

Muslim Confucian Philosophy: Islamic-Confucian Dialogue and the Integration of Civilizations

Alimtohte Shiho

Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan

At the end of the Ming Dynasty and at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, a new theory of learning was created—Muslim Confucian Study (Chinese Islamic Philosophy)—on the basis of Islamic philosophy and under the influence of Confucianism. Wang Daiyu (1570-1660) and Liu Zhi (1660-1739) were two great Huiru (Muslim Confucian) scholars at that time. They published *Zhengjiao zhenquan* (The real commentary on the tire teaching), *Tianfang xingli* (Nature and principle in Islam) major books. Their approach is distinguished from that of other Muslim scholars in that they addressed the basic articles of Islamic thought with Confucian terminology and categories. The study deals with the Islamic worldview, and with the practices that make it possible for people to bring themselves into conformity with that worldview. However, the teaching of the Muslim Confucian was continuous with those of Mainstream Islam. In my research, I attempted to answer two questions: (a) How did Muslim Confucian Study Inherit the Mainstream Islamic Thought? (b) What is the value and contribution of the World Islamic philology and civilization?

Keywords: Muslim Confucian, Islamic philosophy, Confucianism, dialogue, integration

At the turn of Ming and Qing Dynasties, a kind of awaking took place in Chinese Islam, during which Huiru (回儒, Muslim Confucian) scholars conducted various dialogues with the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, by translating and interpreting Islamic classics. As a result, they created a number of Chinese documents that contained numerous academic terms and concepts brought from Confucianism. “Huiru study” (回儒学, Muslim Confucian study) has two basic thought sources: one is the imported Islam and its thought; the other is the local thought system of Confucianism. Therefore, “Huiru study” harmoniously combines the characteristics both of Confucianism and of Islam.

Recording of Chinese Islamic (Muslim) Ancient Books, the original name is *Huihui Ancient Book*¹, including documents before 1949. The Complete pandect All included 235 volumes: Religion 209 kinds, 58 volumes; Political History 112 kinds, 300 volumes; Culture 148 kinds, 64 volumes; Science and Technology 70 kinds, 24 volumes.

The Complete pandect *Huihui Ancient Book* is including the Han Kitab (Han Qitabu, 汉克塔补), Islamic literature between the 1630s and the 1730s. Among Chinese Muslims, this approach has often been called, an expression that combines the Chinese word “Han” and a transliteration of the Arabic Kitab, or “book” meaning

Alimtohte Shiho, Ph.D., Assistant Professors, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan.

¹ The leading group for the compilation and publishing planning of the books of the ethnic minorities in Ningxia edited the “Complete Book of Hui Collections”, published by Gansu Culture Publishing House, Ningxia People’s Publishing House, July 2008, with a total of 235 volumes.

(Muslim) books written in Chinese. Those who took this approach were often called Huiru (回儒), that is, Muslim literati, or Muslim scholars of Confucian learning. Wang Daiyu (王岱輿, ca. 1570-ca. 1660), Ma Zhu (马注, ca. 1640-ca. 1711), Liu Zhi (刘智, ca. 1670-ca. 1739) and Ma Dexin (马德新, ca. 1794-ca. 1874) is called “four great Chinese translators in the Ming and Qing dynasties” or “the four Great Hui (Muslim) Confucian Masters”.

Among Wang Daiyu’s main works are *Zhengjiao Zhenquan*² (正教真詮, “A True Explanation of the Right Religion”), the first major book, published in 1642, *Qingzhen Da Xue*³ (清真大學, “The Great learning of Islam”), *Xizhen Zhengda*⁴ (希真正答, “Rare and True Answers”). Ma Zhu’s main works include: *Qingzhen zhinan*⁵ (清真指南, “The guides to the sciences of Islam”) published in 1683. He translates the title into Arabic as *al-Murshid ila’l-u’lum al-islam*. Liu Zhi’s main works include *Tianfang xingli*⁶ (天方性理, “Nature and principle in Islam”), published in 1704; it was the Arabic translation by Ma Lianyuan (馬聯元, ca. 1841-ca. 1903). *Tianfang dianli*⁷ (天方典禮, “Rules and proprieties of Islam”), appeared in 1710. *Tianfang zhisheng shilu*⁸ (天方至聖實錄, “The true record of the utmost sage of Islam”), in 1921, was translated into English by Isaac Mason as *The Arabian Prophet: A Life of Mohammad from Chinese Sources*⁹. Ma Dexin’s main works include *Sidian Yaohui*¹⁰ (四典要会), *Dahua Zonggui*¹¹ (大化总归), the book about the Islamic Jurisprudence and philosophy. It was introduction and analysis of works of other Muslim authors in China, such as Ma Zhu and Liu Zhu.

These Muslim scholars in China were influenced by Islamic philosophers such as Najm al-Din Razi (d. 1256), Aziz al-Din Nasafi (d. 1300), ur al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492).

Razi was born in Lei in Iran in 1177. He became a disciple of Kubrawiya’s founder Najal al Denkura, and received his attention from his high brother Majd al DIN Baghdadi. His representative works: *mirsad Al-“IBAD min al mabada” ILA al ma’ad* (from the origin to the place where he comes back from the origin of God). Nasafi was born in Nazar in Central Asia, Marshall annafal, and died in Abbarquh, southern Iran. Naji’al hudmu’i, a disciple of Najim al DIN kubra, was named after the name of Kubrawiya, his teacher Huammu, and was associated with Saldr al Din Rimi, a disciple of Ibn ‘Arabi. His representative work is *Maqsad-l aqsa*. Jami is born in Jamaver in the horror saloon District in 1414. He became a disciple of SA’d al DIN Kashghari and belonged to Naqshbandiya, and was also famous as a poet. In Herat under the reign of Husayn Bayqara in the Timur Dynasty, Husayn and he wrote numerous works under the protection of the Minister Amir ‘alishir Nawa’I. His representative works were *Ashi ‘at al-lama’at*, Islamic writings, and the *Lawa ‘IH* (flashing). These Islamic scholars were all influenced by Ibn’ Arabi.

² Wang Daiyu “Zhengjiaozhenquan”, was published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 13, Volume 14, pages 111-144.

³ Wang Daiyu’s “Qingzhendaxue”, was published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 14, pages 145-224.

⁴ Wang Daiyu’s “Xizhengda” is published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 14 pages 225-411.

⁵ Ma Zhu’s “Qingzhenzhinan” was published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 16, pages 1-539; Volume 17, pages 1 - 487; Volume 18, 1-519.

⁶ Liu Zhi’s “Tianfangxingli” was published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 24, pages 1-440; Volume 25, pages 1-256.

⁷ Liu Zhi’s “Tianfangdianli” was published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 20.

⁸ Liu Zhi’s “Tianfang zhi Shengshilu” was published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 21, pages 1-446; Volume 22, pages 1-446; Volume 23, Page 1-567.

⁹ Isaac Mason’s “The Arabian Prophet: A Life of Mohammad from Chinese Sources”, by Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1921.

¹⁰ Ma Dexin’s “Sidiyaoahui” is published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 32, pages 1-258.

¹¹ Ma Dexin’s “Dahua zonggui” is published in *The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, Volume 31, pages 1-108.

The works of these Islamic scholars have been actively translated into Chinese by Muslim scholars in China and cited in their own works.

1. For instance, Razi's *Mirsad*, as a Chinese translation of *Mirsad* (密迓索德), was translated into Chinese *Guizhen Yaodao* (歸真要道), written by Wu Zunqi (伍遵契, 1598-1698). In *Tianfang xingli*, this book is called *Daoxing Tuiyuanjing* (道行推原經), and it is the most quoted (28 Dan). In the *Tianfang dianli*, *Zhengjiao Zhenquan*, *Qingzhen zhinan*, *Sidian Yaohui*, there are also many quotations in there Hankitab books. It seems to have been used as a textbook in Jingtang education (Chinese Muslim teachings).

2. Nasafi's *Maqsad* as a Chinese translation of *maqsad*, called *Guizhen Biyao* (歸真必要), was written by She Qiling (舍起靈). In addition, *Daoxing Yanjing* (道行研竟) by Ma Dexin was also translated into *maqsad*'s (Arabic translation). In *Tianfang xingli*, this book is called *Yanzhenjing* (研真經), it is the most quoted (14 Dan). Various subjects of the existentialism are treated. There are also explanations about the views of those who differ in the philosophical positions of Ahi-I Hikma and Tassaowf's people (Ahl-i Tasawwuf) of those subjects, and the view of the individual of the Singaporean (Ahi-iwhda) is explained. The words of Ibn "Arabi, Saldr al-Din Rumi, and Hammu" are ones that I often quoted.

3. Jami's *Ashi at al-lama'at*, as a Chinese translation of *Ashi 'at* (額史尔), there is *Zhaoyuan Mijue* (昭元秘訣) written by She Qiling. In the *Tianfang xingli* (天方性理), in the name of *Fei yin Jing* (費隱經) it is the most quoted (15 Dan). *Ashi 'ath* is a Persian commentary on the Persian works of Fakhr al DIN'Iraqi (d. 1289). "Iraqi" was a disciple of Ibn 'Arabi's disciple Saldr al DIN Rumi and Lama' at was based on the theory of Rumi's oneness, while he also found the family of Ahmad Ghazali's Sawanih in the point of love. There were many notes on the work of Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn 'Arabi school.

4. *Lawa 'IH* (flashing)' (勒瓦一合)'s work, *Lawa 'ih*, consisting of Persian prose and many poems, was translated by Liu Chi, and it was named *Zhenjing Zhaowei* (真境昭微), but most of the poems were omitted in this Chinese translation. *Tianfang xingli*, in the name of *Zhaoweiing* (昭微經), is the most quoted (11 Dan). Although it was a work belonging to the field of "Existentialism", it was not a commentary on a specific work of Jami's works on Ibn 'Arabi's thought.

In terms of ideological system, the philosophical thoughts of Chinese Muslim scholars have been influenced by Islamic philosophy and Confucianism. In Islamic Studies *uṣūl al-dīn*, the "roots" or "principles" of the religion, these are the foundational articles of Islamic faith; typically; it is said to be three: tawhid, or assertion of God's unity; prophecy (nubuwwa); and the Return to God (ma'ād), in terms of Confucianism, in Neo-Confucianism Wu Ji (無極) and Taiyi (太極), Li (理), Qi (氣). In Wang Daiyu's ideological system, ALLAH cannot be represented by an existing concept in China. The highest existence is described as Zhen Zhu (真主). The process of the self-manifestation of God is explained using the word Wu Ji (無極) and Taiji (太極). In Liu Zhi's ideological system, the relationship between You (有), which is the beginning of the world, and the existence (有) of the world, and the whole world, including the world and the person, finally reaches the end of the world, the true (真) which is said to be the complementary way of the Wu Ji (無極) and Taiji (太極) which is said to be in the Neo Confucianism.

Conclusion

At the end of the Ming Dynasty and at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, a new theory of learning was created—Huiru Study (回儒学, Chinese Islamic Philosophy)—on the basis of Islamic philosophy and under the influence of Confucianism. Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, were two great Huiru (Islamic) scholars at that time. They

published *Zhengjiao zhenquan* (The real commentary on the tire teaching), *Tianfang xingli* (Nature and principle in Islam) major books.

Their approach, like that of the Huiru in general, is distinguished from that of other Muslim scholars in that they addressed the basic articles of Islamic thought with Confucian terminology and categories. In other words, Their study deals with the Islamic worldview, and with the practices that make it possible for people to bring themselves into conformity with that worldview. However, the teachings of the Huiru was continuous with those of Mainstream Islam.

References

- Isaac Mason. (1921). *The Arabian Prophet: A Life of Mohammad from Chinese Sources*. Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
- LIU, Z. (Qingmu carving copy, Jingjiang Tongshi Reissue Collection Board). *Tianfangdianli. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 20, 1-569.
- LIU, Z. (Qingmu carving copy, Tongzhi Renshen Year). *Tianfang zhi Shengshilu. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 21, 1-446; 22, 1-446; 23, 1-567.
- LIU, Z. (Qingmu carving copy, Tongzhi Xinweinian). *Tianfangxingli. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 24, 1-440; 25, 1-256.
- MA, D. X. (1858). *Sidianaohui. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 32, 1-258.
- MA, D. X. (1922). *Dahuazonggui. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 31, 1-108.
- MA, Z (Qingmu carving copy, 1683). *Qingzhenzhan. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 16, 1-539; 17, 1-487; 18, 1-519.
- WANG, D. Y. (Qingmu carving copy, Qingzhen Hall Board). *Qingzhendaxue. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 14, 145-224.
- WANG, D. Y. (Qingmu carving copy, Qingzhen Hall Board). *Xizhenzhengda. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 14, 225-411.
- WANG, D. Y. (Re engraved in the Guiyou year of Tongzhi reign, with the Jincheng Baozhen Hall hoarding board). *Zhengjiaozhenquan. The Complete Book of Hui Collections*, 13(14), 111-144.