



THE HISTORY OF HUI MUSLIM MINORITY IN
MING DYNASTY: A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
STUDY

BY

SAKEENAH JI BINTI ABDULLAH @ SHAN SHAN JI

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International Institute of Islamic Thought and
Civilization
International Islamic University
Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The history of Islam in China could be viewed over five dynasties namely Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasty. The Yuan Dynasty was considered as the Golden Age of Islam in China. However this thesis focuses on the development of Islam in the Ming Dynasty. Islam in Ming dynasty went through a process of adjustment and adaptation. The term 'Hui' was coined in this era. The assimilation process took place by Emperor's decree because he no longer wanted to see the Chinese divided into different groups. As a result Muslims who were mostly descendents of Middle East origins gradually with Chinese society and started to live and practice Chinese culture but still had a strong understanding of Islamic teachings. By this time, their identities were hardly distinguishable from the Han majority. In other words, social interaction was at a peak during this era. Besides that, they were given full freedom to fulfill duties as Muslims. Mosques were built in high-populated areas like Nanjing and Xinjiang. Islamic arts and literature continued to grow. Indeed, it obviously showed the continuation of the glorious era of Yuan in its own way. Therefore this research will be an effort to explore the conditions of Islam in Ming and how it impacted the history of Islam in China.

ملخص البحث

إنّ تاريخ الإسلام في الصين قد يمكن النظر فيه علي مراحل الخمس للأسر الحاكمة و هم كالتلي: تانغ، صونغ، يوان، مينغ و كنج. و يمكن القول بأنّ فترة الحكم للحاكم يوان كانت العصر الذهبي للإسلام في الصين. علي كل حال، إنّ هذا البحث يركز علي تنمية وتطوّر الإسلام في عهد الحاكم "مينغ". في تلك الفترة كان الإسلام يمرّ بعملية تعديل و تلاؤم، و في نفس الوقت تمت إشتقاق اللفظ "هوء" (Hui). حينئذ تمّ عملية الإستيعاب بين المسلمين و غيرهم بقرار الحاكم الإمبراطور، فقط لأنه ليس لديه الرغبة في أن يرى الصينيين منقسمة إلي مجموعات مختلفة. و نتيجة لذلك، كان المسلمون الذين هم من أصول ألسرق الأوسط بدأوا حياتهم تدريجياً مع المجتمع الصيني و كذلك تعايشهم و ممارستهم الثقافة الصينية، و مع ذلك مازالوا علي فهم دقيق لدينهم الإسلام و تعاليمه. و بحلول ذلك الوقت كان من الصعب التمييز بين هذه الجاليات المسلمة هويةً من غيره "هان" (Han) التي هي الأغلبية. و بعبارة أخرى إنّ التفاعل الإجتماعي كان في ذروته في هذا العصر. و إلي جانب ذلك كانت للجالية المسلمة الحرية التامة في ممارسة واجباتهم الدينية . بُنيت المساجد في مختلف الأحياء السكانية المكتظة مثل مناطق "نانجينغ" و "سجانغ"، و كما أن الأدب و الفنون الإسلامية واصلت نموها. وبالتأكيد قد تبين إستمرار العصر المجيد في عهد "يوان". و لهذا يكون هذا البحث جهد إستطلاعي لأوضاع الإسلام في فترة ولاية "مينغ" و مدى تأثيرها علي تاريخ الإسلام والمسلمين في الصين

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Civilization and Arts.

.....
Sayyid Ajmal M. Razak Al-Aidrus
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Civilization and Arts

.....
Baharudin Ahmad
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and is accepted as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Islamic Civilization and Arts.

.....
Ibrahim M. Zein
Dean,
International Institute of Islamic
Thought and Civilization

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDY**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This theoretical research is conducted to explore the Islamic history in China, with the special reference of the Hui minority during the Ming Dynasty. The sources of this study are based on some written work in Chinese and English language. The Ming era (1368-1644) is considered by Chinese historians as one of the greatest dynasties in the history of China, and this comes to light after investigating their earlier contacts with the Muslims. It can also be said that this period can be considered as the Golden Age of Islam in China due to a large tolerance for minorities and the Islamic faith by Chinese empires.¹

The main objective of this study is to observe the social and cultural adaptation of Hui Minority during the Ming Dynasty. It is commonly debated by historians whether Islam was established in China during the Tang Dynasty or (I deleted if) it came to China even before the Tang Dynasty. But most historians assert that it was at its peak during the Yuan Dynasty.² The academic writings of Muslims in these two dynasties are enormous but very few are written with regard to Islam in the Ming Dynasty. Furthermore, there seems to be a dearth of Muslim scholars in the early Ming Dynasty. Although Islamic education (mosque education) started during the later Ming period, it continued for nearly 100 years during which scholars began to translate the Arabic books into Chinese which marked a beginning for the better education of Islamic teaching among Hui. It was indeed a great contribution made by

¹ Mohamad Yasin Owadally, *The book of a great Sahabi: Sa'ad Ibn abi Waqqas(r.a) and Muslims in China*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.s.Noordeen, 1996).

² Wang Guangping, Ma Yong, "Islam in Guangzhou at the time of Tang and Song," *Journal of Guangzhou University (Social Science Edition)*, Vol. 5 (No 1), Jan 2006.

Consequently, this was usually designated as a Chinese dynasty in contrast to the Mongol Yuan dynasty that preceded it and the Manchu Qing that followed, with both being labeled as foreign conquest dynasties.⁵ For the nation as a whole, the reality was far more complicated than this, and the history of the three dynasties are what brought about the history of other ethnic groups as well as that of the majority Han.

In the history of Muslim communities in China, the Ming dynasty was seen as a crucial turning point. This was the period when Muslims gradually became an ethnic minority who permanently settled in China, rather than an immigrant community looking towards central Asia as their homeland. They changed from being “Muslims in China” to “Chinese Muslims”.⁶ Muslim communities’ cultures became a distinctive culture in China, which was not only just a transfer of Persian or Central Asian culture but was also distinct from Han Chinese culture. From this time onwards it is possible to speak of a group of Chinese Muslim with common bonds, who can be called the Hui.⁷

During the Ming dynasty, Hui population increased substantially, with many of them being dispersed around China, some of them were sent to areas such as Gansu, Shanxi, Ningxia (autonomous Hui region which was previously part of Gansu Province), and these areas later became one of the important Hui community settlements; this resulted in the consideration of the Hui communities as a majority among the Muslim minority of Chinese population, mostly in areas where they were greatly outnumbered by the Han population. Some of the factors that contributed to their dispersion included commerce field and exchanges, assignment of Hui garrison

⁵ Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects*, (N.p.: Curzon press, 1999), 27.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid.

troops to various areas to open up wasteland for growing food grain, nationwide tours by Hui officials and scholars, especially the migration of Hui during peasant uprisings.

The majority of these people settled in cities, or along particular streets and vital communication lines, taking to handicrafts and commerce. They tried to extricate themselves gradually from military involvement and to settle down for farming, breeding livestock, handicrafts and small-scale trading. Because of these activities a common economic life began to take shape among Hui Muslims, as scattered as they were, they stuck together in relative concentration in settlements and around mosques which they had built. This has been handed down as a specific feature of the distribution of Hui population in China. Thus, they established a new common economic life among themselves, characterized by an agricultural economy.⁸

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

While focusing on the history of Hui minority communities during the Ming Dynasty in mainland China, this study aims to look into the following:

1. To identify the historical background of Chinese Hui Muslim communities.
2. To identify the concept and identity of Chinese Muslims as a minority in the Ming Dynasty.
3. To contribute a guide-line to the Muslim world and to facilitate a better and more lucid understanding of the history of Chinese Muslim

⁸ Huang weimin, Discuss the spread of Islam in china with the development and characteristic, (回回民族史论), *Shan xi qingnian guanli ganbu xueyuan journal*, Vol.15 No.3, 2002.

communities, especially the Hui communities in terms of settlement and culture during Ming Dynasty.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This study involved library and field research, focusing on Chinese history relating to the history of Muslims in China, with special reference to the Ming Dynasty and where applicable to other common fields related to the study. The material includes, the *journal of Research of Religion in the World*: “Islam and Muslim in the society of Ming dynasty”⁹, *Journal of Yancheng Teachers College* (Humanities & Social Sciences): The Social Reform in Early Ming Dynasty and Its Consequence—Probing into the Social Background of Zaju of Ming Dynasty, together with articles that are related to Chinese Muslims communities¹ .

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Muslims emerged in China as early as 7th Century AD. Michael Dillon¹ in his book *China’s Muslim Hui community: Migration, settlement and sects* was more explicit on the history of China’s Muslims who belonged to the Hui community, and gave more emphasis to the Hui Communities of northwest China which is the Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai and the Xingjiang and Uyghur autonomous regions. Hui community was quite successful in retaining their distinctive origins in those areas. This book probably can be considered as one of the best scholarly works on the history of Hui

⁹ Ge Zhuang, “Islam and Muslim in the Society of the Ming Dynasty,” *Shijie Zongjiao yanjiu (World Religion Research)*, (2002), No.1, 113-122. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House.

¹ Xu, Zifang, “The Social Reform in Early Ming Dynasty and Its Consequence--Probing into the Social Background of Zaju of Ming Dynasty,” *Journal of Yancheng Teachers College* (Humanities & Social Sciences) 2003, 23(1).

¹ Michael Dillon, *China’s Muslim Hui community*.

Muslim. The history of Hui in the Ming Dynasty in this book is immense. Apparently, the title of this book is closely related to Islam in the Ming Dynasty since it was during this era that the term 'Hui' as refer to Muslims came into existence. Chapter 3 of this book namely 'Settling in China: The Hui during the Ming Dynasty' serves as the best assistance for our study since the historical accounts provided here are the precise comprehensive summary for the condition of Muslims in the Ming Dynasty. Dillon had stressed out the very important points to show the changes and assimilation process that took place at this time. It is apparent from his writing that during the Ming Dynasty, mixed reactions were given by the emperor towards Muslims. For example, the first Ming emperor, Ming Taizu discriminated against a Muslim lineage, the Pu from taking part in the official examination due to the fact that the family was a part of the reason for the fall of Song Dynasty to the Mongol rule whereas on the other side he also employed eleven Muslim astronomers in 1369 and saying that *Semuren* were talented and able to be chosen for official employment.¹ It is also surprising to² know that some scholars suggested that Ming Taizu's queen, Ma Hou was a Muslim and some of their sons and daughters married to Muslims. Under this favourable condition Islam continued to flourish and had been given a good place in the society. Besides that, the status of Muslims had changed from outsider to insider. Dillon proposed the term 'acculturation' to show on mingle of Islamic teaching with the local Chinese culture. He also provides information about Nanjing, the centre of Islamic thought in the Ming Dynasty. The famous Hui scholar, Wang Daiyu was belong to this city and he made tremendous contributions to Islamic education of Muslim in China. He was the first person to introduce sources in Chinese language and also the first to assimilate Islamic teaching with the local understanding wherever necessary.

¹ Ibid., 28.

²

Indeed, his thought and works hugely influenced scholars and Muslims during his time and afterwards.

Besides that, another source of Islam in Ming Dynasty is *Islam in China* by Ming Shoujiang and You Jia. Ample information could be found in this book. It is obvious in history that Islam was firmly established in the Yuan Dynasty and continued to flourish during the Ming Dynasty. In this book, the authors stress that during the first 200 years of the Ming Dynasty, the coverage of Islam further expanded in China. Mosques became the center of education and settlement. Muslims even started to occupy remote places which in one sense expanding geographical demography of Muslims in China. The contribution of Muslim navigator Zheng He is also mentioned in this book. His famous seven sailings to the Pacific and Indian Ocean is indeed one of the greatest journeys in the world history. The fact that he was a Muslim gives a strong indication that Islam had a significant position in the history of China. The importance of Nanjing as an Islamic center is also stressed in this book. In terms of political system and socio-cultural aspect, there were some changes occurred in Ming Dynasty. Apart from being second highest class in Yuan Dynasty, the status reduced to that of being ruled. The government had also restricted their economic participation to that of agriculture and restricting trade, made them lost their advantage on trading. Besides that, an assimilation policy had been implemented by the decree of emperor whereby they were forced to use Chinese language and put restriction on marriage within the same race. All of these changes apparently opened a new dimension to the history of Muslims in China. Besides that, the authors also reveal in detail about regions of Muslims after Ming Dynasty as well as the birth and growth of sects and Menhuan. Another important point namely mosque education is stressed out in this book. The initiator of mosque education was Hu Dengzhou

(1522-1566 AD) and Wan Li (1573-1620 AD) of the Ming Dynasty. Obviously, it gave a huge contribution to the stronghold of Islamic teaching among Muslims. It allowed Islamic education to be taught systematically.¹ 3

A Glance at Chinese Muslims: An Introductory Book by Yusuf Liu Baojun is a book on historical and contemporary account of Muslim in China from various perspectives. It provides information about brief history of Islam in the past, beginning from the early years of the coming of Islam until the Qing Dynasty. Then it reveals about the new era of Muslim Chinese in 19th century who faced many difficulties and obstacles to maintain their position as a minority. The author also talks about Muslim ethnicity in China and other related information to Muslim like mosque institution and the condition of Muslim Chinese who migrated to other Asian countries. In terms of Islam in Ming Dynasty, the related historical accounts constitute a small section of the book. An introduction to Islam in Ming Dynasty is given in a brief manner. The achievement of Muslim of this period is credited to the great Muslim navigator, Zheng He, as well as other prominent names such as Cheng Yu Chun and Hu Da Hai who greatly devoted themselves to the establishment of the Ming Empire. Besides that, it is noted in history that Islamic thoughts flourished at this time with big names who profoundly influenced Muslim community such as Wang Daiyu who famously known as a scholar who developed the theory of integrating Islam to Chinese culture. As previously mentioned, historical perspective constitutes a small part of the whole book, therefore detail information about Islam in Ming Dynasty is hardly found here.

In Fu Tongxian's book *Zhong guo Huijiao Shi (The History of Islam in China)*¹, the history of Islam in China is written according to the recorded history and

¹ Islam in China, p81

his authentic research in different dynasties. He reveals the history in an excellent way compared to the other related books on the same issue. He includes many diagrams and historical evidences to support his statements and prove his arguments. Other books, even though are not as good as the former, uphold a similarity in this context such as Ma Ming Liang's book of *jian ming Yisilan shi (The short history of Islam)*, Ding guo yong of *Hui zu Shi hua (A talk of Hui Muslim history)*, Bai Shouyi's book of *Zhong guo Hui Hui min zu shi (The history of Hui Hui nationality)*, *yisilan zai Zhong Guo (Islam in China)*. In these books the authors have used lots of historical material for instance, during the rule of the Ming Dynasty, China's socio-economic status was supposed to have been greatly advanced, the scattered Muslims' living conditions had also changed. In the mainland, there appeared many Muslim villages, some of which seemed to have developed from the Yuan bureaucracy Grange, and some had also come into existence due to breeding population. During the late Ming and early Qing dynasty, China's feudal agriculture economy had evolved and developed to a higher level. In a number of traffic along the port cities the Islamic handicrafts with a combination of traditional business had also developed rapidly. In the Ming dynasty, the political atmosphere was neither conducive enough to accommodate Muslims nor the development of the Islamic religion. Ming emperors wary of the relics of Mongol influence were determined to wipe out foreign influence in China. A forced assimilation was strongly encouraged and the Muslim groups were not allowed to marry among themselves, instead they had to marry Chinese women. As a result of assimilation, Hui Muslims' identity in the Ming Dynasty changed from being "Muslims in China" to "Chinese Muslims."¹

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¹ Fu Tongxian, "Islam in Ming dynasty" in *The history of Islam in China*, (Peking: Zhonghua press, 2003).

¹ Leslie (1986), 105.

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Meanwhile, in another article ‘Islam and Muslims in the society of Ming Dynasty’, Ge Zhuang stated that:

*In the society of the Ming Dynasty, the social status of Muslims differs from that of the Yuan Dynasty.*¹

He refers to the national and religious policies of the rulers that changed during the Ming dynasty. The new state power had imposed restrictions on the ways of their dressing; also on language and name of minorities including the name of Muslim. Meanwhile, some of the most powerful rulers of the Ming Dynasty also expressed their desire to revert to the Islamic faith. Several emperors had even supported the tasks of building some of the mosques. Wuzong of the Ming Dynasty (Zhu Hou Zhao) is said to have taken great interest in Islam. Some Muslims were placed in important positions, the most noteworthy among them being Zhenghe. He was the most famous explorer among the Muslims, who had led his big fleet to visit some countries in Asia and Africa and he is reported to have made his journey seven times. A lot of his crew members were also reported to be Muslims.

The article of *The Social Reform in Early Ming Dynasty and Its Consequence-Probing into the Social Background of Zaju of Ming Dynasty* by Xu Zi fang¹, pointed out that rather than a mere change of regimes, the substitution of the Ming dynasty for the Yuan dynasty was a profound cultural transformation in which the authority of Confucianism was reestablished; or, it was the final effort made in Chinese ancient history by the political forces of the Han nationality to reunify the country. Owing to the rulers’ autocracy and tyranny, the substitution pushed the Chinese imperial power to an unprecedented height; besides the new regime practiced closed-door and

¹ Ge Zhuang, “Islam and Muslim in the society of Ming dynasty” no. 1 (2002) *Research of Religion in the World*.

¹ Xu Zi fang, “The Social Reform in Early Ming Dynasty and Its Consequence-Probing into the Social Background of Zaju of Ming Dynasty” Vol.23 no.1 (2003) Feb, *Yancheng Teachers College (Humanities & Social Sciences)*.

conservative policies and denied talents, the freedom of creation, causing therefore the cultural inanimateness and sterility in the next century. All these underlay the final decline of Zaju of the early Ming Dynasty.

Donald Daniel Leslie in his book *Islam in traditional China: A short history to 1800*, generally explains the main aspects of the political history, the mutual knowledge and relations between Muslim and non-Muslim in China. His writing is important to this research in terms of identifying the assimilation process and challenges faced by the both groups in order to live in one social community.

In Mohamad Yasin Owadally's book '*The book of a great sahabi: Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (r.a) and Muslims in China*', he emphasizes adventurous literature on Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas' (r.a) visit to China, and the glorious days of about 60 million Muslims in China.¹ He gives a concise account of the rise and decline of Islam in China in terms of culture, customs, social activities, and Islamic calligraphy. He also sheds light about Ming Tai Tsu's (founder of Ming Dynasty) Muslim identity. This is an important argument to support this statement since there are disputes among historians in this issue. As he mentions:

The Ming Dynasty may be called the golden age of Muslims in China. It is said that Ming T'ai Tsu, the founder of the dynasty, was a Muslim who composed the hymn of praise in one hundred words dedicated to Prophet Muhammad (saw) which may still be found inscribed in the main mosque in Nanking.¹

It shows the wide-acceptance of Islam among the Chinese whereby they could accept a Muslim to be an emperor. Besides that, this book discovers an interesting fact about Hui Muslim. Hardly found in any other books, Owadally tells about the

¹ Mohamad Yasin Owadally, *The book of a great Sahabi: Sa'ad Ibn abi Waqqas(r.a) and Muslims in China*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.s.Noordeen, 1996).

¹ Ibid., vi

contribution of Hui Muslim in Chinese martial art, Kung-Fu which started in Ming Dynasty. As he mentions:

In kung-fu, the Muslim Hui contributed the seminal Northern styles of Cha Quan and Tan Tui. Since the Ming Dynasty, many wushu (Kung-Fu) masters have emerged from among the Hui (Muslim) people, famous not only for their combat skills but also for having created many schools of Wushu which have enriched the Wushu treasure house of China.²

Another significant contribution of Hui Muslim in the Ming Dynasty was the enrichment of wushu techniques in China. Several new schools of wushu emerged in this era and amazingly they were invented by Hui minority. Three famous schools recorded in the history, particularly in the mid and late Ming Dynasty were both the Ma and Sha families who were Muslims.² They contributed to the seminal northern styles of Cha Quan and Tan Tui.²

Nevertheless, after a careful perusal of all these works, it was found that none of these book concentrate on the social and cultural adaptation of Hui Muslim Minority in Ming Dynasty. General history of Islam in China is given in all these books yet no particular title on Hui Minority in Ming Dynasty is to be found. They only present a brief history of Islam in Ming Dynasty. Thus, this study attempts to cover the history of the Chinese Hui community in China, their establishment and contributions during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In this study the researcher explores the gradual process of the transition from being Muslims in China towards becoming Hui Muslim community, including the process of adaptation and assimilation in terms of culture, history, social life, politics, military affairs, law, and economics, etc.

² Ibid., 85

² Mohammad Yasin Odawally, *The Book of Great Sahabi*, 85

² Ibid.

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is comprised of four chapters. Chapter One is the introduction of the thesis. It consists of, the objective of the study, methodology of research, and concludes with a literature review. It includes the important resources for the development of this thesis. The books mentioned above had covered the related information with regard to the history of Hui Muslim Minority in China.

In Chapter Two, the emphasis will be given to the early establishment of Muslims beginning from the 7th century AD. It will also provide the general historical background of Muslim Minority in each dynasty from the beginning of Tang Dynasty until the last dynasty in Chinese history, which is the Qing Dynasty.

Chapter Three will focus on the history of Hui Muslim minority with special reference to the Ming Dynasty. It will concentrate on the social and cultural adaptation of Hui groups in order to live in peace and harmony with the indigenous Han Chinese. These adaptations penetrated into various kind of social life including culture, marriage, lineage, customs and arts. The adaptation brought about many changes to the life of Hui minority in China whereby from this time onwards they had developed their own distinctive features which distinguished them from the Han Chinese without being neglected as the part of the Chinese community.

Finally, in the last part of this study, the conclusion is brought to summarize and analyze the previous chapters in order to state the best findings from this research and to assess the accomplishment of the objective of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND IMMIGRATION OF HUI MINORITY IN CHINA

INTRODUCTION

The network between China and Middle East could already be traced ever since the holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad around 610 A.D. Chinese grand expedition is said to have reached the Arab land before the Han Dynasty. It is evident that even before the classical period, trade routes extended from China through India and Central Asia to the Middle East and the Mediterranean',¹ passing through the Persian Gulf and appearing inland on Arab rivers. This has been considered as a well established historical fact. According to Chinese historical records, it is reported that Muslims have existed in China since the earliest years of the foundation of Islam in the seventh century.² However, the influence of Islam was apparently seen and recorded in 7th century onward, as it will be discussed in this chapter, along with the development of Islam through the efforts made by Hui minority in their early years of settlement in China.

HISTORY OF THE ADVENT OF ISLAM AND HUI SETTLEMENT IN CHINA

The emergence of Islam in China was more apparent during the caliphate of *'Uthman ibn Affan (Allayhi Rahma, ra)*, the third Caliph, in 651, less than twenty years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He sent an envoy to the emperor of China,

¹ Peter N.Stearns, *Gender in world history* (Routledge, 2000), 10.

² Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui community: Migration, settlement and sects* (Surrey: Curzon press, 1999), 11.

which was led by *Sa`ad ibn Abī Waqqās (Allayhi Rahma)*, the maternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who was also one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (saw) in 650 C.E. According to the records of the Book of the Old Tang Dynasty, “the Western Regions Biography”, in August 2009, the third Arab-Islamic Empire Caliphate Uthman sent envoys to pay tribute to the Tang Dynasty in the second year of the reign of Emperor Yong Hui (651 A. D.). This was to establish and inform the upcoming Islamic state with the basic knowledge and conditions for the growth of Islamic culture. This was the first diplomatic contact between the Chinese and Arabs. This event is considered to be the birth of Islam in China.

Since then the international relations between China and Arabia were getting stronger, especially in trade, with more and more Arabian traders coming to China to do business. The regular friendly exchanges between the governments and the frequent commercial intercourse on the other hand, promoted the existing traditional friendship between China and the Arab world, that lead to provision of good conditions for Islam to spread within China. Muslims who lived in China were treated well by the government and they were allowed to practice their religion without oppression from the rulers.

Although Islam was new to the people in China, the response from the high authority was good. The Chinese emperor Yung-Wei at that time respected the teachings of Islam and considered it to be well-suited with the teachings of Confucius. To show his admiration for Islam, the emperor approved the founding of the mosque at Chang’an which still stands today even after fourteen centuries. He then ordered the construction of the Memorial mosque in Canton. China reached its golden age during the Tang Dynasty and this situation more or less provided an opportunity for Islam to grow and become well grounded in this country. The cosmopolitan culture at that time