PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON ISLAMIC ETHICS IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT

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Abstract: The paper is a preliminary and introductory sketch of the background necessary to study Islamic ethics in China. (1) It situates Chinese Islam in the spectrum of world religions and within the context of the "Three Teachings" of China. (2) It traces the spread of Islam into the central Chinese lands and highlights the important role Sufism played in its expansion into the heart of China. (3) It offers an overview of the origin and development of Islamic literature in Chinese that drew on sources written mainly in Persian (Fārsī) by Muslim authors of Central Asia and Iran. This body of literature was translated or adapted by a group of Chinese authors, who produced a collection of works written in Chinese and known as the Han Kitab (compiled between 1630 and 1730). Amalgamating Islamic patterns of thought with Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist ideas, these works developed the foundations for a comprehensive vision of Chinese Islamic ethics. This vision, in turn, gave moral and social cohesion to the Hui communities in China. (4) Finally, the paper identifies substantive issues of Islamic ethics in the Chinese context and draws up a catalog of issues that present avenues of research for Chinese Muslim ethics in a general and applied sense.

Three Families of World Religions

On today's global map, three large families of religion have withstood the test of time, continuing to stand as large living faiths and communities. Without subscribing to a rigid religious typology one can observe three principal centers in the spectrum of world religions. To the west we find the religions rooted in the geographical area and cultural environment of the Middle East and along the shores of the Mediterranean, a family of religion that includes Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the middle and to the south of the Asian landmass, protected by the towering Himalayas, we encounter the family of the great religions that originated in India, Hinduism and Indian Buddhism. To the east in the vast Asian expanse (with its rim of islands and peninsulas), we meet the Confucian foundations of the societal order of China and the native religious vision of Daoism that, in an amalgam with Chinese Buddhism, constitute the "Three Teachings" of a third family of religion. In the course of history, three of these great religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, became animated by missionary zeal and developed into universal religions, spreading into the cultural environments and geographical regions of their neighboring families. By contrast, Hinduism and Confucianism as well as Daoism and Judaism remained enclosed in the environment of their original culture, showing little zeal to travel from their homes in a missionary spirit. Whereas Judaism, Christianity and Islam were based on defined and normative scriptures that constituted their religious foundations, Hinduism and Buddhism embraced wide-ranging collections of sacred literature possessing equal and fluid religious authority, while Confucianism and Daoism referred to the sayings and teachings of their sages as the treasure of their most authoritative religious sources.

Tracing characteristic differences between these three religious families, one notices that the Abrahamic religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all revolve around the divine revelation of the **Word**, and that each is impelled by a prophetic and messianic dynamism that keeps God radically distinct from nature. Each is founded by a historical prophet (Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad) and possesses its normative scripture and monotheistic creed. All three religious traditions proclaim the existence of a transcendent God, creator and ruler of the universe, to whose command every person must answer with worship and obedience. The human being, God's creature, lives a unique earthly life and finally reaches an eternity that escapes the limitations of the human condition, an eternity which offers ultimate liberation from suffering, sin and death through the justice or mercy of God. Time in each of these traditions is conceived as linear, tracing a person's irrevocable existence from birth to death and offering a new eternal existence beyond death in reward or punishment for deeds committed on earth. The ethical ideal is discovered by submission to the divine will and fulfillment of duties toward God and fellow-beings as defined by divine commands and interdictions.

The religious family traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism rooted in India may be understood as centered on **Wisdom** and as having a mystical and introspective trend that fuses the divine and the natural. Each of these traditions takes as its model a timeless teacher of wisdom (Rishi, Buddha, Siddha) and possesses a vast body of sacred literature reflecting the immanent Absolute. Time appears as a cycle of recurrent rounds of life and the importance of history is seen as secondary in comparison with permanent principles discovered by philosophical contemplation. Through the experience of one's own immortality beyond an endless cycle of rebirths one finds lasting liberation from suffering and death within oneself and through one's own efforts. The ethical ideal of these two traditions is realized in establishing one's harmony with nature, society and the impersonal Absolute that engulfs all, and in producing good deeds for the sake of others that return unending rewards upon the practitioner of those deeds.

The strands found in the Chinese family of religions can be seen as woven into the **Way**, defined by the "Three Teachings," Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese Buddhism, that do not merely coexist in relative harmony but also merge into a coherent amalgam. The basic Confucian principles of benevolence and righteousness find their ideal in the socially responsible self that espouses a structured society of public and private relationships. The Confucian underpinnings, with their emphasis on reverence for ritual and filial piety, are joined by Chinese folk beliefs and assimilated with a Daoist pantheon manifesting great reverence for nature. The two Daoist principles that describe how polar opposites or seemingly contrary forces are interconnected in the natural world are met by the meditative force and philosophical power of Buddhist enlightenment that offers happiness to everyone seeking enlightenment through devotion and the acquisition of merit. Its ethical ideal is to live in harmony with the ineffable that is the driving force behind everything that exists, seeking to follow the grain of the universe discovered in one's own intuition and decoding the symbols and images of esoteric texts.

Of the three great universal religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, it is **Buddhism** that has shown the greatest willingness throughout history to embrace deep inner transformations and cultural adaptations. This process can be documented through its development from Theravada within its Indian context in two steps, first, to Mahayana empowering it to leave South Asia for East Asia, being transformed into Chinese Buddhism, and, second, to Tantrayana mooring it firmly in the world of Tibetan Lamaism and propelling it into Japan in the form of Zen Buddhism. By contrast, although equally engaged in missionary activity, Christianity and Islam tended to safeguard an unalterable core of belief against cultural mutations.

For its part, **Christianity** separated from Judaism by claiming the latter's messianic hope was accomplished in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. Beginning with Paul, Christianity began to open itself to the "Gentiles" and thus to take the course of a cosmopolitan religion. Assimilating the Greek and Roman cultures of the Mediterranean world, and associating itself with the Western imperial and secular powers, it stretched its domains into Europe organized in Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant branches and created a significant presence of its churches in colonial territories in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Christianity eventually experienced how its apex in the age of colonial hegemony became gradually overshadowed by a secular Western culture that tries to separate itself from its roots, looking back at its Christian origins with indifference or through the lenses of agnosticism and atheism. Incipient forms of cultural assimilation, such as liberation theologies in Africa, Asia and South America, and trends of rejuvenation in Europe and North America encounter a strong opposition of conservative forces.

From its very beginnings, **Islam** demonstrated a spirit of expansion and conquest, remaining consistently in a movement of growth, almost immune to abandoning any region it had conquered or assimilated. Welcoming the elements of the conquered cultures it found most suitable (Greek and Persian in its early middle period, Turkic and South-Asian in its high middle period, and African, South-East Asian and Western in its modern period), it integrated them under the banner of Islam and reframed them with Arabic as the dominant language throughout its empire and culture. These levels of cultural integration were grafted on the core of its religious foundations that remained unshakeable throughout the centuries. In the present day, fundamentalism and militancy challenge this rich and variegated cultural evolution in the search for identity in an idealized past. Islam is now constricted by its religious law, which it considers to be immutable by virtue of divine authority, although its formulation actually is closely tied to transient social conditions that no longer obtain in the modern world. Islam is the only religion making the claim to be the first and the last, the primal religion at the dawn of creation with Adam and the final revelation of all truth in human history with Muḥammad.

Islam in China

The designation in medieval Arabic for China is "*al-Ṣīn*," referring to both the land and the people (with the original Persian "*Čīn*" rendered in Arabic as "*Ṣīn*"). It is known to Muslims in the Prophet's saying, "seek knowledge even if as far as China" (for studies on Islam in China see especially the informative reference source of Leslie, Yang Daye & Youssef, 2006 and Pickens, 1950; see also, Devéria, 1895; Broomhall, 1910; Israeli, 1980, 2002; Leslie, 1986; Rossabi, 1987; Li & Luckert, 1994; Gladney, 1991, 2004; Lipman, 1997; Dillon, 1999; Ben-Dor Benite, 2005). There are about 25 million Muslims living in China today who are counted as ten minorities among the 55 ethnic minority groups recognized by the People's Republic of China (PRC, 1949-present). They are the Turkic-speaking groups of the Uyghur, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Tatar and Salar; the small Persian-speaking group of the Tajik; the Mongol-speaking groups of Tunghsiang (Shirongol Mongols) and Baoan, living in the provinces of Gansu and Qinghai; and most importantly, the large group of native Chinese-speaking Muslims, called the Hui since the Mongol Yuan period (1279-1368), who call themselves the Huimim, the Muslim people, and referred to in the PRC as the Huizu (for an excellent map showing the distribution of the main ethnic groups of Muslims in China [including Xinjiang] see Kennedy, 2002, map 68). They are found throughout the country, although concentrated mainly in the provinces of Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu and Yunnan (Bosworth, 1997; Atwill, 2005).

Though Chinese by nationality, the Turkic and Persian speaking groups are not Chinese by race, language or culture. They live in the Chinese North-West, a vast region traditionally called Eastern Turkestan, which became integrated into the Chinese empire in the mid-18th century and is known as the autonomous region of Xinjiang (Sinkiang), the largest administrative unit of the PRC, comprising about one-sixth of its total territory. The ethnic roots of the Muslims of Xinjiang tie them to the cultural and religious environment of Islam in Western Turkestan, the large Muslim areas of Central Asia that were the main staging area of the Muslim advance into China along the Silk Road (Chang-Kuan Lin, 1997; Grousset, 1970; Benningsen & Bryan, 1987; Sinor, 1990; Fletcher, 1995; DeWeese, 2001).

Separate from these ethnic groups centered in Xinjiang, the Hui live mainly in the northwestern quarter of the interior Chinese lands between Tibet and Mongolia and constitute only a marginal presence in the eastern lands and on the coastal line of China. These Chinese Muslims, numbering slightly less than half of all Muslims living in the PRC today, have to be considered as the main representatives of Chinese Islam, which developed noticeably detached from contact with the world of Islam at large, even if some were able to join the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Over the centuries, the Huis were required to develop their Islamic identity in isolation, enjoying only sporadic contacts with the centers of Islamic piety and learning that lay far beyond their frontiers in Islamic Central Asia, the Iranian world, Muslim India and the maritime Muslim world of Southeast Asia.

In Hui consciousness, the strongest connection with Islamic doctrine and practice, however, remained its focus on the "Western lands," the regions of Central Asia, called the "celestial region" (*tianfang*, extending it into Arabia), from which their earliest ancestors had migrated to China (Mason, 1921, p. 91; Ben-Dor Benite, pp. 17-18). The regions inhabited by the Huis show a high illiteracy rate of the general population today and reflect the somewhat impoverished training of its religious leaders in the past - ahongs (from Persian *ākhūnd*) and imams, prayer leaders and preachers (Algar, 1985). Nonetheless, new Islamic teaching colleges (*madrasa*) and study abroad of some of its leaders have widened the base of instruction and learning since the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Islam came to China as an immigrant religion. Some of its followers leaving from Central Asia passed through the landmass of Inner Asia (Central Eurasia) and Xinjiang (Sinkiang) in the North West of China, until they reached the Chinese heartlands at the end of the Silk Road in Xi'an (formerly Chang'an). Before Muslims walked this road, Mazdeans (Zoroastrians, Boyce, 1979), Manicheans (Widengren, 1965; Tardieu, 1981, 1997; Schmidt-Glintzer, 1987; Lieu, 1992, 1998), Jews (White, 1966; Pollak, 1980), and Nestorian Christians (Saeki, 1937, 1951) had taken the same route into China (Foltz, 1999). The earliest Chinese contacts with Islam, however, may be traced to the port city of Guangzhou (formerly Canton, known as Khānfū in the Muslim sources, located on the Pearl river northwest of Hongkong) where Muslim traders coming by sea from the Middle East established a small settlement with a mosque, a generation after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad (570-632 C.E.). The traditional Chinese Muslim claim that Muḥammad sent his companion Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ in 628 to China is a legend (Hawting, 1995) but the first Arab Muslim embassy arrived in China in 651 (according to Chinese sources, Leslie et al., 200, p. 33). Other coastal settlements of Muslim traders, protected by extraterritorial rights and confined to specifically designated port cities, were established thereafter in Quanzhou (formerly Chinchew, known as Zaytūn in Muslim sources, located opposite Taiwan) and Hangzhou (formerly Hangchow, known as Khansā in Muslim sources, located in the Yangtse river delta) during the Tang dynasty (618-907), which had its capital in Xi'an (known as

Khumdān in Muslim sources). These traders led a separate religious and social life of their own and preserved their Arabic names, native tongues and original dress. In Central Asia, a military engagement with imperial China prevented the Muslim forces led by Qutayba b. Muslim from conquering Kashgar in 713 (Bosworth, 1986). Led by Ziyād b. Ṣāliḥ (Bosworth, 2002), however, an Abbasid army was able to defeat the Chinese imperial forces (under the command of a Korean general) in battle in the valley of the Talas River in 751 (known as Ṭarāz in Muslim sources, Bosworth, 2000).

As the Muslim migrants passed through the vast zone of the steppes of Inner Asia, they encountered the nomadic civilizations of people who spoke a variety of Altaic (Turkic and Mongol) languages. Built on the relationship of horse and pasture, the nomadic civilizations between the South Russian and Mongolian steppes were organized as large tribes with vast herds of sheep, goats, camels and cattle. They were highly mobile forces -- skilled archers mounted on galloping horses and firing back at the enemy -- and posed a constant military threat against their more sedentary neighbors. Until modern times this vast zone was often seen by Europeans as the home of barbarians, a cauldron of the hordes of Gog and Magog, sealed off behind the Wall of Alexander, the Iron Gate at the Caucasus, and the Great Wall of China. Whether known as Scythians, Huns, Turks and Mongols, they brought death and destruction with a terrible swiftness (Meserve, 1987).

The spread of Islam into China began with commercial interests and trade routes. It was carried on by two major routes: the northern land road, generally termed the "Silk Road" (for a map see Meserve, 1987, ER 8: 239), into the western half of the Chinese core lands, and the southern sea route, sometimes termed the "Spice Route" (for a map see Kennedy, 2002: map 9), that passed along the shores of India and around the straits of Malacca to reach the port cities of the southeastern coast of China (for Islam's entry into Tibet see Aksoy, Burnett & Yoeli-Tlalim, 2010). The northern trade route led from Balkh and Marw in Khurasan, passed through Samarqand and Kokand in Transoxiana, continued via Kashgar around the Tarim basin on either its northern (through Kuqa [Kucha] and Turpan [Turfan]) or southern rim (through Hotan [Khotan]) and moved into the Gansu corridor, from where it would reach Xi'an and thence bring back to the west the Chinese merchandise, which included many other goods in addition to silk. The southern route followed a long history of trade between the Middle East and China. Persian (Fārsī) and Arabic speaking groups established Muslim settlements along the southeastern coast of China between the middle of the 8th and 14th centuries. In 1346, the world-traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304-1368 or 1377) gave a vivid account of Muslims living in the major port cities (Gibb, 1958-2000; Miquel, 1979; Da-Sheng, 1992; Beckingham, 1998).

The Arab geographers and historians developed a detailed, albeit partly legendary, picture of China as linked with India, which is exemplified by the more southern, maritime vision of Ibn Rusta (written about 903) and the more northern, land vision of Masʿūdī (written about 955). Moreover, Ibn Khurdādhbih (ca. 850), the oldest Arab geographer whose work has survived, described in detail the sea route to China and was also aware of a northern land route. Other Muslim sources, foremost the *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* compiled in the tenth century by an anonymous author from Juzajan in Iran, offer many details about the routes by land and sea from the core lands of Islam into China. From all these accounts, it appears that the land route from Turpan via the Gansu corridor was the main route for Muslim commercial and diplomatic contacts with China up to the Mongol period (Bosworth, 1997).

Accounting for the difference in the respective character and objectives of the land and sea routes that brought Islam into China will require further research. It seems clear, however, that the early history of Islam

in China was influenced from two directions: the northern land route that brought Islam into the western parts of China (but did not send out colonies to the Chinese coast in the east) and remained the main artery through which Islam made an impact on Chinese society through the emergence of Hui Islam; and the southern route that ran along the coast of China as far as Hangzhou and founded small Muslim colonies in many port cities but avoided an advance into the interior of the Chinese core lands. When Islam came to China by water, it remained on the coast; when it came by land, it rested in the interior.

With the expansion of maritime contacts with the Middle East, the number of Muslims increased in the Song period of Chinese history (northern Song, 970-1126, and southern Song, 1127-1279) mainly through settlement of traders and their intermarriage with Chinese women. These Muslim settlers began to integrate into Chinese society, and a Muslim by the name of Pu Shougeng was a Trade Commissioner (*shiboshi*) at the end of the Song period. After the Mongol conquest of China, ushering in the Yuan period of Chinese history (1279-1368), the Muslim impact on China became even stronger. The Mongols transported a large number of Muslim artisans and soldiers into China from West and Central Asia. Muslims held important positions in the military, finance and business sections of the Mongol administration, second in authority to the Mongol overlords (Leslie et al., 2006, p. 33).

These newly arrived Muslim settlers and their descendants expanded Islam substantially into the central and southwestern parts of China. Leading his Central Asian countrymen into the province of Yunnan to settle down, Sayyid Ajall (Shams al-Dīn Bukhārī, 1211-1279, Lane, *iranicaonline.*sayyed-ajall) is credited with enforcing Muslim provincial rule, building Muslim mosques and establishing his provincial capital at Kunming (Yunnanfu). Appointed governor over Yunnan in 1273, he represented a class of soldiers, administrators and financial middlemen serving the Mongol conquerors, who with Qubilay Khān (Kubla Khan, 1215-1294) established firm Mongol rule over Yunnan in 1253 (Boyle, 1986). With time, these Muslim settlers came to be Sinicized and absorbed into the local society as a Hui community, making Yunnan the second most populated province of Muslims in China after Gansu.

With the end of the Yuan period and the emergence of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), and possibly in part also with the disruptions of navigation due to the Portuguese appearance in the Indian Ocean, Muslim immigration into China from the south petered out. Thereafter any significant contacts of Islam with China passed almost entirely through the northern land route and made the Hui communities of northwestern China the fulcrum and focus of Islam in China. Islam had now firmly established its own tradition (*qingzhen-jiao*, literally, "pure and true religion") of the Chinese Muslims. They now obtained degrees and official positions in the civil service, and many mosques were built all over China. Muslims now gained influence in military affairs, became experts in astronomy and the rules of the calendar, distinguished themselves in medicine and pharmacy, and took positions of leadership in trade and transport. One Muslim, the eunuch Zheng He, led a large Chinese fleet to Africa and Arabia over almost three decades in 1405-1433 (Leslie et al., 2006, pp. 33-34).

In the declining decades of the Ming dynasty and the ascent of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) of Manchu origin, the great period of Chinese Muslim literature, known as Han Kitab, came to flourish with Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi and others (see below). Their work was deeply influenced by the thought and ethics of Sufi affiliations that had their origin in Central Asia, the Kubrawīya in particular (DeWeese, 1988, pp. 45-83). The most important achievement of the authors of Han Kitab, however, was their far-reaching and deeply rooted harmonization of Muslim thought with the Confucian vision and order of society. Now, Chinese Islam was

established, firmly rooted in both the Islamic and the Confucian traditions. In about 1781-1784, under the Qianlong emperor, the New Teaching (*Xinjiao*) of Ma Mingxin (1719-1781), the founder of the Jahrīya branch of the Naqshbandīya Sufi affiliation (Algar, 1990, pp. 3-44), caused a split among the Muslims. It exploded in a rebellion in Gansu province against the Manchu rulers that was suppressed in 1784 and Ma Mingxin was executed. In the 1850s, renewed Muslim rebellions occurred, both in the south in Yunnan province, led by Du Wenxiu (1823-1872), the leader of the Panthay Rebellion, and in the north in Gansu province, led by Ma Hualong (d. 1871), who was the fifth leader of the Jahrīya Sufi affiliation. In the suppression of these secessions millions were displaced or died, Muslim and non-Muslim alike (for a detailed study of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi affiliation in China see, Aubin, 1990, pp. 491-572).

With the elimination of imperial Manchu rule in the first quarter of the 20th century, an Islamic renaissance occurred that came to a halt temporarily by the Cultural Revolution of Mao Tse Tung (1893-1976). Since the last quarter of the 20th century, however, Chinese Islamic culture has been flourishing in China's autonomous Islamic regions, such as Ningxia, and in several of the main Chinese cities, such as Beijing, Tianjin (Tientsin) and Nanjing (Nanking). A flowering of Islamic books in Chinese has appeared, documenting a continued cultural integration of Chinese Islam into the mainstream of the country (Leslie et al., 2006, p. 34). Chinese Islam no longer feels isolated from the rest of the Muslim world. It is firmly established as part of global Islam, although it constitutes only a small fraction of the population of both the Islamic world and China, each of which numbers about 1.4 billion people.

Islamic Literature in Chinese

Islamic literature in Chinese, focused on the religious beliefs and practices of Chinese Muslims, developed only with the last decades of the Ming dynasty (for an account of Persian language and literature in China see Shi-Jian & Feng Jin Yuan, 1992, pp. 446-449). The most significant corpus of this literature is a collection of Islamic texts in Chinese that are known as the Han Kitab. This term is a hybrid expression formed by Chinese Muslims, meaning "The Chinese Book" (Han meaning "Chinese" and Kitāb "Book" in Arabic; the first usage of the expression, Han Kitab, has been traced back to Lan Zixi's *Tianfang zhengxue* [*The true meaning of Islam*] published in 1852, see Ben-Dor Benite, 2005, pp. 159-160) and referring to a collection of texts written by Huiru, that is, Muslim scholars who had acquired an expertise in Confucian learning (the term, Huiru, is found as early as 1681 in several prefaces written by Muslim scholars; Ben-Dor Benite, 2005, p. 143). These texts have the common goal of synthesizing Islam with Confucian teachings and to some degree also of assimilating Daoist and Buddhist concepts into the mix. The collection appeared between 1630 and 1730 and represents an unprecedented burgeoning of Chinese Muslim scholarship. It may be considered the fruit of a far-flung network of educational institutions preceding it, and the teachers and disciples through whom Chinese Islam developed its own distinctively Chinese Muslim institutions, values and ideas. The key figure in establishing this network was Hu Dengzhou (Muhammad Ibrāhīm Ilyās, 1522-1597) who started a rigorous Islamic school in Nanjing where Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and Islamic Law were taught. He died in 1597 without leaving any written work (for studies on Islamic Literature in Chinese, see especially the highly informative study of Leslie et al., 2006 and also, Ben-Dor Benite, 2005).

The earliest outstanding work of the Han Kitab is *Zhengjiao zhenquan* (*The Real Commentary on the True Teaching*) published by Wang Daiyu in Nanjing in 1642 (for a short study of Wang Daiyu's life and work see Murata, 2000, pp. 19-24). This, his principal and longest work, is the earliest extant book on Islam

in Chinese by a Muslim. Wang Daiyu studied the Islamic sciences in Persian and Arabic and began a serious study of Chinese only when he was about thirty years old. Using Confucian and, to some degree, Daoist and Buddhist concepts and images, he explained Islamic teachings to educated Chinese-speaking Muslims, expressing Islamic ideas in an appropriate Chinese idiom. He was buried, probably in 1657 or 1658, in a graveyard belonging to a mosque in the Western part of Beijing. Wang Daiyu's major work is about 82,000 characters in length and consists of four sections in two books, each book with twenty chapters. Book One deals with theological principles (divine attributes, predestination, creation and human nature) and Book Two focuses on religious conduct, ethics and commandments of Islamic law (Murata, 2000, pp. 48-60). It also directs some guarded criticism against Zhou Xi (1130-1200), the Aquinas of Neo-Confucianism in the southern Song dynasty (1127-1279).

Wang Daiyu also wrote a minor work, *Qingzhen daxue* (*The Great Learning of the Pure and Real*; translated into English by Murata, 2000, pp. 81-112), which has about 6,000 characters and includes three chapters (God, the Muḥammadan reality, and the perfect human being). A third work of his, *Xizhen zhengda* (*The True Answers of the Very Real*) with about 25,000 characters, was first published in 1658 after Wang Daiyu's death by his disciple Wu-Liang-cheng (for examples selected from Wang Daiyu's *Xizhen zhengda* translated into English see Murata, 2000, pp. 44-48). It is a collection of some two hundred conversations, presented in dialogue form or as questions and answers, on topics from metaphysics to daily ritual. The questioners are Muslims, learned divines and ordinary believers, as well as non-Muslims, mainly Confucians. Added to the 1925 edition of this work one finds two short treatises, which also may have Wang Daiyu as their author. They are: *Fu-lu* (*Appendix*) of 3,000 characters, including thirty-six conversations in the same style as the main text; and *Shengyu* (*Addendum*) of about 4,000 characters, including a series of short questions from Buddhist monks followed by equally short answers.

A large stream of Islamic books, some in Arabic, some in Arabic and Chinese, and several only in Chinese, were written soon after the work of Wang Daiyu, some translations, some originals. A short essay among these books, *Tianfang sheng xu* (*Introduction to the Sage of Islam*), written by Ding Peng (fl. 1650-1695), refers to the Three Teachings of ancient Chinese origin but asserts that Islam is the truest of all teachings and not different from "our Confucianism" (Ben-Dor Benite, 2005, p. 190). Most significant among these books, however, is *Qingzhen zhinan* (*The Guide to Islam*) published in eight volumes by Ma Zhu in 1683. Ma Zhu (1640-1711) was educated in the Chinese classics and, eighteen years old, passed the first level of the civil-service examinations. In 1669, around the age of thirty, he went to Beijing where he engaged in serious study of Islamic texts. His work, the title of which he translated into Arabic as *al-Murshid ilā ʿulūm al-islām* (*The Guide to the Sciences of Islam*) became probably the single most respected of the many works written by Chinese Muslim scholars (Ben-Dor Benite, 2005, pp. 136-142).

The peak of Islamic literature in Chinese was reached during the early Qing period of Chinese history (1644-1912) with Liu Zhi (1670-1739) being the most prolific Chinese Muslim author (for a short study of Liu Zhi's life and work see Murata, 2000, pp. 24-28). He received his first education from his father Liu Sanjie (1630-1710) and Yuan Ruqi (fl. 1683-1704), a teacher at the school of the Garden of Military Guardians mosque in Nanjing. At the age of fifteen, he began to study on his own. He claims to have studied the traditional Confucian classics and histories for eight years. Then, for six years, he read the "Western" books, probably mainly Muslim sources of Islamic religious literature but possibly also books brought to Nanjing on the initiative of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and other Jesuits who followed after him (Spence,

1985; Minamiki, 1985; Mungello, 1994; & Po-chia Hsia, 2010*). Finally, he devoted three years to the study of Buddhist texts and one year to the Daoist classics. He believed that the religious writings of Islam were generally similar to the intentions of Confucius and Mencius and that the teachings of the latter two as "Sages of the East" were one and the same with those of "the Sage of the West" (i.e., Muhammad).

Liu Zhi expounded his thought in Nanjing for twenty years and visited Muslim and non-Muslim scholars in a number of cities, soliciting their advice while bringing his manuscripts with him. In the years 1704-1724, Liu Zhi authored his three main works: the *Tianfang xingli* (*Nature and Principle in Islam* [1704 C.E.], translated into English by Murata et al., 2009) on Islamic philosophy; the *Tianfang dianli* (*Rules and Proprieties of Islam* [1710 C.E.] studied by Frankel, 2011) on Islamic law and ritual; and the *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* (*The True Record of the Ultimate Sage of Islam*, 1724 C.E.), a biography of Muḥammad, which was based on the *Tarjuma-yi mawlid-i Muṣṭafā*, a Persian translation from the Arabic work by Saʿīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Kāzarūnī (d. 1357). Liu Zhi's *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* has been translated in part into English by I. Mason, *The Arabian Prophet*, Shanghai 1921. Though each of these three books had its own focus, this *Tianfang* trilogy formed a unity in Liu-Zhi's perception according to his own words: "These three books are three and, at the same time, one. They are like stepping up the stairs, going into the hall, and then entering into the inner chamber" (Murata et al., p. 9). In addition, Liu Zhi produced some short treatises, noteworthy among them, *Tianfang zimu jieyi* (*Explaining the Meaning of the Arabic Letters, 1706 C.E.*), 5,000 characters in length, describing each stroke with illustrations and following the Islamic model of "the science of the letters" (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*; for the Islamic implications of this literary genre see Böwering, 2011, pp. 339-397).

In his works, Liu Zhi was able to rely on Chinese translations – or rather, paraphrases and summarizing abridgements – of a number of Islamic sources originally compiled in Persian or Arabic. The majority of these sources were translated from Persian Sufi sources (for a survey of the Sufi affiliations in Islam see Trimingham, 1971; with regard to Sufi affiliation active in China, see the conspectus assembled by Gladney, 1991, 2nd ed. 1996, pp. 385-392; for secondary literature on the Sufi affiliations in China see, Leslie et al., 2006: 183-184, and Fletcher, 1986, pp.13-26). They may be understood as constituting a good part of the Islamic basis of concepts with which Liu Zhi harmonized his interpretation of crucial Confucian terms and teachings. This source situation has been carefully documented with regard to his *Tianfang xianli* in which Liu Zhi cites 66 titles of Islamic sources in Chinese transliteration and translation, not all of them reliably identified by scholarly analysis to date (for a list of these sources see Leslie & Wassel, pp. 78-104).

The following four, translated from the Persian, however, appear to have been the principal Islamic sources on which he relied foremost in his work. The first two are prose texts and stem from the literary environment of the Kubrawīya Sufi affiliation: (1) *Mirsād al-ʿibād min al-mabdaʾ ilā l-maʿād* (*The path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return*, translated into English by Algar, 1982) by Najm al-Din Dāya Rāzī (1177-1256, M.A. Rīāhī, 1996; EIran 7, pp. 166-167), a direct disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (1145-1220, Algar, 1986; Böwering, 1987a, pp. 1-39; Böwering, 1987b, pp. 82-101; Böwering, 2006, pp. 7-34). This treatise was probably the single most influential Islamic text translated into Chinese. It was entitled *Daoxing tuiyuan jing* (*The Classic on the Ongoing Way of Pursuing the Origin*) and constituted Liu Zhi's most important source for the *Tianfang xianli* (cited 30 times). (2) *Maqsad-i aqsā* (*The Furthest Goal*) by ʿAzīz-i Nasafī (fl. 13th century; ʿAzīz-i Nasafī's *Maqsad-i aqsā* was translated into English from the Persian (Fārsī) by H. Palmer in 1867 (Palmer: 1938; a recent and more reliable translation is Ridgeon, 2002, pp. 41-128; see

also, Landolt, 1996, pp. 163-193), a disciple of Saʿd al-Dīn Hammūya (1190-1252), who also counted Najm al-Dīn Kubrā among his teachers. The abridged Chinese translation of this work from Persian (Fārsī), *Yanzhen jing* (*The Classic of Searching for the Real*), was done by She Yunshan in 1679; it is cited 14 times.

Next in importance, are two short Persian treatises of mixed prose and poetry by Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Rahmān Jāmī (1414-1492) who belonged to the Naqshbandīya Sufi affiliation (for Jāmī's life and work see Losensky, EIran 14, pp. 469-475 and Algar, EIran 14, pp. 475-479): (3) *Ashiʿʿat al-lamaʿāt* (*The rays of 'The Flashes'*), which is Jāmī's commentary on the *Lamaʿāt*, a Persian treatise on divine love by Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIraqī (1213-1289). Jāmī's *Ashīʿʿat al-lamaʿāt* (edited by Hāmid Rabbānī in Ganj-i ʿIrfān, Tehran 1973 and, more reliably, by Richard, 1982) is a commentary on the *Lamaʿāt* by Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (edited by S. Nafīsī in *Kulliyāt-i ʿIrāqī*, pp. 375-409, and by J. Nūrbakhsh, Tehran 1338š/1959 and translated into English by Chittick & Wilson, 1982; see also, Chittick, 1998, EIran 8, pp. 538-540). Liu Zhi cites the work 15 times as *Feiying jing* (*The Classic of Exhausting the Hidden*) but draws principally on its lengthy introduction; and (4) Jāmī's *Lawā'ih* (*The Gleams*), of which Liu Zhi made his own abridged and paraphrased translation, dropping most of its poetry. He entitled it *Zhenjing zhaowei* (*Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*; translated into English by Murata, 2000, pp. 113-210), citing it 11 times.

All three treatises of Liu Zhi's trilogy are called *tianfang*, "heavenly direction," perhaps alluding to the Muslim direction of daily prayer (*qibla*) toward the Kaʿba, the sanctuary of Mecca, which stands as a symbol for the entire religious region and tradition of Islam focused on its very center (Mason, 1921, p. 91). Thus, it has been suggested that the three treatises of the trilogy may be translated as "Principles of Islam," "Practices of Islam," and "The Sage Embodiment of Islam," and be understood in relation to the trifold pattern of Islam, expressed by the distinction between *sharīʿa* (religious law), *ṭarīqa* (path to God) and *haqīqa* (reality itself; Murata et al., 2009, pp. 9-10).

For its part, the *Tianfang xingli* is highly organized, illustrated by diagrams, and drawing upon the four afore-mentioned basic Islamic texts, called "root classics." It falls into three parts: a brief introduction; a head section of the "root classics" in five short chapters, illustrated by ten diagrams; and the bulk of the treatise, presented as a lengthy commentary on the root classics divided into five long parts, called "volumes". Each of the five volumes of the commentary section refers back to one of the five short chapters of the root classics and explains them with the help of twelve diagrams each. The treatise as a whole thus has (1) a very brief introduction, (2) a basic statement of five basic principles, extracted from the principal Muslim texts and illustrated by ten diagrams, and (3) a lengthy commentary with sixty diagrams (resulting in seventy diagrams for the whole text). Inasmuch as the essential content of the work is concerned, Liu Zhi focuses on the two affirmations of the Muslim profession of faith (*shahāda*) - God's oneness (*tawhīd*) and Muhammad's prophethood (*nubūwa*) - and adds as its third part the eschatological return to God (*maʿād*), the theme and goal of Dāyā Rāzī's treatise. Addressing these three articles of the Muslim faith within a framework of Confucian terms and categories renders Liu Zhi's approach distinct and original (for the organization of Liu Zhi's *Tianfang xingli* see, Murata, et al., 2009, pp. 81-87).

Turning to Liu Zhi, and his work on Islamic ethics in Confucian categories, a detailed look at his *Tianfang dianli* is in order because it is the most prominent text of Chinese Islam that tries to harmonize Islamic morals with Confucian maxims and norms, some of them intertwined with Buddhist and Daoist views. Liu Zhi described the *Tianfang dianli* as "a book that explains the Teaching (jiao)" and intended it to deal with the concrete, practical aspects of Islam. It thus became the sole Han Kitab book devoted primarily to the

subject of Islamic ritual, law and custom. A number of Confucian literati wrote prefaces to this work, many of them laudatory. On the basis of their praise and at the initiative of the bibliographer Yuan Guozuo, the *Tianfang dianli* became the only book ever to be included in the *Siku quanshu* (Compendium of the Four Treasuries), the largest collection of books in Chinese history and the official compendium of state-accepted literature that was commissioned by the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1796) and compiled between 1773 and 1782, about half a century after Liu Zhi's death (Frankel, 2011, pp. 43-44, pp. 51-55, pp. 94-96).

The *Tianfang dianli* has twenty chapters. The first gives a survey of Islamic teachings on divine oneness, the creation of humanity, the role of the prophets and the special function of Muḥammad. The second and third explain the Islamic concept of the "True Master," i.e., Allāh, and its difference from Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist notions. Chapters four through eight explain the meaning of the Muslim profession of faith and the five basic practices of Islam considered collectively under the rubric of the "Five Endeavors," a Confucian notion. Chapter nine focuses on the ritual slaughter of animals. Chapters ten through thirteen address the "Five Relationships" arranged in the Confucian order of parent-child, ruler-subject, brother-brother, husband-wife and friend-friend. Chapters fourteen through seventeen explain the necessity of the "four constants," the Confucian categories of dwelling place, property, clothes and food. Chapter eighteen discusses the benefits of congregational prayer. Chapter nineteen deals with marriage; chapter twenty discusses funerals. This organization of the material does not resemble the standard order of Islamic treatises because it is influenced by Confucian categories and concerns. It pays special attention to practices that have importance in the Confucian order of society (such as funerals) or are particularly problematic to understand in its context (such as ritual slaughter and congregational prayer; for a list of these twenty chapters, see Murata et al., 2009, pp. 7-8).

No longer belonging to the authors of the Han Kitab, perhaps the most eminent 19th century Muslim scholar was Ma Dexin (1794-1894), also known as Ma Fuchu, who hailed from the province of Yunnan and was proficient in Arabic and Persian. He performed the Muslim pilgrimage in 1841, traveling over land to Rangoon in Myanmar (because maritime travel had been disrupted by the Opium War) and from there by steamship to the Arabian Peninsula. Staying in the Middle East for eight years, he visited Jerusalem, studied at Cairo and traveled to Istanbul. After his return to Yunnan, he mediated in the Panthay Rebellion that had flared up in 1856. Although disagreeing with Du Wenxiu's revolutionary methods, he was executed as a traitor two years after the suppression of the rebellion, his old age notwithstanding. Ma Dexin is credited with about thirty books, many of them on Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and is regarded as an orthodox Islamic thinker who harshly criticized the absorption of Buddhist and Daoist elements into the practice of Islam in China. The claim that he produced the first translation of the Arabic Qur'ān into Chinese, however, cannot be substantiated. He may have begun a translation without completing it.

Understandably, Chinese Muslim scholars did not consider it a pressing need to translate the Qur'ān into Chinese, because any and all Qur'ān recital during Islamic ritual worship (*ṣalāt*), at funerals, weddings and other public occasions had to be recited only in Arabic. In fact, all known translations of the Qur'ān into Chinese date from the 20th century. For a long time, the earliest complete translation of the Qur'ān into Mandarin Chinese, published in Beijing in 1927, was believed to be the one made by Li Tiezheng, a non-Muslim translator, who based his translation on Sakamoto Ken-ichi's Japanese translation which, in turn, was based on Rodwell's English translation of the Qur'ān. According to a press report of Xinhua (December 17, 2011), however, Chinese researchers discovered a manuscript translation into Chinese, written next to the

hand-written Arabic text of the Qur'ān, in the archives of the Culture Institute of Lanzhou University, which had been done by the two calligraphers Sha Zhong and Ma Fulu in the years 1909-1912 (no evidence, however, was presented that this manuscript preserved a complete translation into Chinese of the entire Arabic text).

Today, the most popular version of the Qur'ān in Chinese is that of Muhammad Ma Jian (1906-1978), who studied at al-Azhar University in Cairo and also edited an Arabic-Chinese Dictionary. Parts of his translation of the Qur'ān into Chinese appeared between 1949 and 1951; yet its full version came out only posthumously in 1981, published by the China Social Science Press in Beijing. Based on it, an Arabic-Chinese bilingual version of 604 pages was later published by the King Fahd Holy Qur'ān Printing Press in Medina, Saudi Arabia, and has been re-printed many times and as late as 2012. Furthermore, Daozhang Tong, a Muslim Chinese American, using the English versions of A.Y. Ali and M. M. Pickthall, authored a modern Chinese translation of the Qur'ān, published by the Yilin Press of China in 1989 (830 pages; for further details on Chinese translations of the Qur'ān in the 20th century see, Leslie et al., 2006, p. 62).

This may be the place for a brief observation on the Chinese mosque (*qingzhens*i, literally, "pure and true temple"), because its architectural style, resembling temples and pagodas, reflects most visibly the harmonization of Confucian ideals of society with Islamic religious principles and values. Wherever Hui settled in any numbers their *halāl* establishments, shops, restaurants, caravanserais, inns and mosques and attendant schools (*madrasa*) soon followed. The mosques the Chinese Muslims built as places of their worship and organized as landmarks of their presence were built in a pagoda style reminiscent of indigenous Chinese temple architecture rather than in emulation of the mosque architecture prevalent in Central Asia, South Asia or the Middle East (except in Xinjiang where Muslim mosques in general resemble those of Central Asia). They became scattered all throughout China but were more numerous in the provinces of Gansu, Ninxia, Qinghai and Yunnan. The Chinese pagoda-style mosques reflected in stone what the treatises of the Han Kitab enshrined in their texts: the intermingling of the Confucian and Islamic ideals in the personal and public life of the Chinese Muslim community.

Four mosques of China stand out since early times: (1) the Huaisheng mosque at Gunagzhou is claimed by Muslim tradition as the first and oldest in China and may well go back to the Tang period of Chinese history (though hardly founded by Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, a companion of the Prophet, as legend has it); (2) the Da Qingzhen Si mosque (Great Mosque) in Xi'an is perhaps the most beautiful mosque in all of China and also dates from the Tang dynasty; (3) the Feng-huang mosque of Hangzhou was most likely built in the southern Song period of Chinese history (1127-1279); and (4) the Qingjing mosque in Quanzhou was probably also from the southern Song period. Beautiful mosques in Xinjiang, resembling those of Central Asia, can be found in Kashgar (Id Kah mosque), Hotan, Turpan (Imin Ta mosque) and Yarkand among others. Of the four mosques known to me in Beijing (known in Muslim sources as Khanbalik), the mosque in Ox Street (Niu Jie) is the most beautiful and active, though not the oldest (for detailed information on early Chinese mosques see, Leslie, 1986, pp. 56-57; Leslie et al., 2006, pp. 135-143). A highly interesting topic is the unique and specifically Chinese phenomenon of "women's mosques," on which research on Islam in China has recently been concentrated in a number of studies (Jashock & Jingjun, 2000; Hsiung et al., 2011; Jaschok & Jingjun, 2011; Bano & Kalmbach 2012).

Islamic Ethics in the Chinese Context

The ethics of Islam is anchored in the Islamic profession of faith, "there is no god but God and Muhammad is God's Messenger," its basic creed known as the *shahāda*. This profession proclaims an uncompromising monotheism of Allāh, who has no other being associated with Him. It also affirms Muhammad as the prophet who brought the divine message of the Qur'ān as God's very own revelation (which Muslims understand as God's final revelation for all of humanity; hence they see Muhammad the final prophet ever to be sent by God). Both these fundamental tenets stand in tension with basic Chinese perceptions of the essence of religion and the order of society. The metaphysics, cosmologies and ethics of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, the Three Teachings dominating Chinese society, accepted neither a monotheistic God nor divine revelation as their foundational principles. More specifically, Islam's focus on the one and only God and the human duty to obey his message as proclaimed by a prophetical envoy stand in sharp distinction to the extensive Daoist pantheon and Daoism's reliance on personal intuition as the inspiration for human action. Allah's supreme authority and eternal Qur'anic revelation are incompatible with the deference accorded to the scala of values and virtues rooted in the sayings of Confucius and Mencius. Islam's stern adherence to an omnipotent God and its ritual prayer in imageless mosques confront vivid mandalas, salvific Bodhisattvas and fragrant incense burning before colossal Buddhas.

Ricci, and before him Nestorian Christianity and Judaism (especially at Kaifeng), encountered this conflict between the age-old Chinese perceptions of religion and society and those of revealed monotheistic religions. Ricci saw the solution in presenting God as "the Lord of Heaven" (*tianzhu*) and, downplaying the crucifixion, reframed Jesus in the guise of a Chinese "Sage." The Chinese Muslim authors of the Han Kitab would adopt a similar approach. They made certain adjustments to both Chinese and Muslim thought in order to bring them into alignment. For example, they set the essence of Islamic doctrines on an equal footing with the teaching (*jiao*) of the Three Teachings. They harmonized the basic ritual practices of Islam with the Confucian principle of ritual (*li*). They also interpreted Islamic law through association with Chinese law (*fa*) and employed the central Buddhist concept of dharma as a bridge over the Confucian/Daoist dyad of the Way (*dao*) and the Teaching (*jiao;* see, Frankel, 2011, p. 92, with diagram).

Academic studies of Chinese Muslim beliefs to date have not sufficiently examined two other foundational aspects of Islamic ethics that represent a significant difference from the Three Teachings. For one, there are variant conceptions of time and space: Islam endorses a conception of linear time versus cyclical time, and different perceptions of space – real and imaginary space, i.e., one lifespan from birth to death versus a return to life by rebirth, as well as the state of eternal afterlife in paradise or hellfire versus emptiness and realized immortality. Islam endorses a conception of linear time, which marks one lifespan from birth to death, whereas Chinese thought is based on a cyclical conception of time, punctuated by death and rebirth. Correlatively, Islam posits an eternal space of an afterlife in paradise or hellfire, in contrast to Chinese thought's ideal of emptiness and realized immortality. For the other, there are differing conceptions of human responsibility for actions and their consequences. Islamic ethics revolves around the relationship of divine omnipotence and human freedom, a crucial point in Islam since the beginnings of its school theology (Watt, 1948). In mainstream Islam, God creates the universe ex nihilo and never rests from maintaining it. He fashions each and every human being and serves as the final judge of all humanity on the Day of Resurrection. Furthermore God's omnipotence requires His essential cooperation with the acts of human beings, although they alone carry the responsibility for their actions, good or evil, and receive eternal reward

or punishment for them. God remains the cause of all actions that are "acquired" by humans at the moment of their own action (for general studies on Islamic ethics see, Donaldson, 1953; Izutsu, 1966; Hourani 1985; Rahman, 1989; Fakhry, 1991; Cook, 2000; Hamdy, 2012).

The Chinese Muslim authors of the Han Kitab sidestepped the intricacies of these theological assumptions, realizing their pitfalls. Bypassing Islamic school theology they focused on the roadmaps of Sufi teachings that led to spiritual perfection through ascetic practice and mystical experience. To judge by the Persian Islamic sources consulted by the most prominent authors of the Han Kitab, such as Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, the Sufi world-view was dominant in their minds while the underpinnings of Islamic school theology were sparsely invoked. To be fair to the authors of the Han Kitab, this omission is not as radical as it initially appears. Generally speaking, Islamic theological thought did not have a deep influence on Islamic ethical reflections or norms about ritual behavior. Rather than extending its influence more broadly in the Muslim intellectual world, Islamic school theology remained a closed system. Its two branches, the Muʿtazila (van Ess, 1987) and the Ashʿarīya (Frank, 1987); as well as the Māturīdīya, (Rudolph, 1997), dedicated their energies to struggling with one another for pre-eminence; neither branch attempted to ensure that their intellectual exercise had any practical impact on the ways of human behavior in Islam.

A far more important influence on Islamic ethics was exercised by the Sufi ethic, known as *ādāb* – used in the plural. In its singular (*adab*), it originally referred to the rules of proper etiquette and was strongly related to Persian narrative and protocol, in particular the literature of "mirrors for princes" (Littmann, 1979; Khaleghi-Motlagh & Ch. Pellat, 1985). This Sufi ethic of *ādāb* (in the plural; Böwering, 1984, pp. 62-87; Böwering, 1996b, pp. 139-156) has its roots in the ninth century with the piety of mystics who purified their hearts by espousing poverty, ascetic renunciation, total trust in God, and recollection of God (*dhikr* and *samāʿ*; Böwering, 1996b). It then developed ethico-spiritual "paths to God" through the close relationship between master and disciple in the Sufi lodge (*ribāt* or *khānaqāh*; J. Chabbi, 1995, and Böwering & Melvin-Koushki, 2011) especially in the Turco-Iranian lands and their neighboring regions. This rigorous practice of the "path" (*karīqa*) developed in a great number of affiliations and, in the 13th to 15th centuries, took on a gnostic character rather than a theological framework. This gnostic trend reflected an earlier, more peripheral tradition of Islam that explains creation by emanation and adopts the pattern of cosmic descent and mystic ascent, with resurrection featured as the immortal soul's return to God from its earthly confinement. It sees everything as a direct manifestation of God, often mediated by archetypes, and adopts the idea of the Perfect Human Being (*insān-i kāmil*) as the theoretical synthesis of its philosophy and the practical ideal of its ethics (Böwering, 1998).

The Islamic profession of faith, when put into practice, entails the concept of obedience, which is basic and central to Islamic ethics. The believer must obey God's revealed will and must follow Muḥammad's normative example of Muslim conduct. To facilitate the necessary obedience Islam has long developed its religious law, the *sharīʿa*, which was understood as having God as its author and hence being immutable. It was not as Western systems of law based on evolving human judgment about the best interests of the community. It stood on four basic root-principles, the Qurʾān, God's revelation; the *sunna*, the normative custom and conduct of the Prophet; *ijmāʿ*, the consensus of the community (established by scholars on the basis of accepted Muslim practice); and *qiyās*, analogous reasoning that offered Muslim scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) the opportunity to interpret legal situations presenting themselves by virtue of newly encountered regional customs and local manners.

Islam never saw the need to develop a specifically defined and universally applicable code of law. It never had a canon that would have been identifiable as its basic book of law. In modern times, however, Muslim nations faced the challenge of governing their people by developing national legal codes based on Islamic principles. Throughout history, Islam relied on its scripture (Qur'ān), tradition (Ḥadīth, an extensive literature encapsulating the *sunna*, the words and deeds of the Prophet and, by extension, his companions), and the store of legal interpretations collected over the centuries by its respected jurisprudents, which constituted an enormous volume of legal literature.

Because Sunni Islam – Shiʻi Islam has minimal importance within the Chinese context -- did not recognize an ultimate teaching authority vested in one human person or institution (such as popes or ecumenical councils), the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence were entitled to offer their legal opinions (*fatwā*, pl. *fatāwā*) with regard to the applications of the law but did not have the power to create law. They undertook this legal interpretation (*ijtihād*) by organizing themselves in four main Sunni schools (Mālikī, Ḥanafī, Shāfiʻī and Ḥanbalī), called *madhhab*. Individual Muslims had the freedom to choose among these schools, but were expected to respect and follow the opinions issued by the scholars they recognized (*taqlīd;* see Hooker, 1997).

The *sharīʻa* represented a system of duties toward God and fellow Muslims. It was much larger in extent than our common understanding of the law because it included norms pertaining to *ʻibādāt*, the ritual obligations of worship toward God that eventually came to be known as the five pillars of Islamic practice (*arkān al-dīn*). They are: giving witness to the profession of faith (*shahāda*); the five daily ritual prayers (*ṣalāt*) performed in the direction of the Kaʻba of Mecca at prescribed times of the day, preceded by ritual washings; the alms-due (*zakāt*) to be given to the needy, orphans and widows of Muslim society; the observance of fasting (*ṣawm* or *ṣiyām*) during the lunar month of Ramaḍān, requiring total abstinence from food, drink and sexual relations from daybreak to sunset; and the Muslim pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) to be performed by every sound and mature Muslim once in a life-time as long as he or she has the means to do so.

To these five obligations, some Sunni scholars (Mālikī in the main) add the religious duty to take part in "the struggle on the path of God" (*jihād*), which is to be pursued by a sufficient number of the Muslims (not necessarily by each individual Muslim at a given time) and can be realized by the pen or the sword, taking on militant features of "holy war." Called "the monasticism of Islam" because of its proselytizing effects, *jihād* is based on the Muslim division of the world into an "abode of Islam" (*dār al-Islām*), the Muslim world, and an "abode of war" (*dār al-ḥarb*), the non-Muslim world with which treaties can be made by compromise, resulting in a temporary state of an "abode of peace" (*dār al-ṣulḥ*). Since the earliest times of Islam, its missionary zeal of *jihād* was political, focused on establishing an Islamic order over conquered territories, rather than personal, gaining particular converts. Special conditions of protected minorities (*dhimmī*) were given to Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians living under Muslim rule, called people of the Scripture (*ahl al-kitāb*), who were granted the freedom of their worship in exchange for the heavy burden of a poll-tax (*jizya*), forcing most Christian populations of the Middle East and North Africa to choose between survival and conversion, thereby accelerating the rapid decline of flourishing Eastern Greek and Western Latin Christian communities (Peters, 1987; Kelsay 1993; Firestone, 1999).

In addition to the ritual duties toward God, the *sharīʻa* includes the *muʻāmalāt*, the duties individual believers have toward their fellow Muslims. They include all matters pertaining to interpersonal relations of Muslims within their community, such as family, inheritance, property, finance and contracts as well as

criminal, constitutional and administrative laws. It is the envisaged ideal of the *sharī'a* to regulate all aspects of public and private life through laws recognized by religion. These laws made Islam a public religion rather than a private faith; they saw religion and politics as inseparably united in a homogeneous society with a uniform religion and normative ethics. There is no "secular" realm in Islam because no aspect of human life is free from religious obligation. No rite of ordination creates a sharp divide between clergy and laity in Islam. Furthermore, Islam was understood as a brotherhood, a community (*umma*) bonded by solidarity with brother and sister Muslims. Those bonds did not reach out, however, beyond the boundaries of the Muslim community to all human beings as the Christian ideal of neighborly love had made it its own goal by preaching even love of enemies. This brotherly ideal called upon Muslims to share goods with one another promoted respect and support for the poor and needy.

Islamic ethical requirements target the individual Muslims and are keyed to their abilities to fulfill them reasonably and consistently. Consequently, Muslim ethics is appropriately classified as an ethics of virtue. More specifically, to give expression to the ethics of its tradition incorporated in Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, Islam since early times employed the term, *akhlāq*, the science of good character traits and moral virtues. Also found in the plural, *akhlāq* (See Walzer, 1979; Rahman, 1985) was used antecedent to the emergence of the Sufi ethic of *ādāb* and has Greek origins reaching back to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. This ethic of *akhlāq* in Islamic tradition, however, does not derive virtuous conduct from a philosophy of the "good," rather it tries to posit particular moral attitudes as appropriate in order to achieve nobility of character. Unlike in the Aristotelian tradition, however, essential character traits are not seen as good or evil by virtue of their inherent nature, a nature that human beings could discover through their rational faculties. Rather, because God does as He wills, God determines what is good and what is evil by divine decree, through His command and interdiction. There is no order of things that are good or evil by their very nature. God could have decreed otherwise according to His own free will and humans can only surmise why God decreed what he decreed. Because God is the inscrutable creator of the entire universe, including its norms, human beings do not have the autonomous capacity to determine what is good or evil on their own account; they can only know the difference by divine decree.

In the Islamic tradition, sin is an act of disobedience to the divine command and interdiction. It is neither due to the consequences of original sin, a concept unknown to Islam, nor to the failure of the independent judgment of one's conscience. Sin is transgression of the divine will rather than violation of a natural law existing separate from that will. God has given each human being an inborn nature (*fiṭra*), endowing all human beings equally with a soul totally inclined to surrender to God, a kind of *anima naturaliter moslemica*. This natural soul can be corrupted through upbringing, education or environment and lose its primal purity when it is formed by parents or teachers under varying cultural conditions, thus becoming for example a Jew or a Christian and losing its original "Muslim" nature. In all human beings there is an inclination to evil that makes them forget God and his many gifts. They turn to God in their needs, yet having received his grace and mercy, forget about him and become ungrateful, impatient and filled with anxieties, even turning obstinate and rebellious toward God. Lack of gratitude (*shukr*) to God is the core of unbelief (*kufr*), which prevents the servant (*'abd*) to fear his Lord (*rabb*) and thus induces humanity to forgo worship of the Almighty, the purpose for which they were created. Islam has no standard catalog of sins, but distinguishes between minor and grave sins and singles out unbelief and associating partners with God (*shirk*) as the most serious of sins that are threatened by hellfire but can be wiped out by divine forgiveness upon repentance (*tawba*).

With regard to God's command and interdiction, the Qur'ān includes a passage (Q 17, 22-38) that resembles in essence what is known as the Decalogue, though it may have twelve rather than ten articles. It reads verbatim:

(1) Do not set up any other god with God, lest you have to sit down reviled and forsaken. (2) Your Lord has decreed that you should serve only Him. (3) And to your parents you should show kindness. If one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say, 'fie' to them, and do not chide them, but speak to them with kindness. And lower over them the wing of humility, out of mercy, and say, 'My Lord have mercy on them in the same way that they brought me up when I was young. Your Lord is well aware of what is in your hearts. If you are righteous, He is ever forgiving to those who turn to Him in repentance. (4) Give the kinsman his due and likewise the destitute and the traveller. And do not squander. Those who squander are brethren of Satan, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord. If you turn away from them, seeking the mercy from your Lord that you are hoping for, speak to them with gentle words. And do not keep your hand chained to your neck nor open it fully, lest you have to sit down, rebuked and denuded. Your Lord gives ample provision to those whom He wishes or He measures it carefully. He is informed and observing of His servants. (5) Do not slay your children through fear for poverty. We shall make provision for you and for them. Killing them is a great sin. (6) Do not come near to fornication. It is an abomination and evil as a way. (7) Do not slay the soul, which God has forbidden, unless you have the right to do so. Whoever is slain wrongfully, we give authority to his heir to take revenge, but let him not go to excess in killing. He will be helped. (8) Do not approach the property of the orphan, except with that which is better, until he is of age. (9) And fulfill the covenant. The covenant will be asked about. (10) Fill the measure when you measure, and weigh with the straight balance. That is better and fairer as a course. (11) Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. The hearing and the sight and the heart – each of these there will be a questioning. (12) And do not walk in the land in exultation. You will not split open the earth nor reach the mountains in height. The evil of all that has become hateful to your Lord." (Translation by Jones, 2007, pp. 263-264).

This Qur'ānic passage is not a direct parallel to the Decalogue of the Hebrew Bible although it may have been inspired by it. It includes several aspects directly related to Muḥammad's native Arab tribal environment, such as the admonition for care and respect of parents and the reproach of miserliness, prodigality, pride, and boasting. Muslims are enjoined to treat poor people and travelers on the same level as kinsmen; all are to enjoy equal hospitality. The ban against worshiping idols or representing God by images is not mentioned although other passages of the Qur'ān militate categorically against such practices. Homicide and murder are prohibited, but the law of blood-revenge is upheld, though mitigated by the payment of blood money. The law protects the property of the orphan and bans the tribal custom of child murder (especially daughters) for economic reasons. The passage designates Friday as the day of congregational prayer but does not treat it as a day of rest; just as other Qur'ānic passages do not present God as resting from his work of creation on the Sabbath, as it is his wont in the Book of Genesis. In general, the Qur'ān demonstrates an admirable ability to merge pre-Islamic tribal values, such as personal honor, manliness, courage, kinship loyalty, hospitality, endurance, forbearance and self-control, with Biblical virtues, such as justice, kindness, equity, compassion, mercy, self-restraint and sincerity. This symbiotic combination of two strands of values is perhaps best expressed by *taqwā*, the Islamic term for piety and fear of God vis-à-vis an almighty Creator and Judge.

Muslim sexual ethics, the status of women, the inequality of the sexes, the veil, the fixed shares of inheritance, family laws, marriage, the custom of endogamous and arranged marriages, restricted polygamy,

unequal rights of divorce and custodianship, adoption, abortion, homosexual conduct, birth control, prostitution, slaves and concubines, etc., make up a long list of ethical topics and moral norms examined by Islam, beginning with the Qur'ān and running through its legal and ethical literature. Analysis of these questions of domestic ethics would need a separate paper. The same holds true for a whole range of topics dealing with applied ethics in the social and economic sectors of Islam as well Islamic banking and the taking of interest, a practice traditionally rejected as usury. Furthermore, the matter of criminal punishment, especially the so-called ḥudūd punishments defined in the Qur'ān, such as cutting off a thief's hand or flogging for fornication, would deserve separate treatment. So do high-profile issues as apostasy and blasphemy, which are punished by death or life-long imprisonment in many Muslim countries. It may be added that stoning for adultery is not a Qur'ānic injunction, but has its home in Ḥadīth literature (and Deuteronomy 22, 21-22). The circumcision of male infants is an age-old, legally valid practice in Islam, while that of females is controversial and rarely practiced today.

In addition to the foregoing more focused questions, the Muslim world faces many wider issues of social justice. To these has to be added illiteracy of at least a fourth of the Muslim world population, especially among its women. An even more pressing challenge for Islamic ethics is the blatant public corruption in most Muslim societies, which has enormous repercussions on their common welfare. Some Muslim countries face serious challenges associated with widespread hunger, infant mortality and child labor. These challenges are often connected with burgeoning populations of migrants and refugees. The grossly unequal distribution of wealth threatens the welfare of Muslim nations by pitting a small class of privileged individuals against the vast majority of Muslims living under the poverty line. Sectarian violence and terrorist acts are explosive contemporary phenomena but also have long historical antecedents. Although Islam clearly forbids suicide, the advocates of suicide bombing interpret it as martyrdom, the crowning virtue of a pious Muslim. Finally, there are the hidden tensions between family honor rooted in clan consciousness and tribal taboos and the ethical requirements defined by religion, which are grounded in Islamic law. Although conceptually two totally separate sets of norms, they both motivate ethical conduct in actual practice. These tensions come out in the open through the killings of girls who have become pregnant out of wedlock in order to safeguard family honor or the forcing of women into undesired marriages in order to promote clan interests. Muslim life in China has encountered specific tensions related to Islamic dietary laws. To some degree, there also are ethical consequences to the dietary laws in Islam that, together with the Qur'ānic prohibitions of pork, alcohol and gambling, have had an impact on Muslim life in China.

Two Tentative Observations in Conclusion

To the best of my knowledge there is no English translation of Liu Zhi's *Tianfang dianli*, his crucial treatise on Islamic ethics presented in Confucian garb. It is obvious that a sophisticated and nuanced translation and analysis of the work may open new vistas toward Chinese Islamic literature on ethics and ritual. In the meantime, I can offer two tentative observations about the challenges involved in such a translation project. One is the question of translatability, which was faced already by the authors of the Han Kitab: How can Islamic concepts be expressed in the very foreign idiom of the Chinese language? More broadly, how can complex Islamic ideas be presented accurately and stably within the broader context of Chinese thought?

Today there are glossaries of Chinese Islamic terms (see Wang, 2001), but there were none that could have been used by the authors of the Han Kitab as a standard. To express Islamic teachings and terms in

Chinese characters, each and all translators faced the almost impossible task to write Arabic and Persian in Chinese characters or scholarly Chinese in Arabic script. The differences between Arabic and Persian with regard to Islamic technical vocabulary posed no problem because of the quasi-identity of terms in both languages and the fact that Persian (Fārsī) has been written in the Arabic script since early Islamic times. Much greater difficulties, however, presented themselves when it came to transliterating Arabic terms in Chinese characters or transposing Chinese terms into Arabic script. There is no massive carryover of Arabic terminology into Chinese, and Arabic or Persian loanwords have as a rule not been adopted by the Chinese language. The Chinese script of characters makes it extremely awkward to transliterate the Arabic script, written in letters, because of the difficulty in presenting words phonetically. This is why, as a rule of thumb, Chinese authors have avoided using Persian words or Arabic terms in their writings. Consequently, Chinese Muslim authors resorted to drawing upon pre-existing Chinese words to represent and interpret Islamic ideas. Each of such Chinese words, however, had precedents and connotations in one or more of the Three Teachings, including variations in meanings in the original Confucian, Daoist and Chinese Buddhist contexts. The difficulty in rendering Islamic words in Chinese script also explains why Chinese translators widely refrained from explicitly referring to the names of the Muslim authors they drew upon - they were at a loss to represent such names in Chinese characters.

The problems of transliteration and translation began with the word, Allāh, the principal name for God in Islam, for which the Persians were able to substitute the quasi-equivalent, Khudā. Such an equivalent does not exist in Chinese and so the Muslim translators used the word "Heaven" (*tian*) in the Tang period (618-907), both "Heaven" and "Buddha" in the southern Song period (960-1279), and by the end of the Ming period (1368-1644) "Real Lord," (*zhenzhu*), "True Master" (*zhenzai*), and "Lord" (*zhu*). Ricci had encountered the same problem with "God" or "Deus" and opted for the term "Lord of Heaven" (*tianzhu*) while earlier 15th century Jewish inscriptions used "August Heaven" (*huangtian*, intimating the absolute power of the emperor, *huangdi*) and later 17th century Jewish inscriptions shortened it to "Ruler" (*di*) or associated it with the ancient Chinese supreme deity Shangdi, by employing the name of "August Heaven, Shangdi" (*haotian* Shangdi).

Muḥammad was referred to as the "Sage" (*sheng*) or "Ultimate Sage" (*zhisheng*), a term reserved for Confucius and other great teachers before him. Islam was called "Muslim teaching" (*huijiao*) or simply, "Way" (*dao*) and "Teaching" (*jiao*) as bywords for its universal way and specific teaching. "Ritual" (*li*) was used for the practice of Islamic rites and ceremonies as well as for pious conduct and appropriate etiquette, cumulatively referring to both *ʿibādāt* and *ādāb*/*akhlāq*. "Law" (*fa*) was used for *sharīʿa* and the Qurʾān as "Scripture" was called the "Classic" (*jing*) or "Heavenly Classic" (*tianjing*). Hui and Huihui was used for "Muslim", Huimin meant "Muslim people" and Huizu "Muslim nationality," whereas Huiru was a "Muslim scholar." Huihe referred to an Uyghur and Dungan to a Muslim Hui who had moved from China to Russia. Mosques were called "Temple of Worship" (*libaisi*) or "Temple of the Pure and Real" (*qingzhensi*). A Muslim mullah or scholar was an *ahong* (from Persian, *ākhūnd*) or *alim* (from Arabic, *ʿālim*), while the term zhangjiao referred to a Muslim imam and community leader. The Arabic word *muʾmin* (believer) was transliterated as *mumin* and translated as "gentleman" (*junzi*), "believer" (*xinshi*) or "follower" (*shunzhe*).

My second tentative observation in conclusion is focused on the English translation of the *Tianfang xianli*, Liu Zhi's metaphysical work that has appeared in print in 2009, published by Harvard University Press. This volume of close to 700 pages is entitled *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*. The translation is the work of

Sachiko Murata with the assistance of her husband William Chittick, a highly respected scholar of Islam, specializing in Sufism, who does not know Chinese but has an expert knowledge of both Arabic and Persian, and that of Tu Weiming, who as a distinguished Professor of Chinese Literature holds the chair of Chinese Literature at Harvard University. Sachiko Murata is known as the author of a source book on gender relations in Islamic thought (Murata, 1992) and has translated into English Wang Daiyu 's Qingzhen daxue (*The Great Learning of the Pure and Real*; Murata, 2000, pp. 81-112, assisted by William Chittick and Tu Weiming).

With regard to the translation of Liu Zhi's *Tianfang xianli*, the translator and her team had before their eyes the interlinear Arabic translation of the Chinese text of the head section of the "root classics" in five short chapters, published in 1898 under the title of *al-Laṭā'if* (*The Subtleties*) by the Chinese scholar Ma Lianyuan (1841-1904), who is better known under the name of Nūr al-Ḥaqq. Two years before his death, Nūr al-Ḥaqq published an Arabic commentary on Liu Zhi's *Tianfang xianli* in Kanpur in India in 1902 and gave it the title of *Sharḥ al-laṭā'if* (Explaining the Subtleties). Nūr al-Ḥaqq wrote his commentary, relying on his own learning and employed thirty-two of the diagrams included in Liu Zhi's text, adding eight diagrams of his own. He did, however, not translate the large commentary section of Liu Zhi's *Tianfang xianli* on the "root classics" divided into five long parts called "volumes" that represent the bulk of Liu Zhi's work. Nūr al-Ḥaqq's Arabic commentary, *Sharḥ al-laṭā'if*, was re-published in a second lithograph edition in 1924 in India and its Arabic text was again published in China in 1983. The story came full circle, when this Arabic text was translated into Chinese in the province of Yunnan by Ruan Bin to serve as a text book for Chinese Muslim seminarians (Murata et. al., 2009, pp.15-19).

What could be the next step in the research on Islamic ethics in the Chinese context? If the interest and research resources could be found, I would suggest that a scholar of Chinese literature, a scholar of law and ethics, and a scholar of Islamic Studies form a team to translate and analyze the *Tianfang dianli*, following the example of the team that translated the *Tianfang xianli*. The task may be steeper because of the absence of an Arabic summary such as Nūr al-Ḥaqq's, which served the translators as a crutch in the case of the latter. In addition, it may be necessary to give some attention to the many prefaces that were written with respect to it in the past by Confucian literati, because their judgment is likely to reveal the assessment that Liu Zhi's work received from the scholarly environment of China in its day. The difficulties, however, are worth enduring, given the fact that Confucian ritual and Islamic law belong to the center of both the Chinese and Islamic order of society, culture and religion. The *Tianfang dianli* constitutes the only systematic source of Chinese Islamic literature that addresses the core of Islamic practice in Chinese garb. Furthermore, it is the only Islamic book that has been granted a stamp of imperial approval. A study of the text as well as it scholarly reception, may illuminate some contemporary challenges facing the People's Republic of China which is characterized by massive religious indifference along with a determined undercurrent searching for a meaningful religious identity.

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