from the meaning of *mu’min*.¹⁸

Liu’s calculated methodology ensured that Sino-Muslim readers would be exposed to both the inherent meaning of important Arabic terminology and their aural forms. This approach revealed aspects of the Arabic discursive frameworks used throughout the Muslim world. Liu was attempting to prepare his readers for a more comprehensive exploration of Islamic sources in Arabic. While most Chinese readers would resonate with Liu’s sophisticated assimilation of Islamic theology in Chinese religio-philosophical expressions, many who desired a thorough investigation of Islam in Arabic would be situated to understand this discourse more easily. Liu’s writings demonstrate that his intended audience was actively involved in discursive systems that included Arabic and attempted to convey this terminology through Chinese.

Geography

Liu’s use of Arabic in his works generally reflected the style of Wang’s works by

¹⁸ Liu Zhi 劉智, *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 (*Rituals of Islam*), in *Qingzhen Dadian* 清真大典, vol. 15, (*The Great Canon of Islam*) (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), 57.

most often transliterating terms he viewed as necessary within his discussions. One aspect of Liu's writing that required the use of Arabic was his detailed description of place names. This was done most systematically in his account of the pilgrimage where he detailed the stations of ritual throughout the sacred environs. He mentioned Mecca (*moke* 墨克), Medina (*modena* 默德那), and the Kab'ah (*ke'erbai* 克而白) on several occasions. In Liu's account he first drew the readers' attention to the focus of journey, "The Heavenly Tower is none other than the hall of pilgrimage, also called the Heavenly Square (*Ka'ba* (*ke'erbai* 克而白)). ... It is located in Mecca (*moke* 墨克) in Arabia."¹⁹ Next he delineated the locations (*mīqāt*, pl. *mawāqit*) where Muslims enter the state of ritual purification (*ihrām*) before entering the sacred environs.

Mecca has five frontiers, which are the boundaries of the hallowed land. The eastern frontier is called Dhāt al-'Irq (*zhati erlige* 查惕二里格). It is the place where the people of Iraq (*erlage* 而刺格) adopt prohibitions. The northern frontier is called Qarn al-Manāzil (*ge'erni* 格而匿). It is the place where the people of al-Najd (*nazhidi* 納止地) adopt prohibitions. The western frontier is called al-Juhfah (*zhuhefa* 祝合珐). It is the place where the people of al-Shām (*shamu* 沙目) adopt prohibitions. The southern frontier is called Yalamlam (*yelanlan* 葉蘭蘭). It is the place where the people of Yemen (*yeman* 耶滿) adopt prohibitions. The central frontier is called Dhu'l-Hulayfah (祖里候來脯). It is the place where the people of Mecca adopt prohibitions.²⁰

He then detailed the minutia of the pilgrimage rituals and mapped out the sacred geography including places like Mina (*mina* 彌拿), Arafat (*erlifati* 爾立法堤), Muzdalifah (*muzidelifu* 母子得里脯), 'Aqabah (*ergebai* 爾肫白), al-Ṣafā (*suofa* 索法), and al-Marwah (*moerwa* 默爾襪). All of these locations are required stations during the ritual progression. Liu attempted to provide as much detail as possible in his description

¹⁹ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 104.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

of the *hajj* in order to enable Chinese Pilgrims to participate fully and be prepared for what they may encounter. Additionally, this detailed knowledge of the pilgrimage raised the general awareness of those who were not able to go to Mecca. The inclusion of Arabic here is necessitated by the content of the discussions but was reflective of Liu's overall approach, which included a growing number of transliterated Arabic terms. Arabic here makes the reader familiar with the world that is at once foreign and intimate because the geography is religiously saturated and meaningful to the Muslim reader. Liu made that landscape more personal by using its Arabic designations rather than glossing over the details and avoiding direct titles.

The Sages and Worthies

The Islamic prophets also received Liu's thorough examination. In this respect, Liu continued the precedent set by Wang and transliterated the names of the messengers. However, Liu offered a much more comprehensive account of the prophets than Wang and therefore included several new renditions of the prophets' names. Liu's overall goal in explaining the roles of the prophets was to demonstrate the importance of Muhammad and demonstrate that Islam has been continuously transmitted since the earliest messengers. Liu explained:

Beginning with Adam (*adan* 阿丹) until Muhammad (*muhanmode* 穆罕默德), among them are those who received the command and promoted the teaching. They are called sages indicating they cannot be wrong. While they were all sages, their character was not the same. If one arranges and counts them, there are four classes of sage. All those who received the command and promoted the teaching, having portents, without exception, are called sages, such as Saul (Arabic *Tālūt*, *tuolutai* 脫魯太) and Joshua (Arabic *Yusha'*, *yushiershi* 鬱實爾是). Those who received the command and promoted the teaching, having portents and regulating by virtue of the scriptures are called by the appellation revered sage, such as Seth (Arabic *Shīth*, *shishi* 施師), Jacob (Arabic *Ya'qūb*, *ye'ergubai* 葉而孤白) and Solomon (Arabic *Sulaymān*, *sulaimani* 素來馬尼). Those who received the command and promoted the teaching, having portents and regulating by virtue of

the scriptures, but who were able to act in accordance with the circumstances, and and neither increased or decreased the standard of the ancient sages, are called by the appellation great sage, like Noah (Arabic Nūḥ, *nuhai* 努海), Abraham (Arabic Ibrāhīm, *yibulaxin* 易卜拉欣), Moses (Arabic Mūsa, *musa* 母撒), David (Arabic Dāwud, *dawude* 達五德) and Jesus (Arabic ‘Īsā, *ersa* 爾撒). His receiving the command and promoting the teaching, especially receiving the great tradition, while abrogating the scriptures of the prior sages so that all under Heaven for ten thousand generations act in accordance with what is permitted, is called by the appellation utmost sage. This is only the single individual Muhammad, and none other. Now, the purpose of the whole way has been transmitted. Originally, it started from Adam. Adam received the True Lord’s clear command and transmitted it to Seth. Seth transmitted it to Noah. Noah transmitted it to Abraham. Abraham transmitted it to Ishmael. Ishmael transmitted it to Moses. Moses transmitted it to David. David transmitted it to Jesus. When Jesus passed away, there was none to receive his transmission. As a consequence, law and social order broke down and heresy rose in swarms. Six hundred years after the passing of Jesus, Muhammad was born. He received the command to expel evil creeds. He made known the clear orthodox teachings to inaugurate great harmony for ten thousand generations.²¹

Muhammad completed the transmission of Islam by continuing the teachings of earlier messengers. Liu emphasized that the teachings of earlier prophets were the same as the message of Muhammad. He added:

Our teaching, from Adam, going through Seth, Noah, and Abraham, has no less than a hundred generations of sages following upon the heels of one another in succession. It has continued up until Muhammad who assembled the great completion (of the teachings). Afterwards the worthies and scholars expound and propagate the main ideas of the religious doctrines. They did not know weariness, tirelessly transmitting and conferring it to others. The reception of the teachings has been maintained continuously until the present day extending over seven thousand years. Its systems and purview today resemble what they were in antiquity. The longer it has continued, the more it has flourished, and the more it has been transmitted and disseminated, the more distant it has reached. It sufficiently passes on for ten thousand generations, prospering in antiquity and today. How can this still be doubted?²²

Liu also made sure that his readers knew that Muhammad at once continued and revived the previous prophetic tradition by preserving and abrogating earlier teachings. This concept of continuity is essential for understanding the relationship of Islam to earlier

²¹ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 61.

²² Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 65.

traditions and Liu skillfully tied them together by specifically citing Judeo-Christian prophets by name. Using transliterations of Arabic names demonstrated that these messengers had a genuine role in the Islamic tradition and made the reader familiar with how they corresponded to the transmission of its teachings.

Liu also mentioned a few other figures from the Qur'anic worldview and the Islamic tradition. He described the division of male and female and explained the meaning of their relationship in marriage. For this subject he used Adam and Eve as the model and initiator. He explained:

Heaven and Earth are the origin of all living things. The Male and the Female are the origin of human life. The very first Male and Female, who inherited the Lord and established the ultimate. Adam is the primary ancestor of the ten thousand generations of humans under Heaven. From his axilla was born Hawwā' (*haowa* 好娃). They were joined together as husband and wife. Therefore, husband and wife originally emerged from a single body. They were born, began to age and increased gradually in number. They were matched as spouses for one another.²³

According to Liu, this relationship was initiated by Adam and Eve and, thus, necessitated specifically naming their role in its inauguration. On another occasion, Liu offered a story about Hagar (Arabic Hājar) and her son Ishmael (Arabic 'Ismā'īl), in order to add depth to the mythology behind ritual activity. He explained:

In the past, Abraham's wife, Hājar (*hazhe* 哈哲), the mother of the newborn sage 'Ismā'īl (*ysimayi* 易司馬義) was without water. Therefore, she searched looking between two mounds, rushing back and forth seven times but was unable to find any. She had no choice but to return only to see flowing water pouring out from under 'Ismā'īl's foot. This is today's Zamzam (*shenshen* 滲滲) spring.²⁴

This explanation tied figures to doctrine and gave ritual action greater contextualization

²³ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 117.

²⁴ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 108.

and meaning.²⁵ Liu also added doctrinal weight to assertions by quoting celebrated scholars of Islam. While describing proper burial practices he quoted the most famous scholar of hadith, Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (810-70). Liu mentioned, “The scholar al-Bukhārī (*buhālie* 補哈烈) said, It is proper that the front face (of the individual) should lay supine, in order to let the vital energy (*qi* 氣) and nature (*xing* 性) easily go out.”²⁶ Liu’s inclusion of this statement verified his position by adding traditional authority. This method matched Liu’s overall strategy of including Arabic in many instances to enhance a generic discussion.

Liu affectively delineated a variety of figures from the Islamic tradition and specifically outlined who these figures were. By naming exact individuals he revealed the rich literary tradition that he inherited. His readers would recognize these individuals by name and gain a greater understanding of Islam when used in specific contexts. If Liu avoided the specificity of naming people and opted for generalizations his readers would lack a firm contextualization of his teachings. Therefore, by adding Arabic transliterations of names he gave weight to his proclamations. When teachings regarding sagacity or ritual were situated within a narrative context they gained significance and meaning for the reader. They were then able to transcend generalizations about Islam and position it within the broader historical and mythological accounts they were familiar with.

Lexicon and Discourse

Liu also used a variety of technical Arabic terms throughout his works. This indicates that his audience expected and was familiar with a discursive lexicon that

²⁵ For more on traditional Muslim explications of the role of prophets, see Brannon Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (London and New York: Continuum International Publications, 2002).

²⁶ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 177.

included Arabic phrases. These expressions brought with them a fixed sense of authority and credibility. Many were key terms from the discursive tradition that Liu inherited and their use demonstrates his familiarity with this legacy and his promotion of it. His readers would greatly benefit from their inclusion because it unveiled a direct glance at an authentic Arabic discourse for understanding Islam without themselves having advanced knowledge of the language.

In this regard, Liu explained the relationship between Muhammad and the Qur'an with the other messengers and their scriptures. He explained that Muhammad:

Received the command and promoted the teaching, continuing the tradition which had been severed for six hundred years since the time of Jesus. He was called the *khātam* (*heting* 合聽), or seal. The True Lord handed down (to him) six thousand six hundred and sixty-six sections named the *al-furqān* (*fuerruni* 甫爾如尼).²⁷

Therefore, Muhammad both completed and sustained the tradition of the earlier prophets. In the Qur'an we are told that Muhammad was the seal of the prophets (*khātam al-nabiyīn*), thus indicating the finality of prophethood and the revelatory relationship with God (Qur'an 33:40). The message he received was sent down as the criterion (*al-furqān*) (Qur'an 25:1) for which one should judge right from wrong. As the final prophet, Muhammad's message, embodied in the Qur'an, built upon these earlier scriptures while clarifying and abrogating the teachings of these texts. Liu elaborated on this point:

These scriptures are the scriptures that the True Lord sent down to the previous sages. From Adam to Jesus, the world received one hundred in four categories, such as the Torah (Arabic *Tawrāt*, *taocite* 討刺特) (the name of the scripture revealed to Moses), the Psalms (Arabic *Zabūr*, *zebuer* 則逋邇) (the name of the scripture revealed to David), and the Gospels (Arabic *Injīl*, *yinzhilei* 引支勒) (the name of the scripture revealed to Jesus). These are all the great scriptures. Since the emergence of Muhammad, the True Lord completed the command and cut the leather, thus, conferring the scripture known as the *Furqān*.²⁸

²⁷ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 61.

²⁸ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 62.

Liu outlined where the Qur'an stood in relation to the continued revelatory message of God. He maintained that the Qur'an was preserving earlier teachings while repealing many of them. The prophet Muhammad was an important messenger serving as the final individual to receive a teaching from God. Liu highlighted this point by including terms from the standard discourse on this position, seeing Muhammad as the seal (*khātam*) and the message as the criterion (*al-furqān*). Liu, also outlined the Qur'an's relationship to other important scriptures. By using their direct titles he demonstrated the weight of the Qur'an in relation to these major scriptures.

Liu also spent a great deal of time explaining the logistics of worship and ritual. Throughout his discussion he included technical Arabic terms to help explain more fully how one enacted their belief or participated in Islamic ritual activity. He discussed the operations of prayer, explaining that one begins with the recitation of several verses from the Qur'an. Liu stated, "first recite the head chapter of the True Scripture (its name is called *al-Fātihah* (*fatihah* 法體海))."²⁹ He also explained how one made their intention to perform the prayer:

While raising one's hands, one utters aloud words of prohibition. This is to signify that one is entering the ritual. As for the words of prohibition, are words intended to repress all worldly thoughts of earthly affairs. (In Arabic it is named *takbīr* (*tekebi'er* 特克比爾)).³⁰

Takbīr is the formulaic pronouncement of God's glory, God is the Greatest (*Allāhu akbar*), which is invoked during each cycle of obligatory prayer. When one has finished the prayer they officially conclude the ritual. Liu explained that:

Looking right and left one says *salām* (*selan* 色蘭), and thereby exits worship. (*Salām* is the phrase whereby one shares their felicitations of peace with others. Is

²⁹ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 93.

³⁰ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 92.

not ritual worship the pure way of Heaven? As for using *salām*, it indicates the state of human affairs as one exits worship. When praying in a congregation, these words are for the congregation. When praying alone, these words are for the spirits (*shenming* 神明) on one's left and right.)³¹

These details sustain the reader's understanding of daily ritual activity while providing the theological underpinnings for those practices. Whether they knew the meaning of these terms or recognized them from obligatory practices Liu furnished the Arabic context that would be understood throughout the Muslim world.

Liu also detailed the key terms for understanding significant Islamic holidays, specifically *'Eīd al-'Aḏḥā*. He related, “Every twelve months there is one pilgrimage. The pilgrimage month is called the month of pilgrimage. (In Arabic, its name is *Dhu al-Hijjah* (*zulihouzhe* 祖立後哲)). The pilgrimage period is the eighth day of the month until the thirteenth day.”³² During this period Muslims perform the ritual slaughter of an animal, *Qurbān*. Liu explained:

***Qurbān* (*guerbang* 古而邦) is a ceremony for self-purification, through hoping to approach the pattern of the True Lord.**

Qurbān and pilgrimage have the same meaning. Altogether, they are intended to seek closeness to the Lord. However, while the pilgrimage is the ceremony of personally visiting the Heavenly House, *Qurbān* is for people from a far distance, who cannot reach the Heavenly House and is a ceremony that is practiced everywhere. Therefore, their ceremonial rules are more or less the same.³³

Dhu al-Hijjah is the final month of the Islamic calendar and on the thirteenth day Muslims celebrate *'Eīd al-'Aḏḥā* in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son 'Ismā'īl. *Qurbān* serves as replacement and reenactment of this sacrifice. Liu explained, “This worship is called the Gathering of Sacrifice. (In Arabic, it is called

³¹ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 93.

³² Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 104.

³³ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 111.

'Eīd al-'Aḏḥā (eryide'ezihā 二一德額子哈).”³⁴ Through the explanation of these of these Arabic terms Liu empowered his readers with a firmer understanding of the rituals they performed or hoped to participate in by adding depth to their meaning.

Liu also introduced a number of key Arabic phrases in relation to traditional spiritual processes to gain closeness to God. He introduced a widespread notion of a tripartite division of faith and practice in his discussion of the interdependence of belief and action. He explained:

The method of cultivating the way has three vehicles (*sheng* 乘) of preparation while the essence of principle is only one.

The vehicles sustain meaning. They are used to sustain the meritorious acts and cultivate the various methods of significance. They are employed to prepare the seekers of the way to examine the sequence for obtaining methods for pursuing advanced studies. Of these methods, prepare to have three vehicles, the first being called the vehicle of ritual (*lisheng* 禮乘). (In Arabic it is called *Shari'a* (*sheli'er* 舍礼二)). It fully conveys the way of Heaven and the way of humans and is the regulations for the cultivation of every matter and meritorious act. This is the fortitude of cultivating the qualities of virtue. Those people who cultivate the self with a single heart of devotion adopt this model. The second is called the vehicle of the way (*daosheng* 道乘). (In Arabic it is called *Tarīqa* (*tuolige* 脱礼格)). It fully conveys both the principle of humans and the principle of phenomena. Human nature is entirely in accordance with the model of the principle of Heaven. This is the limit of the principle of phenomena. Those people who entirely conquer the principle of humans adopt this model. The third is called the vehicle of principle (*lisheng* 理乘). It is also called the vehicle of truth (In Arabic it is called *Haqīqa* (*hejige* 合幾格)). It fully conveys all of the colors and appearances of disappearance, namely the conditions of no-self and no-thing. Causing the principle of Heaven and the pure nature of humans to return to the single source of sublime words and subtle righteousness. This is being able to conquer all the selfish desires of the personal self. Those people who completely turn towards the True Lord adopt this model.³⁵

In this scheme, the practitioner learns how to embody the religion through action, enact their faith through activity and unite with God through the annihilation of the self. This threefold model was typically expressed in circles that promoted an interpretation of

³⁴ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 114.

³⁵ Liu, *Tianfang dianli*, 64.

Islamic mysticism. The example was derived from a hadith that read, “The *sharī‘a* are my words, the *ṭarīqa* are my actions, and the *ḥaqīqa* is my interior states.”³⁶ While readers would have been introduced to these theological concepts throughout Liu’s writing, the Arabic designation for these methods strengthened their value. Students were now able to link their beliefs and practices with traditional discursive structures that provided a personal foundation for spiritual exploration.

Anthologizing Arabic

Another key development in Liu’s works was his inclusion of bibliographic information of the sources for his writings. Liu wrote two bibliographies that cataloged the Islamic works he referenced, listed in both a transliterated form and translated version. This demonstrates that he viewed his work in relation to these earlier texts. Liu was maintaining and sustaining their teachings by referencing these Arabic works. It also indicates that Arabic works were both accessible and in reading circulation, at least among scholars. We can also discern what resources Liu found valuable and determine which texts he believed required a broader readership through his transmission of their teachings.

Liu included lists of the sources he referenced in his *Tianfang xingli* (circa 1704) and *Tianfang dianli* (circa 1710). The *Tianfang xingli* listed 40 titles and the *Tianfang dianli* had 45, 19 of which were duplicates or almost identical, totaling 66 to 68 distinct works. Many of these works were Persian treatises but the inclusion of several Arabic works demonstrates the discursive influence Arabic had at this time. The first two titles were identical in both the *Tianfang xingli* and the *Tianfang dianli* and cite scriptural references. The first text was the Qur’an (*guerani* 古爾阿尼), translated as the *Treasured*

³⁶ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 99.

Mandate of the True Scripture (*Baoming zhenjing* 寶命真經). We have already seen that Liu utilized direct passages from the Qur'an on various occasions. The next treatise was a commentary on the Qur'an, the *Tafsīr al-Qāḍī* (*tefuxi'er gazau* 特福西爾噶最) or *Commentary on the True Scripture by al-Qāḍī* (*gazuizhenjing* 噶最真經注). This was a famous commentary, entitled *The Lights of Revelation and the Mysteries of Interpretation* (*Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl*), written by the judge (*qāḍī*) 'Abdullah b. 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī (d. ca. 1300). This was a well-known *tafsīr* that was reproduced throughout the Islamic world and received several commentaries of its own. Another important text Liu used to inform his writings was *al-Mawāqif* (*mowajifu* 默瓦吉福) or *The Complete Scripture of the Patterns and Causes* (*gezhiquanjing* 格致全經). This was *The Standpoints in the Science of Theology* (*al-Mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām*) by 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355). In addition to listing these two titles in the bibliography, Liu also specifically cited these texts in his *Root Scripture* (*benjing* 本經), the comprehensive prolegomenon to his *Tianfang xingli*. Liu cited *Commentary* in five instances and *Standpoints* on seven occasions. Most of the other texts listed by Liu are still unidentifiable. However, we see that the Arabic literary tradition held great weight in Liu's writings. While his citations were not direct translations of these texts he paraphrased their content in his *Root Scripture*. This opened up his readers to the authority and substance of these texts. Overall, he revealed a glimpse of the discursive tradition of these Arab theologians.

Characters of Faith

The dynamics of Arabic were also a prominent feature of Liu's work. In his *Explanation of the Islamic Alphabet* (*Tianfang zimu jieyi* 天方字母解義), he included a

description and interpretation of the letters of the Arabic alphabet. This was intended to make Sino-Muslims familiar with the forms and sounds of Arabic letters. Liu also went into the theological meaning behind the letters and what they symbolize when they join together in words, such as *Muḥammad*. It is evident that Liu believed personal knowledge of Arabic was valuable for Sino-Muslims. *Explanation of the Islamic Alphabet* unveils the world of Arabic to the Chinese reader at an elementary level but constructs this brief account on a theological foundation that demonstrates the greater value of the Arabic language. Overall, Liu wanted to enable Sino-Muslims to become more familiar with Arabic but situated the discourse within the Sino-Islamic vocabulary of his other works. This step towards greater inclusion of Arabic in the Sino-Muslim literary tradition was only a preliminary initiative that emphasized the importance of Arabic as a holy language, while the general incorporation of Arabic as a discursive tool came at a later date.

Liu began his discussion by outlining the composition of letters and how this related to their theological significance. He printed a large dot and explained, “This one dot is the original root of the ten thousand letters. Every letter comes from this one dot, emerging and being born by transformation.”³⁷ Liu was referring to the pointing diacritics that distinguish many Arabic letters from one another (*‘i jām*). The dot was likened to the oneness of God and His creative power. Similar to creation, the dot transforms itself to produce all the possible letters. He continued, “This one encircling is the original substance of the ten thousand letters. Every letter all from this one encircling are

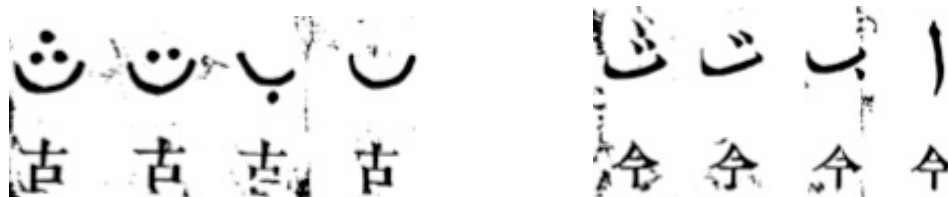
³⁷ Liu Zhi 劉智, *Tianfang zimu jieyi* 天方字母解義 (*Explanation of the Islamic Alphabet*) (Zhenjiang: Qingzhensi cangban 清真寺藏板, 1879), 4. Both sides of one page are listed as the same number, so while there is 48 pages the pagination only goes up to 24.

dissected and are considered two halves, interlocking the model to it.”³⁸



The lines of the letters make up their structure and shape, which joins them to their ancestral essence. Liu included this image that shows various letters in their ancient form. *Rasm* was the original written portion of the Qur’an that was composed of only lines and lacking diacritics and vowelings. The “encircling” (*wei* 圍), or linear script of Arabic letters, makes up the substructure of each letter that is then distinguished by the *’i’jām* dots.

In the subsequent few pages of *Explanation of the Islamic Alphabet*, Liu printed the ancient (*gu* 古) and contemporary (*jin* 今) forms of each letter of the Arabic alphabet and included a Chinese transliteration that reflected their pronunciation. He began with the first four letters, *’alif*, *elifu* 額立甫, *bā’*, *bawu* 巴物, *tā’*, *tawu* 他物, and *thā’*, *xiewu* 些物.



This section delineated how one would read, write, and pronounce the Arabic alphabet.

³⁸ Liu, *Tianfang zimu jieyi*, 4.

Liu discussed the entire Arabic alphabet including linguistic features such as *shaddah*, *hamza* and *maddah*, among others. This set the stage for the ensuing theological discussion Liu embarked on.

After the introduction of the form and sounds of letters Liu elaborated on their meaning and significance more broadly. Each letter embodies qualities of creation and Liu delineated how they were understood as both receptive and creative entities within the cosmos. The letters transformed and developed in relation to one another. He explained:

Again, we consider the one dot as the true substance. Therefore, movement is considered the encircling of the dot's subtle substance. As for *'alif* it is the transformation and circulation of the dot's subtle substance. As for *bā'* it is the manifestation of the alteration of vital energy and hidden principle of *'alif*. As for *tā'* it is the manifestation of the bright form and hidden vital energy of *ḥā'*. As for *thā'* it is the manifestation of the appearance and the principle view of *ḥā'*. As for *jīm* it is the turbidity of principle and vital energy becoming the same subtle color and mutually gathering together of *ḥā'*. The principle of the ten thousand transformations reaches this and orders (creation). *Hā'* is vital energy. The singularity of the Supreme Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) is the heavenly command circulating deeds and circulating substance. *Khā'* is the created being. Every correct life is every tool of the singular Supreme Ultimate. The forms of the ten thousand creatures reach this and halt.³⁹

Here we see that the first seven letters of the alphabet each produce each other in a reciprocal manner. They experience the same original formation as the rest of creation and enact the inner principles of the creative forces of God's operations. Some letters exemplify the qualities of created beings. Liu maintained that "*Dāl* is the heart. *Dhāl* is nature (*xing* 性). *Rā'* is knowledge. *Zāy* is the condition of appearance."⁴⁰ Still others represent creation itself, "*Sīn* is heaven. The sun and stars adorn what is below. *Shīn* is

³⁹ Liu, *Tianfang zimu jieyi*, 9.

⁴⁰ Liu, *Tianfang zimu jieyi*, 9.

earth. The disposition of the created beings exhibits what is above.”⁴¹ Liu continued to explain that *ṣād* is man, *dād* is woman, *ṭā’* is birds, *zā’* is beasts, *‘ayn* is metals, *ghayn* is stone, *fā’* is plants and trees, *qāf* is mountains, *kāf* is rivers, *lām* is ancient grains, and *mīm* is fruit.⁴² Finally, we learn that *nūn* is the birth of humans, *wāw* is the death of humans and *yā’* is the self. Each letter has an inner meaning that is irrespective of its linguistic function. This demonstrated that knowledge of the Arabic language was valuable for the Sino-Muslim audience in and of itself.

Liu continued to explain how the Arabic language gains various meanings as words are constructed with a selection of letters. This concern is exemplified through his discussion of the name *Muḥammad*. Here Liu outlined how the combination of four Arabic letters created three interrelated meanings. Liu observed:

Muhammad (Arabic *Muḥammad*, *muhanmode* 穆罕默德) is the name of our sage. Originally there were four writings and four sounds, *mīm*, *ḥā’*, *mīm*, *dāl*, when complete. Altogether there are three theories (about the word), the first is about the shape and form, the second is about grasping the meaning, and the third is about the theory of principle. The shape and form of Muhammad (*Muḥammad*) can be regarded as a human. The apex of its form, the *mīm*, appears as a head. The *ḥā’* appears as its arms. The second *mīm* appears as its belly. The *dāl* appears as a pair of feet. Altogether its appearance is like this.



In grasping the meaning of Muhammad (*Muḥammad*) he can be regarded as the universality of Heaven praising the God of universal Heaven. Altogether the spirit of the earth humbly respects its own True Lord and gives life to spirituality. Everyone praises his virtue and appreciates his beauty. Then, in the theory of principle, *mīm* is the fruit, *ḥā’* is the vital energy (*qi* 氣), and *dāl* is the heart. He is created as a special tree. Muhammad (*Muḥammad*) can be regarded as its seed and also as its fruit. Before Heaven and Earth, we can consider the seed as the original root of the ten thousand principles. After Heaven and Earth, we can consider the fruit the seal of the ten thousand sages. Therefore, the one word has a

⁴¹ Liu, *Tianfang zimu jieyi*, 9.

⁴² Liu, *Tianfang zimu jieyi*, 10.

pair of *mīms*. The *ḥā*’ resides in the vital energy between the pair of *mīms*. The Real resides between the before Heaven and after Heaven. Through this (process) before Heaven and after Heaven are completed and establish the command. Those who receive the command are the heart. Therefore the *dāl* resides at its end. One says the first *mīm* serves as the first substance (*awāl jawhar*), while the second is the second substance (*dovvom jawhar*). The *ḥā*’ is the world of spirits (*‘ālam arwāḥ*) and the *dāl* is the world of bodies (*‘ālam ajsād*). Generally, before Heaven and after Heaven are singular in God’s image (*‘ajalahu Āllah sūrah*). Therefore, it is said Muhammad is for God’s image (*Muḥammad ‘ajalahu Āllah sūrah*).⁴³

This single word has meaning in the physical combination of letters, as an exemplary model of behavior, and as personification of creation in totality. Liu demonstrated that name *Muḥammad* had beneficial qualities that could only be grasped through the Arabic iteration of its linguistic manifestation. Muhammad functioned at different levels of reality both as the source and product of creation, in addition to serving as the sagacious paragon of lived faith. Liu’s goal was magnify his importance through an explanation of his name. however, this further meaning is only inherent in the Arabic form of his name. Therefore, Liu’s introduction and description of Arabic was intended to detail the theological benefits of understanding the Arabic language.

Liu provided a rich tapestry of Arabic terminology that empowered readers’ ability to explore Islam more fully. The Arabic terms, individuals and concepts that Liu introduced to his readers would bolster their belief and comprehension of the various interpretations of Islam. It also prepared them for further study in primary Arabic sources. Liu’s explanation of the Arabic alphabet also gave Chinese readers firsthand interaction with the language. This text encouraged readers to closely examine Arabic for their own purposes because it linked comprehension of the language with further theological meanings. It is clear that Arabic was becoming more essential for readers of Liu’s works. We can surmise that Arabic was a noticeable feature of Sino-Islamic

⁴³ Liu, *Tianfang zimu jieyi*, 22-3.

scholarship and the scripture hall system. However, Arabic still played a minor but growing role in his oeuvre in general and his readers would come away with only a modest linguistic toolbox for approaching Islam through an Arabic discursive framework.

Ma Dexin

Ma Dexin was a cosmopolitan Muslim who was well aware of the shifting global reunification of the broader Muslim community during the mid-nineteenth century. His travels enabled him to witness the changing dynamics within the religious community and the rising importance of Arabic as a means for accessing Islamic knowledge and joining in contemporary debates. Ma increasingly employed Arabic as a means for discussing Islam while simultaneously writing in Chinese, often having his texts translated into the other language. This variation in Sino-Islamic compositional routine accentuates an ideological departure from the Sinic culture that continued to dominate *Han Kitab* scholarly activity up until the eighteenth hundreds. Ma envisioned Arabic as a tool for Sino-Muslims to engage the Muslim community in both lived physical realities and in theological literary debates. Through greater contact and communication with Muslims throughout the globe, Sino-Muslims were able to participate in dialogue primarily through their acquaintance with Arabic. Thus, Sino-Islamic scholarship of the *Han Kitab* began to cooperate in the perceived orthodox Islamic intellectual tradition by reintroducing this Arabic discursive framework.

Ma Dexin was the first Sino-Muslim to fully incorporate Arabic into his body of work. Ma's works included the translation, transliteration, and inclusion of complex vocabulary from the Arabic Islamic tradition. Many of Ma's Arabic texts expressed Islam using the same terminology and sources as popular Arabic texts from the Middle East.

While he followed Wang and Liu's method of transliterating key expressions, places, and people, he strove to deliver a more thorough presentation of Islam through firsthand knowledge of Arabic discourse. The recurring inclusion of Arabic with Chinese texts indicates that Ma's Sino-Muslim audience was eager and prepared to embrace Arabic resources. Like Liu before him, it is evident that Ma encountered readers who anticipated a linguistic register that included Arabic terminology. However, Ma's repeated use of Arabic as the central language for writing texts illustrates that his students were becoming well versed in Arabic religious discourse. For Ma, Arabic served as the link between divergent linguistic and cultural Muslim communities both theologically and pragmatically and provided Sino-Muslims tools for accessing an authoritative literary tradition for understanding Islam. Ma's elevation of Arabic signaled a repositioning of linguistic authority in Sino-Islamic discourse. Arabic now served as the means for accessing Islamic authority and engaging in religious understanding. By promoting this discursive trajectory Ma prepared Sino-Muslims for living as a universal Muslim fellowship of believers where they could play an active role in Islam's further development. This linguistic revision also situated Sino-Islamic thought within a broader discourse and symbolically wed it to the long Islamic intellectual tradition. Therefore, while Ma's Arabic teachings readied Sino-Muslims for inclusion in early modern religious dialogues it also elevated their social and intellectual status as authoritative scholars.

Inclusion and Transliteration

Many of Ma Dexin's texts echoed the methods employed by his predecessors by including transliterations of numerous Arabic terms, names, and places. The preceding pages have unveiled a number of these terms, such as Muḥammad, 'Alī, Arafat, *'umrah*,

salām. However, his writings expose the instructive intentions of the author because he includes the Arabic for each of these items in a number of works. The didactic nature of these insertions demonstrates that Ma wrote as a teacher who was trying to enable his readers to grasp the complexities of the Arabic language within a natural and familiar setting, the Chinese text. In a number of works, including *Opening Love for Ritual and Law* (*Lifa Qi'ai* 禮法啟愛), *Precious Instructions from the Veritable Records* (*Shilu Baoshun* 實錄寶訓), and especially in *Record of the Pilgrimage Journey* (*Chaojin Tuji* 朝覲途記), Ma repeated the same pattern when using Arabic words. Within these Chinese treatises he would first write the Arabic, followed by the transliteration of the term, in this manner, *ziyāra/jiyalei* 擠呀勒, 'Arafāt/erleifate 爾勒法特, *salām/seluemu* 色略母, Muḥammad al-Būṣīrī/*muhamode busuili* 母哈默德補雖里, al-Shāfi'ī/*shafeier* 沙菲爾. This procedure provided Sino-Muslim readers with the original Arabic script, which would simultaneously reinforce their practical knowledge of the language and their discursive understanding of its meaning. The pedagogical objective became unambiguous as the reader encountered reoccurring words, where Ma repeated this method and continuously provided the Arabic text, in *Precious Instructions from the Veritable Records*, for example, Ma always wrote Adam/*adan* 阿丹. Placing Arabic within the context of the Chinese text moved beyond the aural recollection that was evoked by transliteration alone, as in the work of Wang and Liu. This inclusion also indicates that his readers were capable of reading Arabic, at least in a very basic fashion. The texts in which Ma used this method were instructive or informational treatises versus his more philosophical works that either did not include Arabic or were written entirely in Arabic. This may indicate that these specific works, a primer on prayer, a prophetic genealogy,

and *hajj* diary, were intended for a more general audience than his other work, which were possibly written for more advanced readers who had command of Arabic or knowledge of Classical Chinese philosophical concepts. His overall goal of preparing students for participation in a global Muslim community is reflected in his placement of specific Arabic words within these Chinese treatises. Overall, the repeated inclusion of Arabic terms alongside their Chinese transliteration signals that many of his readers were familiar with written Arabic and would appreciate its inclusion.

Linguistic Parity and Sororal Composition

Another group of Ma's work demonstrates his admiration for the Arabic literary tradition from which he culled many of his ideas. In *Description of the World* (*Huanyu Shuyao* 寰宇述要)⁴⁴ and *Sources of the Islamic Calendar* (*Tianfang Liyuan* 天方曆源) Ma employed a parallel system of producing the same text in both Chinese and Arabic. This fraternal pairing of treatises in two languages reveals dual goals. Providing corresponding texts enabled Ma's Muslim readers to enhance their linguistic skills in complex primary sources and explore authentic Islamic discourse in Arabic. The Arabic version of *Description of the World* provides various details for tracking time via the solar system and how one can understand their position in the cosmos. For example, Ma explained:

The universe is round in its production and is similar to the nature of quicksilver. ...Every period [of time] mentioned is natural and its environment is divided into twelve signs of the zodiac. They are Aries (*al-ḥamal*), Taurus (*al-thawr*), Gemini (*al-jawzā*), Cancer (*al-saraṭān*), Leo (*al-asad*), Virgo (*al-sunbula*)⁴⁵, Libra (*al-*

⁴⁴ *Description of the World* was first published in Chinese in 1862 and later in Arabic in 1868. According to Isaac Mason's catalogue the text is also titled *Description of the Islamic World* (*Tianfang Huanyu Shuyao* 天方寰宇述要). See Isaac Mason, "Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 56 (1925): 207.

⁴⁵ *Al-Sunbula*, which literally means "the ear of corn," was a named used for the constellation Virgo (*al-Adhrā*'), as it was the brightest star. See J. Ruska, "Al-Sunbula," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1913-34), 553.

mīzān), Scorpio (*al-‘aqrab*), Sagittarius (*al-qaws*), Capricorn (*al-jadī*), Aquarius (*al-dalū*), and Pisces (*al-hūt*).⁴⁶

Ma explored various topics describing how the heavens and earth work together in harmony and how we can witness God’s unveiling through creation. Muslim students would advance their knowledge and gain an advanced linguistic register, which they could employ to discuss the cosmos in scientific language with other Arabic speaking Muslims abroad. Through his assertion of the primacy of the Islamic sciences Ma reaffirmed the accuracy of the Islamic knowledge. Ma further verified his opinions by physically locating his knowledge in a foreign area where Arab Islamic sciences were practiced. He spent several years living in Singapore exploring these disciplines and claimed, “I tried what they said yearly and found the precision of the Arab dates to be correct.”⁴⁷ For Ma’s Muslim audience these comments reassured their confidence in their Islamic heritage and provided them with practical skills in reading through Arabic scientific materials or discussing them with coreligionists.

A second objective was to demonstrate the continued contribution of the Islamic sciences to Chinese civilization. As one can gather from the titles of these texts they outline geography, astronomy, astrology, and calendrical systems, which played an integral role in advancing Chinese civilization throughout history.⁴⁸ When writing in Chinese, Ma located earlier Muslim thinkers in a position of local authority by clothing them in clear Chinese symbolism. He explained:

Indeed, Great Heaven (*huangtian* 皇天) hangs down an expansive image thus showing humankind the Highest of Heavens (*jiutian* 九天), and the sun and the

⁴⁶ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Huanyu Shuyao* 寰宇述要 (*Description of the World*), (Arabic Volume, n.p., 1868), 2-3.

⁴⁷ Ma, *Huanyu Shuyao*, (1868): 2.

⁴⁸ For an introduction to the history of Islamic sciences in China see, Kōdō Tasaka, “An Aspect of Islam Culture Introduced into China,” *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko* 16 (1957): 75–160.

stars. You must be aware of this. Therefore, ancient sages and former kings comprehensively examined it and wrote their scriptures of history to cause later generations to examine the form. By means of differentiating righteousness and observing appearances thereby one now realizes the principle of this.⁴⁹

The Chinese version of *Description of the World* positioned the Islamic sciences and the “sages” and “kings” who probed the cosmos in an authoritative posture. The non-Muslim Chinese audience reading this text would become clearly aware of the contribution of Islamic writings on the development of indigenous Chinese sciences. Ma also achieved this by relating the Islamic sciences to Chinese knowledge. When Ma translated the passage above in the Chinese version of *Description of the World* he linked the Arabic understanding of the zodiac to traditional Chinese notions of the Earthly Branches (*dizhi* 地支), the traditional manner of timekeeping in pre-modern China.

Our surroundings are divided into the twelve constellations of the zodiac, Aries (*baiyang* 白羊), the eleventh palace of the twelve earthly branches (*xu* 戌), Taurus (*jinniu* 金牛), the tenth palace of the twelve earthly branches (*you* 酉), Yin and Yang are the central palace, Cancer (*jujie* 巨解), the eighth palace of the twelve earthly branches (*wei* 未), Leo (*shizi* 獅子), seventh palace of the twelve earthly branches (*wu* 午), Gemini (*shuangnu* 雙女), the sixth palace of the twelve earthly branches (*si* 巳), Libra (*tiancheng* 天秤), the fifth palace of the twelve earthly branches (*chen* 辰), Scorpio (*tianxie* 天蝎), the fourth palace of the twelve earthly branches (*mao* 卯), Sagittarius (*renma* 人馬), the third palace of the twelve earthly branches (*yin* 寅), Capricorn (*mojie* 磨羯), the second palace of the twelve earthly branches (*chou* 丑), Aquarius (*baoping* 葆瓶), the first palace of the twelve earthly branches (*zi* 子), and Pisces (雙魚), the twelfth palace of the twelve earthly branches (*hai* 亥).⁵⁰

Here Ma unites Islamic astronomy with Chinese calendrical systems. Ma used the dual composition method to achieve the simultaneous goals of supporting the Sino-Muslim community and raising the status of it among Chinese literati who may read his texts on

⁴⁹ Ma, *Huanyu Shuyao*, (1868): 1.

⁵⁰ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Huanyu Shuyao* 寰宇述要 (*Description of the World*), (Chinese Volume, n.p., 1862), 4-5.

the natural sciences. In these types of texts Ma documented the significant contribution Muslims made to scientific advancement while establishing a corpus of parallel texts for Sino-Muslim readers to master new knowledge.

Describing Discourse

One of Ma's most important contributions to Sino-Islamic intellectual development was the reintroduction of Arabic as practical discursive language. Prior to this period Arabic was overshadowed by the Persian literary tradition, and was seldom used outside of ritual observances. Ma wrote a number of works solely in Arabic for various purposes, such as *The Story of Adam (Qiṣat Adam)*, *Secrets of the Return (Asrār al-Ma'ād)*, *Lies of the Christians (Akādhīb al-Naṣāra)*, *Yearning (Mushtāq)*, *Stimuli (Munabihāt)*, *Complete (Kāmil)*, *The Definite (al-Muhkam)*, *Verification of Prayer (Taḥqīq al-Ṣalāt)*, *Logic (Manṭiq)*, *Consistent Grammar (al-Naḥw al-Mutasiq)*, *Consistent Morphology (al-Ṣarf al-Mutasiq)*, and *Islamic Admonitions (al-Naṣā'ih al-Islāmiyya)*.⁵¹ The diverse subject matter indicates that Ma hoped his readers and students would be able to advance their knowledge of Islam in its mother language regardless of their intellectual interests. These works would also prepare Muslims to engage with the broader Arabic speaking Muslim world by providing them with the linguistic apparatus for complex discussion and debate.

One of the most basic but essential features of Arabic Islamic texts is their opening invocation, the *bismala*. The Qur'an repeatedly begins chapters with the declaration "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" and most written works throughout Islamic history have followed this pattern. Ma's texts are no different

⁵¹ It seems likely that many of these texts are no longer in existence. I was unable to locate copies of these texts for my research.

from his coreligionists'. He began *Description of the World, Sources of the Islamic Calendar, A Breviary of Ritual and Prayer* (*Lifa Jiejing* 禮法捷徑), *Translation of the Five Chapters of the Root Scripture* (*Benjing wuzhang yijie* 本經五章譯解), and *Folding the Inner Feelings through the Study of Principle* (*Lixue Zhezong* 理學折衷) with *bismala*. In each of these examples the *bismala* is written in raised *Ṣīnī* style calligraphy.⁵²



As mentioned earlier, many Muslims invoke the *bismala* whenever they do something of worth. The visual admiration for the *bismala* and the literary replication of this tradition in Ma's texts demonstrates that he held the *bismala* in high regard. This simple act of duplicating this prefatory remark carried great theological merit and reflects the continued efforts by Ma to unify the Muslim community through discursive processes.

Ma employed Arabic in a variety of discursive settings but one of the most lasting uses was in advanced theological treatises, including, most notably, *Lixue Zhezong*. The text is intended to introduce Ma's readers to a variety of theological opinions and a specific literary discourse that is employed in Arabic Islamic thought. This process already begins from the opening passages. Ma started *Lixue Zhezong* in a traditional manner with reverence for God:

Praise be to God, the Most High⁵³, the Majestic⁵⁴, the Generous⁵⁵, the Protector⁵⁶, the Beautiful, the Holy One being free from obstruction, the Promenade

⁵² This sample is from Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Tianfang Liyuan* 天方曆源 (*Sources of the Islamic Calendar*) in *Qingzhen Dadian* 清真大典 (*The Great Canon of Islam*) vol. 21 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), 880.

⁵³ This and the following three epithets are some of the "Most Beautiful Names (*al-'asmā' al-ḥusnā*) of God. There is a hadith that explains, "God has ninety-nine names, one hundred minus one, and whoever

exceeding in glory, the Exemplification, the Invitation, and the Source of Peace upon its emanations. By the most perfect revelation, with the perfection of the most beautiful, and upon his family and the companions who have reached their destination. By pursuing towards the conclusion of their high predilection is the following treatise.⁵⁷

From the beginning of his treatise Ma employed terminology and wrote in a manner that would be familiar to Arabic readers anywhere. For example, he used several of the ninety-nine names of God (*al-’asmā’ al-ḥusnā*), which are repeatedly used to honor God in His various attributes in Islamic texts throughout history.⁵⁸ This opening passage also mirrored the passionate oaths found in many of verses the Qur’an.⁵⁹ In testifying to the veracity of his writings he swore by the inspiration of the Qur’an, the perfected model of Muhammad, his decedents, and his closest companions. This general schema was replicated in Ma’s other key Arabic theological text, *Translation of the Five Chapters*, where he begins by saying, “Praises due to God, lord of the worlds.”⁶⁰ This phrase is uttered by millions of Muslims during each prayer as part of the recitation of the opening chapter of the Qur’an, *sūrat al-fātiḥa*. He also continued his reverence for the Prophet Muhammad and those associated with him, “And peace be upon the messenger

memorizes them will enter paradise.” For an overview see Jon Armajani, “Names of God,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. Juan Campo (New York: Facts on File Publications, 2008), 515-7. For a brief explanation of the name the Most High (*al-’Alī*) see Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, *The Name and the Named: The Divine Attributes of God* (Louseville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2000), 102-3. This name is derived from Qur’anic passages, such as 4:34, 31:30, 42:4, and 42:51.

⁵⁴ *al-Jalīl* (Q 55:27), Halveti, *The Name and the Named*, 109-10.

⁵⁵ *al-Karīm* (Q 27:40, 82:6), Halveti, *The Name and the Named*, 110-2.

⁵⁶ *al-Walī* (Q 4:45, 7:196, 42:28, 45:19), Halveti, *The Name and the Named*, 134-5.

⁵⁷ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Lixue Zhezhong* 理學折衷 (*Folding the Inner Feelings through the Study of Principle*) (N.p., 1867), 1.

⁵⁸ For a classical discussion on the *al-’asmā’ al-ḥusnā*, see David Burrell and Nazih Daher, *Al-Ghazali: The Ninety- Nine Beautiful Names of God* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1992).

⁵⁹ See, for example, Qur’an 91:1-8: “By the sun in its morning brightness and by the moon as it follows it, by the day as it displays the sun’s glory and by the night as it conceals it, by the sky and how He built it and by the earth and how He spread it, by the soul and how He formed it and inspired it [to know] its own rebellion and piety!”

⁶⁰ Ma Dexin 馬德新, *Benjing wuzhang yijie* 本經五章譯解 (*Translation of the Five Chapters of the Root Scripture*) (N.p., 1867), 1.

Muhammad and his family and companions.”⁶¹ In these remarks Ma offered various models for understanding traditional praises and affirmations of the Islamic tradition and its sources.

Throughout these texts Ma developed detailed explanations of the cosmos and the unfolding of creation using technical Arabic terminology from traditional discourses. In *Lixue Zhezhong*, for example, he sketched an outline of the complex relationship between God and His creation. In trying to explain the true nature of this association he described the various manners in which one can understand God while remaining aware of the possible misunderstandings. He suggests:

Almighty God is sometimes necessary (*wājib*), sometimes possible (*mumkin*), sometimes eternal (*qadīm*), sometimes newly arrived (*ḥādath*), sometimes Creator (*khāliq*), sometimes created (*makhluq*). For in here, it is possible to stray from the path of God’s unity (*tawhīd*).⁶²

These interpretations depend on the perspective one views the relationship between God and creation. Ma develops God’s role further, “He is its [creation] quintessence (*‘ayn*) because of His impression. . . . Surely, God is the donor for the creature (*makhluq*).”⁶³

When viewed from the perspective of creation, the creatures are utterly reliant on God for their contingent existence. Ma expanded this notion, “Almighty God is an eternal (*qadīm*) necessity (*wājib*) and the world is a possible (*mumkin*) new arrival (*ḥādath*).”⁶⁴ Creation is only a possibility and is totally dependent on God for its existence. When viewed from the perspective of God, creation is the manifestation of His actualized qualities. Ma clarifies this relationship:

He [God] says to them the world is the manifestation of the Real (*al-ḥaqq*), and the Real is the hidden (*bātin*) of the world. He says to them before manifestation

⁶¹ Ma, *Benjing wuzhang yijie*, 1.

⁶² Ma, *Lixue Zhezhong*, 3.

⁶³ Ma, *Lixue Zhezhong*, 2.

⁶⁴ Ma, *Lixue Zhezhong*, 3

the world is the quintessence of God, and after manifestation the Real is the quintessence of the world. This impression that God, glorious is He, is the substance of the world and the world is His image, it means that God distinguishes and differentiates and turned towards existence (*mawjūd*) but is intrinsically different.⁶⁵

Here we see that God is clearly distinguished from creation while being innately tied to it and the foundation of it. This description of creation needs to be understood in relation to God's essence (*dhāt*) and His attributes (*ṣifāt*). Through revelation and the signs of creation God unveils Himself to His creation. However, God does not manifest His essence, which is eternally unknowable in and of itself. Ma explains, "It is not the Essence of God, the Holy, that turns towards bodies of existents (*mawjūdāt*) because the unified Essence is not ever manifested."⁶⁶ *Al-ḥaqq* is the foundation for creation because it provides creation with its appropriate position in the cosmos and clothes the creatures with their correct mode of being.⁶⁷ However, the reality of *al-ḥaqq* is never detectable apart from the things themselves. Therefore, as Ma insists, "Verily, the essence of the Real is the essences of the things."⁶⁸

Ma's discussion reflected ongoing conversations about the nature of the cosmos throughout history. Overall, creation is the manifestation of God's attributes (*ṣifāt*), thus, making Him knowable, while His eternal essence (*dhāt*) remains unknowable from the human perspective. The debate about the relationship between God and creation is highly complex and technical. What we can gather from Ma's presentation is that he was well-versed in traditional fields of theology and philosophy and wanted to make that

⁶⁵ Ma, *Lixue Zhezhong*, 2-3.

⁶⁶ Ma, *Lixue Zhezhong*, 5.

⁶⁷ The full meaning of *al-ḥaqq* is not encompassed through English translations, where the term is usually rendered as the Real, the Truth, the Right, whereas *al-ḥaqq* also embodies the notion of giving each existent entity their duty. This idea becomes clearer when understood in relation to a term from the same Arabic root, realization *taḥqīq*. The act of realization requires that each thing is given their rightful due, thus, making it true or real as a complete entity.

⁶⁸ Ma, *Lixue Zhezhong*, 7.

knowledge available to the Sino-Muslim audience who were able to read Arabic. His texts provided a clear explanation of this sophisticated discourse using normative technical vocabulary, which was employed by authoritative Muslim authors over time, such as al-Kindī (d. ca. 866), al-Fārābī (d. 950), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Suhrawardī (d. 1191), Fakr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209), Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240), Nāṣir al-Ṭūsī (d. 1273), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1307), and Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1641), among numerous others. Ma adapted his explanation from these earlier figures and presented in a coherent and approachable manner. For the Sino-Muslim audience these Arabic texts on metaphysics further reinforced their theological understanding of the tradition and their linguistic capacity for engaging Muslims across geographical boundaries. They gained a linguistic toolbox from these works, which could be mastered and replicated in new dialogues.

Maintaining the Inheritance

Despite the evident benefits and advantages of mastering Arabic as a means for participation in a global Muslim community, Ma did not outline this as an explicit objective. However, it is clear that he valued Arabic as a crucial linguistic instrument for gaining Islamic knowledge that was not accessible through Chinese language alone. When we look at Ma’s contribution collectively it does become clear that his combined efforts towards knowledge of scripture, linguistic dexterity, and religious mobility, were aimed at better situating Sino-Muslims in a globally networked world. Ma witnessed firsthand the rewards of interacting with coreligionists in intellectual and communal settings and encouraged his students to go abroad. Advanced knowledge of Arabic was not only a means for basic communication on these journeys but also a venue for forging webs of transformative learning processes created through universal Muslim dialogues.

Discursive proficiency enabled Sino-Muslims to navigate complex systems of thought and lived practice, thus, providing the foundation for personal experiential growth.

One of the most conclusive signs that indicated the new prominence of Arabic after Ma Dexin's reintroduction of it was the replication and reproduction of Arabic discursive patterns by Ma's direct students. Therefore, despite Ma's intentionality when emphasizing Arabic in Sino-Islamic intellectual discourses his disciples continued to concentrate on the language and it was employed by them as a means for engaging broader international Muslim discourses in both literary and lived environments. The most revealing examples of Ma's influence on later generations of Sino-Muslims are seen in his foremost students, Ma Lianyuan 馬聯元 (1841-1903) and Ma Anli 馬安禮 (d. 1899). These two individuals embraced Ma Dexin's model of simultaneously combining the local conservation of Chinese language interpretations of Islam with a concerted return to Arabic Islamic sources, by both consuming and producing them. For Ma Lianyuan and Ma Anli, Arabic did serve as a tool to engage the local and global Muslim communities through the transmission and transference of Islamic knowledge, and as foundation for connecting with global networks of Islamic education.

When Ma Lianyuan and Ma Anli are examined out of historical context they may appear to have little in common but in actuality they are two sides of the same coin. Ma Lianyuan wrote primarily pedagogical texts aimed at shaping the growing institutionalization of Islamic education in Southwest China, which were almost exclusively penned in Arabic. He traveled widely throughout the Muslim world making the pilgrimage on two occasions, spending years studying with masters in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Ma Anli's never left China and his works are nearly all written in Chinese, and those that do include Arabic are part of a larger Chinese text.

He also focused more on theological and philosophical content in his writing and generally continued the *Han Kitab* tradition established by Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi, and Ma Dexin. At first glance, one may wonder how these figures all fit together and relate to Arabic discourses but both Ma Lianyuan and Ma Anli preserved and developed Ma Dexin's efforts to extend the boundaries of Sino-Islamic scholarship to global Muslim intellectual conversations.

The role of Arabic in shaping Ma Lianyuan's Islamic identity and its importance in establishing his religious knowledge is identifiable from one's first introduction to him. Ma Lianyuan referred to himself by his Arabic name in his texts, 'Abd al-Hakīm al-Ḥajj al-Sayyid Muḥammad Nūr al-Ḥaqq ibn al-Sayyid Luqmān al-Ṣīnī. The name immediately situated Ma Lianyuan in a family lineage of Islamic scholars, "The Servant of the Wise, the person who has gone on pilgrimage to Mecca, the Sayyid [descendent of the Prophet], Muḥammad, the Light of the Real, the son of Sayyid, Luqmān, of China."⁶⁹ Arabic also enabled Ma Lianyuan to travel and study in various places using Arabic as a way to communicate despite local linguistic diversity. Ma Lianyuan made the *hajj* pilgrimage on two occasions using Ma Dexin's *Record of a Pilgrimage Journey* as his guide. Throughout his years abroad he learned from several well-known scholars, such as Raḥmatullāh Ibn Khalīl al-'Uthmānī al-Kairānawī (1818–1891) in India. Arabic provided Ma Lianyuan with the linguistic tools and discursive ability to engage Islamic scholars abroad. His success in these endeavors among the global Muslim community is compelling evidence for demonstrating Ma Dexin's success in reintroducing Arabic.

⁶⁹ Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 15 and 630.

Ma Lianyuan's engagement with Arabic is also evident by the numerous texts he wrote: of his more than twenty works only about three were written in Chinese, the remainder were primarily in Arabic, but also some in Persian. He came from a long lineage of Islamic scholars originating from Central Asia. He studied under his father as a child and by the age of twenty he had mastered Chinese, Arabic, and Persian languages. Ma Lianyuan took over as the leader of the Muslims community for his aging father in Hexi. At that point Ma Lianyuan focused his attention on reworking institutional religious instruction, and we can recognize these instructional goals from the types of texts he wrote. Ma Lianyuan's efforts were all focused towards greater understanding of Arabic language and primary knowledge of scriptural resources and practices, which were chiefly centered on linguistic skills, introduction to basic practices, and the preservation and dissemination of the Qur'an.

The initial goal of Ma Lianyuan was basic linguistic skill that would enable his students to access Arabic works. This emphasis on grammar is seen in his Arabic texts, such as *First Rules of Character Methodology* (*Zifa chucheng* 字法初程), *A Summary of Character Methodology* (*Zifa cuoyao* 字法撮要), and *First Rules of Arabic Grammar* (*Tianfang wenfa chucheng* 天方文法初程).⁷⁰ These works reflect the direct goals of his teaching initiatives that revolved around the use of Arabic. The second group of work focused on fundamental understandings of the core teachings and scriptures of Islam. Ma wrote Arabic instructional materials introducing basic practices, *The Islamic Divisions of Faith* (*Tianfang fenxin bian* 天方分信篇), reproductions of important hadith in Arabic,

⁷⁰ As we saw with many of Ma Dexin's texts, it was commonplace to title any work used by the Sino-Muslims with Chinese. Often an Arabic title was also given but not always. Ma Lianyuan followed this procedure when titled his texts.

Treasured Saying of the Utmost Sage (*Zhisheng bayou* 至聖寶諭), and produced a reader of Qur’anic passages in Arabic, *Interpretation of Qur’anic Verses* (*Haiting Chiayi* 孩聽解譯). His aspiration to advance Sino-Muslim knowledge of primary scriptures is also demonstrated by his efforts to assemble a complete wood-block print edition of the Qur’an. Ma Lianyuan presided over this project and after three years the hand calligraphed block-print edition was published.⁷¹

Numerous students used these works in the newly structured educational system that Ma Lianyuan was implementing during the same period in which he was composing theological treatises for more advanced readers. The most celebrated of these was *Sublime Words on Nature and Principle* (*Xingli weiyan* 性理微言), or *Subtleties* (*Laṭā’if*) as it was titled in Arabic.⁷² This work is especially interesting because the *Laṭā’if* is actually Ma Lianyuan’s translation of Liu Zhi’s *Root Scripture* (*Benjing* 本經), the prolegomenon to his magnum opus, the *Tianfang xingli*. The *Root Scripture* is a summation of the main elements of the *Tianfang xingli* presented in a succinct and poetic manner. Ma Lianyuan’s decision to translate the *Root Scripture* into Arabic demonstrates that he highly valued the Sino-Islamic tradition of his predecessors despite not following their literary style or covering similar intellectual content in his own writings. It also shows that he believed Liu’s representation of Islamic theology was exemplary and worthy of a wider distribution outside of the Chinese speaking community. The translation also served as another text that enabled Sino-Muslims to become familiar with complex Arabic Islamic discourses that would be used abroad. Having access to a widely

⁷¹ Lin Chang-Kuan, “Three Eminent Chinese ‘Ulama’ of Yunnan,” *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 11 no. 1 (1990): 111.

⁷² A complete translation and contemporary edited edition of the Arabic text is available in Murata, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, 102-57.

available and regularly read Chinese source in Arabic translation made the complicated Arabic literary setting more accessible. A cross analysis of the two texts in Chinese and Arabic made the continued interpretation and understanding of technical terminology. To further the develop the understanding of these key texts Ma Lianyuan also wrote his own commentary on his translation, *Commentary on the Subtleties (Sharḥ al-laṭā'if)*. From Ma Lianyuan's contribution we can see that at the dawn of the twentieth century Sino-Muslims used Arabic in order to understand their own literary tradition in relation to the larger Islamic discourses by participating in its evolution. While the majority of his works were in Arabic he also aimed to circulate the religious heritage of his Chinese coreligionists with the broader non-Chinese speaking world. His translations of early Sino-Islamic works into Arabic and commentary on them are clear evidence for the conscious inclusion of Sino-Muslims in global Muslim world.

Ma Dexin's other primary student was Ma Anli 馬安禮 (d. 1899), whom we have met already as Ma Dexin's frequent Chinese scribe and translator. Ma Anli generally highlighted the Chinese side of his teacher's work and did not pen an Arabic work himself. He was a master of employing neo-Confucian vocabulary to express an advanced literary explanation of Islamic theology. Therefore, his contribution to the continuation of Arabic Islamic discourse in the Sino-Islamic environment can easily be overlooked. However, he aimed to reintroduce Sino-Muslims to widespread Islamic theological and spiritual concepts from foundational Arabic texts.

Ma Anli accomplished this objective in his most important work, the *Islamic Book of Odes (Tianfang shijing 天方詩經)*. The *Tianfang shijing* was a massive work written in a highly stylized manner utilizing the rich palette of Chinese motifs and

expressions. It was published in three volumes, consisting of 386 pages, and manuscripts copies were generally of better quality than most other Chinese printings of Islamic texts. The project was first conceived by Ma Dexin in 1867, who planned to write the work himself, but was completed by Ma Anli and published in 1890. The title *Tianfang shijing* makes reference to the Chinese *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經), the earliest existing collection of Chinese poems from roughly the tenth to seventh century BCE. The *Book of Odes* was edited by Confucius (551-479 BC), codified by scholars during the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), and included as one of the Confucian Four Books and Five Classics (*sishu wujing* 四書五經). The *Shijing* became the model of poetics in the Chinese literary environment and the text was influential in literature, religion, and politics throughout all of Chinese history up until the present. Ma Anli was trying to evoke this authority and influence for his text as he wrote from the Islamic (*Tianfang* 天方) context. Therefore, *Islamic Book of Odes* was meant to be the foremost example of Islamic poetics and demonstrate how the influence of the Islamic tradition on human experience.

This goal of spreading global Arabic Islamic discourses to the Sino-Muslim audience becomes very lucid when we dive into the text itself. Ma Anli's *Tianfang shijing* is translational commentary of the most famous Arabic Islamic poem, the infamous *Mantle Ode* (*Qaṣīdat al-Burdah*) by the Egyptian poet Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Būṣīrī (d. /1294-7).⁷³ The *Mantle Ode* is a devotional homily in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. As the story goes, the poem was written after al-Būṣīrī

⁷³ The full title of the poem is *Celestial Lights in Praise of the Best of Creation* (*al-Kawākib ad-Durrīya fī Madḥ Khayr al-Barīya*). For a translation and analysis, see Suzanne Pickney Stetkevych, *The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 70-150.

had a dream wherein he recited his poem to the Prophet who in return offered al-Būṣīrī his mantle (*qaṣīdat*). This offering from Muhammad also cured al-Būṣīrī of his paralysis when he awoke. The impact of the *Mantle Ode* among Islamicate societies is difficult to quantify but is one the universal and ubiquitous features of Muslims everywhere. There are hundreds of commentaries, numerous translations, and thousands of Arabic manuscripts elaborately decorated to hand written personal copies. It has been popularized throughout Muslim societies in every corner of the world and is recited often in congregations as devotional practice. It has even been employed as talismans and amulets for positive physical and psychological effects.⁷⁴ In Ma Anli's text he presented the original Arabic poem along the top of the page with his Chinese translation below, followed by his own commentary. In some copies of the manuscript the Arabic poem itself along with the Chinese translation were written in bright red ink while the commentary was written in black ink. The *Tianfang shijing* provides another valuable text for determining the conceptual relationship and intertextuality between Chinese and Arabic in Sino-Muslim scholarship. Ma Anli's major work reveals the continued value of Arabic Islamic discourses by Sino-Muslims. The translation of this key Arabic work demonstrates that Ma Anli also believed that even Sino-Muslims who were not conversant in this language and discourse, should have knowledge of the *Mantle Ode* in order to benefit from it.

Ma Dexin instituted an authoritative linguistic discourse that fostered wider participation by Sino-Muslims in a global world where Arabic could be used as a *lingua franca*. His audience was eager and able to exercise their social and intellectual authority through the act of writing and reading in Arabic. Ma Lianyuan and Ma Anli derived their

⁷⁴ Stetkevych, *The Mantle Odes*, 70-71 and notes.

distinctive perspectives on the authority, uses, and role of Arabic from Ma Dexin's dynamic integrated approach to the Islamic tradition. Their continued engagement with the Arabic Islamic tradition is persuasive evidence that Ma Dexin played an instrumental part in instituting a new discursive environment in the Chinese setting. It is evident that his students greatly appreciated this new discourse and their attempts to facilitate dialogue with the broader Muslim community in their own work reveals the effects of Ma Dexin's guidance on his students. Ma Dexin's success was confirmed by the continuation of this Arabic discourse that was maintained by succeeding generations of Sino-Muslims throughout the twentieth century. Further, the diglossic nature of Ma Dexin's works imbued symbolic meaning of from various authoritative traditions to his readers, which underlined the rich contributions of both their Muslim and Chinese forefathers. The methods Ma Dexin employed, inclusion of Arabic terminology, parallel Chinese-Arabic texts, translations of Arabic works into Chinese, authentic Arabic theological discourse, all urge readers and students to reproduce traditional Islamic linguistic and thematic patterns in their understanding of Islam. This advocacy for intimate knowledge of Arabic Islamic discourse derives from Ma Dexin's aims and expectations for his students, which anticipate the increased contact between Sino-Muslims and their Muslim neighbors throughout the world. Overall, for Ma Dexin, the use of Arabic served a dual purpose: foremost it prepared students to gain discursive fluency and engage in global debates pertaining to Islam, and it socially and intellectually situated Sino-Muslims within the broader Islamic heritage and symbolically united them with their Muslim coreligionists.

Conclusions

Over time Arabic was increasingly shaping Sino-Islamic discourse in the *Han Kitab*

literature. The approaches to Arabic in the works of Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi, and Ma Dexin demonstrate a shifting engagement with the language, and changing perceptions towards linguistic authority and utility. The increased employment of the language demonstrates that Arabic Islamic knowledge was becoming more essential in non-Arabic speaking geographies. During the late modern period, Sino-Muslims perceived themselves in a networked environment where travel and communication was becoming increasingly possible and achievable. Thus, Arabic and Islamic knowledge became the key to understanding Sino-Muslims relation to the larger Muslim community. This transition is observable from the expanding inclusion of not only Arabic language but also Arabic Islamic sources in each successive generation's works. In the seventeenth century, Sino-Muslims were generally disconnected from their coreligionists abroad. Therefore, for Wang Daiyu Arabic served as a source of personal inspiration and authority. He used examples of prophets and mystics to inform his understanding of the Islamic tradition and included select examples for his readers and included several key Arabic terms in transliteration. Wang presented only what he believed his readers needed at the time, authentic knowledge that was derived from traditional sources but removed from the original language and Arabic discourse. Liu Zhi generally maintained this method of transliterating by adding numerous individual names, phrases, and adding geographical titles. The increasing breadth of this hybrid lexicon indicates Liu believed his readers should master a detailed Arabic lexis even without knowledge of the language itself. He also provided the sources that informed his understanding making Arabic knowledge accessible for those who wanted to seek it out in original texts. Instructional developments and growing numbers of exceptional students in the scripture hall system made Arabic texts themselves accessible to a few. Liu's inclusion of more and more

Arabic expressions implies that students would recognize these terms and readers would have a heightened knowledge of Arabic Islamic discourse. Therefore, during the eighteenth century, Liu's contribution indicate a movement towards direct understandings of Arabic discourse through terms and awareness of key texts as a source of knowledge. In the nineteenth century, Sino-Muslims were developing material connections with Muslims through advancements in travel. Networks of knowledge were beginning to be created between Muslims in China and those abroad in the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Ma Dexin's efforts show that intellectuals were conscious of these changing circumstances and aiming to ready themselves for participating in global Islamic dialogues. Ma created a discursive space where Arabic was central. His complete incorporation of Arabic enabled his students and readers to engage Islam from a more universal perspective. The reproduction of Arabic terms in Chinese texts, corresponding Chinese-Arabic texts, translations of Arabic works into Chinese, and the introduction to authentic Arabic theological dialogues, encouraged and aided in the mastering and duplication of an authentic Arabic Islamic discourse. This in turn facilitated Sino-Muslim incorporation and participation on the global Muslim community. Discursive fluency and linguistic expertise were the key elements for Sino-Muslims in this process. Ma anticipated the growing need for knowledge of Arabic and the continuation of this Arabic discourse by successive generation in the twentieth century demonstrate his success.

The use of Arabic reflected the position of Sino-Islamic scholarship and education within specific historical periods. As the possibilities and expectations for Sino-Muslims to participate in the larger Muslim world grew Arabic became increasingly essential. However, while these authors' engagements with Arabic were distinctly dissimilar their efforts to straddle multiple traditions in the creation of a new discursive framework were

parallel. The varying levels of importance given to the Arabic language and Arabic Islamic discourse over time reveals that they were seen as discursive linguistic tools that situated Sino-Islamic scholarship within traditional modes of Islamic knowledge. Their use of Arabic discourses bound them to a perceived orthodox and authoritative Islamic tradition when they employed established discursive frameworks through writing, reading, and referring to Arabic. Sino-Muslims envisioned themselves in global world where contact and communication between diverse local communities was desirable for the veracity and authenticity of Sino-Islamic scholarship. Therefore, Arabic became the most salient quality Sino-Muslims could outwardly demonstrate to indicate their competence, comprehension, commitment to the Islamic tradition in a global environment.

***Conclusions: The Great Transformation
Chapter Six***

The diversity of the global Muslim community has garnered much attention from scholars who have shown the variety of ways that Muslims conceptualize the world and enact those beliefs through lived practice. This study adds to that conversation by revealing the rich intellectual tradition of Sino-Muslim scholars and how they navigated through their Islamic faith in relation to the local Chinese environment. Where this study diverges from other research is in its aims. Here I strive to understand shared Islamic beliefs and issues from the perspective of an understudied community located in specific geographical and historical circumstances. Sino-Muslim convictions about universal Muslim concerns, such as the directive to perform the pilgrimage, the desire to understand and engage the Qur'an, and the necessity to use Arabic, reveal a deeper understanding of the variety of Islamic perspectives. By examining the specific circumstances of Sino-Muslim reinterpretations of these three issues we determine that even at the micro-level of Islamic thought there is variation in perspective. Consequently, the seeming consensus in opinion toward a given category, principle, or object among a group of scholars must then be analyzed according to the various factors that shape individual interpretations. Thus, this study encourages us to question the perceived unity of "schools of thought," such as the *Han Kitab* tradition. Despite the continuation of a parallel discourse between Sino-Islamic works it is evident that certain categories were reinterpreted and reexamined in relation to specific times and places. What does this then lead us to believe about Muslims more generally? Does this not encourage us to reassess the usefulness of the parlance of our times, which situates perspectives into neatly organized categories, such as Salafi, Wahhabi, Islamist, Traditionalist, Progressive, etc.?

Altogether, this study encourages and anticipates future analysis and investigation of various Muslim perspectives regarding the *hajj*, the Qur'an, and the use of Arabic, leading towards a collaborative exploration of the themes of pilgrimage, scripture, and language in religion more generally.

This examination of the varying attitudes of leading Sino-Muslim intellectuals on the issues of pilgrimage, scripture, and language serve as a productive model for investigating religious categories and their meaning within particular schools of thought. The work of Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (1590-1658), Liu Zhi 劉智 (1670-1724), and Ma Dexin 馬德新 (1794-1874) demonstrate that significant conceptual variation is possible in relation to the value and meaning assigned to various religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, by tracing the contours of Sino-Islamic thought through the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, we have provided a lens on how fundamental beliefs and practices within Islam are negotiated and justified according to social, geographical, intellectual, and historical factors.

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is a universal religious category for a practice that believers perform in both local and global contexts. For all of our authors, the *hajj* was seen as an essential religious obligation but its performance was not routinely emphasized until it was a more feasible practice within the nineteenth century. Prior to this the pilgrimage was explained in the context of principles of belief and cosmography, contrary to its usual performative implications. Through each successive generation authors promoted the pilgrimage to a greater extent as it became more easily achievable by Sino-Muslims and completed by the authors themselves. Overall, we see that accompanying the global integration of Sino-

Muslims was the increasing emphasis on the obligatory observance of the pilgrimage through performance rather than its role as a station of personal faith and cosmic position.

Wang Daiyu never went on the pilgrimage himself and did not fully assert the necessity of its performance in his writings. For him the pilgrimage formulated a sacred geography with the Ka'bah as its axis. In general, he outlined the theological foundations of the *hajj* and demonstrated how the pilgrimage should serve as a fundamental principle of faith rather than an actual observance to be performed. During the mid-seventeenth century many Sino-Muslims would have embraced this perspective because they did not have the means to perform the *hajj* and were significantly Sinified, lacking depth of religious knowledge, linguistic capabilities in Islamic languages, and culturally settled in Chinese society.

Liu Zhi's presentation concerning the *hajj* was not too dissimilar. He reiterated the cosmographical mapping that the pilgrimage completed while also outlining the theological ideals embodied in the ritual activity fulfilled during the pilgrimage. Despite his detailed description of the pilgrimage activities he never performed the *hajj*. Additionally, he offered various excuses for omitting the performance of pilgrimage, which justified the general lack of success in going to Mecca by Muslims in Southeastern China. The cosmopolitan nature of Nanjing in general and the rich collegiality within the local Scripture hall school during the mid-eighteenth century when Liu was writing may have also contributed to the ambivalence towards the necessity to perform the *hajj*.

Ma Dexin clearly shifted his views about the *hajj* from those of his predecessors. He went on *hajj* himself and spent several years in study in various centers of learning throughout Asia and the Middle East. In his estimation, the pilgrimage was as essential to the spiritual health of the community as daily prayer. Therefore, he vigorously advocated

for its performance and provided a guidebook for those who wanted to follow in his path to the Middle East. Ma certainly took great care in exploring the theological and spiritual meaning of the *hajj* but saw it foremost as a religious duty to be performed by all Muslims. Additionally, Ma stressed the transformative power of the communal engagement during the pilgrimage, which for him required his own rectification of many practices and beliefs. Therefore, the benefits of the pilgrimage were not merely theoretical but embodied and experienced personally. Ma's own pilgrimage experience attests to these merits gained during the *hajj*. His writings and personal embodiment of the practice inspired a general renewal in Mecca centered devotional practices, which led many of his successors to make the pilgrimage a priority. His views were reflective of an age of Islamic renewal that was ongoing throughout the Muslim world, which perceived Arabia as the locus of authentic Islam. The Sino-Muslim community in Southwest China had to negotiate its position vis-à-vis both their broader religious community and their local Chinese setting. Ma Dexin emphasized the performance of the *hajj* because of its capacity to rectify and renew religious participation while also promoting pan-Islamic attitudes that would eventually lead to the incorporation of Sino-Muslims into the broader religious community.

Scripture

Modern scholarship has debated the role of the Qur'an, and scripture more generally, in the shaping of local understandings of religious traditions. This study continues this conversation by demonstrating that contrary to traditional religious understandings of scripture, it should not be approached as a post-canonical text that has

a singular fixed meaning or purpose within a tradition.¹ From this investigation we can conclude that scripture was at different points in time theologically informative, legally authoritative, and practically valuable and spiritually efficacious. These various dimensions do not exclude the other but for our authors we witnessed a shifting emphasis on one of these aspects in relation to an intellectually developing audience. Our authors' translation and engagement with the Qur'an altered over time while simultaneously maintaining the approaches of their predecessors. Sino-Muslim authors steadily moved from the use of thematic borrowings of Qur'anic motifs to carefully replicated translations for legal assertions to a clear intention to offer the Qur'an in its entirety for Sino-Muslims. Overall, their procedures for engaging the Qur'an were generally reflective of their specific historical circumstances, personal methodological approach to scripture, and specific discursive settings.

The audience the *Han Kitab* literature addressed during the early period of Scripture Hall education was Sino-Muslims who lacked the linguistic skills to access Arabic and Persian Islamic texts. Since Wang Daiyu's treatises were intended for this Sinicized readership he explained Islam in the rich literary tradition of the Chinese classics. Within this context, Wang chose to present key Qur'anic teachings rather than introduce the Qur'an as a source in and of itself. Therefore, scripture was theologically informative but direct understanding of the Qur'an's contents was not essential for this local audience. So in lieu of precise and persistent translations Wang occasionally translated the same passage in various ways and often liberally adapted passages of the Qur'an. An outline of key themes and beliefs in Wang's own voice would be more

¹ Most recently, Carl Ernst argued against approaching the Qur'an from the perspective of traditional "orthodox" readings of its meaning. Carl W. Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide, with Select Translations* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

appropriate for seventeenth century Sino-Muslim religious sensibilities. Wang's limited application of the Qur'an itself demonstrates that direct literal translations were not necessary to sketch an Islamic worldview. For him, Qur'anic sentiments and universal propositions were not limited by their exact enumeration in the Qur'an. Wang's adaptation and transformation of Qur'anic patterns, themes, and elements show that scripture was the source of essential religious knowledge but their sacred meaning transcended their scriptural formulation.

Sino-Islamic education and the *Han Kitab* literature had significantly matured during the few generations between Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi. By the mid-eighteenth century in southeast China, advanced Sino-Muslim students in the Nanjing school regularly studied Chinese, Arabic, and Persian texts. The discursive flexibility of this scholarly environment enabled Liu to utilize the Qur'an in a variety of ways. Altogether, Liu shifted translational registers as he moved across discursive settings in theology and liturgy, providing both symbolic and precise renderings of the Qur'an. In this regard, Liu viewed the Qur'an as the foundation and guide for notions of faith (*imān*) and submission (*islām*). When discussing issues of faith Liu often merely provided allusions to scripture but in relation to obligatory practices Liu offered a translation that was very close to the letter of the Qur'an. Overall, it is evident that when attempting to elicit scriptural authority of the Qur'an for detailing ritual activity Liu translated passages in a precise manner. However, he aroused Qur'anic themes and motifs without directly translating them when explaining theological premises. Liu's unique translation methods and his circle of advanced students allowed him to make advanced theological arguments and intertextual references while also relying on the Qur'an's legal authority for issues of practice and its sacred source for issues of belief.

During the nineteenth century, travel to the Middle East, access to Islamic texts, and personal interaction between Muslim communities were becoming more attainable for Sino-Muslims. Ma Dexin was a perfect example of this new participatory mode of Muslim engagement. For him, greater knowledge of the content and structure of the Qur'an facilitated Sino-Muslims' participation in communal debates and dialogues, which would promote global Muslim cooperation and exchange. Ma's conviction that knowledge of the Qur'an equipped Sino-Muslims to engage their coreligionists drove him to provide a complete translation of its contents. Ma's holistic approach to the Qur'an demonstrated that he valued the Qur'an not only as a source of belief and legal guide but also as spiritually and practically effective in and of itself. His translation was for the most part faithful to the original Qur'an and systematic in its presentation. Presenting the Qur'an as a whole document opens it up to readers and reveals its complicated literary structure, the non-linear progression of its narrative, and mystical features, such as the "isolated/opening letters." The exclusion of these features, and other distinctive idiosyncrasies that are denied visibility within intermittent translations, challenge the sacred revealed nature of the Qur'an itself. Ma valued the Qur'an as a revealed text, whose content and structure were intentionally meaningful, and, therefore, believed it should be available for the Sino-Muslim audience as a complete text. Overall, a complete portrait of the Qur'an was key to Ma Dexin's vision of promoting congregational unity and exchange. Knowledge of the Qur'an equipped Sino-Muslims with the necessary intellectual tools for participating with their coreligionists in a manner unattainable in previous generations. In the end, Ma attempted to provide Chinese readers with a text that was representative of its Arabic origins, a sacred, irregular, and thoroughly complex scripture.

Language

Language carries with it a variety of consequential effects within religious traditions. Its symbolic meaning may also vary significantly depending on the community within which it is being defined or explained. Due to the sacred nature of Arabic for Muslims it holds meaningful religious and communal implications. It serves as a theological and practical unifying feature, which binds together divergent linguistic and cultural Muslim communities. It also links communities that lie at a geographic periphery from Mecca to a continuous authoritative tradition. Sino-Muslim authors were custodians of this perceived unbroken Islamic intellectual tradition when employing an Arabic Islamic discourse within the Chinese context. For Sino-Muslims within the developing *Han Kitab* tradition the emphasis on Arabic shifted based on historical circumstances. The growing networked environment, where travel and communication among Muslims was increasingly possible, required greater capabilities in Arabic. The inclusion of Arabic language, and eventually also Arabic Islamic sources, operated as a discursive linguistic tool that situated Sino-Islamic scholarship within traditional modes of Islamic knowledge. Language in this case legitimized Sino-Muslim scholarship within the broader Islamic framework and aided in the formulation of an authentic form of Islam, which reflected notions of fidelity, inclusion, and identity. Finally, Arabic also functioned as a visible sign of authenticity for Sino-Muslims, which demonstrated the community's adequacy, apprehension, and allegiance to the Islamic tradition in a global setting.

Wang Daiyu's limited engagement with Arabic was primarily articulated through his inclusion of key Islamic terms and allusions to prominent Muslims, which were all expressed through Chinese transliteration. These few examples of the inclusion of Arabic served as a fount of inspiration and authority within Wang's texts. These references

served to inform his readers of the sources of his knowledge, making his presentation both authoritative and authentic. Direct engagement with Arabic would not have been necessarily consequential for the Sino-Muslims Wang addressed in his works during the early development of the *Han Kitab* literature. He certainly valued these traditional sources of knowledge but did not feel compelled to present this work in its original Arabic, for it would have been both nearly linguistically impossible and religiously ineffective. However, the content of the Arabic literary tradition that Wang drew upon provided authentic Islamic knowledge to a readership that required established doctrines in an accessible form. Therefore, Wang relied on this discourse to inform his own writings but presented them through a familiar framework for Sino-Muslims rooted in Chinese culture.

The intellectual environment of Muslim education in eighteenth century Southeast China was deepening in scale and sophistication. Liu Zhi's work demonstrates that at this time there was a movement towards greater inclusion of Arabic discursive markers and signals within Sino-Islamic discourse more generally. This was reflective of the growing number of advanced students who were becoming increasingly familiar with Arabic. Liu responded to these new circumstances by explaining the theological significance of Arabic letters and citing his primary sources for readers who could access original texts. More generally, Liu Zhi reproduced Wang's method of using Chinese transliteration to express Arabic terminology but introduced many new phrases, expressions, names, and locations. The increasing scope of this hybrid lexicon indicates that Liu valued Arabic discursive elements even if they were removed from their natural intellectual setting. He wanted readers to be familiar with fundamental Arabic terminology even if they were otherwise ignorant of the language. Liu's inclusion of a multitude of Arabic expressions

suggests that by the mid-eighteenth century awareness of Arabic Islamic discourse through technical terminology and knowledge of key primary texts was a salient feature of Sino-Islamic discourse. This movement toward further direct engagement with Arabic discourse through texts and terminology would continue to increase throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Accompanying the growing connections between Sino-Muslims and Muslims abroad during the nineteenth century was the necessity to master Arabic, for both its practical functionality and its religious resonance among coreligionists. Material connections between Muslims were developing within the blooming networks of knowledge in the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Ma witnessed these encounters and anticipated the growing need for knowledge of Arabic among Sino-Muslims. Therefore, he produced a discursive space where Arabic was essential and reintroduced an Islamic Arabic discourse within the Chinese framework. Throughout his texts Ma incorporated a variety of methods for exposing readers to the linguistic elements of Arabic and its discursive components. He transliterated Arabic terminology and created Chinese translations of Arabic sources but also wrote original compositions entirely in Arabic, parallel Chinese-Arabic texts, and included Arabic in many of his Chinese texts. All of these strategies helped introduce Sino-Muslims to an authentic Arabic Islamic discourse, which could then be digested and reproduced in global Islamic dialogues among the broader Muslim community. The extensive inclusion of Arabic within Ma's work facilitated Sino-Muslim participation and allowed his readers to view Islam from a more universal perspective. Knowledge of recurring Islamic debates in Arabic enabled Sino-Muslims to participate in contemporary communal dialogues from a perspective rooted in tradition. The continuation of an Arabic Islamic discourse by Ma's

intellectual heirs demonstrates that the importance of discursive fluency and linguistic expertise would only grow stronger among the ensuing generations of Sino-Muslims.

The Great Transformation

This study presents a intellectual history of Sino-Islamic thought, as examined through key figures in the *Han Kitab* tradition, and provides a panoramic view of the historical development of a Sino-Muslim scholarly perspective on Islam in the early modern period. This study demonstrates that even the most fundamental features of a given intellectual tradition are contested, challenged, and questioned based on specific social, geographical, and historical circumstances. The shifting attitudes of Sino-Muslim authors toward the pilgrimage, the Qur'an, and the use of Arabic all increased in importance as these scholars were absorbed into wider orbits of social and intellectual interconnections. The scholars examined here, Wang Daiyu (1590-1658), Liu Zhi (1670-1724), and Ma Dexin (1794-1874), illustrate that even within a tradition with a perceived consensus among its foremost representatives there can still be substantial variation in perspectives on a given topic. Positions alter and shift in relation to changing conditions and demands of the local community in relation to broader transformations among the global community.

The effects of historical and intellectual alteration are most evident in the central subject of this study, Ma Dexin. As the focal point of this study, he reveals how individuals draw from multiple sources of authority and shape their perspectives in relation to both local and global influences. His various reworkings of tradition were impacted by intra-Muslim politics of Yunnan, Sino-Muslim interaction with the Qing government and military, the preceding Sino-Islamic literary tradition, alongside intellectual currents that Ma encountered during his time abroad in the Middle East,

South, and Southeast Asia between 1841-1849. His presentation of Islam was reflective of his combined experiences as both a local Sino-Muslim in a time of conflict and as a participant of a global religious community that was debating how to revive its tradition. In both cases Ma challenged conventional understandings of the role of local and global influences upon Muslims. With respect to his role in local Sino-Muslim society he reveals that Sino-Muslims did not indiscriminately object Qing policies or perceive an inherent discontinuity between their Islamic faith and their Chinese culture. Ma clearly believed that Confucian values outlined a potent moral ethic for human behavior and he often explained these Chinese perspectives within Islamic value systems. Regarding his connections with Muslims abroad he illustrates that religious reform and revival occurs in various forms. He did not entirely reject his local Chinese interpretive framework of understanding Islam in exchange for a reproduction of an Arabized interpretation of Islam that relied solely on original scriptural sources of Islam. Rather he combined the local tradition of *Han Kitab* discourse with tools for enabling his students and readers to participate in Muslims dialogues and debates that were occurring throughout the global community. These included greater knowledge of the Qur'an and the functional ability to not only communicate in Arabic but also contemplate Islam in an Arabic discourse. Both of these capabilities would be required for Sino-Muslims to fully benefit from their encounters with other Muslims as they performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. Thus, he emphasized the benefits of both his local discursive system and the advantages of participating in global Muslim dialogues. Altogether, he illustrates how Muslims in China successfully navigated multiple points of reference to forge an authentic Sino-Muslim identity.

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