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Mosques of the Maritime Muslim Community of China

A STUDY OF THE MOSQUES IN THE SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST COASTAL REGIONS
OF CHINA

By Qing Chen

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2015

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Declaration for SOAS PhD thesis

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In memory of Klaus, the love of my life, who is the every reason for me to complete this research project.

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It has been a long journey, an emotional journey for me too. It would have been impossible for me to make it through without all support from my loving family and friends. I thank my sister and especially my brother-in-law Gao Donghua for being always by my side and being always there for me, and my dear friend Stella Liu and her entire family for all their love and care. My warmest thanks to Hessah, I thank her for her friendship and the time and the thoughts we shared at the Doctoral School over last Christmas.

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Abstract

The naturally-linked south and southeast coastal regions of China are the areas where the religion of Islam first arrived in the country in the 7th century CE and where the first settlements of Muslims of Middle Eastern origins were established. These subsequently grew into a large Muslim community, called here the Maritime Muslim Community in China, which can be defined both by its origins from seafarers from the heartlands of the Muslim world and the geographic location.

The thesis seeks to explore the complex process of the evolution of the Maritime Muslim Community and its material culture, within the context of prevailing political, economic and social conditions, and in a conceptual framework of cultural syncretism and regionalism with regards to the development of its religious architecture.

Focussing on the mosques of the Maritime Muslim Community, the thesis examines the process whereby Islamic architecture and practice, which arrived in coastal China in the early centuries of Islam, had evolved by the time of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and continued to develop during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) into a Chinese reinterpretation of Islamic forms. It also addresses contemporary trends in Islamic architectural practices in coastal China in the modern era.

It commences with a historical overview of the coming of Islam to the Chinese coast and the formation of the Maritime Muslim Community. Subsequent chapters examine the present form of both early and later mosques and the textual sources, especially those referring to the early mosques. The evolution of the minaret and architectural decoration, including epigraphic traditions, are discussed in separate chapters.

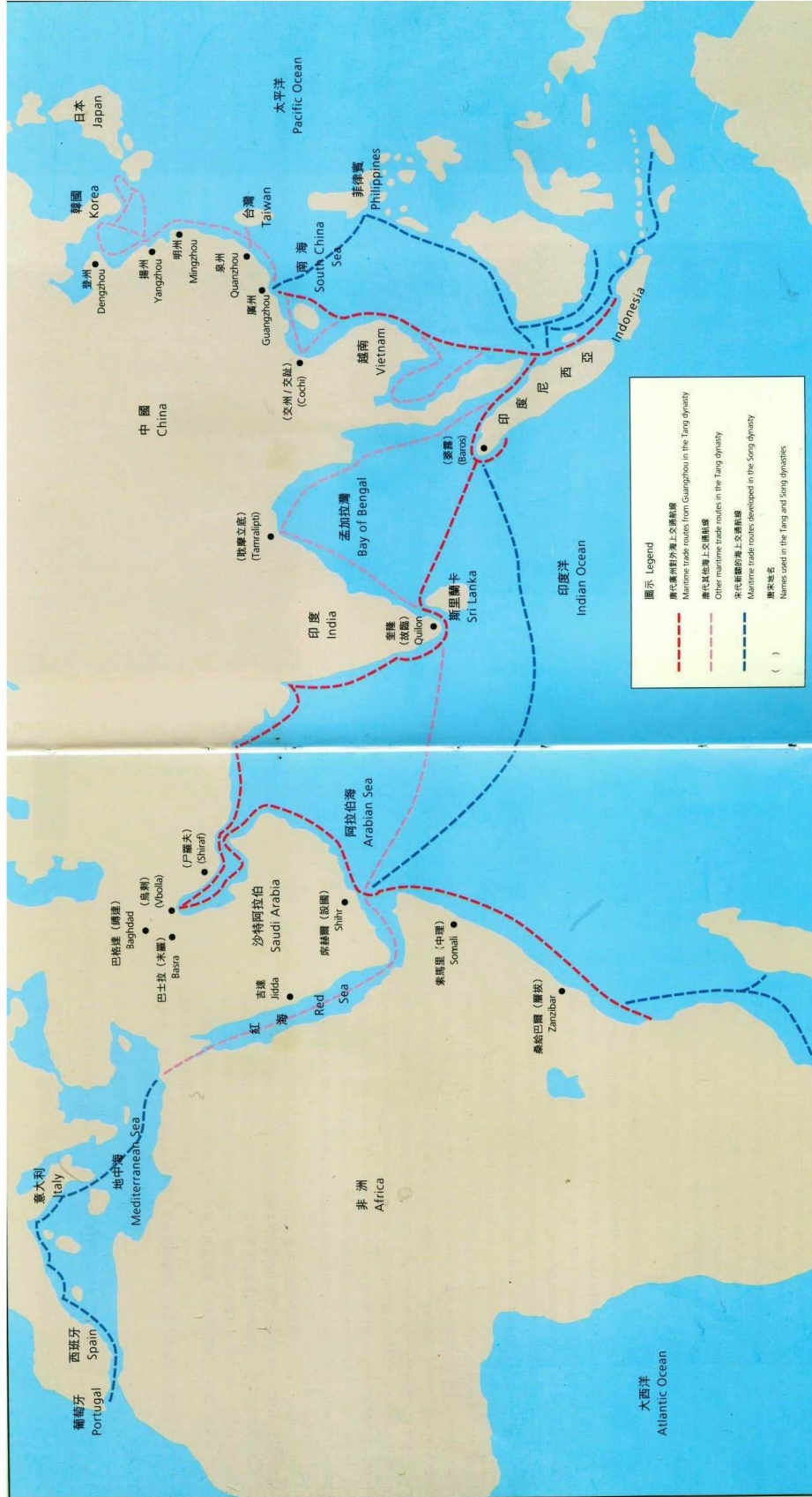
The evolution of mosque architecture of the Maritime Muslim Community illustrates a synthesis of Islamic and Chinese culture, and sheds light on the creation of local Muslim identity: from Muslim seafaring diaspora to Chinese Muslims.

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Map showing maritime trade routes in the Tang and Song dynasties



From *The Maritime Silk Route: 2000 Years of Trade on the South China Sea*, the Hong Kong Museum of History (comp., and eds.)

Map 2

Map showing sites covered by fieldwork in China

(Principal areas in the southern and southeastern coastal regions visited are underlined in purple; sites visited for comparative studies are underlined in blue)



Timeline of Chinese Dynasties

ca. 2100-1600 BCE	Xia Dynasty	
ca. 1600-1050 BCE	Shang Dynasty	Capitals: near present-day Zhengzhou and Anyang
ca. 1046-256 BCE	Zhou Dynasty	Capitals: Hao (near present-day Xi'an) and Luoyang
	Western Zhou (ca. 1046-771 BCE)	
	Eastern Zhou (ca. 771-256 BCE)	Spring and Autumn Period (770-ca. 475 BCE)
		Confucius (ca. 551-479 BCE)
		Warring States Period (ca. 475-221 BCE)
221-206 BCE	Qin Dynasty	Capital: Chang'an, present-day Xi'an
		Qin Shihuangdi dies, 210 BCE
206 BCE-220 CE	Han Dynasty	
	Western/Former Han (206 BCE-9 CE)	Capital: Chang'an
		Confucianism officially established as basis for Chinese state by Han Wudi (r. 141-86 BCE)
	Eastern/Later Han (25-220 CE)	Capital: Luoyang
220-589 CE	Six Dynasties Period	Period of disunity and instability following the fall of the Han; Buddhism introduced to China
	Three Kingdoms (220-265 CE)	Cao Wei, Shu Han, Dong Wu
	Jin Dynasty (265-420 CE)	
	Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386-589 CE)	
581-618 CE	Sui Dynasty	Capital: Chang'an
618-906 CE	Tang Dynasty	Capitals: Chang'an and Luoyang
907-960 CE	Five Dynasties Period	
960-1279	Song Dynasty	
	Northern Song (960-1127)	Capital: Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng)
	Southern Song (1127-1279)	Capital: Lin'an (present-day

		Hangzhou)
1279-1368	Yuan Dynasty	The reign of the Mongol Empire; Capital: Dadu (present-day Beijing)
1368-1644	Ming Dynasty	Re-establishment of rule by Han ruling house; Capitals: Nanjing and Beijing
1644-1912	Qing Dynasty	Reign of the Manchus; Capital: Beijing
1912-1949	Republic Period	Capitals: Beijing, Wuhan, and Nanjing
1949-present	People's Republic of China	Capital: Beijing

(From: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/china_timeline.htm#Chinese History)

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A Note on Illustrations and Copyright

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Introduction

Over a century ago, Marshall Broomhall, a pioneer Western scholar in the field of studies of Islam in China, made an urgent call for scholarly attention to be paid to the lack of information about the Muslims and Islamic practices in China.¹ However, the presence of the ‘Maritime Muslims’ and Islamic practices in coastal China still remains largely unknown today, especially outside China, despite the efforts made by generations of Islamic scholars. In particular, this remains the case with regards to the material culture of the Maritime Muslims, defined here as being indigenous Chinese-speaking Muslim communities in the southern and southeastern coastal regions whose origins can be traced back to original settlers from the heartlands of Islam, in particular the Arab world and Persia.²

Islamic architecture in China has thus far received little attention in the general studies of Islamic art and architecture. The mosques that belong to the Maritime Muslim Community have been only recorded to a very limited degree, even by Chinese scholars, while the complex process of the evolution of Islamic architecture in coastal China and the extent of its distinctively Chinese nature has been barely addressed. Indeed, the very existence of this group of buildings is little known outside China. This thesis thus seeks to begin the process of filling in this gap in the field of studies of Islamic art and architecture.

Historiographical Context

Primary Sources

One of the primary sources upon which this thesis draws is a large body of historical accounts, primarily the imperial archives and epigraphic records, on the maritime connections between the Muslim world and the Chinese coast and on the activities of the Muslim traders in the Chinese ports. In addition, the accounts of early travellers to these ports or which refer to the maritime trade with China provide useful information.

Another primary source upon which the thesis has drawn heavily is the results of extensive and original fieldwork. This involved interviews with members of the Chinese Muslim

¹ M. Broomhall, *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem*, Morgan & Scott; China Inland Mission, London, 1910, pp. xiv-xv.

² On the expansion in Persian Gulf commerce and Persian maritime activity in the early Islamic period, see M. A. Cook, C. F. Robinson, et al., *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge University Press, London, 2010. Ma Qicheng, ‘A Brief Account of the Early Spread of Islam in China’, *Social Sciences in China*, issue 4, 1983, pp. 97-113.

community, both in cities and in smaller towns, the examination of textual materials, in both Chinese and other languages, and surveying of the existing mosques, both old and new, throughout the area of the southern and southeastern coastal regions of China. The principal areas in these regions that are associated with the Maritime Muslim Community are the old trading ports of Guangzhou, Fujian and of the lower Yangtze River valley and the offshore islands of Hainan and Hong Kong. Here mosques, of both early and modern date, and Islamic graveyards are to be found.

The first generation of Chinese Islamic scholars emerged in the late Ming and early Qing period (around the mid-17th century CE),³ amongst whom Wang Daiyu (王岱輿) and Liu Zhi (劉智) were leading figures. However, they primarily concentrated on studies in Islamic theology, translating the Qur'an and interpreting Islamic doctrines. Their theological approach to Islam, undertaken within a framework of Confucianism, as shown in their works, influenced succeeding generations of Islamic scholars in China. Most notably, these works shaped Islamic practices and, thus, the development of the Muslim communities in China, a topic which will be reviewed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Secondary Sources

Not until the beginning of the Republican period (1912), did some attention begin to be paid to the history of Islam and the Muslim communities in China. While in the West awareness of the existence of Chinese Muslims was promoted by scholars such as Marshall Broomhall, in China itself the field of studies of Islam in the country was led by Chen Yuan (陳垣) and Bai Shouyi (白壽彝). These general studies of the history of Islam and Muslims in China will be referred to and discussed in the chapters that follow.

Particularly prior to the creation of the Communist state in 1949, some attention was also paid by scholars to the Muslim communities of Central Asian ethnic origins in northwestern China, sometimes described in general terms as the Central Asian Muslim Community.

In recent decades, there has been a growth of academic interest in the nature and origins of China's Hui Muslims. These are ethnically and linguistically similar to Han Chinese, being distinguished from them primarily by their Muslim faith, this being reflected in distinctive cultural characteristics. This topic has been discussed in a number of publications, especially

³ CE dates are used throughout the thesis; AH dates are used only when referring to particular events of some significance in the Islamic context.

by Western scholars working in the field of Sinology, society, anthropology and Islamic studies, such as the works on China's Muslims by Michael Dillon.⁴ These general studies of the Hui Muslims focus more on investigation of their ethnicity rather than on their material culture. They also focus primarily on the inland Muslim communities, special attention being paid to the Hui Muslims who are concentrated in rural areas in China's northwestern provinces.

Generally categorised as Hui today, along with other Chinese-speaking Muslims in inland China, the Maritime Muslim Community has received little attention either in terms of its long history or its role in the development of Islam in China. The separate identity and origin of the Maritime Muslims and the historical role played by their community will be addressed in this thesis.

The Maritime Muslims have the longest history of any Muslim community in China, yet, as noted above, there has been little study of this community and its material culture. The case study by Chen Dasheng in the 1980s of the Islamic inscriptions in Quanzhou is among the very few works by Islamic scholars that casts light on the history of the Maritime Muslims.⁵ His works also touch upon the topic of early Islamic architecture of the Maritime Muslims, this being a topic that will be reviewed and discussed in the chapters that follow. An example of subsequent studies of history of the Maritime Muslims is found in a recent case study of the community in Quanzhou, which deals with the issue of their identity.⁶

The first-known and most comprehensive survey of Islamic architecture in China was made by Liu Zhiping in the 1960s, and was only published after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976),⁷ in the 1980s.⁸ A professional architect, he paid more attention to the aspect of the construction itself rather than to the artistic development of Islamic architecture in China. The aspect of the social meanings linked with these buildings was barely addressed in his survey. His work, however, is very informative, primarily because it provides a very valuable record of Islamic buildings in China, many of which were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

⁴ The publications of Michael Dillon are listed in the bibliography.

⁵ Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*, Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, and Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1984.

⁶ Fan Ke, 'Maritime Muslims and Hui Identity: A South Fujian Case', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 21, Issue 2, 2001, pp. 309- 332.

⁷ The Cultural Revolution - officially called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution - was launched by the Communist Party in July 1966, with all open expressions of faith being formally banned the next month. Mosques, churches and temples were taken over, sometimes being destroyed, and public worship became impossible. The Revolution lasted for 10 years.

⁸ Liu Zhiping, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Jianzhu*. Xinjiang Renmin Chubanshe, Urumqi, 1985.

Information from his work was used in the design of the initial scope of fieldwork for this thesis.

There have been a few publications in recent decades, mainly articles, by both Chinese and Western scholars, which deal with the topic of mosques in China. Most are, however, case studies of some of the oldest mosques in China, such as the article by Nancy S. Steinhardt.⁹ Luo Xiaowei's studies, which also deal with some old mosques, are an attempt to provide an outline of the general architectural history of Muslims in China, but are rather brief and inadequate.¹⁰ In particular, the complex process of the evolution of Islamic architecture in coastal China and the driving force behind this distinct process has not been explored in these publications. Moreover, these studies are primarily based on secondary sources. A publication related to women's mosques in China is primarily focused on studies of Muslim society, exploring the issue of gender equality with references to the rights and role of Muslim women in modern China rather than studies of the structures of the mosques.¹¹

In very recent years, some studies by Chinese scholars have been undertaken of specific old mosques. These, however, are primarily archaeological in nature, rather than studies of Islamic architecture. They will be reviewed in the chapters where the buildings to which they refer are analysed.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

The notion of trade as an agent for cultural transmission and the spread of Islam and Islamisation has been extensively explored. In particular, the dispersal of the Muslim diaspora through maritime trade and the creation of settlements in port cities around the Indian Ocean has attracted considerable scholarly interest for several decades, with a number of studies having been published.¹²

⁹ N. S. Steinhardt, 'China's Earliest Mosques', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 67, No. 3, September 2008, pp. 330-361, University of California Press, viewed on 06 June 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jsah>

¹⁰ Luo, Xiaowei, 'China', in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, M. Frishman, Hasan-Uddin Kan, and Al-Asad Mohammad (eds.), Thames and Hudson, London, 1994, pp. 209-212.

¹¹ M. Jaschok, and Shui Jingjun, *The History of Women's Mosques in Chinese Islam: A Mosque of Their Own*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000.

¹² See such as, H. N. Chittick's works on trading cities on the East African coast as listed in the bibliography, and K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985. A. Cohen, 'Cultural Strategies in the Organization of Trading Diasporas', in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*, C. Meillasoux (eds.), Oxford University Press, 1971, London. J. Clifford, 'Diasporas', *Cultural Anthropology: Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 9 (3), 1994, pp. 302-228. The recent publications deal with this topic see such

Trade is recognised as having been a contributory factor in the initial introduction of Islam to many areas, and in its continuing spread and acceptance. This is, for example, the way in which Islam first reached the coast of China, along an already well-established maritime trading route. Trade, whether maritime or overland, has historically served as a way of maintaining relationships between the various regions of the Islamic world, and beyond, and, at the same time, a medium through which ideas and beliefs were transmitted from one place to another.¹³ The Indian Ocean trade network, one of the most important trade systems in the history of maritime trade, offers an example of this. This vast area, on the edges of which lie many different cultures and civilisations, including Hindu/South Asian, Chinese, Irano-Arabic and Indonesian, as well as the various cultural traditions of East Africa, has been defined by Neville Chittick as ‘the largest cultural continuum in the world’.¹⁴ This offers, in turn, considerable possibilities for syncretism.

The concept of unity lent by the maritime trade and culture diversity over this vast area is explored by Kirti Chaudhuri.¹⁵ The notion that the cultural diversity of the Muslim world has been formed as a result of the contact between Muslims and the Islamic faith with many different people and cultures and a consequent intermingling has been a topic of much discussion. This is well exhibited in the mercantile milieu in the Indian Ocean. Trading movements led to social and cultural intermixing and interaction, and, hence, the emergence of new Muslim societies in port cities and other trading centres. Through the mechanism of trade, the universal principles defined by Islamic doctrines interacted with many other different civilizations and cultures, thus creating new syncretic traditions, out of which the special characteristics of the Muslim maritime communities in the trade centres across the Indian Ocean emerged.

Many case studies of the port cities and trade centres bordering the Indian Ocean have been undertaken by various scholars, these providing evidence of the evolution and development of syncretic traditions. Chittick’s archaeological investigations of the Swahili coast,¹⁶ for

as, K. R. Hall (eds.), *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, C. 1400-1800*. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2008, and Abdul Sheriff, and E. Ho (eds.) *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies*, C. Hurst & Co., London, 2014.

¹³ T. Insoll, and Cambridge Conference on Archaeology and World Religion, *Case Studies in Archaeology and World Religion: The Proceedings of the Cambridge Conference*, Archaeopress Oxford, 1999, pp. 134, 148.

¹⁴ H. N. Chittick, ‘East Africa and the Orient: Ports and Trade before the Arrival of the Portugueses’, in *Historical Relations across the Indian Ocean*, Menaud (eds.), Unesco, Paris, 1980, pp. 13-22.

¹⁵ Chaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 21-23.

¹⁶ H. N. Chittick, ‘The early history of Kilwa Kivinje, Azania’, *Archaeological Research in Africa*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, 1969, pp. 153- 159.

example, provide evidence that the creation of the identity of the Swahili maritime communities was the result of the intermixing and interacting of the flows of people and ideas within the trade networks of the Indian Ocean. This point of view is discussed by Mohamed Bakari in his anthropological studies of the formation of Swahili societies.¹⁷

Historically, the South China Sea was part of the mercantile milieu in the Indian Ocean, and the port cities along the southern and southeastern coast of China were therefore part of the maritime trade networks. The notion of the creation of Muslim identity and cultural syncretism in relation to the Muslim trade communities around the Indian Ocean can be used as the conceptual framework within which the formation of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China and the development of its distinct cultural characteristics can be examined.

The concept of regionalism has been much discussed in architectural literature. Ismail Serageldin summarised it as following:

It embraces the notion that any architectural work reflects the specificities of the region in which it is located. It accepts contextualism in the broader sense of including the physical aspects (sites, climate, materials) as well as the socio-cultural context, stylistically and functionally.¹⁸

In the context of mosque architecture, regionalism is represented by the diverse architectural styles which evolved and developed across the Muslim world, while retaining unaltered the core or fundamental elements required by Islamic liturgy.

This concept of the diversity within the overall unity reflected in the creation of mosque architecture in the Muslim world has been explored by various scholars. Tim Insoll, for example, analyses this within a framework of cultural diversity and structuring principles in relation to Muslim faith.¹⁹ Islam is generally viewed as being more than a religion and, rather, a way of life. All aspects of Muslim life, in other words, are structured and codified by Islamic doctrines. The structuring codes or principles are thus seen to be translated into, and

H. N. Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 1974.

H. N. Chittick, *Kisimani Mafia: Excavations At an Islamic Settlement On the East African Coast*, Government Printer, Dar es Salaam, 1961.

¹⁷ Mohamed Bakari, 'the State of Swahili Civilization: Swahili Language and Society: Indian Ocean Antecedents and Anthropological Research', in *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies*, Abdul Sheriff, and E. Ho (eds.), C. Hurst & Co., London, 2014, pp. 185-204.

¹⁸ Ismail Serageldin, 'Introduction: Regionalism', in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, M.Frushman, Hasan-Uddin Khan, and Al-Asad Mohammad (eds.), Thames and Hudson, London, 1994, p. 73.

¹⁹ T. Insoll, p. 27.

illustrated in, material culture. The immutable requirements of these principles create the universality. At the same time, they interact with the different cultures with which they come into contact, thus forming the great diversity of the Muslim world. The presence of great complexity and diversity, however, are seen as being encompassed within the broader structuring principles.²⁰

Insoll uses mosque architecture as an example to analyse how the structural principle is translated into material culture and how regionalism is represented. What makes a mosque a mosque? A mosque is more than a place for worships, but acts, through its functions, both sacred and secular, 'as a creator, unifier and perpetuator of the Muslim community'.²¹ It is 'a symbol of Islam, to Muslim and non-Muslim alike'.²² It is a structure for, and defined by, the requirement of prayer. Thus, the mosque is the material manifestation of a structural principle - the obligation of prayer, one of the Five Pillars of Islam. It is this requirement of the structural principle that leads to some essential features of mosque architecture, determining the key components of the liturgical space of a mosque.²³ One of these essential features is the *qibla* wall with a *mihrab* set into it which is oriented towards Mecca, serving as the physical marker indicating the direction of prayer. Other features are a *minbar* close to, or affixed to, the *qibla* wall to the right of the *mihrab* in a congregation mosque, - i.e., a mosque used for the regular Friday prayers - and, generally, a minaret as the physical representation of the Call to Prayer. In addition, the usually rectangular layout of the space of the mosque sanctuary reflects the requirement of the actual act of prayer – that worshippers pray in rows parallel to the *qibla* wall, facing Mecca.²⁴ Despite the existence of many different types of mosques, and a great variety of styles that reflect regional traditions, fashions and decorative and architectural trends, as well as social contexts, the fundamental elements of a mosque contains remain unchanged. A mosque can, for example, vary greatly in its form and decorations, but the *qibla* wall with an inset *mihrab* would be certainly found inside. The degree of architectural diversity at a regional level, therefore, cannot be taken beyond certain limits that are defined by the structural principle that a mosque is a place of prayer. The presence of this principle, in other words, can always be identified.²⁵

²⁰ T. Insoll, pp. 33-37

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 26.

²² *ibid.*, p. 26.

²³ *ibid.*, pp. 29, 33.

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 12, 29-31.

²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 31-33.

Martin Frishman interprets the relation between the universality and regional diversity illustrated in mosque architecture through using a simple analogy of a tree. That is that a tree grows with a straight trunk, representing the common ancestry of the architecture of the mosque, then dividing to have numerous branches, each clad in its own distinctive foliage, thus representing a regional style. The branches that represent the essential component parts of a mosque remain linked to the trunk, while the foliage of the branches develops differently.

²⁶ Thus the regional diversity to which the branches and foliage refer produces changes in appearances of buildings that have a common ancestry, represented by the trunk. This point is well illustrated in the minaret, for example. The minaret, as Frishman notes, ‘serves the same purpose with the minimum of functional complexity throughout the Islamic world; however, no two regions employ the same language of design or ornament’.²⁷

This metaphor of a tree is further elaborated by Serageldin in his discussion of the issue of regionalism, through introducing two concepts: ‘societal specificities’ and ‘overlays’. He notes:

Societal specificities are defined by local geographic, climatic and morphological features and social practices that give a ‘sense of place’ to particular locations and ‘character’ to an environment. Overlay refers to a process by which the cultural manifestation of Islamic principles in any Muslim society interact with, enrich and create new syntheses with the existing cultures - Muslim and non-Muslim alike - with which they have extended contact.²⁸

Thus the importance of context is emphasised in relation to regional diversity. The context, for architecture, as he points out: ‘exists at two levels: (1) an immediate physical context that determines the style, and (2) a wider social, cultural and economic frame of reference that gives it meaning’.²⁹ Any work of architecture has functional and artistic dimensions. For any mosque, the prayer hall must be suited for the purpose of prayer required by Islamic liturgy, a common core for mosque architecture. However, the mosque must speak to the local community, ‘providing both spiritual uplift and an anchor for the community’s identity’.³⁰

The mosque thus is considered as a social structure, illustrating the community's image of its

²⁶ M. Frishman, ‘Islam and the Form of the Mosque’, in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, M. Frishman, Hasan-Uddin Kan, and Al-Asad Mohammad (eds.), Thames and Hudson, London, 1994, p. 41

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁸ Serageldin, p. 74.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 74.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 74.

own identity. How a mosque communicates its message to the community to which it belongs depends on ‘the particular codes forged by the evolution of the societies in a specific region’.

³¹ This, however, does not deny the existence of a common core that is defined by its common grounding in liturgy. In other words, this common grounding, or structural principle as termed by Insoll, allows expressions of regional diversity within certain limits in mosque architecture.

While the mosques of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China are recognised as one of the regional variations of mosque architecture in the Muslim world, they are, as yet, relatively unexplored. The framework involving the structural principles and cultural diversity can be used to examine the process of their evolution.

Research Questions

The key questions set for this research can be summarised as follows:

- How are Islamic structural principles adapted by the Maritime Muslim Community of China to suit the specific political, social and cultural context and how is this illustrated in its mosques?
- How is the identity of the Maritime Muslim Community defined and maintained and how is it manifested in its mosque architecture?
- What are the characteristics of the syncretic traditions created by the Maritime Muslim Community of China?
- What is the significance of the development of the regional diversity represented in mosques in coastal China?

Methodology

As noted, there has previously been very little work undertaken with regards to the subject matter with which the thesis deals. The research methods used have, therefore, been designed to build up a factual basis for the narrative that the thesis presents. They were as follows:

1. Surveying the existing Islamic buildings in the coastal regions of China

This survey work followed the conventional methods in recording buildings. It involved photographing the buildings and taking measurements, based on which the

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 74.

ground plans were drawn up. Some Islamic buildings in other regions of China and other parts of the Muslim world were visited and documented with photographs for the purpose of comparative study.

2. Investigating and analysing available epigraphic information and other textual evidence

The textual materials, including inscriptions, archives and historical accounts, were mainly collected during fieldwork in China. Wherever possible, original stelae that bear the inscriptions were photographed. Other accessible textual sources were photocopied.

3. Interviewing local Muslim communities

The interviews were conducted in person during fieldwork in China. These personal communications with the members of the local Muslim communities were mainly with regard to the history of the communities and their mosques.

4. Assembling of the collected materials for analysis

The buildings that have been visited and recorded are grouped chronologically in order to trace the process of the evolution of mosque architecture. Where there appear to have been regional variations, these are separately analysed, but also within a chronological framework. The analysis involved comparing and contrasting the physical evidence of architectural elements and the textual evidence and information from the interviews. The conceptual framework, involving the creation of the Muslim identity and cultural syncretism, was applied to the analysis of the collected materials.

Several problems and difficulties with regards to the applications of the research methods above should be noted. The first, and most significant, problem encountered was the difficulty of obtaining official permission to survey the mosques, due to the nature of the research subject, which touches upon the issue of religious sensitivity.

The policy of the Government of the People's Republic of China towards religious beliefs is shaped both by considerations of national security and by the ideology which promotes atheism. The very existence of Muslim communities has often been regarded as a threat to the unity of the State, in part because of the bloodshed arising out of Muslim rebellions in the

past.³² After the ending of the Cultural Revolution, communist ideology was modified as a result of the different demands of a new era, and religious policy was therefore relaxed, allowing considerable freedom to the country's religious communities, provided that these did not conflict with the interests of the State. However, topics related to religion are still considered by the state to be sensitive, in particular with regards to the religious practices of the Muslim communities. Apart from the historical events mentioned above, this is due to the struggles of the government in recent decades with that part of its Muslim population concentrated in northwestern China, and also to the impact of the attacks of 11th September 2001 (9/11) and growing tension between Muslims and the rest of the world in general.

During fieldwork, it proved impossible to obtain official permission to undertake a formal architectural survey of the mosques visited. The use of conventional methods for accurate measurements was, therefore, unfeasible. Ground measurements were therefore calculated by pacing out the lengths of the walls. Measurements cited in the floor plans are, therefore, cautious estimates and should not be taken as having been fully verified.

The same issue of religious sensitivity also caused problems in making complete records of personal interviews. In general, those Muslims who were interviewed proved to be reluctant to talk to a Western-based researcher. Even where members of the Muslim community were willing to be interviewed, they requested that their names should not be used. Information derived from the interviews is, therefore, used with caution, and, wherever possible, is verified by other sources.

Another difficulty was that of dealing with the extensive amount of textual material, most of which was written in pre-modern Classical Chinese. However, thanks to a good command of Classical Chinese and the investment of much time and effort, it proved possible to make good use of this material.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured conventionally, through the presentation of the narrative in chronological order.

Since there is a lack of comprehensive studies of the 1300-year history of the Maritime Muslim community, the thesis commences with a historical overview of the coming of Islam

³² On Hui Muslim revolts of the Qing period, see A. M. Lynn, trans. P. L. Lin, and Cheng Fang, *Muslims in China*, University of Indianapolis Press, Indianapolis, IN, 2004, pp. 7-9.

to the Chinese coast and the formation of the Maritime Muslim Community. This introductory chapter, Chapter 1, will examine the varying traditions related to the arrival of Islam to the coasts of China, the beginnings of settlement and the consequent formation of the Maritime Muslim Community. This will draw upon a large body of imperial archives, records and epigraphs as well as accounts by travellers, in various languages.

Chapter 2 will investigate the first mosques of the Maritime Muslim Community, in which the remains of the early mosques, datable to before the Yuan period (i.e., before 1271), and the textual sources referring to them will be analysed. It will also examine the phenomenon of the economic settlements primarily formed by Muslim traders of Middle Eastern origins and the conditions in which the community lived as a diaspora.

Chapter 3 will examine mosque architecture of the Maritime Muslim community during the Yuan period (1271-1368). It will explore the impact of the arrival of the Mongols in China and the beginning of the integration process of the Muslim community with Chinese society.

Chapter 4 will discuss the formation of a distinctly regional style mosque in coastal China, and explore the evolution of the Maritime Muslim Community and the shift of cultural emphasis after the change of dynasty from the Yuan to the Ming (1368-1644), leading to the creation of a new Muslim identity.

Chapter 5 will discuss the continued development of mosque architecture in the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) through a reinterpretation of traditional Islamic architectural forms, which would represent the cultural diversity of the Muslim world. It will also look at the extensive intellectual development of the Maritime Muslims during this period.

Chapter 6 will examine the impact of contemporary trends on Islamic architectural practices, and explore the changing community life of the Muslims following the arrival of the Western colonial powers in the coastal regions of China after the Opium Wars of 1839-1842 and 1856-1860.

Chapter 7 will examine the role that Chinese cultural concepts played in the process of the evolution of the minarets of the Maritime Muslim Community.

Chapter 8 will explore the influences of traditional Chinese beliefs and the symbolism inherent in Chinese decorative art on the development of Islamic architectural decoration in

coastal China. It will also analyse the effect of Chinese epigraphic and calligraphic traditions on the evolution of Muslim epigraphy in coastal China.

The thesis will conclude with a reflection on the creation of a synthesis of Islamic and Chinese culture overlays that resulted in the emergence of a new Muslim identity and of a distinctly Chinese style mosque.

Focusing on the mosque architecture to be found in the southern and southeastern coastal regions of China, the narrative will begin with the tracing of the historical background of the Maritime Muslim Community in the context of the early spread of Islam in China.

Chapter 1

Historical Overview

The Coming of Islam to the China Coast

The date of the coming of Islam to the south and southeast coasts of China is controversial as those few scholars who have investigated the subject have questioned the textual evidence that is taken to prove the date of its arrival.

The tradition amongst the Chinese Maritime Muslim community holds that the coming of Islam to China was the result of missionary activities by the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, and his companions in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (ca.570-632CE). The alleged tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs (Fig.1) today is the central feature of the



Fig.1. General view of the Tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, Guangzhou.

Muslim cemetery in Guangzhou, also formerly known as Canton, and both this and his

mosque, the Huaisheng Si (懷聖寺, Fig.2)³³ are much visited and revered by the Chinese Muslims.



Fig.2. General view of the Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

The absence of early texts both in Arab and Chinese sources recording the date of the coming of Islam to China leaves room for debate. We have textual sources, including epigraphic information from old mosques, that state that Islam came to the port cities of coastal China during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. However, those Chinese texts that relate to the coming of Islam to China are primarily of a later date, although purporting to reflect an earlier tradition. The greater part of the textual materials regarding the coming of

³³ The Chinese Muslim tradition insists that Huaisheng Si in Guangzhou was founded by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, although the present structures are largely of Ming date, which is discussed in Chapter 2.

Islam to China are dated to the 14th century and thereafter, some being preserved in the form of commemorative stone stelae.

The complex and contradictory epigraphic records reporting the first arrival of Islam in China have sparked much debate among Chinese Islamic scholars since the Republican period when there was a growing interest in the history of Islam in China.³⁴ There are two issues at the centre of those scholarly debates: the date of the first arrival of Islam in China and whether there was an involvement of missionaries sent by the Prophet in the early years of Islam. Regarding the date of the first arrival of Islam in China, there are primarily four Chinese Muslim traditions: the years of Tang Wude (618-626CE);³⁵ the second year of Tang Zhenguan (628CE);³⁶ the sixth year of Tang Zhenguan (634CE); the second year of Tang Yonghui (651CE).³⁷ The textual evidence on which these Muslim traditions based is very confused, but these dates are generally accepted by Chinese Muslims and are supported by Chinese Islamic scholars as possible dates of the coming of Islam to China.

Evidence for a date in the Tang Wude reign period is mainly based on the text found in the *Annals of Min*³⁸ (*Min Shu*, 閩書) by a Fujian historian, He Qiaoyuan. The text referring to the event of the four missionaries sent by the Prophet Muhammad to China coasts is a later source of Ming date that recounts events in the 7th and the 8th century CE. He reports:

默德那國有嗎喊叭德聖人，生隋開皇元年...門徒有大賢四人，唐武德中來朝，遂傳教中國。一賢傳教廣州，二賢傳教揚州，三賢四賢傳教泉州，卒葬此山[靈山]。

(Medina Kingdom [i.e., Arab Kingdom] has a sage Muhammad who was born in the first year of Sui Kaihuang [i.e., 581CE]...He has four Companions, who come to China as missionaries in the Tang Wude reign period [i.e., 618-626CE]. One of them goes to Guangzhou, another one goes to Yangzhou and two of them go to Quanzhou, [these two] were buried in this mountain [Lingshan]).³⁹

³⁴ Chen Yuan, 'Huihuijiao Ru Zhongguo Shilue' (1928), in *Zhongguo Yisilanshi Cungao*, Bai shouyi (eds.), Ninxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1983, pp. 346-365. Bai Shouyi, 'Zhongguo Yisilan Shi Gangyao', in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol.147, pp. 1-82. Chen Yuan and Bai Shouyi are among those scholars who have examined the textual sources and have debated the date of the coming of Islam to China.

³⁵ Wude(武德 618-626) was the reigning title of the first emperor of Tang dynasty, Tang Gaozhu (唐高祖)

³⁶ Zhenguan(貞觀 627-649) was the reigning title of the second Tang emperor, Tang Taizong (唐太宗)

³⁷ Yonghui (永徽 650-655) was the reigning title of the third Tang emperor, Tang Gaozong(唐高宗)

³⁸ Min (閩) is a short alternative name for the Fujian region.

³⁹ He Qiaoyuan, *Min Shu* (ca.1616), vol.7, Chap., Fangyu zhi, Lingshan Tiao, cited in *Gujin Tushu Jicheng: Ji Suoyin* (1701-1726), Chen Menglei, and Jiang Tingxi (comp. and eds.), Wenxing Shudian, Taipei, 1964, vol. 1512, Chap. 5, Quanzhoufubu Zhalu.

He Qiaoyuan does not specify sources for his text. The earliest mention of the Prophet Muhammad in Chinese sources is found in the text in the *Annals of Old Tang*, known as the *Old Tang Book (Jiu Tang Shu, 舊唐書)* dated to ca.945CE.⁴⁰ It gives accounts of the ancestry lineage of the Prophet Muhammad and his rise to dominance in his clan during the Sui Kaihuang regin period [i.e., 581-604CE].⁴¹ That might be the early source from which He Qiaoyuan’s text originated, but neither the companions nor missionaries as reported in the Min text are mentioned in the text of *Jiu Tang Shu*. Despite the lack of firm evidence in early writings, this tradition has been strongly maintained till today, in particular within the Maritime Muslim community.



Fig.3. Tomb of the Two Companions, Quanzhou.

Two graves in the Muslim cemetery high up in the mountain of Lingshan in the suburb of Quanzhou are traditionally believed to be the tombs of the two Companions (Fig.3) as mentioned in the *Min Shu*. Despite no proof of their existence having been found in the early texts, the cemetery, today known as Lingshan Holy Tomb (Lingshan Shengmu 靈山聖墓), is much visited by Chinese Muslims.⁴² The famous Muslim personality of the Ming dynasty, Admiral Zheng He,⁴³ paid his respects to the alleged tombs of the two Companions in the year 1417 during his stay in the port of Quanzhou, while undertaking final preparations of one of the important voyages he led to the Indian Ocean. The commemorative stele (Fig.4) marking his visit is still seen close to the graves today.



Fig.4. Commemorative stele of Admiral Zhenghe, Quanzhou.

⁴⁰ *Jiu Tang Shu* is the official historical records of the Tang dynasty compiled in the Five Dynasty period.

⁴¹ Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang Shu* (ca. 945 CE), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1975, vol. 198, p. 5316.

⁴² Studies of epigraphs and history records referring to these graves by Chen Dasheng proposed a Song or Yuan date for these graves. See Chen Dasheng, ‘Quanzhou Lingshan Shengmu Niandai Chutan’, in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, pp. 167-176.

⁴³Zheng He (鄭和 1371-1433),was appointed by the Yongle Emperor as admiral of the fleets leading seven expeditionary voyages to the Indian Ocean between1405-1433.

The belief that the second year of Tang Zhenguan can be taken as the date of the first arrival of Islam in China seems to be primarily based on oral traditions collected in *Huihui Yuanlai* (回回原来) by an anonymous author in the Qing period.⁴⁴ This tells a rather fanciful story that begins with a dream of the Emperor Tang Taizong. The story goes that the Emperor followed a suggestion from his officials to request Arab embassies after having dreamt of a turbaned man chasing a devil in his palace, his officials having identified the turbaned man being the Huihui (i.e., Arabs),⁴⁵ who were reportedly honest, loyal and brave. It is said that there were three Arab envoys who were sent to China in response to the invitation of the Chinese Emperor, but only one of them named Ga Xin actually reached China.⁴⁶ Following the Arab embassies, there is said to have an exchange of three thousand Arab and Chinese soldiers. The Arab soldiers then settled in China, and that is said to have been the beginning of Huihui [i.e., Muslims] in China.⁴⁷

We have a passage in H. G. Wells' *The Outline of History*, which has been quoted by many as independent supporting evidence for this tradition.⁴⁸ The text relates the coming of the Arab envoys to the court of Tang Taizong in the year 628, and specifies that the envoys came by sea via Guangzhou in a trading vessel from Yanbu, the port of Medina. They carried a message from the Prophet Muhammad to the Emperor Taizong, which was thought to be identical with the summons that was sent to the Byzantine Emperor the same year. It is said that the Chinese Emperor did not only receive these Arab envoys well but also showed a great interest in their religion, and even assisted them to build a mosque for the Arab traders in Guangzhou, which is one of the oldest mosques in the world.⁴⁹

Wells does not specify his sources, so the question has arisen as to whether his text could be considered as having been derived from sources that independently support the Chinese sources. His text referring to the Arab embassies and the mosque in Guangzhou could have been derived from Chinese sources of later date available in his time, since we have textual sources from the Ming period and thereafter giving information about the presence of Arab envoys in the Tang court in the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the mosque in

⁴⁴ Anonymous, 'Huihui Yuanlai', Qing, in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol. 63, pp. 281-335.

⁴⁵ There has been confusion about the use of the term Huihui, which is discussed in following chapters. Here it means Arabs, but at the end of this text it means Chinese Muslims.

⁴⁶ Ga Xin (葛心), presumably as one of the Chinese spellings of the transliteration of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas

⁴⁷ *Huihui Yuanlai*, op. cit., vol. 63. p. 281

⁴⁸ Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo Huijiaoshi Yanjiu*, Guiting Chubanshe, Taipei, 1972. pp. 52-56.

⁴⁹ H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*, Rev. and corr. ed., Cassell, London, New York, 1920, Chap. 31, p. 312.

Guangzhou, such as the inscription (Fig.5): *A Record of the Reconstruction of the Huaisheng Mosque* (*Chongjian Huaisheng Si Ji*, 重建懷聖寺記) by Guo Jia, dated to 1350.⁵⁰ The specific date given by Wells seems to be his own hypothesis, based on his knowledge of the events of the contact made with the Byzantine Emperor by the Arabs in the year 628, perhaps also with reference to the Chinese Muslim tradition, if one assumes that he was also aware of the story related in *Huihui Yuanlai*. Although Wells' report is informative, one should be cautious when taking it as supporting evidence, given the lack of information about his sources.



Fig.5. Stele 'A Record of the Reconstruction of the Huaisheng Mosque', Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

The information on the coming of Islam to China collected by the Russian Archbishop Palladius in Beijing in 1872, cited in *Collections of the Documents in the Communication History of China and the West* (*Zhongxi Jiaotongshiliao Huibian* 中西交通史料匯編), has been taken into account by many to determine the date of the first arrival of Islam in China. The document that Palladius collected is said to be in the form of a bulletin written in Classical Chinese. It reports that in the year 632 (the sixth year of Tang Zhenguan) the Prophet Muhammad's uncle Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs led three thousand Muslims with the Qur'an to China. The Emperor Taizong was so pleased by the good character of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs that he kept him in Chang'an (i.e., Xi'an) and erected a Qingzhen Si (i.e., mosque)⁵¹ for him and his followers to stay. Later, more mosques were built in Jiangning (i.e., Nanjing) and Guangzhou.⁵²

⁵⁰ According to the information provided by the local Muslim community during fieldwork, the original stele bearing the inscription by Guo Jia (郭嘉) was seriously damaged during the Cultural Revolution, which is preserved in the library of the Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou. The one as shown in the picture is a copy after the original, made in 1984. See the copy of full text of the inscription in Appendix, and it is further discussed in chapter 2.

⁵¹ The term Qingzhen Si (清真寺), literally the Temple of the pure and real or purity and truth, has been used for mosque since the Ming period, it is discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.

⁵² Zhang Xinlang, *Zhongxi Jiaotongshiliao Huibian*, Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1977, p. 187. According to the author, Palladius' document was translated into English and published in the magazine: *The Phoenix* (1872, March Issue), and the document quoted in the book is his translation based on the English text, as the original Chinese text was not available to him.

Another text, known as *Epitaph of the Great Human Waqqâs* (*Wangeshi Daren Muzhi* 旺各師大人墓誌), can be found in a book: *The True Learning of the Heavenly Direction* (*Tianfang Zhengxue*, 天方正學) written by a Muslim scholar, Lan Xu, in 1852. In his commemorative inscription, Lan Xu mentions the arrival of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs as an envoy carrying the Heavenly Classic (*Tianjing* 天經) in Chang'an in the sixth year of Tang Zhenguan, and relates how well he was received by the emperor Taizong. He also refers to the imperial edict issued by Tang Taizong for the building of a great mosque in Chang'an and later other mosques in Jiangning and Guangzhou; and the subsequent death of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs and his burial and entombment in Guangzhou.⁵³

Regardless of whatever the year 628 or the year 632 is selected as the most likely date, the local Muslim tradition clearly insists that the first arrival of Islam in China was during the early Zhenguan reign period. As we can see, the textual sources on which these two Chinese Muslim traditions are based are of a rather late date, from the Qing period. We do have an earlier text in *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping Guangji*, 太平廣記), dated to the Song period, ca.978CE, implying the arrival of an Arab envoy in the Tang court in the early Zhenguan reign period.⁵⁴ Whether this Song text might be the origin of these Muslim traditions is unclear. The *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*, known as one of the four great books of the Song period, is a collection of stories that are apocryphal and fictional rather than historical records. Although the text is of an early date, we cannot be sure of its accuracy, especially when referring to historical events.

If we compare the information given in those later texts, for instance, in the document collected by Palladius, in Lan Xu's commemorative inscription and the story told in *Huihui Yuanlai*, similarities can be found in these narratives. They seem to be different versions of a story originating from the same Muslim oral tradition that may have already been current for several centuries within Chinese Muslim communities. The key information given in these texts is the presence of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs in the Tang court during the reign of Tang Taizong (r.627-649CE). Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs first appears in Chinese texts in the inscription on the stele: *Re-erection of the Qingjing Mosque Stele* (*Chongli Qingjing Si Bei* 重立清淨寺

⁵³ Lan Xu, 'Tianfang Zhengxue' (1852), in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol. 35, p. 383. See the copy of full text of the Epitaph in Appendix; also see the English translation of the full text by Sachiko Murata. S. Maurata, 'Lan Zixi's "Epitaphs of the Real Humans"', in *Tales of God's Friends: Islamic Hagiography in Translation*, J. Renard (eds.), University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2009, p. 366.

⁵⁴ Li Fang, *Taiping Guangji* (ca.978CE), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1961, vol. 402, p. 3239.

碑, Fig.6), dated to 1507.⁵⁵ The inscription gives account of the coming of a *sahabat* (i.e., Companion of the Prophet) Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, who came by sea to Guangzhou and built a mosque named Huaisheng. There are no texts giving explicit accounts of his arrival in China that can be dated to before the Ming period. We learn from the Arab histories that Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs was one of the earliest converts to Islam, a Companion of the Prophet and a military commander who died in the year 54AH/674CE in his birthplace near Medina.⁵⁶ There is no mention in Arab histories of his mission to China as reported in the Chinese Muslim accounts that seem to have existed since the early 16th century, if not earlier.



Fig.6. Stele: 'Re-erection of the *Qingjing Mosque Stele*', Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

Hence, the Chinese Islamic tradition of insisting on the connection of Sa'd Ibn Abi

Waqqâs with the coming of Islam to China could either be a fraudulent invention or an amendment of records of early events in Chinese Islam, these having been written down during the Ming period when there was a great efflorescence of the Chinese Muslim communities. This was especially the case on the southern and southeastern coasts of China, where the Maritime Muslim community had suffered serious destruction in the late Yuan and early Ming period. It is logical that the Maritime Muslims might have sought to emphasise their origins, as a source of legitimacy, and, thence, of protection. It may very well be, therefore, that the Muslim tradition of the connection of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs with the coming of Islam to China began to evolve at this time, developing a variety of versions in the centuries that followed, all of which included as key elements the story of the coming of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs as a missionary to China and his acceptance by the Chinese emperor. The imperial edict issued by the Yongle Emperor (r. 1403-1424) in 1407 regarding protection and tolerance towards Muslims was copied instantly by the Muslim communities and inscribed on

⁵⁵ The stele is preserved in the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou. It is said to be a copy of *Qingjing Si Ji* of 1349 by Wu Jian, but there is different information given in the stele from that in Wu Jian's paper inscription. It is further discussed in Chapter 2. See the copy of full texts of both inscriptions in Appendix.

⁵⁶ 'Biography of a Companion (Sahaabah): Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs', *Islamiska.org*, 27 July 2012, viewed on 6th June 2014, <http://islamiska.org/e/waqqas.htm>

stone stelae displayed in their mosques (Fig.7).⁵⁷ This reflects the Chinese Muslims' awareness of the importance of legitimacy at a time when the political and social conditions of China had dramatically changed after tumultuous times that affected the Muslims community in the late Yuan and early Ming periods, especially the Maritime Muslims were still largely regarded as foreigners, seeking to survive in their host country.

The identification of the second year of Tang Yonghui as the date of the first arrival of Islam in China has been supported by many scholars, since there are textual sources of an early date referring to the events of the arrival of the Arab envoys in the Tang court, these sources generally being regarded as very reliable. The earliest text recording the Arab envoys in China is found in a Tang text in the



Fig.7. Stone Plaque: 'The Yongle Edict', Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

Comprehensive Documents (Tongdian, 通典) by Du You, dated to the late 8th century CE. It reports the following:

大食, 大唐永徽中遣使朝貢...云: 其國在波斯之西...有國以來, 三十四年矣. 王已死, 次傳第一摩首者, 今王即是第三. (Dashi [i.e., Arabs]⁵⁸ sent an envoy to present tributes [to the Tang court] during the Tang Yonghui reign period [i.e., 650-655CE]...[The envoy] said: 'his country is west to Bosi [i.e., Persia]⁵⁹...The country has been founded for thirty-four years. The founding king has died, then [the rule] passed to the first head of the community leaders, now the ruler is the third ruler).⁶⁰

We have later texts, which are thought to originate from the Tang text above, in the *Annals of Old Tang*, and the *Institutional History of Tang (Tang Huiyao, 唐會要)*, dated to ca. 961CE, also in *Prime Tortoise of the Record Bureau (Cefu Yuanguai, 冊府元龜)*, dated to ca.1013 CE, reporting the event but specifying the year as the second year of Tang Yonghui.⁶¹ The

⁵⁷ Yongle emperor is the third emperor of the Ming dynasty. He was famous for his tolerance towards his Muslim subjects. See the copy of full text of the imperial edict in Appendix.

⁵⁸ Dashi is suggested to be the transliteration of Persian word Tazi for the Arab tribe Tayy.

⁵⁹ Bosi is the ancient Chinese name for Persian

⁶⁰ Du You, *Tongdian* (766-801), Rev. and corr. ed., Shangwu Yinshuguan, Shanghai, 1935, vol. 193.

⁶¹ Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang Shu*, op. cit., vol.199, p. 5315. Wang Pu, *Tang Huiyao* (961), Rev. and corr. ed., Taipei Shijie Shuju, Taipei, 1963, vol. 100, p. 1789. Wang Qinruo, 'Cefu Yuanguai' (1005-1013), in *Qinding Siku*

Muslim tradition of putting the date of the arrival of Islam in China in the year 651CE is obviously derived from the later texts. However, other than giving the specific year and additional information on the name of the Dashi ruler as Amir al-Mu'minin,⁶² these later texts give the same information as given in the *Tongdian*. Amir al-Mu'minin, of course, is the title of the ruler in Arabic, but was mistaken by the Chinese as a specific name, perhaps when the envoy made his report addressing his ruler. The error is understandable as we are talking about the early Tang period when the rising Dashi was still little known by the Chinese.

These texts all agree that the event took place in 34AH, as reported by the Arab envoy, which is 655CE. As we can see, there is a contradiction regarding the date in the later texts. This dating confusion could be explained as being derived from a lack of knowledge on the part of the Chinese of the Islamic *hijri* calendar.⁶³ In ancient China, the Chinese counted the years from an accession of an emperor, using the title or name he used during his reign. This generated a major problem in converting the Islamic lunar year to the Chinese year. In this instance, there may have been a miscalculation of the year in the later texts when recounting the same event of the arrival of the Arab envoy as recorded in the *Tongdian*. We have another text in the *Cefu Yuangui* recording an event of the Arab envoy presenting tributes to the Tang court in the year 655CE.⁶⁴ Seen in this light, the event recorded in these texts could indeed have taken place in the sixth year of Tang Yonghui.⁶⁵

If so, then we are to conceive of a delegation being sent to China as early as the Caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (r.644-656CE). Circumstantially, this is not implausible. His predecessor, ʿUmar b. al-Khattāb, is said to have developed Jidda as the port of Mecca and the sources agree that ʿUthmān continued to develop Jidda as well as building a port at Ayla (al-ʿAqaba, Jordan) as the Red Sea port for Palestine.⁶⁶ Since ʿUthmān, as a rich former merchant of the Meccan-based Quraish, actively promoted the use of the Red Sea as a trade route, it is indeed conceivable that he sent a delegate east to China. In 655CE, the journey from the Hijāz to Tang China would have had to be by sea, as the Arab Muslims had only just completed the

Quanshu, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, vol. 970, p. 919.262. Ouyang Xiu, and Song Qi, *Xin Tang Shu* (1053-1060), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1975, vol. 221, p. 6262.

⁶² Han Mi Mo Mo Ni (讷蜜末摩膩) as given in *Jiu Tang Shu* or Yan Mo Nian (言莫念) as given in *Cefu Yuangui*, which are suggested as different spellings of Chinese transliterations for Amir al-Muminin. Zhang Rimin, trans. Yao Jide, *Tangdai Zhongguo Yu Dashi Muslim*, Ninxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 2002, p. 2.

⁶³ The Chinese scholar Chen Yuan has addressed the issue of the confusion in converting the *hijri* calendar to the Chinese year. See Chen Yuan, op. cit., pp. 349-350.

⁶⁴ Wang Qinruo, *Cefu Yuangui*, op. cit., vol. 970, p. 919.263.

⁶⁵ Zhang Rimin suggests that there may have been two separate events, which took place in 651 and 655. See Zhang Rimin, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶⁶ Communications with Dr. G.R.D. King.

conquest of Sassanian Iran and certainly had not yet conquered central Asia to bring them within reach by land of Tang China, it must be recalled that Central Asia was not brought into the Islamic realm until the early 8th century CE.⁶⁷

The existence of communications between the Hijâz and the eastern Indian Ocean during the Caliphate of ʿUthmân is evident from the fact that he had imported teak from southern India or South East Asia to rebuild the roofing of the Mosque of the Prophet at al-Madina, and the Haram Mosque at Mecca during his Caliphate. One must also assume that, as merchants dealing with southern Arabia, the Quraysh rulers of Mecca were well aware of the eastern trade conducted by vessels out of the ports of Yemen, and of south and southeast Arabia more generally.

Although there is little evidence from the Arab side of the early communications between the Islamic west and the great ports of China, we have much information from the accounts of Buddhist pilgrims of the 7th century CE. The early communications between the Persian Gulf and Guangzhou were recorded very precisely by the Chinese pilgrim Yi Jing (635-713CE) who sailed on a boat of the Bosi [i.e., Persia] from Guangzhou in 671 to a place called Bhoga, which has been identified as Palembang in Sumatra.⁶⁸ Forty years later in 717, an Indian pilgrim was recorded sailing on one of a fleet of Bosi ships between Ceylon and Palembang. Of the fleet of 35 vessels, most were wrecked. The Indian finally reached Guangzhou in 720.⁶⁹ This early evidence of Guangzhou as the destination of vessels sailing from the Middle East was the continuation of a pattern of trade that had existed well before the coming of Islam. It seems plausible that the Bosi fleets began sailing so far east at a far earlier date.

It is noteworthy that there appears to have been some confusion between the Bosi and the Dashi in the minds of early Chinese writers. The Chinese sources only begin to distinguish them in the 8th century CE. The Bosi referred to in the early Chinese texts could have been anyone passing through the ports of the Persian Gulf to coastal China. For instance, non-Muslim Arabs from southeastern Arabia and Yemen may have sailed for the Persians long before Islam, and all would have been described by the Chinese as ‘Bosi’. It is plausible that the nautically experienced Arabs were present in the port cities of China long before being

⁶⁷ On the history of Arabs in general see A. Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Faber, London, 2005.

⁶⁸ Hui Chao, *Wang Wu Tianzhuguo Zhuan* (8th cent.), Rev. and corr. ed., with commentary by Zhang Yi, Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 2004, p. 101. Yi Jing, *Datang Xiyu Qiufo Gaosengzhuan Jiaozhu* (671-695CE), Rev. and corr. ed., with commentary by Wang Bangwei, Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1988, p. 152.

⁶⁹ G. F. Hourani, and J. Carswell, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Rev. and expd., Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995, p. 62.

recorded in the Chinese texts. Not until the 8th century did the Chinese began to recognize the presence of different characteristics among the Middle Eastern traders, perhaps reflecting the fact that new groups of Arabs, hence the generic reference to Tays, were reaching the coasts of China with Islam and dominance of a new Muslim Arab identity.

This perhaps may help to explain the absence of early Chinese texts referring to the religion of Islam, at a time when China already had a well-developed bureaucratic system with a highly efficient writing system. In contrast, unlike in China, the Arab world still largely remained in its oral tradition in the early days of Islam. It is, therefore, not surprising that we find no early Arab texts reporting the activities of Arab traders or missionaries in coastal China, if there were any. The earliest Arab source yet known to refer to China is a *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad: Go as far China for knowledge.⁷⁰ This has been often quoted by the Chinese Muslims as implying the sending of missionaries to China by the Prophet; and it has been suggested that one of the figures portrayed at the Umayyad desert palace Qusayr ‘Amra is the Emperor of China.⁷¹

Conversely, the earliest evidence of Chinese knowledge of Islam is recorded in *Recollections of the Journey (Jingxing Ji, 經行紀)* dated to the second half of the 8th century CE by Du Huan, who speaks both of the religion of Islam and of the countries of Islam. Du Huan here provides an accurate, if summary, observation of aspects of the religious and social life of the Islamic Middle East that he had seen at first hand. He reports:

[大食] 女子出門, 必擁蔽其面. 無問貴賤, 一日五時禮天...又有禮堂, 容數萬人. 每七日, 王出禮拜, 登高座, 為眾說法... ([Arab] women must cover their face when going out. All pray five times per day regardless of being rich or poor ... There is an assembly hall [i.e., mosque or prayer hall], [it] accommodates several tens of thousands of people. Every seven days, the leader comes to pray. [The leader] sits high up and preaches the [Islamic] law...).

其大食法者...不食猪狗驢馬等肉, 不拜國王父母之尊, 不信鬼神, 祀天而已. 其俗每七日一假...(The Tashi law is:...No eating of meats of pig, dog, donkey and horse

⁷⁰ The authenticity of this *Hadith* has been questioned by many, but it seems to be widely known in the Muslim world, and is especially frequently quoted by Chinese Muslims.

⁷¹ O. Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, Rev. and enl. ed., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987, p. 44. G. Fowden, *Qusayr ‘Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif, 2004, p. 207.

etc., no worshipping of the King and the parents, no believing in supernatural beings [i.e., idols], only worshipping the heaven, its custom of having a day off every 7 days...⁷²

After Du Huan wrote, there was a gradual recognition that there was a new religion linked to the ever-increasing numbers of foreign traders of Middle Eastern origins in coastal China. Whatever the truth of the Chinese tradition and its insistence on the connection of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs with the coming of Islam to China, the fact remains that there is no firm evidence from both the Arab and Chinese sides, as discussed above. Although we have the Tang text referring to the coming of the Arab envoy to China in the mid-7th century CE, this information only proves the beginning of a diplomatic connection between the Dashi and Tang China, and does not necessarily mean the coming of Islam to China. Since there is no shortage of evidence of early communications between the China coasts and the Persian Gulf, we are on safer ground on the issue of trade between the Middle East and China. It is logical to assume that an existing trading network between the Middle East, i.e., the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea and the coasts of China at the eastern extreme, provided the context in which Islam spread eastwards. It is at least plausible that, regardless of the issue of the missionaries and the first Arab envoys, Islam arrived in coastal China no later than the late 7th century CE, when the ever thriving Indian Ocean trade brought considerable numbers of Muslim traders into the great ports of China.

Formation of the Maritime Muslim Community

Despite the confusion and controversy over when Islam first arrived in China, it has been generally agreed that it was by sea that Islam first reached China. The southern and southeastern coasts of China, as part of the historical maritime trade networks across the Indian Ocean, were intimately connected to the maritime trade with the Persian Gulf and it was here that there was the establishment of the first settlement of Muslims of Middle Eastern origins in the 7th century CE. In subsequent centuries, this developed into a large Muslim community - the Maritime Muslim Community in China, which can be defined both by its origins from seafarers from the heartlands of the Muslim world and the geographic location. Despite having the longest history of any Muslim community in China, the

⁷² Du Huan, 'Jingxing Ji', in *Tongdian*, Du You (766-801), Rev. and corr. ed., Shangwu Yinshuguan, Shanghai, 1935, vol. 193, Chap. Bianfang, 9. Du Huan was taken a prisoner of war at the battle of Talas, in 751, in central Asia, between Tang China and the Abbasid Caliphate. He was brought to Arabia and stayed there for 10 years, returning to China by sea. He wrote the *Jingxing Ji* upon his return.

Maritime Muslims today are very little known, compared with other Muslim groups in China, such as the better-known Muslim communities concentrated in northwestern China, generally known as the Central Asian group due to their origins and also the geographic location. The Maritime Muslims are identified as Hui nowadays, along with other Chinese-speaking Muslims in inland China, although they do not share a common history.⁷³

As mentioned, the great port of Guangzhou had been evidently the destination of vessels sailing from the Middle East even before the time of Islam. Guangzhou is one of the best-located ports of the Chinese coast. It is located on the Pearl River which opens out into a deep sea inlet running inland from the South China Sea, flanked at its mouth on the south side by Macao and by Hong Kong on the north side. It lies in the sub-tropics and is open all year round. Guangzhou's maritime trade has a history that goes back many centuries. The establishment of the Commissioner of Maritime Affairs (*shibo shi*, 市舶使) by the Tang court for the management of the maritime trade in Guangzhou in the 7th century CE is good evidence of the considerable volumes of overseas trade.⁷⁴ Later, this post was institutionalised into an office, the Commission of Maritime Affairs (*shibo si*, 市舶司), which was set up first in Guangzhou, and later in the other great Tang ports like Quanzhou, and ports of the lower Yangtze valley such as Yangzhou, Songjiang, Hangzhou, as is well documented.⁷⁵ This institution acted in a similar way to the customs authorities of today.

Whatever the scale of trade and the degree of Islamic presence at Guangzhou in the 7th century CE, in subsequent centuries the number of merchants from the Middle East, including Muslim, Zoroastrian, Jews and Nestorian Christians, increased very substantially.

⁷³ The term Hui in general applies to all Chinese-speaking Muslims, thus distinguishing them from the Turkic-speaking Central Asian Muslim group in Northwest China. The ambiguous use of the term Hui for both religion and ethnicity has caused confusion. In the Republican period, Hui was officially used for religion, i.e., Islam, but since the beginning of the Communist period, it has been officially used for ethnicity. Hui is one of the 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities in China, which is further discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.

⁷⁴ Li Futai, and Shi Cheng, *Fanyu Xian Zhi* (Qing Tongzhi ed.), Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1967, vol. 21, p. 249.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 281. Rui Lindai, Zhao Chen and Shi Cheng, *Guangzhou Fu Zhi* (Qing Guangxu ed.), Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1966, vol. 21, p. 456. Huai Yinbu, *Quanzhou Fu zhi* (Qing ed.), Dengwen Yinshuajiu, Tainan, 1964, vol. 75, Chap. Shiyi, 36, 39. Chen Shouqi, *Fujian Tong Zhi* (Qing Tongzhi ed.), Datong Shuju, Taipei, 1968, vol. 270, pp. 5125-5126. Fang Ding, Zhu Shengyuan, et al., *Jinjiang Xian Zhi* (Qing Qianlong ed.), Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1967, p. 61. Sun Xingyan, and Song Rulin, *Songjiang Fu Zhi* (Qing Jiajin ed.), Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1970, vol. 15, pp. 338,344,349,412, 639. Zhou Zong, and Shi E, *Nansong linan Liang Zhi: Qiandao Linan Zhi* (1169), *Chunyou Linan Zhi* (1252), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, Hangzhou, 1983, p. 24. Tuo Tuo, *Song Shi* (1343), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1977, vol. 186, pp. 4541-4566. Song Lian, *Yuan Shi* (1370), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1976, vol. 94, pp. 2401-2403. Zhao Rushi, 'Zhufan Zhi' (1225), in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, pp. 594.1-594.2. Zhu Yu, 'Pingzhou Ketan' (1119), in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, vol. 2, pp. 1038.288-1038.289.

Despite the military confrontation between Muslims and Chinese armies in China's North-western frontiers, such as the battle of Talas in 751CE as mentioned above, the maritime trade between coastal China and the Persian Gulf ports of the Abbasid caliphate flourished as never before. A famous Buddhist monk Jian Zhen (鑑真) caught sight of the busy port of Guangzhou, when passing through on his pilgrimages between 742CE and 745CE. He saw numerous foreign vessels, and described the spices and precious merchandise being piled up like a mountain in the port.⁷⁶ Through the Tang poet's eyes, we see the market place of the mid-8th century great Tang port of Quanzhou crowded with foreigners of different nationalities (*Yun Shan Bai Yue Lu, Shi Jin Shi Zhou Ren*, 云山百越路, 市井十洲人).⁷⁷ Many of the stories about the foreign merchants told in *The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* are a reflection of the extensive involvement of Muslim merchants in the business life in the great ports of China during Tang times.⁷⁸

We have both Chinese and Arabic sources giving accounts of the presence of large numbers of Arab and Persian merchants in the ports of China by the 8th century. There is a text in the *Old Tang Book* recording an event in the year 760, when General Tian Shengong (田神功) marched into the great port of Yangzhou to put down the rebellions, robbing the citizens and merchants. One report suggests that thousands of Persians and other foreign merchants were killed in this event.⁷⁹ That indicates that there must have been many Muslim traders already residing in the port of Yangzhou by that time.

Another episode is recorded in the *Old Tang Book*. The Tang court received a report from Guangzhou about the sack of the city by Arabs and Persians in the year 758CE. It reports that Dashi and Bosi together sacked and burned the city of Guangzhou, escaping by sea.⁸⁰ The reason behind this event is not very clear. It has been suggested that it was the result of the weakness of the Tang during the An Lushan Rebellion (安史之亂 755-763CE).⁸¹ The

⁷⁶ Yuan Kai, *Tang Daheshang Dongzhen Zhuan* (779CE), Rev. and corr. ed., with commentary by Wang Xianrong, Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1979, pp. 74. It is a biography of Jian Zhen, who passed through Guangzhou 5 times.

⁷⁷ Bao He, 'Song Quanzhou Lishijun Zhiren(送泉州李使君之任)', in *Quan Tangshi* (Qing Kangxi), Peng Dingqiu (eds.), Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1960, vol. 208.

⁷⁸ Many volumes in *Taiping Guangji*, op. cit., devoted to the stories of foreign merchants (Hu Shang 胡商), such as in vol. 402.

⁷⁹ Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang Shu*, op. cit., vol. 124, pp. 3523-3533. It is not very clear why Tian Shengong acted in this way. It may have been an act of robbing the richest in the city. The foreign merchants were among the richest also perhaps present in large numbers, so they may have been targeted for wealthy rather than for any other reason.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, vol. 198, p. 5313.

⁸¹ Hourani, and Carswell, op. cit., p. 63.

reaction of the Arabs and Persians to the corruption of the local government officers might be another explanation. It has been recorded that in the year 684 outraged foreign merchants killed the governor of Guangzhou for his misbehaviour in robbing the foreign cargo vessels.⁸² Whatever the reason for the sack of Guangzhou, such a daring act proves the presence of large numbers of Muslim traders in Guangzhou at that time.

Hourani cited Chinese sources that record a large village of the Bosi on the Island of Hainan in the year 748. They were seen as ship-owners along with Brahmans and Malayans on the river in Guangzhou in the same year.⁸³ Hainan Island lies at the most southern tip of China on the route from the Indian Ocean to Guangzhou and Quanzhou and beyond. It could have been a natural stopping place for vessels sailing between the Middle East and the ports of China. Local history records refer to places on the Island as the foreigner's harbor (*fanren gang* 番人港), the foreigner's village (*fanren cun* 番人村), and the foreigner's hill (*fangren po* 番人坡), which may suggest the presence of large numbers of foreign traders.⁸⁴

The identity of these Bosi at Hainan is unclear. As mentioned earlier, the Bosi in early Chinese writings could be anyone who had sailed from the Persian Gulf; Arabia was seen by the Chinese as part of the Persian Empire before the rise of the Caliphate. It is tempting to suggest that before the time of Islam the sea-going capacity of the Bosi was made possible by the nautical experience of their Arab subjects along the Gulf coast and of Uman and the



Fig.8. Archaeological site of an early Islamic graveyard, Sanya, Hainan Island.

United Arab Emirates in particular, where there were important ports at Julfâr, Dibba and Suhâr at the time of the coming of Islam in the 7th century CE. Whatever the role of the Persians, i.e., the Sassanians, in the maritime trade in the past, they had been supplanted by the Islamic Caliphate by 651 CE. The discovery of an early Muslim graveyard (Fig.8) that

⁸² Ruan Yuan, *Guangdong Tongzhi Qianshi Lue* (Qing ed.), Rev. and corr. ed., with commentary by Li Mo, Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, Guangzhou, 1981, p. 54.

⁸³ Hourani, and Carswell, op. cit., p. 62.

⁸⁴ Zhang Xi, Xing Dinglun, and Zhao Yiqian, *Yazhou Zhi* (Qing ed.), Rev. and corr. ed., with commentary by Guo Moruo, Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, Guangzhou, 1983, pp. 47, 50. Ming Yi, and Zhang Yuesong, *Qiongzhou Fu Zhi* (Qing Daoguang & Guangxu ed.), Rev. and corr. ed., Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1967, p. 100.

covers an area of over 3 acres in a village near Sanya overlooking the South China Sea in the southern part of the Hainan Island is good evidence of the presence of an early Muslim settlement in the Island. Archaeological studies of the unearthed gravestones (Fig.9), made of material from coral reefs and bearing Quranic inscriptions indicate they are of an early date, presumably from the Tang period. It is reasonable to assume that this Muslim graveyard is linked with this recorded Bosi village, although local inhabitants interviewed during fieldwork have no knowledge of the existence of such a village.

Arab texts by al-Marwazi, dated to ca.1120 CE, mention a group of Shi‘ah refugees who escaped from persecution in Khurāsān into China before the end of the Umayyad Caliphate in 749 CE. These refugees are said to have finally settled on an island in a river, one of the greatest in existence, opposite a port. In his texts, Marvazi says that these refugees later acted as middlemen in the trade between Chinese and foreign merchants, as they



Fig.9. Gravestone, preserved in Wuzhishan Museum, Hainan Island.

learned Chinese and other languages during their long period of residence in China.⁸⁵ It is not very clear where exactly this Shi‘ah community settled, but, from Marvazi’s description, it seems that they may have settled on one of the rocky islands in the Yangtze River between the great ports of Yangzhou and Zhenjiang that are opposite each other across the river.⁸⁶ Marco Polo, the well-known 13th century traveller, reported the presence of many inhabited rocky islands on his journey from Yangzhou to Zhenjiang. He especially noted that there were monasteries and well established communities on these islands.⁸⁷ These may well have been present long before Marco Polo’s times.

By the 8th century, there were large foreign communities that had become established in the great Tang ports, largely made up of Muslim traders of Middle Eastern origins. By this time,

⁸⁵ Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marwazī, tans., and comm. by V. Minorsky, *Sharaf Al-Zaman Tahir Marvazi on China, the Turks and India* (Arabic text ca. 1120), Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1942, p. 17. Hourani, and Carswell, op. cit., p. 63.

⁸⁶ There are many islands, such as the well-known Jiaoshan (焦山), Jinshan (金山) in the Yangtze river, with Zhenjiang on the southern shore and the great port of Yangzhou to the north across the river.

⁸⁷ M. Polo, trans. R. E. Latham, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Penguin Book, London, New York, 1992, pp. 209-210.

more itinerant Muslim merchants were beginning to settle in the China ports. It was these Muslim traders of Arab and Persian origin who made up the very first Muslim settlement in China. The maritime trade continued to flourish into the 9th century, with both Arab and Chinese texts, such as the Arabic texts by Ibn Khurdadhibid and the Chinese texts by Jia Dan known as *Guangzhou Tonghai Yidao* (廣州通海夷道), recording in details the well-established maritime trading route from Guangzhou to the Persian Gulf.⁸⁸ The text in *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind* indicates that there were regular sailings from the Persian Gulf to China coastal ports in the mid-9th century.⁸⁹ The well-established connection between the Chinese ports of Guangzhou, Quanzhou and the Gulf port of Siraf during the Tang period facilitated the thriving maritime trade. This drew in more foreign traders to join the early settlers, thus forming a large colony of foreign merchants in coastal China.

This very large colony of foreign traders - Muslims and others, as described in the Arab texts - came to be known in the Chinese texts as *fanfang* (番坊), i.e., the foreign quarter. There are Arab sources that independently support Chinese sources giving accounts of the foreign quarter in Guangzhou. *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind* reports that the Muslims received from the Tang court the concession of referring legal disputes among themselves to a *qadi*, i.e., judge, of their own community. Chinese texts refer to the person appointed by the court to deal with the legal disputes within the community as *fanzhang* (番長), i.e., head of the foreign quarter. We have texts in the local history records referring to the separate *fanfang* formed gradually in the major ports like Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Yangzhou and Hangzhou from the 8th century CE. All texts, both Arab and Chinese, indicate that this colony of foreign traders or *fanfang* was dominated by Arab and Persian merchants.⁹⁰ *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind* says that cargoes were generally brought in smaller vessels from al-Basrah to Siraf where they were transferred to the large vessels destined for the China ports.⁹¹ Later Al-Marvazi gives explicit accounts of the origins of those Muslim traders in the ports of China. He reports that the majority of Persian and Arab merchants sailed on their own boats to the port of Guangzhou, the Persians coming from Siraf and the Arabs coming from al-Basrah.⁹² Merchants from Siraf were present at Guangzhou and other port cities in China, as is evident from the excavated

⁸⁸ Jia Dan, 'Huanghua Sida Ji' (c. 802CE), cit. in *Xin Tang Shu* (1053-1060), Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi (comp.), Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1975, vol. 43, pp. 1153-1154. Ibn Khurdadhibid, 'kitab al-masalik w'al-mamalik' (c. 850CE), cit. in *Zhongxi Jiaotongshiliao Huibian*, Zhang Xinlang, Rev. and corr. ed., Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1977, pp. 217-218. Hourani, and Carswell, op. cit., pp. 67, 69-72.

⁸⁹ *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind*, 851CE, cit. in Hourani and Carswell, op. cit., pp. 66-68

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p.72. Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou Ketan*, op. cit., pp. 1038.290-1038.291.

⁹¹ *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind*, cit. in Hourani, and Carswell, op. cit., p. 70.

⁹² Marvazi, op. cit., p. 22.

gravestones. It is said that by the early 9th century, as much as half of the population in Guangzhou was foreign merchants, these mainly being Muslim traders. That might be an exaggeration, but it indicates emphatically the involvement of the Muslim merchants in the maritime trade in Guangzhou. One devastating event is recorded in both Chinese and Arabic sources. At least 120,000 foreign merchants, mainly Muslims, are said to have been killed in the massacre of Guangzhou in the year 878, which resulted from the Huang Chao (黃巢) rebellion against the Tang court.⁹³

With such an influx of Arab and Persian merchants to the ports of China, large Muslim community – the Maritime Muslim community – had developed in coastal China by the 9th century. As the maritime trade continued to flourish, this Maritime Muslim community continuously grew in the subsequent centuries. The Arab and Persian merchants remained as the core of this community until the end of the Yuan period when large numbers of Muslim merchants started returning to the Middle East, uncertain of their future in the chaotic times of dynastic change.

The growing Muslim community obviously had a need for mosques as places of worship. It is in this context that the origins of many mosques on the China coasts should be seen. The complex of the process of evolution of Islamic architecture in coastal China and the extent of its distinctively Chinese nature will be analysed in the following chapters.

⁹³ Abu Zaid Hassan al-Sirafi, Supplement to *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind*, 10th cent, cit. in Hourani, and Carswell, op. cit., pp. 76-77. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang Shu*, op. cit., vol. 200, pp. 5391-5398. Ruan Yuan, *Guangdong Tongzhi Qianshi Lue*, op. cit., pp. 66-69. As in the earlier event in Yangzhou, the Huang Chao rebellion did not mean to target on the foreign merchants *per se*, but only the richest amongst them, and many Muslim traders were amongst the richest people in the Chinese ports.

Chapter 2

Early Mosques: Muslim Diaspora and Imported Artistic Tradition from Islamic Lands

The Political, Economic, and Social conditions of Tang Song China

When Tang China was at its highest power under the great Emperor Tang Taizong (r. 627-649CE),⁹⁴ there was a small Arab community consisting of a handful of merchants that was linked to, and affected by, a new faith starting to rise in the sands of western Arabia. At that time, with its wealth and rich culture, Tang China was recognised as the most prestigious oriental power in the world. At the same time, two other great powers, far to the west, the Byzantines and Sassanians were wearing each other down through warfare. Within a brief time, the adherents of the new faith in the western Arabian peninsula had risen to become the new power of the world - a Muslim empire following Islam and dominated by a new Arab identity that quickly overran much of the vast lands of the Byzantine Empire in the West, conquered the Persian Sassanian empire, and soon brought the lands of Central Asia under Islam, thus coming within reach by land of Tang China.

By the early 8th century, the Muslim Caliphate had become a major competitor of Tang China. The forces of both sides eventually met at the famous battle of Talas in the year 751 with the Tang armies being defeated by the Abbasid Muslim troops.⁹⁵ However, the military confrontation on land did not undermine the maritime trade connection between Tang China and the Abbasid Caliphate. On the contrary, from the mid-8th century onwards, the eastern sea trade came to be a major element of the economic supremacy in the Middle East of the Abbasid Caliphate at Baghdad. The Tang court, responding to the shifting of trade from overland routes to the oceans, opened up more ports to accommodate the increasing trade volumes from the 7th century after the success of the great port of Guangzhou as a free port for the maritime trade while the major Abbasid entrepôt of Sirâf on the Iranian coast of the Persian Gulf thrived as the entrepôt directly related to the maritime trade with the Chinese ports. Foreign trade was evidently sufficiently important for both the Tang court and the

⁹⁴ The Emperor Taizong is regarded as one of the greatest emperors in Chinese history. His reign, known as ‘Zhenguan Zhi Zhi (貞觀之治), is considered as a golden age of Chinese history.

⁹⁵ The exact location of the Battle of Talas (怛羅斯會戰) has not been identified but it is generally believed to be near Taraz on the border of present day Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. See Bai Shouyi, ‘Cong Taluosi Zhanyi Shuodao Yisilanjiao Zhi Zuizao De Huawen Jilu’, in *Zhongguo Yisilanshi Cungao*, Bai shouyi (eds.), Ninxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1983, pp. 56-67.

Abbasid Caliphate to wish to encourage and facilitate it actively.

The Tang court's maritime policies effectively facilitated the trade connection between the China ports and the Persian Gulf. As noted in Chapter 1, the Tang court set up the Commission of Maritime Affairs for regulating the overseas trade first in Guangzhou as early as the 7th century, later extending its role to the other great Tang ports. The efforts that the Tang court made to ensure stability at its open ports, yet to guarantee a friendly environment for the overseas trade, are well documented. The custom regulations of the Tang court are detailed in Arab accounts. The procedure for the control of imports on the China coast is described in *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind* by Arab merchants as follows:

When the seamen come in from the sea, the Chinese seize their goods and put them in the [customs] sheds; there they guard them securely for [anything up to] six months, until the last seaman has come in. After that, three tenths of every consignment is taken as a duty, and the remainder is delivered to the merchants. Whatever the government requires, it takes at the highest price and pays for promptly and fairly.⁹⁶

That indicates how closely the overseas trade was regulated by the Tang court, and reflects the merchants' approval of the fair custom regulations set by the Chinese authority. There is an imperial decree issued by Tang Wenzong (唐文宗 r.827-840CE) in 834CE that gives details of the protection provided to the foreign merchants residing in the ports of Guangzhou, Fujian and Yangzhou, part of which reads:

南海番舶，本以慕化而来，固在接以仁恩，使其感悦...其岭南，福建及楊州番客，宜委節度觀察使常加存問。除舶脚，收市，进奉外，任其来往通流，自為交易，不得重加率税。(The foreign trading vessels came here [i.e., China ports] on account of its reputation, so [we] must receive [them] with kindness, make [them] feel pleasant...the governors should take good care of the foreign merchants in Guangzhou, Fujian and Yangzhou. Apart from the anchor duties, [the court] regulated market,⁹⁷ paying tributes [to the court], [the government] should allow them trading - buying and selling freely,

⁹⁶ *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind*, cit. in Hourani and Carswell, op. cit., p. 72.

⁹⁷ The court has the priority to buy highly desired items such as rhino horns.

must not impose heavy taxes [on them].⁹⁸

That is evidence of the Tang court's effort in supporting and promoting maritime trade, a policy that had been developed in early Tang times and was carried on throughout the lifetime of the Tang dynasty.

The fall of the Tang dynasty in the early 10th century did not result in the decline of foreign trade. Maritime trade continued to flourish under its Song successor because the Song rulers also had a sustained policy of support for overseas trade. This is evident in the official accounts that record in detail the regulation of maritime trade and the trade volumes.⁹⁹ During the Song period, the China ports continued as the preferred destination of trading vessels sailing from the Middle East. The collapse of the Siraf merchant network in the Persian Gulf in the late 10th century did not end the trade connection between China and the Muslim world. The Middle East terminus for trade with China and other parts of the east moved to Fatimid Cairo via the Red Sea in the later 10th and 11th centuries, and this trade, whether directly or indirectly, was to continue throughout Ayyubid and Mamlûk times. The Arab and Persian merchants were still very active in the ports of China during this time, as is evident from both Chinese and Arabic writings.¹⁰⁰

Marvazi, for example, gave detailed accounts of the custom regulations for foreign cargoes in the China ports in Song times, which indicated that the procedures for customs clearance still remained the same as those which had been explained in *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind*, as mentioned earlier, for the Tang period,. In addition, he also devoted some passages to describing in detail how well received the foreign merchants were in the ports of China. His remarks on the port of Guangzhou read: 'the people of this city are faithful, sure and truthful in speech...their king is kind to merchants and there is no oppression of anyone who enters his region'.¹⁰¹

It was the presence of such a welcome environment that enabled a large colony of foreign merchants, dominated by the Muslim traders, to coexist peacefully with the host society in

⁹⁸ Tang Wenzong, 'Taihe Banian Jiyu Dein' (834CE), in *Quan Tang Wen* (1808-1814), Dong Gao et al.(comp.), Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing,1983, vol.75, pp. 784-785.

⁹⁹ Tuo Tuo, *Song Shi*, op. cit., vol. 186, pp. 4541-4566. Song Lian, *Yuan Shi*, op. cit., vol. 94, pp. 2401-2403.

¹⁰⁰ Wu Zimu, 'Mengliang Lu'(Song), in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, vol. 12, pp. 590.102-590.104. Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou Ketan*, op. cit., pp.1038.290-1038.291. Also see R. Israeli, 'Medieval Muslim Travelers to China', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol.20, issue 2, 2000, pp. 313-321.

¹⁰¹ Marvazi, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

coastal China. Although some disruptive events took place in the China ports during Tang times, as noted in Chapter 1, that should not obscure the fact that the Tang authority set out to protect the interests of the foreign traders as well as its own interests. The Muslim diaspora continued to enjoy the hospitality of their hosts and to live in prosperity under the Song rule. Their wealth and the luxurious life that they led are noted in many texts.¹⁰² Most notably, these members of the Muslim diaspora were allowed to conduct their life, in accordance with Islamic norms, without much interference from the Chinese authority throughout the Tang and Song dynasties. This has been noted in both Chinese and Arab texts. In *Ting Shi* (程史), for example, Yue Ke gives explicit accounts of the luxurious house of a rich Arab merchant family named Pu (i.e., Abu) in Guangzhou. Yue Ke especially notes that there was no interference from the local authority in the extravagant life of the Abu family.¹⁰³ As mentioned earlier, there was a *qadi* or *fanzhang* appointed to deal with legal disputes among the Muslim diaspora of their own community, the *fanfang*. The Muslims were allowed by the Chinese authority to arrange separate burials in accordance with Muslim burial customs, as indicated in the *Burial Record of Quanzhou Foreign Merchants* (*Quanzhou Dongban Zang Fanshang Ji* 泉州東坂葬番商記) by Lin Zhiqi in the Song period. In his text, Lin Zhiqi reports that a member of the Muslim merchant community named Siraf (a probable indication of his ancestral origin), among the richest of the foreign merchants residing in Quanzhou, obtained a piece of land in the east of Quanzhou called Dongpan from the Chinese authority as a burial place for foreign merchants i.e., the Muslim burials.¹⁰⁴ The existence of a Muslim graveyard in Guangzhou was noted in a Song text as *fanren zhong* (番人冢), i.e., literally foreigner's graves.¹⁰⁵ There were also early Muslim cemeteries founded in other major ports like Yangzhou, Songjiang and Hangzhou.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the Muslim diaspora were also allowed to run their own school - the foreign school (*fanxue* 番學),¹⁰⁷ in such a way as to

¹⁰² Yue Ke, 'Ting Shi'(Song), in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, vol.11, p. 1039-487. Gu Yanwu, *Tianxia Junguo Libing Shu* (Ming Qing), vol.104, cit.in Zhang Xinlang, *Zhongxi Jiaotongshiliao Huibian*, op. cit., p. 298.

¹⁰³ Yue Ke, p. 1039-487.

¹⁰⁴ Lin Zhiqi, 'Zhuozai Wenji'(Song), in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, vol.15, p. 1140.490.

¹⁰⁵ Fang Xinru, 'Nanhai Baiyong ▪ Fanren Zhong' (Song), cit. in Lu Yun, 'Dui Guangzhou "Chongjian Haishengsi Zhi Jibei De Zaici Jiedu", *Gansu Minzhu Yanjiu*, vol. 2, 2011, p. 62. Also see Li Xinhua, 'Guangzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu', *Huizu Yanjiu*, vol. 2, 2011, p. 96.

¹⁰⁶ Records show that the Muslim burials in Hangzhou had formed as early as in the Song period. See Zhou Mi, 'Guixin Zashi', in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, Rev. and corr. ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, Shanghai, 1987, vol.30, p. 1040.75.

¹⁰⁷ *Fanxue*, literally means 'foreign school', but as the trading colony was dominated by the Muslim traders, this school, in a sense, is likely to have been a Muslim school, just as the term *fanfang*, the foreign quarter, sometimes refers to the Muslim quarter, or Muslim community. It first appeared in the official document,

allow the descendants of the Muslim diaspora to retain their own culture. Seen in this light, there was indeed a need for a communal place serving the purpose of worship of the Muslim community. That was the origin of the first mosques on the coasts of China.

The first Mosques of the Maritime Muslim Community of China

There is repeated mention in available records of mosques being founded with permission from the Chinese authorities during Tang times, but no actual surviving mosque in coastal China can be dated to earlier than the Song period. Following the formation of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China, it is logical that a communal place would have been established for the performance of religious practices, even if there were not purpose-built mosques in this early period. However, the lack of architectural remains and early documents makes it difficult to reconstruct the appearance of the first mosques of the Maritime Muslim community.

In the early period, when the Muslim community was relatively small, the performance of religious rituals may have just been carried out in any convenient place rather than any purpose-built structures, i.e., mosques. At that time, the Maritime Muslim community is likely to have consisted mainly of itinerant merchants who would spend some months in the ports of China doing businesses - both selling and buying - while waiting for the arrival of the Northeast monsoon to sail back to the Persian Gulf. Some existent structures may have been used as communal meeting places; these may also have functioned as mosques. There is, in fact, a Song text indicating that the private house of the *fanzhang*, i.e., the *qadi*, in Guangzhou *fanfang* functioned as a communal meeting place of the Muslim diaspora, as well as a place for performing communal prayers.¹⁰⁸

As is well-documented, a simple structure attached to the Prophet Muhammad's private house had served the Muslim community both as a communal meeting place and as a place for worship in the early years of Islam. This simple rectangular structure with an open courtyard, surrounded by colonnades of palm trunks covered with palm leaves, was the very first mosque of the world of Islam. This practical and functional approach might, logically,

Guangzhou Shibo Tiaofa, which was issued by the Song court in 1080, the first Trade law ever issued in Chinese history. Tuo Tuo, *Song Shi*, op. cit., vol.186, p. 4560. Also see Huang Wenkuan, 'Songdai Guangzhou Xiyu Yu Fanfang Kao', in *Guangzhou Wenshi*, p. 6, viewed on 20 January 2015,

http://www.gzxxws.gov.cn/gxsl/bngy/wjm/gm2000/201006/t20100602_18670_5.htm

Zhong Peilu and Liang Shuyan, 'Qiannian Fanfang Guta Youguang', in *Zhongguo Minzu Zongjiao Wang*, 6 August 2013, viewed on 20 January 2015,

<http://mzb.com.cn/html/Home/report/410453-1.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou Ke Tan*, op. cit., pp. 1038.290-1038.291.

also have been adopted by the early Muslim diaspora in coastal China. There are abundant records about another guest religion, Buddhism, in early Chinese texts that deal with the significance of organising the liturgical space. Had there been mosques of any significance built by the Maritime Muslims in coastal China at this early period, it is unlikely that there would be no mention of them in the early Chinese texts.

The earliest Chinese text showing knowledge of a mosque and Islamic rituals is found in Du Huan's *Jing Xing Ji*. As cited in Chapter 1, Du Huan describes the prayer hall as *litang*, i.e., assembly hall, and the minbar as *gaozhuo*, i.e., high chair.¹⁰⁹ Obviously Du Huan is providing a description of a Friday prayer that he witnessed first-hand in the Middle East, although the exact location of the congregation mosque mentioned in his work cannot be identified. While many early Chinese texts refer to the presence of Arab and Persian merchants in the ports of China, these are related to the business activities of those Muslim traders rather than their religious life. Yue Ke's observation of the religious practice of the Muslim diaspora in Guangzhou is, therefore, the earliest Chinese text that provides information specifically on the religious life of the Maritime Muslims. In his text, Yue Ke describes a place of worship of the Muslim diaspora in Guangzhou, noting, in particular, the liturgical differences from the Buddhist practice in China. It reads:

獠性尚鬼而好潔，平居終日，相與膜拜祈福。有堂焉，以祀名，如中國之佛而實無像設，稱謂聾牙亦莫能曉，竟不知何神也。堂中有碑，高袤數丈，上皆刻異書如篆籀，是為像主，拜者皆嚮之。(Liao [i.e., foreigners]¹¹⁰ believe in spirituals and like to be clean. [They] live in disciplines, and pray every day. There is a hall built for worship. [The rituals] looks similar to Chinese Buddhist rituals but without setting any idol [there], also the prayer [they perform] is incomprehensible, it is not known which divinity [they worship]. There is a stele over several zhang in height [i.e., over 3m height] with strange foreign scripts on it that are like [Ancient Chinese] seal scripts, [which] could be regarded as the idol [they worship]. They pray towards it [i.e., the stele].¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Du Huan, in *Tongdian*, op. cit., vol.193.

¹¹⁰ *Liao* in Chinese writings in this context means 'foreigner'-the foreign traders in coastal China often appeared in the Chinese writings as *hailiao* (海獠), maritime foreigners, i.e., foreign merchants in coastal China in this context.

¹¹¹ Yue Ke, *Ting Shi*, op. cit., vol. 31, p. 1039-487.

Yue Ke's text indicates that up until Southern Song times, Islam and the religious practice of the Muslim diaspora had not been fully recognized by the Chinese, or, at least, was little-known or little understood. This indicates that the Muslim diaspora still conducted their life separately from the Chinese at that time, with the business-orientated Muslim merchants appearing to have little involvement in the social and political life of the host society. This could account for the fact that the Chinese had not yet obtained a clear view of Islam and of the Islamic practices that had arrived in coastal China with the early Muslim traders at least three centuries earlier. That could help to explain the absence of early texts on the religious practice of the Maritime Muslims. During a period when the community was still small, the performance of Islamic religious practices may well have been organized in a relatively discreet manner, in private houses or any convenient place that did not attract comment from the Chinese.

The earliest specific Chinese account of a mosque in China is found in a text of 1350 in the inscription of *A Record of the Reconstruction of the Huaisheng Mosque* by Guo Jia, as noted in Chapter 1, in the form of a commemorative stele preserved in the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou. There are two other commemorative stelae apparently dated earlier than this Guangzhou stele of 1350. One is the stele with the inscription of *A Record of Erection of Qingzhen Si* (*Chuangjian Qingzhen Si Ji* 創建清真寺記) preserved in the Huajiue Mosque (化覺清真寺) in Xi'an and dated to 742 CE, but Chinese scholars who have examined the inscriptions have identified it as a fake Tang stele, probably of Ming date.¹¹² The authenticity of another stele with an inscription of *A Record of Re-erection of Libai Si* (*Chongjian Libai Si Ji* 重建禮拜寺記), preserved in the Dingzhou Mosque and dated to 1348, has recently been also questioned by Chinese scholars.¹¹³

Hence, the Guangzhou stele is generally accepted as the earliest genuine inscription specifically describing a mosque in China. In his inscription, Guo Jia mentions the founding of the Huaisheng Mosque in the Tang period in Guangzhou and hints Islam reached China by sea. He also refers to the visit of an Arab envoy to the Tang court and implies that it took place in the time of the Prophet Muhammad.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Chen Yuan, op. cit., p. 351. Feng Jinyuan, *Sanyuan Ji: Feng Jinyuan Zongjiao Xueshu Lunzhu Wenxuan*, Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, Beijing, 2002, pp. 262-264.

¹¹³ Lu Yun, op. cit., p. 64.

¹¹⁴ Guo Jia, op. cit., see the copy of full text in Appendix.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the inscription on the commemorative stele of 1507: *Re-erection of the Stele of Qingjing Mosque*, preserved in the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou is purported to be a copy of Wu Jian's *A Record of Qingjing Mosque (Qingjing Si Ji 清淨寺記)* of 1349.¹¹⁵ It states that the new stele was erected because of serious damages to the original stele of 1350 bearing Wu Jian's original inscription.¹¹⁶ However, the inscription on this 1507 stele contains different information from that in Wu Jian's paper manuscript. In particular, the passage specifically mentioning a *sahabat* (i.e., Companion of the Prophet) Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqâs who came by sea to Guangzhou and built a mosque named Huaisheng is not found in Wu Jian's paper manuscript, collected in *Min Shu*.¹¹⁷ Since, however, it is impossible to assess the accuracy of Wu Jian's copying of the inscription on the original stele, now lost, we cannot tell whether or not there was a mention of Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqâs in the original.

Regardless of the authenticity of these inscriptions, they provide little information on the architectural forms taken by the first mosques that were presumably founded during Tang times. If the earliest mosques of the Maritime Muslim community were merely functional and of little artistic significance, as was the case with the first mosques in the world of Islam, they could have been structures of any form, used to serve the religious needs of the community. Later, as the Maritime Muslim community grew much larger with a considerable number of settled traders, it is logical to expect that the mosques built by the community would reflect certain artistic expressions chosen by the Muslim diaspora.

One issue to resolve is whether these first mosques built by the Muslim diaspora in coastal China made use of the rich Chinese artistic forms or whether they incorporated any artistic tradition brought from home. Whereas the Chinese had well-developed artistic traditions long before the time of Islam, especially architectural traditions, it has been generally assumed that the Arabs of Arabia had very little artistic traditions of any significance, although it should be noted that some earlier cultures in the peninsula, such as those of the Nabateans and in southern Yemen, had, indeed, produced impressive architecture, both secular and religious, the latter including, for example, the Temple of the Moon at Ma'rib. A discussion of whether the apparent failure by Muslim Arabs to adopt or to adapt these forms because of their

¹¹⁵ Wu Jian, *op. cit.*, see the copy of full text in Appendix.

¹¹⁶ Wu Jian's paper manuscript dated to 1349, however, it states in the stele of 1507 that the original stele bearing Wu Jian's inscription is dated to 1350. It is either an error while making a copy of the stele, or the original stele was erected in 1350 after a year the paper inscription had been done. In this thesis, the date 1349 is used for the paper manuscript and the date 1350 for the original stele.

¹¹⁷ Wu Jian, *Qingjing Si Ji* (1349), in *Min Shu*, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, *cit.* in Feng Jinyuan, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-310. See the copy of full text in Appendix.

association with pre-Islamic cultures and religious practices is beyond the scope of this thesis.

However, within a very short time, as the new Muslim Caliphate expanded, it began to adopt the rich culture and traditions of those with whom it came into contact, such as the architectural vocabularies of the Byzantines and the artistic expressions of the Persians.

The military success of the expanding Arab empire in its foreign campaigns was followed by a flourishing of building activities and the formation and development of Islamic art and architecture in the lands that were formerly ruled by the Byzantines and the Sassanians of Persia. From the celebrated Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem to the Great Mosque of Damascus and the monumental mosques in the heartlands of the Abbasid Caliphate, they are celebrations of the dominance of the Muslim empire.¹¹⁸ Besides fulfilling the liturgical functions, the building of mosques now was also a statement of the power of the Caliphate. The growth of the importance of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China did not result from military campaigns but rather from the economic expansion of the Abbasid

Caliphate. Thus economic power of the Muslim diaspora in the ports of China found its expression in extravagant buildings, as indicated in the Chinese texts.¹¹⁹ As elsewhere in the Islamic lands, the building of mosques was no longer merely functional, in religious terms, but also could now be a way of expressing the confidence of the community, based on its well-secured economic power. Apart from the giant minaret known as Guangta (光塔 Fig.10) in the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou, discussed below, the mosques built by the Muslim diaspora in coastal China seem rarely to have been monumental in size. It is,



Fig.10. Guangta Minaret, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou

however, logical to assume that, even if they were not built on an impressive scale, they would, nonetheless, have had a distinct form based on the artistic traditions already

¹¹⁸ R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1999, pp. 12-16.

¹¹⁹ Yue Ke, *Ting Shi*, op. cit., p. 1039-487. Yue Ke gives detailed accounts of the luxurious private residential building of the Arab merchant of the Pu family.

developed at home, this providing a way for the Muslim diaspora to display their separate identity and their confidence as a community. Only at this stage did the Islamic practice of the Muslim diaspora begin to attract attention from Chinese scribes, who noted this imported architectural form and the liturgical and other differences in religious practices that remained totally alien to them, even though the Muslim diaspora still preserved their separate way of life without significant interference from their Chinese hosts.

It is possible, of course, that the first mosques built by the Muslim diaspora in coastal China could have taken a Chinese architectural form. Certainly the rich Chinese artistic traditions would have been available to the Maritime Muslims when they first felt the need to build their own mosques. Would they, however, have chosen to follow Chinese artistic traditions at the point when the building of mosques had become a way of projecting their own image? As discussed earlier, up to that time the Muslim diaspora had shown little desire to integrate into the host society, but had rather maintained strong ties with their Muslim Middle East countries of origin, trying to retain their own culture and customs. The connection between the Muslim diaspora and the Chinese at this stage appears to have been still primarily an economic one. There is no record of conversion of any Chinese to Islam, and there are only a very few cases of intermarriage between the Muslim merchants and the Chinese been recorded before the Yuan period.¹²⁰ Although we have records of the Pu (Abu) family dominating Quanzhou *shibo si* for three decades and of its activities in helping the Song government to put down the pirates,¹²¹ this involvement in state affairs could still have been seen as related to their own business interests, rather than as evidence of a desire to integrate with Chinese society.

Seen in this light, it appears more likely that the Muslim diaspora chose to follow the artistic traditions developed at home for their first mosques, those then representing an open statement of their attachment to their homeland, and as evidence of their confidence in the security that they enjoyed in their host country. This assumption receives further support from the earliest remains of mosques found in the great ports of China.

¹²⁰ There are two cases in the Song period recorded in Chinese texts, see Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou Ketan*, op. cit., pp.1038-293. Sang Yuan Zhi Zang, trans. Chen Yujing, *Pu Shougeng Kao*, Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1929, p. 49.

¹²¹ Huai Yinbu, *Quanzhou Fu Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 75, Chap. Shiyi, 36,37. It gives detailed records of the dominance of the Pu brothers (Pu Shougeng 蒲壽庚, Pu Shoucheng 蒲壽晟) during their terms of office in the Commission of Maritime Affairs in Quanzhou. Fang Ding, Zhu Shengyuan, et al., *Jinjiang Xian Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 15, p. 462. Also see the biography of Pu Shougeng in Sang Yang Zhi Zang's studies. Sang Yuan Zhi Zang, op. cit., pp. 141-151.

The Earliest Remains of Mosques in Coastal China

As has already been mentioned, although there is no firm evidence of it, the Chinese Maritime Muslim tradition insists that the Huaisheng Mosque, also known as Guangta mosque, is the earliest mosque in coastal China, having been founded by Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs with permission from the Tang authorities. Regardless of the truth of this Muslim tradition of the connection of the first mosque with Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, there are indications in the Chinese texts that the Huaisheng Mosque could, indeed, have been one of the first mosques of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China, even though, apart from the old minaret, the present structures of the Huaisheng Mosque are largely of Ming and Qing date. There are two issues that should be investigated and addressed - the foundation date of the present-day Huaisheng Mosque and the date of the oldest surviving remains. That could help us to determine whether the Huaisheng Mosque is, indeed, one of the oldest mosques in Guangzhou as suggested in the Chinese texts.

Thanks to its superior geographical location, large economic hinterland, plentiful material sources and advanced shipbuilding technology, Guangzhou, the first open Chinese port for overseas trade, had maintained its supremacy in the maritime trade, as the starting point of the trade route through the South China Sea. It also had a role as an entrepôt for about 2000 years.¹²² It is plausible that the very first mosque of the Maritime Muslims was founded in Guangzhou, since the flourishing port, known as Khanfu to the Muslims in early times, had been a port used by the Muslim traders since the Tang period. The Guangzhou *fanfang* had already grown very large by the 9th century, as noted in both Chinese and Arab texts, mentioned in Chapter 1.

The earliest specific mention of the Huaisheng Mosque is in the inscription on the Guangzhou stele of 1350. It thereafter appears repeatedly in the many later texts as discussed in Chapter 1. The inscription records the event of the rebuilding of the Huaisheng Mosque in 1350 after it was burnt down in 1343 for seven years. As cited earlier, Yue Ke's early text describes a prayer hall in Guangzhou but does not specify the existence of a mosque named Huaisheng as do later texts from the Ming period onwards. Apart from giving his observations on how the liturgical space was organized, and how the Islamic ritual was performed, he also describes a 'stupa' or 'pagoda' nearby as follows:

¹²² Yang Shiting, 'Two Topics in the Early Maritime Trade on the South China Sea', In *The Maritime Silk Route: 2000 Years of Trade on the South China Sea*, the Hong Kong Museum of History (comp., and eds.), the Urban Council of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1996, p. 27.

後有窳堵坡高入雲表，式度不比它塔，環以甃为大址，紊而增之，外圓而加灰飾，望之如銀筆。下有一門，拾級以上，由其中而圓轉焉如旋螺，外不復見其梯蹬，每数十级啓一竇。歲四五月舶將來，羣獠入于塔，出于竇，啁哳號呼，以祈南風，亦輒有驗。絕頂有金雞甚鉅，以代相輪，今亡其足。(Behind [the residence of the Pu family] there is a stūpa going high up to the sky, the form is not comparable with any other tower [i.e., pagoda]. [It] is round and built in bricks laying up from the base, the outer is plastered, which looks like a silver pen. There is an entrance lower [at the base], and there are spiral stairs inside turning every ten steps and leading up without being seen outside. Every year in April or May, [when] the trading vessels are about to come, the foreign merchants enter into the tower [i.e., the stūpa] and come through the stairs [to the top] praying tremulously for the South wind [i.e., Monsoon], also [the prayer] is always answered. There is a very big golden rooster on the top [of the stūpa] as a substitute of the sōrin [i.e., finial of the stūpa], today one foot [of the golden rooster] has gone missing).¹²³

Yue ke's description of a 'stūpa' of an unusual form would appear to refer to a minaret, an Islamic form of construction that was obviously not known to the Chinese at this time, further evidence that at this period religious practices of the Muslim diaspora still remained little-known to the Chinese. Indeed, many Buddhist terms were borrowed by the Chinese writers when describing the religious practice of the Muslim diaspora, since Buddhism had taken firm root in China, and was already familiar to the Chinese by Tang times.

In addition to Yue Ke's text, there is another Song text mentioning a *fanta*, i.e., literally a foreign tower or pagoda, and a prayer hall next to it in Guangzhou, written by his contemporary Fang Xinru. He writes:

番塔，始于唐時，曰懷聖塔。輪囷直上凡六百十五丈，絕無等級。其穎標一金雞，隨風南北。每歲五六月，夷人率以五鼓登其絕頂，叫佛號以祈風信。下有禮拜堂...《歷代沿革》載懷聖將軍所建，故今稱懷聖塔。([The] Fan tower [was] founded in the Tang time, called Huaisheng tower, [which was] hugely round going straight up to 615 zhang [i.e., ca.2049 m],¹²⁴ [was found] absolute no comparison. There was a

¹²³ Yue Ke, *Ting Shi*, op. cit., p. 1039-487.

¹²⁴ It has been suggested that the measurement unit should be chi (尺) instead of zhang(丈), also it should be 165 chi instead of 615 chi, then it is approximate 55m, which is still exaggerated, as the actual height of the minaret

golden rooster on the tip [of the tower] turning with the wind. Every year in May or June, the foreigners [i.e., foreign merchants] usually took five drums climbing to the top [of the tower], calling the name of Buddha [i.e., praying to God] for Monsoons. There was a prayer hall down under... The 'Dynastic Chronicle' recorded [it] was built by the Huaisheng General [i.e., *fanzhan* or *qadi*], so today it was called the Huaisheng tower.¹²⁵

Apparently, the tower- the 'stūpa' and the 'fanta', i.e., the 'pagoda', in this context- described in both texts is the same, having caught the eyes of both writers for its sheer size and unprecedentedly distinct form. Fang Xinru here shows even more limited knowledge than Yue Ke of the religious life of the Muslim diaspora in Guangzhou, which is reflected in the confusing use of Buddhist terms in his text. The event of praying for monsoons is mentioned in both texts but, if the two writers observed the practice at different times, this could refer to the Call to Prayer or the event of the Sighting of the Crescent moon that marks the beginning of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Both writers, however, may be correct in associating the golden rooster with the observation of the wind direction. It was vital for the maritime merchants to know this correctly for their voyages, so the design of the finial might have had a practical purpose, as a device of weathervane for indicating wind direction. This golden rooster mentioned by the Song writers was evidently a weathercock.

Despite the confusion in both texts, it is clear that there was a mosque of some significance consisting of a prayer hall and a minaret in the Guangzhou *fanfang* in the Song period. Although Fang Xinru only mentions a prayer hall without going into details, Yue Ke's description of the interior of a hall for worship is clearly a prayer hall of a mosque, and the 'stūpa' of an unusual shape nearby is likely, therefore, to have been a minaret. Yue Ke's text also provides us useful information on the location of the mosque, which is adjacent to or perhaps within the compound of the luxurious private residence of the Pu family. He mentions that the location of the minaret is behind the residence of the Pu, perhaps indicating a connection between the founding of the mosque and the wealthy Pu family. Fang's text does not indicate the location of the mosque but specifies the minaret is named Huaisheng

is about 36m. See Bai Shouyi, 'Ba "Chongjian Huaishengsi Ji"', in *Zhongguo Yisilanshi Cungao*, Bai shouyi (eds.), Ninxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1983, p. 329. This is discussed further in chapter 7.

¹²⁵ Fang Xinru, 'Nanhai Baiyong ▪ Fanta' (Song), in *Zhongguo Nanfang Huizu Qingzhen Si Ziliao Huibian*, Chen Leji et al. (comp.), Guizhou Renmin Chubanshe, Guiyang, 2004, p. 17.

after its founder, the ‘Huaisheng General’. Historical records show that the prominent *fanzhang*- i.e., *qadi*- of the *fanfang* had sometimes been given by the Chinese authorities the honorary title of ‘General’ of certain ranks, such as Ningyuan General (寧遠將軍), Huaihua General (懷化將軍), Guide General (歸德將軍),¹²⁶ since the time when the Maritime Muslim community had grown very large. The *fanzhang* or *qadi* had become a very influential figure because of their wealth and the authority given to them by the Chinese government. The ‘Huaisheng General’ named at Fang Xinru’s text could have been one of the members of the Pu family mentioned in Yue Ke’s text, who held the *Fanzhang* position in Guangzhou *fanfang* at that time. Originally from one of the ports of Arabia, the merchant family of Pu (Abu) is said to have come to Guangzhou via Champa sometime perhaps in the Song period.¹²⁷ They soon became an extremely wealthy and influential family in the Guangzhou *fanfang*, holding the position of *Fanzhang* at times.¹²⁸ It has been suggested that the pre-eminent Pu family of the late Song and Yuan period in another great port, Quanzhou, mentioned earlier, was a branch of the Pu family in Guangzhou.¹²⁹ The connection of the Guangta minaret and the Huaisheng Mosque with the Pu family was first suggested by Sang Yuan Zhi Zang.¹³⁰ It was supported by Bai Shouyi, thereby rejecting the Muslim tradition of attributing the Huaisheng Mosque to Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqâs.¹³¹ Recent studies, however, propose a link between another leading merchant with the founding of the Guangta. Recorded in Chinese text as Xinyatuoluo (辛押陀羅) of Oman origin, he took the *fanzhang* position during the Xining reign period (熙寧年 1068-1077), and was also given the General title by the Chinese authority of Guide General.¹³² This may suggest a possible date for the Guangta, as noted below.

If we compare the Guangta in the present-day Huaisheng Mosque with the descriptions of a minaret in both Song texts, apart from the finial, we can see the similarities in terms of architectural form and building materials (this is discussed further in Chapter 7). The golden rooster, which is described in the Song texts and also in Guo Jia’s commemorative stele of

¹²⁶ Wang Pu, *Tang Huiyao*, op. cit., vol. 100, p. 152

¹²⁷ Chanpa was an ancient kingdom covering the area of modern day central and southern Vietnam. Its coasts had been frequented by Muslim traders since the Tang period, thanks to the flourishing Indian Ocean trade.

¹²⁸ Yue Ke, *Ting Shi*, op. cit., p. 1039-487. Sang Yuan Zhi Zang, op. cit., pp. 114-115

¹²⁹ Sang Yuan Zhi Zang, pp. 115-116.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 115.

¹³¹ Bai Shouyi, ‘Ba "Chongjian Huaishengsi Ji"’, op. cit., pp. 329, 338.

¹³² Liu Youyan, ‘Guangzhou Huaisheng Ta Jianzhao Niandai Yanjiu’, in *Huizu Yanjiu*, vol. 2, 2009, p. 121.

1350, is said to have been destroyed by a strong gale in the Ming period.¹³³ During the Qing period, there were several attempts to restore it to its original form, but it was again destroyed by strong winds. The finial seen today, in the form of an onion bulb or candle, is a modern addition dating to the Republican period.¹³⁴ Fang Xinru's text clearly exaggerates the height of the minaret. Perhaps he was overwhelmed by its sheer size, apart from its distinct form. Studies have confirmed that the quarter of Guangzhou where the present-day Huaisheng Mosque and Guangta stand was the site of the center of the original Guangzhou *fanfang*.¹³⁵ Seen in this light, it is reasonable to assume that the Huaisheng Mosque mentioned in the Chinese texts was founded by a member of one of the pre-eminent Muslim merchant families, perhaps while the person concerned was serving as *fanzhang*, and that it was on the site of the present-day Huaisheng Mosque.

The date and the identity of the founder of the Guangta minaret have been issues that have much scholarly debates. Archaeological studies of the base of the minaret indicate that the bricks used are of Tang date, while the base itself is located on a Tang culture layer,¹³⁶ this having been interpreted by some scholars as supporting evidence for the long existing Muslim tradition that the minaret itself dates to the Tang period.¹³⁷ However, even if the dating ascribed to the bricks by the archaeological studies is correct, it is possible that there was some re-use of available building materials. This had been a common practice in the world of Islam, we often see, for example, columns taken from the ruins of the Roman temples or Christian churches were re-used for Islamic buildings, especially in the early Islamic period. Alternatively, some early structures may have been present on the site before the construction of the Guangta in its present form. If the minaret described by the Song writers or the Guangta seen today was built before the Song period, it would seem surprising, giving its impressive scale and distinct architectural form, that there is no reference to it in earlier texts from both the Arab and Chinese sides. Even though the Chinese might have had

¹³³ Ruan Yuan et al., *Guangdong Tong Zhi* (1864 ed.), Shangwu Yinshu Guan, Shanghai, 1934, vol. 65, p. 182.

¹³⁴ The restorations of the Guangta were recorded mostly on stelae preserved in the Huaisheng Mosque; also see Chen Leji et al., op. cit., pp. 6-15, and Liu Zhiping, op. cit., p. 13.

¹³⁵ This subject has been well studied by Chinese scholars, and it is generally agreed that the vicinity of the Guangta minaret had been the centre of the Guangzhou *fanfang* in Tang and Song times. See Huang Wenkuan, op. cit., p. 3. Zhang Xiaoxi, 'Tangdai Guangzhou Fanfang Yu Difang Jingmao Guanxi Zhi Yanjiu' (2005), in *Hailiang Wendang*, p. 9, viewed 19 January 2015, <http://max.book118.com/html/2014/0731/9255300.shtml>

¹³⁶ Chinese archaeologists are said to have investigated the building materials of the minaret. Details of their results are not very clear since there is no archaeological report available but they are mentioned in Chen Leji, op. cit., p. 4.

¹³⁷ Liu Youyan listed the studies that support the theory of dating the Guangta to the Tang period; see Liu Youyan, op. cit., p. 111.

very limited knowledge of the religious life of the Muslim diaspora, one would expect such an eye-catching structure to have attracted comment from the Chinese writers, as it did for these Song writers.

As cited in Chapter 1, there are Arab texts of the mid-9th century in *Akhbar al-Sin w-al Hind*, and of the early 12th century by Al-Marvazi that contain notes on the Guangzhou *fanfang*. The former, in particular, notes that there was a Sheikh and a mosque in the Guangzhou *fanfang*, and that the *qadi* attended the communal prayers in different days of the week.¹³⁸ There is, however, no further comment on the architectural form of the mosque, which hints that it may have been only a simple functional structure. It is unlikely that, if such a large minaret was already present, it would have escaped the notice of those travellers. Moreover, since the form of the minaret is not related to any Chinese artistic tradition, it is logical that it is a form imported from the Islamic lands, where, indeed, such forms are known. According to Creswell's studies of the evolution of the minaret,¹³⁹ the first appearance of such cylindrical tower-shaped minarets is some time after the Tang period. The insistence in Chinese Muslim tradition that the Guangta was built in the Tang period, therefore, obviously does not fit the chronology of the evolution of the minaret in the world of Islam.

It is, of course, plausible that the Huaisheng Mosque was first founded before Song times, but was then a simply functional structure, including its minaret, if there was one. It could be the mosque recorded in *Akhbar al-Sin w-al Hind* as above. It is also possible that the prayer hall and the minaret described in the Song texts might have been built on an older foundation on the same site. If we read Fang Xinru's text carefully, we see that he does mention the date but in a rather ambiguous way. He starts his account with '*Fanta shiyu tangshi*', which literally reads 'Fanta started in Tang times', but at the end of his text, he recounts that the Huaisheng General built the minaret, without specifying the term of office of this particular *fanzhang*. Hence, Fang's text could be read as stating that the date of foundation of the minaret was in Tang times, and that the minaret that he sighted was built by the Huaisheng General, at an unspecified date. This suggests the possibility of the existence of an earlier structure on the same site. Yue Ke's text specifies neither the date when the mosque or the minaret was built. However, Yue Ke, writing later as an adult, does tell us that he first saw them in 1192 when he was still a child. If, therefore, the Guangta is the minaret mentioned in the Song texts, it

¹³⁸ *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind*, cit. in Zhang Xinlang, *Zhong Xi Jiao Tong Shi Liao Hui Bian*, op. cit., p. 201.

¹³⁹ K.A.C. Creswell, *The Evolution of the Minaret: with Special Reference to Egypt*, Burlington Magazine, London, 1926, pp. 11-13.

was certainly already in existence by 1192. This is consistent with the development of the minaret in the world of Islam, as this cylindrical freestanding type of minaret was recorded to have started appearing in the central and Eastern Islam lands, especially, in the Iranian regions from the 11th century onwards. There are a number of surviving early examples, such as the minaret of Damghan of the mid-11th century in northern Iran, and the Sarban Minaret of mid-12th century in Isfahan.¹⁴⁰

However, recent studies of the literature have revealed two poems, by a Song poet Guo Xiangzheng (郭祥正, 1035-1113), that clearly refer to the *fanta*, i.e., the Guangta minaret, although they do not give as much detailed descriptions as the texts by the other Song writers mentioned above. Both poems have been dated to 1088.¹⁴¹ Chinese scholars who have studied them consider the poems to be authentic.¹⁴² If this is, indeed, the case, the Guangta minaret would appear to have been built at least by 1088. This would not conflict with the date of the first appearance of the freestanding cylindrical minaret of Persian type, even though the majority of the surviving examples of this type have been dated to the 12th century (which is further discussed in Chapter 7). Based on these evidence in these poems, a date of between 1069 and 1072 for the Guangta minaret has now been proposed. This suggestion would be consistent with the evident new construction in Guangzhou at this period, as well as with the activities of the merchant of Omani origin, Xinyatuoluo who, as mentioned above, has been suggested as the person who ordered the minaret's construction. Xinyatuoluo is recorded in Chinese texts as having been the *fanzhang* in Guangzhou during these years, and left for home in Arabia in 1072.¹⁴³

This suggestion is not implausible. However, in the Song records of the foreign merchants in the Chinese ports, there is no shortage of descriptions of the wealth and luxurious life of the Persian and Arab merchants in Guangzhou.¹⁴⁴ Xinyatuoluo could not, therefore, have been

¹⁴⁰ The date of Damghan minaret is after Ettinghausen, Grabar et al., see R. Ettinghausen, O. Grabar, and M. Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., London, 2001, p.151. The date of Sarban minaret is after Fatema AlSulaiti, 'the Style and Regional Differences of Seljuk Minarets in Persia', in *Ancient History Encyclopaedia*, 30 January 2013, viewed on 24 December 2014, <http://www.ancient.eu/article/484/>

And more examples of Persian minarets of the cylindrical type given in Creswell, see Creswell, op. cit., p.12.

¹⁴¹ Song Xin, 'Xiaoyi Guangzhou Huaisheng Guangtasi Chuchuang Niandai', *Shijie Zongjiao Wenhua*, vol.1, 2007, p. 43. Liu Youyan, op. cit., p. 113. Chen Zehong, 'Guangzhou Huaishengsi Guangta Jianzhu Niandai Kao'. *Lingnan Wenshi*, vol. 4, 2002, p. 43.

¹⁴² Liu Youyuan, p. 113.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 121-123.

¹⁴⁴ In his essay on *Pu Shougeng Kao*, Sang Yan Zhi Zang extracts many Song texts referring the wealth of the Muslim merchants in the China ports, see Sang Yan Zhi Zang, op. cit., pp. 70-73.

the only Muslim merchant in Guangzhou in the Song period capable of founding the Guangta minaret, even taking into account the wealth and power he would have derived from his position as *fanzhang*. This position may, however, have accounted for the fact that he received more notice in Chinese records than any other Muslim merchant. Any of those who are described in the Song texts as being extremely wealthy merchants could have sponsored the construction of a minaret of a significant scale. Furthermore, while the discovery of these two poems does provide crucial information on the date of the minaret, they do not rule out the possibility of an association between the Pu family with the Guangta and the Huaisheng Mosque. Neither poem makes any reference to a specific person or family linked to the minaret as do the texts of Yue Ke and even Fan Xinru.

There is, moreover, no reliable record providing information on when the Pu family first arrived in Guangzhou, subsequently settling there. Yue Ke reports that the family was originally from Champa (although presumably they had arrived there from some port-city in the Middle East),¹⁴⁵ and had come to Guangzhou initially to trade, then deciding to settle there. He then says ‘*suiyijiu, dingju chezhong...*’ (歲益久，定居城中...), i.e., literally, after very long time, settled in the city.¹⁴⁶ This may suggest that the family had been settled in Guangzhou for generations by Yue Ke’s time. It is, therefore, possible that the Pu family had already arrived in Guangzhou in early Song times, if not earlier, since records show Guangzhou had been frequented by the Arab and Persian traders since mid-Tang times, as noted in Chapter 1.

Providing Guo Xiangzheng’s poems are genuine and the date ascribed to them is accurate, the Guangta minaret can be safely dated to the Northern Song period no later than 1088. Based on Yue Ke’s texts, it is highly plausible that the Pu family had a connection with it.

The minaret and the mosque described in Yue Ke and Fan Xinru’s texts may have well been built at the same time, but perhaps replacing an older foundation, as mentioned above. The textual sources are not enough for us to re-construct the mosque in its original form, but Yue Ke’s description of the compound of the Pu family,¹⁴⁷ where the *tang*, i.e., prayer hall, and the *ta*, i.e., minaret, were located, does hint that the layout of the mosque may not have followed the traditions of Chinese architecture. The minaret that is still standing suggests that

¹⁴⁵ Sang Yuan Zhi Zang has pointed out the family had been likely Arab diaspora in Champa before came to Guangzhou. See Sang Yuan Zhi Zang, op., cit., p. 115.

¹⁴⁶ Yue Ke, op., cit., p. 1039-487.

¹⁴⁷ Yue Ke, op. cit., p. 1039-487.

the original mosque as a whole is likely to have been of an architectural form imported from the Islamic lands of Arabia and the wider Middle East. It would then have represented an open display of the wealth and power of the prominent Muslim merchant family that was associated with the mosque.

As to the relation between the mosque described by the Song writers here and the Huaisheng Mosque mentioned in the Guangzhou stele of 1350 and the subsequent texts from the Ming period, there has been considerable debate. A new study of the Guangzhou stele re-examined the inscription, especially the Arabic inscription recovered in recent years that is said to be a rubbed copy from the original stele,¹⁴⁸ which reveals the name of the mosque in Arabic. It reads: Almasjid Aljamei Alkareem Alssahabi (المسجد الجامع الكريم الصحابي), i.e., the great Jami mosque of Ashab. This provides us very important information that may help to clarify some confusion existed since long in the Chinese Muslim traditions as well as the studies of the history of Islam in China.

Firstly, we learnt that the mosque was a Jami mosque i.e., congregation mosque, or mosque used for Friday communal prayer. Secondly, the Arabic name of the Huaisheng Mosque is given as Ashab, which may have well been the original name from its date of foundation. Thus, it shared the same name with the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, as discussed below. Since the Arabic word Ashab means companion, this may have been responsible for the confusion that grew up in Chinese Muslim tradition about the founder of the Huaisheng Mosque. While there has not been any confusion over the identity of the founder, being Muslim merchants, in the case of the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, it appears always to have been understood that it was founded by Muslim merchants. In the case of Guangzhou, however, it would seem that the local Muslim community interpreted ‘Ashab’ here as the Companion (of the Prophet), thus providing the source for the Muslim tradition that developed from the Ming period onwards, which, as already noted in Chapter 1, insists that the Huaisheng Mosque was founded by the Companion, Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqâs as early as the time of the Prophet.

The recovery of the Arabic inscription from the Guangzhou stele enables us to compare the available Chinese translation. A new study suggests that there are some errors in this Chinese

¹⁴⁸ As noted in Chapter 1, the original stele with both Arabic and Chinese inscriptions was damaged in the Cultural Revolution. The Arabic inscription (which was not available to me during fieldwork) was omitted in the copy of the stele displayed in the Huaisheng Mosque today. See Lu Yun, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

translation as well as in original readings of the text.¹⁴⁹ The Arabic name of the mosque ‘Ashab’, for example, has been translated as *xianxian* (先賢), i.e., great worthy, this perhaps having been influenced by the same Muslim tradition of associating Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqâs with the founding of the mosque. He had been respected by the Maritime Muslims as a great worthy since the legend that he had arrived in China as a missionary sent by the Prophet had become established, as noted in Chapter 1. His alleged tomb in Guangzhou was, therefore, named Xianxian Gumu (先賢古墓), i.e., the ancient tomb of great worthy. The Huaisheng Mosque, founded by an as-yet unidentified prominent Muslim merchant and originally named the Ashab mosque, is likely to have been the mosque seen by the Song writers. As is the case with the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, there was initially no further aspect to the meaning of this original name, this having been added later in Chinese Muslim traditions.

The origin of the name Huaisheng Si has also been much debated. As noted in Chapter 1, it first appeared in the Chinese inscription on the Guangzhou stele of 1350 by Guo Jia. There have been many interpretations of the origins of this name and its meaning in this context.¹⁵⁰ The word ‘Huaisheng’ literally means ‘commemorating sage’. There have been two interpretations, one of which says that it means ‘commemorating the Companion’, Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqâs, again going back to the Muslim tradition of association of Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqâs with the founding of the mosque. Another interpretation is as ‘commemorating the Prophet’, which is mainly based on Guo Jia’s inscription on the stele saying: the mosque is named Huaisheng, the founder of Western religion, i.e., Islam, (*si yue huaisheng, xijiao zhi zong* 寺曰懷聖，西教之宗).¹⁵¹ Comparing these two interpretations, the latter seems more convincing. It is noteworthy that in Chinese texts, especially referring to Confucianism and Daoism, the terms ‘sheng’, i.e., sage and ‘xian’, i.e., worthy, are carefully applied, Confucius, for example, has been referred to as sage, but Mencius as worthy.¹⁵² This was evidently adopted by Chinese Muslims in distinguishing between the Prophet and the Companions. Thus, the Prophet appears in Chinese Islamic texts as sage, the Companions as worthies.¹⁵³ Hence, the ‘Huaisheng’ here should read as ‘commemorating the Prophet’, if it meant to carry a commemorative message, since Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqâs has been clearly referred to as *xian*, a worthy in Chinese Islamic texts as well as referred in those oral Muslim traditions, as

¹⁴⁹ Lu Yun, op., cit., p. 62.

¹⁵⁰ Li Xinhua has summarised the interpretations in recent years. See Li Xinhua, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁵² Mencius, a 4th century BCE philosopher who is the best known Confucian after Confucius himself.

¹⁵³ S. Murata, op. cit., p. 366.

mentioned above.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that the name refers to the founder of the Guangta, and the mosque, the ‘Huaisheng General’ mentioned in Fan Xinru’s text.¹⁵⁴ This would mean that the term is simply a name, with no attached implication of the value or worthiness of the person concerned.

However, there is an obvious confusion in Fan’s text. As noted earlier, the *fanzhang* or leader of the Muslim merchant community, was sometimes given one of certain ranks of a General, distinguished in the name of the title, such as Guide, Huaihua, mentioned earlier. However, no title of Huaisheng is known. It is possible that Fan Xinru may have made an error in his citation of historical sources or that the sources themselves were inaccurate.

Fan’s text does, however, hint that the mosque may have appeared in Chinese records as the Huaisheng Si by Fan Xinru’s time, even if this term was not yet used by the Muslims themselves, since if the minaret was recorded as Huaisheng Ta, it is logical to assume the mosque would have been known as Huaisheng Si. It is unlikely that the mosque, as some suggested, would have been named after the minaret. As noted earlier, the Guangta minaret and the mosque described by Yue Ke may have well been built on an older foundation, so any earlier mosque may not have had an associated minaret.

Whatever any meaning of the name ‘Huaisheng’, it is evident that the Chinese name ‘Huaisheng Si’ was used by the Maritime Muslim community, alongside the Arabic name ‘Ashab’, by the time of Guo Jia, since Guo Jia’s inscription on the stele clearly says that a signboard bearing the character ‘Huaisheng’ was discovered in the burned down ruins. This is, perhaps, not surprising, since it was around this time that the Maritime Muslim community began to become integrated into Chinese society, adopting Chinese culture and way of life while retaining its religious identity (which is discussed in Chapter 3 and 4).

Although the date of the first foundation of the Huaisheng Mosque still cannot be determined, we can conclude that the Huaisheng Mosque recorded in Chinese texts, was one of the first mosques founded by the Maritime Muslims. It is clear that its minaret, the Guangta, one of the few remaining early Islamic buildings in coastal China, is also the only surviving minaret built by the Muslim diaspora during the Song period.

¹⁵⁴ Lu Xinhua, op., cit., p. 91

Another early Islamic building in coastal China is found in Quanzhou, another great Tang port known as Zaitun to the Muslims in early times. Located on the Jinjiang River and close to the sea, Quanzhou is a natural stopping place for trading vessels between Guangzhou and the ports in the lower Yangtze River like Yangzhou and Hangzhou. Quanzhou reached its zenith as one of the major ports for maritime trade by the Southern Song period, at times even overtaking Guangzhou, and it remained a leading centre for overseas trade until the late Yuan period. The Quanzhou *fanfang*, dominated by Muslim merchants, had grown very large by the Song period, as is recorded in both Arab and Chinese texts. It is in this context that the mosques of some artistic significance should be expected to have existed in Quanzhou. Textual sources and archaeological discoveries indicate, indeed, that several mosques had been founded by the wealthy Muslim merchants in Quanzhou by the Song period.¹⁵⁵ Today, however, the only surviving mosque is the Ashab Mosque, which is the earliest Islamic architectural remains found in coastal China.



Fig.11. Foundation inscription, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

The Ashab Mosque is also the only surviving old mosque in coastal China that has retained the foundation inscription giving the date of the mosque. Today the stone slabs bearing the Arabic inscription can still be seen on the northern wall of the entrance passage facing the courtyard (Fig.11). It reads:

This is the first mosque here, and this oldest holy mosque is named Ashab Mosque. It was founded in 400AH [1009-1010CE]. Three hundred years later, Ahmed bin Muhammad Quds, the well-known Haji Rukah from Shiraz, rebuilt and renovated it. A magnificent entrance portal with vaults and broad passage was built, and new doors

¹⁵⁵ Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, 'Quanzhou Qinzhen Shi Ji Xinkao', in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, pp. 103-111.

and windows were installed. The renovation was completed in 710 AH [1310-1311CE].¹⁵⁶

Despite the presence of the foundation inscription, there has long been debate over the foundation date of the Ashab Mosque. There is no doubt about the genuineness of the inscription, since the stone slabs on which it is inscribed show no sign of being relocated at any later time but are an original integral part of the wall. In addition, the inscription appears in the same style as the Quranic inscription bands running along the walls of the portal and the prayer hall. The inscriptions are beautifully written in a type of cursive script known as *thuluth* that is said to have started developing in the 10th century, thereafter becoming a popular calligraphic style in the Arab and wider Islamic world.¹⁵⁷

The Ashab Mosque was for a long time known as the Qingjing Mosque because of the information given in the inscription on the stele: *Re-erection of the Stele of Qingjing Mosque* that is preserved in the Ashab Mosque, as noted earlier. The confusion arose when the Arabic foundation inscription was first published in 1911, providing the actual name and the foundation date of the mosque, since the Arabic and Chinese inscriptions provide different information on the date and founder of the mosque. The inscription on the stele states that the Qingjing Mosque was founded in 1131 in the south of the city of Quanzhou by a Persian merchant from Siraf, and was rebuilt in 1349, on the initiative of and supervised by Sheikh Burhan al-Din and Sharif al-Din and sponsored by Ali.¹⁵⁸

Since both inscriptions regarding the founding of the mosque appear to be genuine, debate has focused on whether there were two different mosques founded at different times by different people, or whether they refer to a single mosque that is given different names in the Arab and Chinese inscriptions. The stele of 1507 in the Ashab Mosque is purported to be a copy of Wu Jian's *A Record of Qingjing Mosque* of 1349. As noted earlier, the inscription on the stele with regard to some passages is different from Wu Jian's paper manuscript. However, the passage on the stele and in the manuscript recording the founding and rebuilding of the Qingjing Mosque are identical. Ibn Battuta gives an account of the wealthy Muslim merchants whom he met in Quanzhou, during his visit in 1345, one of them is Sharif

¹⁵⁶ The inscription has been read by several Islamic scholars since Max van Berchem has read and first published in 1911, see Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, op. cit., pp. 104-105. My reading and translation is with reference to the latest reading by Chen Dasheng in 1982, see Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, p. 105.

¹⁵⁷ E. J. Grube, *The World of Islam*, Paul Hamlyn, London, 1966, pp. 11-12.

¹⁵⁸ The stele of 1507 after Wu Jian, op. cit.

ad-Din of Tabriz. He also was introduced to one of the eminent sheikhs, Sheikh Burhan ad-Din from Kāzarūn.¹⁵⁹ These two named by him have been identified as the same persons as those mentioned in Wu Jian's inscription.¹⁶⁰ Ibn Battuta also mentions that Sheikh Burhan ad-Din 'has a hermitage outside the town, and it is to him that the merchants pay the sums they vow to Shaykh Abu Ishaq of Kazarun'.¹⁶¹ The biography of Sheikh Burhan al-Din in *Quanzhou Fu Zhi* says that he was originally from Kāzarūn, and he came to Quanzhou with merchants. He lived in Paipu Street, and it is stated that he was asked to be the imam of the old mosque there.¹⁶² Paipu Street was at that time outside of the city to its south, so all the texts independently support each other. Hence, the information on Qingjing Mosque given in Wu Jian's manuscript of 1349 should be regarded as accurate.

As a result, some scholars have concluded that the Ashab mosque is, in fact, the Qingjing Mosque recorded in Wu Jian's inscription, regardless of the information contained in the Arabic inscription. One explanation of the difference is that the Chinese stele and the Arabic inscription record different phases of the rebuilding of the mosque or reflect a different viewpoint in recording the historical phases of the mosque.¹⁶³ In other words, the mosque was first founded in 1009, but was demolished and was then rebuilt several times on several occasions, this accounting for the different dates in the Arabic and Chinese inscriptions. This explanation is not very convincing, since both the Arabic and Chinese inscriptions recount explicitly the foundation and renovation dates and who founded and renovated the mosque. It is quite clear, therefore, that the inscriptions give accounts of two different mosques, founded at different times, by different people.

The fact that both inscriptions give the same name of the mosque is not an issue here, as Qingjing Si could simply be any mosque. Up until Yuan times, a specific term for Islam had not been introduced into Chinese texts.¹⁶⁴ Islam is sometimes referred to in early Chinese writings as Qingjing Jiao, i.e., Qingjing religion, thus Qingjing Si for a mosque. Thus the

¹⁵⁹ Muḥammad ibn Abd Allah Ibn Battuta, trans. and sel. by H. A. R. Gibb, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*. George Routledge, London, 1929. p. 288.

¹⁶⁰ Zhang Xinglang, 'Quanzhou Fanggu Ji', in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, op., p. 8.

¹⁶¹ Ibn Battuta, and Gibb, op. cit., p. 288.

¹⁶² Huai Yinbu, *Quanzhou Fu Zhi*, op. cit., vol.75, Chap. Shiyi, 39.

¹⁶³ Zhuang Weiji, *Quanzhou Qingjing Si De Lishi Wenti*, in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, p. 66.

¹⁶⁴ Bai Shouyi, 'Yuandai Huijiaoren Yu Huijiao', in *Zhongguo Yisilanshi Cungao*, Bai shouyi (eds.), Ninxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1983, p. 208. Chen Yuan, op. cit., p. 358.

mosque recorded by Wu Jian was not necessarily named the Qingjing Mosque; it may have had a specific Arabic name. It is known that some old mosques built by the Muslim diaspora had Arabic names from their foundation date like the Ashab Mosque but were often later given Chinese names from the Ming period onwards by the Chinese Muslims who had become 'Sinicized'. Some later Chinese texts also refer to some mosques simply with a generic term. However, whatever the original Arab name of the Qingjing Mosque referred in Wu Jian's inscription may have been, it is clear that it cannot have been the Ashab Mosque, since Wu Jian does not only specifies the date and the founder, but also gives account of its location. His inscription states that the Qingjing mosque that he mentions was located to the south of the city, outside of the former southern gate of the city, while the Ashab Mosque is in Tonghuai Street in the southeast of the city, within its old boundaries.

Hence, it is clearly wrong to regard the Ashab Mosque as the one referred to as the Qingjing Mosque in Wu Jian's inscription. The issue is when and how the Ashab Mosque came to be called the Qingjing Mosque. According to historical records, there were serious Muslim conflicts in Quanzhou in the late Yuan period that lasted a decade, resulting in the destruction of many mosques.¹⁶⁵ It is not clear why the Ashab Mosque is the only mosque that appears to have survived from the destruction, when all other mosques in the city were reportedly destroyed. This period was followed by chaotic times of the dynastic change from Yuan to Ming, during which many of the members of the Muslim diaspora left for their original homeland, the Middle East. The Muslims who remained, mainly the descendants of intermarriage between the members of the Muslim diaspora and the local Chinese, also left the city for remote places, fearing possible persecution by the newly founded Ming authority.¹⁶⁶ When the stele of *A Record of Qingjing Mosque* was re-erected in 1507, due to the stated serious damage to the Wu Jian's original stele of 1350, the new generation of those remaining Muslims who had resettled in the city had been Sinicized, and lost their Arab roots, including the language.¹⁶⁷ That could help to explain why the foundation inscription had ever since been virtually ignored.

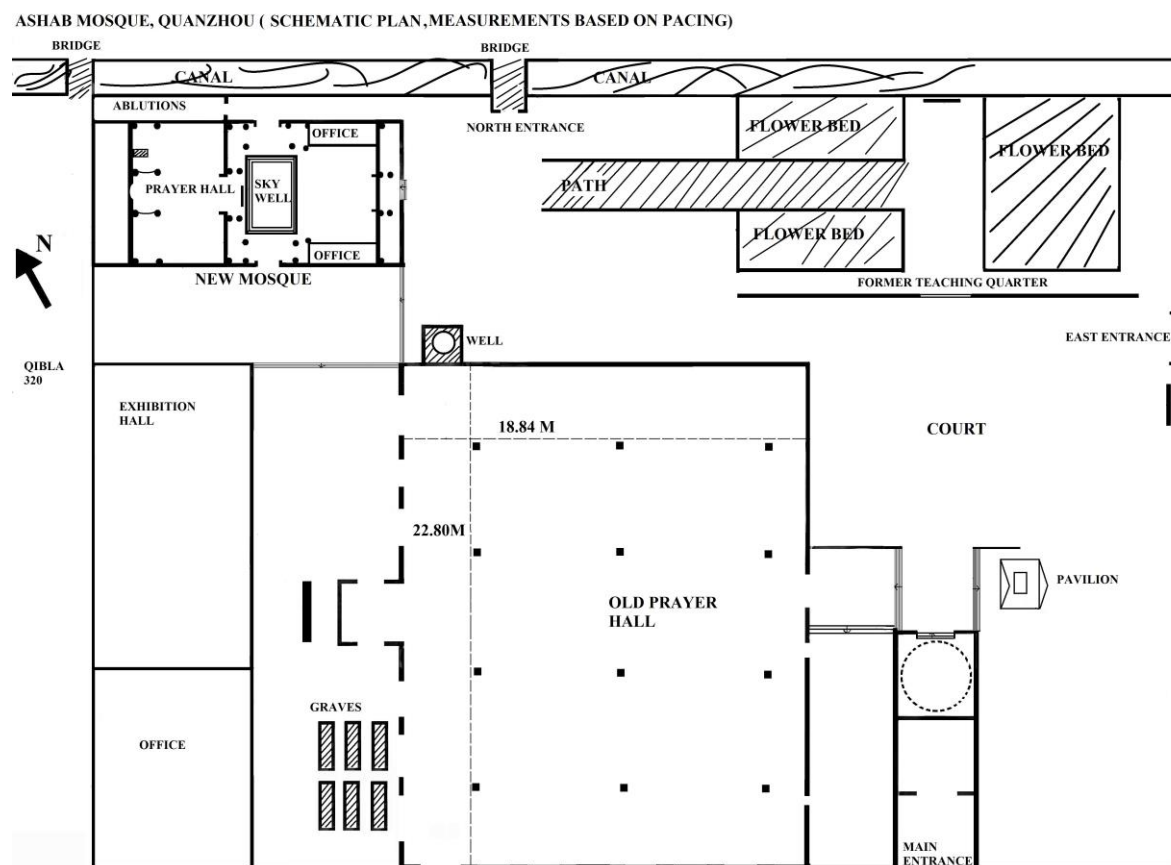
¹⁶⁵ This Muslim conflict is well recorded, and also studied by Chinese scholars. See Fang Ding, Zhu Shengyuan, et al., *Jinjiang Xian Zhi*, vol.15, p. 463. Nu Er, 'Yi Si Ba Xi (Isbah)', in *Quangzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, pp. 48-52. Chen Dasheng, 'Guangyu Yuanmo Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu De Jige Wenti', in *Yisilanjiao Zai Zhongguo: Xibei Wusheng (qu) Yisilanjiao Xueshu Taolunhui (Lanzhou Huiyi) Lunwen Xuanbian*, Gansusheng Minzu Yanjiusuo (comp., and eds.), Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1982, pp. 140-144, 175. It is further discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁶ Further discussion in Chapter 3 and 4.

¹⁶⁷ Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, op. cit., p. 109.

As Chen Dasheng has suggested, the original stele of 1350 by Wu Jian may have been damaged in the destruction of the Qingjing Mosque, where it had been originally erected. When it was recovered, the Qingjing Mosque had long vanished, and the new stele was therefore placed in the Ashab Mosque, presumably the only mosque was still standing in the city by 1507.¹⁶⁸ It is reasonable to assume that, thereafter, in the absence of people able to compare the stele with the original Arabic inscription, the Ashab Mosque became known as the Qingjing Mosque, and that, therefore, all texts after 1507 referring to the Qingjing Mosque actually mean the Ashab Mosque.

The significance of the Ashab Mosque is not in its scale, impressive though that is, but in its architectural form. Although preserved in a ruinous condition (Fig.12), it is evident that its form follows the architectural tradition of the Islamic world. The inscription says that it was founded in 400AH/1009CE, and that there was a major renovation in 1310, indicating at least



Plan I. Plan of the Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou

¹⁶⁸ Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, op. cit., pp. 107-109. Wu Wenliang, 'Zhailun Quanzhou Qingjingsi De Shijian Shiqi He Jianzhu Xingshi', in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, pp. 86-93.

two phases of construction.

The mosque originally consisted of an entrance portal and a prayer hall, built of local stone comparable to that visible at the archaeological site of the Song period gate to the city. The rest of the structures in the compound were originally the living quarter, extensively rebuilt later with additions of Ming and Qing date (Plan I).



These were later converted into a mosque after the superstructure of the prayer hall collapsed in the Ming period, which is discussed in Chapter 4. The information on the inscriptions giving the date of foundation also records that the portal was built in the renovation in 1310, but it is not clear whether the

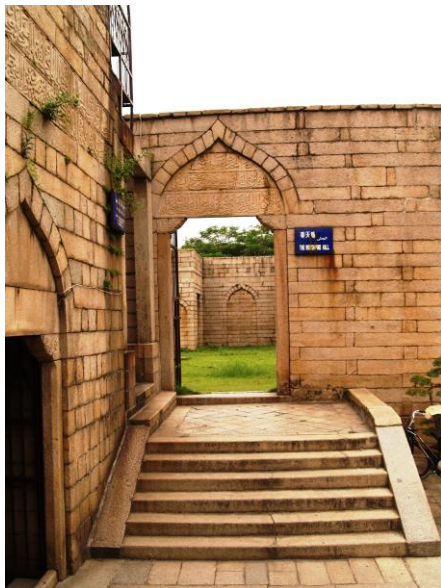


Fig.13. Entrance of the prayer hall, looking west, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

Fig.12. Remain of the old prayer hall, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou. prayer hall seen today was built at the time of the foundation. The space between prayer hall and the portal appears to be rather cramped and lacks articulation, especially when viewed from the courtyard of the mosque compound (Fig.13). One must immediately make a sharp left turn to get into the prayer hall after walking through the entrance portal. This rather awkward plan may indicate that the portal and prayer hall were not constructed at the same time. Apart from the blank niches marking the *qibla* wall, and the Quranic inscription bands, the surface of the walls of the prayer hall is left unadorned (Fig.14). This sobriety and simplicity is reminiscent of the architectural idioms of the heartlands of Islam in medieval times, as shown, for example, in the

masonry work of the madrassa of Al Firdaws (1230s) in Aleppo, Syria,¹⁶⁹ and early works of the Mamluks in Cairo. It is, therefore, plausible that the prayer hall was built at the foundation time, or, at least, before the major renovation in 1310.

There is an extant Song text recording a case with which an official dealt while carrying out his governmental duty in Quanzhou. It accounts that this official received complaint over a multi-storey building in the city built by the foreign merchants. This he judged to be inappropriate, since it was against the local government regulation on the restriction of the building activities of the foreigners within the town. He, therefore, recommended that the building should be removed with a replacement being constructed outside the city.¹⁷⁰ If the building attracted people's attention to the extent that they felt that the government must intervene in this, and also the official accepted the argument and made such a recommendation, it is probably that it must have been of some significance - if not in terms of its size then, more probably, its non-Chinese architectural form. The location of the building indicated in the text as

being in front of the *junxiang* (郡庠), i.e., official Confucian school, which was in the vicinity of the Ashab Mosque.¹⁷¹ It is a reasonable assumption that it was, indeed, this mosque to which the official referred in the Song text.

Fig.14. Prayer hall, looking southeast, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.



The nature of the original

¹⁶⁹ See Ettinghausen, Grabar, et al. on the Firdaws Mosque and the construction and decoration of mosques. R. Ettinghausen, O. Grabar, and M. Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 230-232.

¹⁷⁰ Zhu Xi, 'Zhu Wengong Wenji' (Song), vol. 98, in *Zhongguo Nanfang Huizu Qingzhen Si Ziliao Huibian*, Chen Leji et al. (comp.), Guizhou Renmin Chubanshe, Guiyang, 2004, p. 136. Both the Chinese and Arabic texts indicate that the foreign merchants were concentrated in the area outside of the city to its south, this area having been identified as the Quanzhou *fanfang* during the Song and Yuan periods. See studies of Sang Yuan Zhi Zang, op. cit., p. 47, 54.

¹⁷¹ The *fluxue* (府學), i.e., the public school, or Confucian school was called *junxiang* during Song times. It was often attached to the Confucius temple. The buildings of the former Quanzhou *fluxue* including the Confucius temple are largely preserved, which are still standing in the city in the same area where the Ashab Mosque stands.

superstructure, i.e., the roof of the prayer hall, is not known. There is a passage describing the prayer hall in the inscription, *A Record of the Reconstruction of Qingjing Mosque (Chongjian Qingjing Si Ji 重建清淨寺記)*, on the commemorative stele of 1609 preserved in the Ashab Mosque.¹⁷² The description ‘*zhonghuan xiang taiji*’ (中圓象太極), literally ‘centre circling like *taiji*’ (i.e., Chinese cosmology) has been interpreted as a spectacular dome centred above the prayer hall. However, the whole passage describing the structure of the prayer hall is very much in tune with the *Taiji tushuo* (太極圖說), i.e., *Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*.¹⁷³ The passage as a whole could be read as the writer’s own interpretation of the space in accordance with the Chinese cosmology; it does not necessarily follow that there was a huge dome. It should be noted that it was typical of many Ming writers to suggest that there was compatibility between Islam and the Chinese philosophies (which is discussed further in Chapter 4). From the layout and the remains of the mosque, the rectangular prayer hall was more likely to have been originally covered by a flat roof resting on the columns, thus following the oldest type of hypostyle mosques in the world of Islam that are found especially in the central Islamic lands, such as the plan of the Kufa Mosque, and the Great Mosque of Samarra.¹⁷⁴ There may have originally been a dome above the *mihrab*, as is the case in some of those old hypostyle mosques. It is unlikely that there was a large central domed hall like the type of square large central-domed mosques introduced and developed by the Ottomans from the 14th century onwards.¹⁷⁵ There is no mention of a dome over the prayer hall in either the foundation inscription or in the stele of 1507. If the passage in the inscription of 1609 can be interpreted as suggesting that there might have been a dome at that time, it does not preclude the possibility that a dome might have been added sometime after 1507.

Work at the site of the prayer hall conducted by Chinese archaeologists has found sherds of tiles and bricks of Ming and Qing date in the Ming-Qing cultural layer. Chen Dasheng has suggested that the prayer hall was probably covered with a roof of Chinese style at times in the Ming and Qing period.¹⁷⁶ If that was the case, the dome could have been added together

¹⁷² The inscription on the stele by Li Guangjin, see the copy of full text in Appendix.

¹⁷³ Zhou Dunyi, ‘*Taijitu Shuo*’ (Song), in *Zhou Yuangong Ji*, Zhou Dunyi (Song), vol.1. It is a treatise written by a Song philosopher. It has a very short text but had a strong impact on the intellectual life of the Song and thereafter. See the copy of full text in Appendix.

¹⁷⁴ Examples see Ettinghausen, Grabar, et al., op. cit., pp. 20-33.

¹⁷⁵ See architectural development in the Ottoman period in Hillenbrand, op. cit., pp. 257-269.

¹⁷⁶ Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*, Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, and Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1984, p. 7.

with a Chinese-style roof. If so, it was probably a type of Chinese dome, likely made of wood, since the prayer hall measures about 500sqm and the surviving walls would not have been able to support a huge stone dome. If this was, indeed, the case - the erection of a Chinese-style superstructure on a traditional Islamic form of building - it is surprising that there is no textual evidence referring to such an unusual combination.

The inscription of 1609 indicates that the mosque had two storeys. Taking into account the report by the Song official, already mentioned, it would appear that the original mosque originally had two storeys, which was not uncommon throughout the Islamic world in the medieval period. The two storey prayer hall would then presumably have been covered by a flat roof made of wood. This may have still been present at the time of the renovation in 1310, or one would expect there to have been mentioned in the foundation inscription of any additional work being done, beyond the installation of the new windows and doors as recorded in the inscription. It is not clear whether the superstructure of the mosque had already collapsed by the time of the restoration in 1507.

There may have been some damage during the Muslim conflicts in the late Yuan period.

The entrance portal (Fig.15) added in the renovation of 1310 clearly follows the architectural traditions then current in the Islamic world.

The structure is reminiscent of

those portals of the Islamic buildings built by the Mamluks in its capital Cairo as well as its overseas provinces, such as the funerary khanqah of al-Muzaffar Baybars (1307-10),¹⁷⁷ although the portal here, by comparison with those much elaborated Mamluk portals, appears to be a rather simple version. It consists of three connected passageways, which makes a deep entrance. All passages are flanked by a pair of blank niches on the sides. The first passage has



Fig.15. Entrance portal, looking north, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

¹⁷⁷ On Mamluk portals, see D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2007, pp. 89-90, 163-164.

a ribbed semi-dome and is open to the street, the second has a semi-dome decorated with *muqarnas* and the last is crowned with a dome. The dome is unadorned and the blank niches in this passage look slightly rounder than those in the other two passages (Fig.16), which may possibly indicate a separate phase of building. It is possible that there had been an earlier entrance built before the construction of the portal, this being later incorporated into the new structure. The domed passage as well as some other parts of the structure could be of an earlier date, preceding the 1310 renovation.

Another issue related to the history of the structure is whether a minaret, mentioned in the later inscription, was built at the time when the portal was built, or even earlier when the mosque was first founded. The inscription of 1609 indicates that there had been a minaret standing on the southeastern corner of the entrance portal. One that had been built in 1567, after the original



Fig.16. Dome of the third passageway of the entrance portal, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

one collapsed, itself collapsed in the serious earthquake of 1607. It was restored, or re-built in the renovation of 1609, when the commemorative stele was erected. A passage in the local history records tells us that the minaret was made of wood and was rebuilt to a height of five storeys after the collapse of 1567.¹⁷⁸ However, it is still unclear when the minaret preceding this five storey minaret of 1567 was built and what kind of form that it took. It is plausible that a minaret was built at the same time as the portal, as a minaret built on the entrance portal had already been common architectural practice in the Islamic world by that time. However, if a minaret had been added in the major renovation of 1310, it is surprising that there is no mention of it in the foundation inscription. Therefore, the minaret that collapsed in 1567 might have been added either at the time of the restoration of 1507 or thereafter (which is further discussed in Chapter 7).

There are no remains of early mosques now to be found in the great ports in the lower Yangtze valley, but textual sources, especially epigraphic information from commemorative

¹⁷⁸ Chen Menglei, and Jiang Tingxi, *Gujin Tushu Jicheng : Ji Suoyin*, op., cit., Chap. Fangxing Huibian •Zhifang Diang, vol.1050, Quanzhou Bu •Zalu, 5.

stelae and funerary inscriptions, provide evidence of mosques being founded in the Song period, such as the Fenghuang Mosque (鳳凰寺), i.e., Phoenix Mosque, in Hangzhou, and the Xianhe Mosque (仙鶴寺), i.e., Crane Mosque, in Yangzhou. Both were evidently founded in the Song period, being re-built in the Yuan and Ming period, with later renovations and restorations. Although there is insufficient information available to allow the original form of either mosque to be determined, those parts of Yuan period structures that survived, like the domed prayer hall in the Phoenix Mosque, suggest that the original mosque could have followed the architectural tradition of the Islamic lands, just as the early mosque in Quanzhou had done.

Artistically, the early mosques of the Muslim diaspora in coastal China display little influence from Chinese artistic traditions, but represent the architectural idioms of the Islamic lands of that period. The well-established host culture had little impact on the cultural life of the Muslim diaspora, who had retained a strong tie with their homeland and enjoyed living a life of their own in a friendly environment provided by their host country. At times when their mosques were not simply functional but were also a statement of their identity, the Muslim diaspora chose to build them in a style that displayed their separate Muslim Middle Eastern identity and also their sense of confidence and security, based on their economic power and the social, economic and political conditions of the host country.

This period, however, was followed by the Mongol conquest of China. This changed the country's social and political landscape, one feature of which was an influx to coastal China of Muslim subjects of the Mongols from Central Asia. Partly as a result, the barrier that once separated the Muslim diaspora of Middle Eastern origin from the rest of Chinese society began to break down. Over the next century, the Muslim diaspora gradually became integrated into wider Chinese society, and Chinese elements were incorporated into Islamic architectural practices in coastal China. This process of the interacting and intermingling would lead to the creations of the syncretic traditions.

Chapter 3

Mosques in the Transitional Phase of the Yuan (1271-1368): Departure and Integration

The Political, Economic, and Social Conditions of Yuan China

The arrival of the Mongols in the Middle East and China effectively broke a key part of the traditional trading pattern that had endured since at least the early Islamic period. The borders of Central Asia remained open for trade and ideas during the Mongol rule in China, but although the Mongol Yuan opened up their northwestern border for trade, the seaborne connection with the Middle East was not neglected. In fact, the Yuan rulers were as well aware of the importance of maritime trade as their Tang and Song predecessors.

The great ports of China continued to be the destinations of the trading vessels sailing from the Persian Gulf during the period of Yuan rule. The major port of Quanzhou, for example, remained a leading centre for the maritime trade throughout the Yuan period, which is evident from accounts of the 13th century travellers. The Jewish merchant Jacob of Ancona reached Zeitun, i.e., Quanzhou, ‘the city of light’ and ‘A city of measureless trade’ as he called it, in 1271.¹⁷⁹ His account provides a view of life in the great port in Yuan times. Some years later, Marco Polo arrived in China, and when he passed through Quanzhou on a mission given to him by the Mongol Emperor in the early 1290s, he remarked that ‘it [i.e., Quanzhou] is one of the two ports in the world with the biggest flow of merchandise’.¹⁸⁰ The rise of Hurmûz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf as an economic power in the 14th century was closely related to the maritime trade with the ports of China.

The arrival of the Mongols in China had a strong impact on the development of Islam in China. The Mongol Yuan considerably strengthened the Muslim presence in China and also changed the nature of that presence. Large numbers of Muslims from their conquered Islamic lands of Central Asia served as their main military forces during their conquest of China, these soldiers later being stationed in inland cities, as well as on the borders, to safeguard Yuan rule. Following the founding of the Yuan dynasty in China, many of these imported

¹⁷⁹ J. D’Ancona, trans., and eds., D. Selbourne, *The City of Light: An Epic Voyage to China Predating Marco Polo’s Celebrated Journey*. Little, Brown, London, 1997, p. 99. It should be noted that there has been much debate over the authenticity of the D’Ancona’s diary since it was published in 1997.

¹⁸⁰ M. Polo, and Latham, op. cit., p. 237. It has been suggested that the other port referred by Marco Polo is the great port of Alexandria in Egypt.

Muslims were then drawn into the administrative service in the Mongol Yuan court, since the Mongols did not trust the Han Chinese but preferred their imported Muslim subjects. The Muslims of Central Asian origins brought in by the Mongols formed a social class known as *semu* (色目) class.¹⁸¹ They were ranked the second after the Mongol nobility in the social scale of Yuan China, being appointed as officials serving in various levels of government, and being posted across China. Many posts were specially created for the *semu* Muslims.¹⁸² This provides the context in which Islam spread inwards, from the west, among the Chinese and, at the same time, strong ties were established between the Muslims in China and the lands of Islam.

The Mongol Yuan quickly adopted the Chinese administrative system in order to rule over the vast lands that they had conquered from the Song. For example, the *tuntian* (屯田) system, an agricultural system originated from the Western Han dynasty, was adopted. This is a system of organized farming by the soldiers, under the direction of military authorities of the state. Once the Mongol Yuan had settled into power, its garrisons were turned into *tuntian* soldiers.¹⁸³ The Yuan also promoted Chinese culture, for which the affections of the Mongol nobilities is well-known. The promotion of Chinese culture, therefore, was more than a strategic policy designed to ensure control over the highly civilized Chinese.

Unlike those trade-orientated Maritime Muslims in coastal China who, over centuries, had shown little interest in adapting Chinese culture and customs, but had remained a deep attachment to their original homeland, the Muslim subjects of the Mongols who were of Central Asian origin, like their lords, had an open mind about, or, indeed, were favourably disposed towards, the highly developed Chinese civilization.

It should be noted that these Muslims subjects of the Mongols did not share a common history with the Muslims concentrated in China's Central Asian province of Xinjiang, although they were also of Central Asian origin. Muslims, largely ethnic Uighurs, had settled in Xinjiang long before the arrival of the Mongols in China. They remain present today and

¹⁸¹ *Semu*, literally 'coloured eyes', was mainly used to define this group of imported Muslims in the service of the Yuan court, in distinguishing them with the other foreigners from *xiyu* (西域, literally 'western region'). However, sometimes, *semu* and *xiyu* were used in no differences in meaning.

¹⁸² Bai Shouyi, *Yuandai Huijiaoren Yu Huijiao*, op. cit., pp. 176-178.

¹⁸³ Song Lian, *Yuan Shi*, op. cit., vol.47, pp. 936, 940. Yang Yongchang, 'Zaoqi Yisilanjiao Xueshu Zai Zhongguo Chuanbo Qingkuang De Tantai', in *Yisilanjiao Zai Zhongguo: Xibei Wusheng (qu) Yisilanjiao Xueshu Taolunhui (Lanzhou Huiyi) Lunwen Xuanbian*, Gansusheng Minzu Yanjiusuo (comp., and eds.), Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1982, p. 56.

have retained their religious as well as ethnic identity. In contrast, the Muslims brought in by the Mongols spread throughout China, and became gradually accustomed to the Chinese way of life, while retaining their religious identity. Eventually, they underwent a process of Sinicization. It is at this point that intermarriages between these imported Muslims and the Chinese began to be recorded, as well as the conversion of ethnic Chinese to Islam in inland China. This seems to have taken place in particular in the places where the *tuntian* Muslim soldiers were positioned, the local Chinese, mostly farmers, having been converted after they had been drawn into the organized *tuntian* farming system.¹⁸⁴ The descendants of those Muslim converts and Muslims of mixed descent later became a core of the Hui Muslim community that emerged in Ming times.

However, the arrival of the Mongol's Muslim subjects of Central Asian origins in coastal China did not immediately change the nature of the Maritime Muslim community and of the presence of Islam in coastal China, since the Arab and Persian merchants still dominated foreign trade in the ports. The Maritime Muslim community in the great ports was still well established by the mid-14th century as Ibn Battuta witnessed. He arrived in Quanzhou in 1345, reporting:

The port of Zaytun [i.e., Quanzhou] is one of the largest in the world, or perhaps the very largest. I saw in it about a hundred large junks; as for small junks, they could not be counted for multitude... The Muslims live in a town apart from the others.¹⁸⁵

He continued his journey to Guangzhou and the other ports, he reports the following:

Sin-Kalan [i.e., Guangzhou] is a city of first rank, in regard to size and the quality of its bazaars... In one of the quarters of this city is the Muhammadan town, where the Muslims have their cathedral mosque, hospice and bazaar. They have also a *qadi* and a shaykh, for in every one of the cities of China there must always be a Shaykh al-Islam, to whom all matters concerning the Muslims are referred [i.e., who acts as intermediary between the government and the Muslim community], and a *qadi* to decide legal cases between them.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁸⁵ Ibn Battuta, and Gibb, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 290.

Khansa [i.e., Hangzhou] consists of six cities, each with its own wall, and an outer wall surrounding the whole... We entered into the third city, and this is inhabited by the Muslims. Theirs is a fine city, and their bazaars are arranged just as they are in Islamic countries; they have mosques in it and muezzins-we heard them calling to the noon prayers as we entered... The numbers of Muslims in this city is very large.¹⁸⁷

He then concludes his journey along the Chinese coasts as following:

In every Chinese city there is a quarter for Muslims in which they live by themselves, and in which they have mosques both for the Friday services and for other religious purposes. The Muslims are honoured and respected.¹⁸⁸

As Ibn Battuta observed, in the mid-14th century the colony of Muslim merchants in coastal China remained as it had been in previous centuries. The maritime Muslims still had the freedom to conduct their religious and social life independently of the Chinese. Thus numerous tombstones have been recovered in major ports like Quanzhou, Yangzhou and Hangzhou, dating mainly to the Yuan period. The tombstones unearthed in Quanzhou, for example, now in the collection of the Maritime Museum in Quanzhou, are dated 600-700AH (i.e., 1203-1300CE) and there are many Yuan graves preserved in the Muslim cemetery in Yangzhou (Fig.17). Studies of the funerary inscriptions on those tombstones indicate that they largely belong to the Muslim diaspora of Middle Eastern origins,¹⁸⁹ proving that



Fig.17. Remains of the Yuan graves in the Muslim cemetery, Yangzhou.

the Arab and Persian merchants were still very active in the ports of China during Yuan times. Ibn Battuta's account indicates that a large number of Muslim merchants were still residing in these port cities at the time when he visited. They obviously still remained the core of the Maritime Muslim community at that time.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁸⁹ Chen Dasheng has made thorough studies of the gravestones unearthed in Quanzhou, see Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*, op. cit. As I noted during fieldwork, the early gravestones preserved in the Fenghuang Mosque and in Muslim cemetery in Yangzhou are mainly dated to the Yuan period, many of which belong to the Muslim merchants of Middle Eastern origins. Also see, Zhongguo Yisilan Baikequanshu Bianji Weyuanhui (eds.), *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Sichuan Cishu Chubanshe, Chengdu, 1996, pp. 210, 439.

The Mongol rule did not have the immediate effect of reducing the presence of the Maritime Muslims of Middle Eastern origins in the trading ports of China. Indeed, they continued to dominate the Muslim community in coastal China for most of the Yuan period. Joining together with Muslims of Central Asian origins in the service of the Mongol Yuan, the Maritime Muslim Community wielded a great deal of power. One indication of that was a flourishing of building activities in coastal China, and many mosques are recorded to have been founded in the ports of China during this time.

For many centuries, the Maritime Muslims had enjoyed their separate way of life, showing little desire to integrate with the host society. The Muslim newcomers from Central Asia, however, were actively engaging in state affairs and in close contact with the Chinese. As they gradually interacted with, and merged with, the Maritime Muslim community, new ideas and attitudes were injected into the community. With their different approach to living in a foreign country, these Muslim allies of the Mongols rapidly, within a generation or so, adopted Chinese culture and customs and socialised actively with the ethnic Chinese. In consequence, the Maritime Muslim community slowly abandoned the old tradition of retaining their separate identity, cultural and customs. Intermarriages between the Maritime Muslims and the Chinese became less uncommon as in the previous centuries, noted in Chapter 2. A funerary inscription on a tombstone unearthed in Quanzhou, dated to 1293, for example, provides good evidence of the case of intermarriage in Yuan times. The inscription states that the owner of the grave, Ahmed, died in his mother's hometown Zaitun [i.e., Quanzhou], which suggests that the mother was Chinese.¹⁹⁰ The Persian inscriptions on the tombstone indicate that the father was of Persian origins, and the Arabic indicates his faith. Rich Muslim merchants from this community began to become involved in state affairs, thus participating in the political and social life of Yuan China. Some, like those Muslims of Central Asian origin, were even appointed to prestigious posts in the Yuan government. An alliance emerged between Muslim merchants with the Central Asian Muslims working as officials in the Mongol Yuan administration, gaining access to considerable political and economic power but, at the same time, leading to division within the elite of the Maritime Muslim community. This was especially the case in Quanzhou, where the Muslim merchant community was strongest.

The Muslim elites became so powerful that they even recruited soldiers privately. Known as

¹⁹⁰ Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*, op. cit., p. 20.

Isbah, some of these unofficial armies or militias are said to have been up to 10,000 strong.¹⁹¹ Previously, the Maritime Muslim diaspora had effectively operated as a single community, working together in what continued, for them, to be a foreign country. Now, as individual ambitions came to the fore, conflicts began to emerge within the community in Quanzhou and surrounding areas in the late Yuan period, as economically-powerful groups of the Maritime Muslim elite, allied with Muslims of the *semu* class holding important political positions in the Mongol Yuan government, competed for the control of state affairs in the coastal region. This decade-long (1357-1366) Muslim conflict resulted in sharp decline of the Muslim community in Quanzhou,¹⁹² and it never recovered its former status as a strongest community in coastal China. During this conflict, there was extensive destruction of mosques that had been built by the community.

The First Phase of Yuan Mosques

Textual sources and archaeological finds indicate that many mosques, now vanished, were founded in the great ports of China during the Yuan period. Thus the inscriptions on the stele based on Wu Jian's *Qingjing Si Ji* preserved in the Ashab Mosque clearly mentions that six or seven mosques had been built during Song and Yuan times in Quanzhou. Studies of the architectural fragments recovered at different sites in Quanzhou indicate that at least three of these mosques were of Yuan date. All were destroyed in the Isbah conflict at the end of the Yuan period.¹⁹³

The writings of Ibn Battuta in the mid-14th century not only confirm the existence of separate Muslim quarters, the *fanfang*, in the Chinese ports but also specifically mention mosques, noting, for example, the presence of a congregation mosque (a major mosque for Friday prayers), in each port, as cited above.

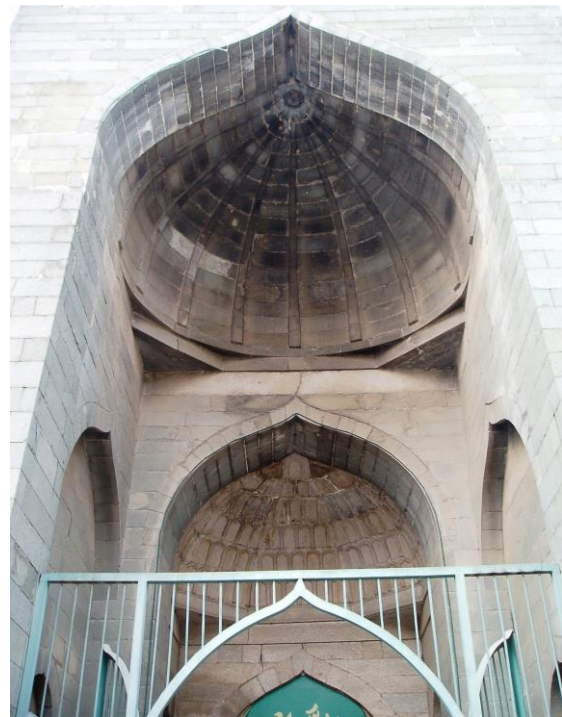


Fig.18. Detail from the entrance portal, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

¹⁹¹ Song Lian, *Yuan Shi*, op. cit., vol.45, p. 936. Also see Nu Er, op. cit., pp. 48-52. Chen Dasheng, *Guangyu Yuanmo Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu De Jige Wenti*, op. cit., pp. 140-146.

¹⁹² This Muslim conflict is well documented in local history records, as noted and referenced in Chapter 2.

¹⁹³ Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, op. cit., pp. 112-114.



Fig.19. *Zhaojing* ceiling of the Qiniandian, Tianan, Beijing.

However, most of the Yuan mosques mentioned in the Chinese texts and the accounts of the foreign travellers have now vanished. Those that survived have been much restored or re-built at a later date, judging by the epigraphic information preserved on the commemorative stelae. Thus the Xianhe Mosque in Yangzhou is recorded to be founded in 1275.¹⁹⁴ Together with the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou, the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou and the Fenghuang Mosque in Hangzhou, it is one of the four great surviving old mosques founded by the Maritime Muslims in coastal China. However, the present mosque has no trace of any structures from the Song Yuan period, but was restored or rebuilt during the

Ming and Qing periods (which is discussed in Chapter 5).

From the remains of the mosques and tombs that do survive, it is possible to suggest that there were two architectural phases in the Yuan period. The first phase appears to be a continuation of the artistic traditions imported earlier from the Islamic lands. One example is the entrance portal of the Ashab Mosque (Fig.18). The portal is the remaining evidence of remains of the Yuan period restoration in 1310. Its architectural form displays architectural vocabularies of the world of Islam, as noted in Chapter 2. There are, however, some Chinese elements such as the corbels supporting the lintels of arched doorways. It has also been suggested that the semi-domes reflect the influence of the Chinese *zaojing* (藻井), i.e., a caisson ceiling, technique.¹⁹⁵ *Zaojing*, literally algae well, is a feature of classical Chinese architecture, which has been used in the ceilings of a higher class of buildings like palaces and temples as a symbol

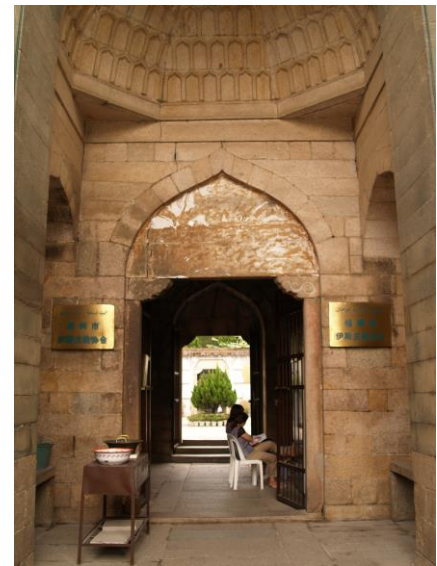


Fig.20. Second passageway of the entrance portal, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

¹⁹⁴ Qian Xiangbao, and Gui Bangjie, 'Xuixiu Jiangdu Xian Zhi' (1926 ed.), Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1975, p. 942. Zhu Jiang, 'Yisilanjiao Wenhua Dongjian Yangzhou Shimo', in *Yisilanjiao Zai Zhongguo: Xibei Wusheng (qu) Yisilanjiao Xueshu Taolunhui (Lanzhou Huiyi) Lunwen Xuanbian*, Gansusheng Minzu Yanjiusuo (comp., and eds.), Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1982, p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ Liu Zhiping, op. cit., pp. 18-19. Wu Wenliang, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

of authority,¹⁹⁶ such as the ceiling of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests (Qiniandian 祈年殿) of the well-known Temple of Heaven (Tiantan 天坛) in Beijing (Fig.19). If one looks carefully, the semi-domes, especially the one in the second passageway (Fig.20), do resemble the forms of these Chinese caisson ceilings. The *zaojing* was evidently adopted by Muslim builders later in the Yuan period. A Yuan period grave in Hangzhou by the West Lake provides a good example of the *zaojing* ceiling being employed by the Muslims (Figs.21, 22).¹⁹⁷

As discussed in chapter 2, this may also suggest that more than one phase of construction of the portal may be present. The domed passageway at the end was probably an older structure pre-dating the construction of the portal, since different construction techniques appear to have been employed. There is also little in the way of decoration, in



Fig.22. Detail from the *zaojing* ceiling of a Yuan period grave, Hangzhou.

contrast to the other two semi-domes addressed in Chapter 2. There is no information available on the builders who were responsible for construction of the Ashab Mosque. Nor have any records been traced of the presence of itinerant Muslim builders or craftsmen in coastal China. Some may have been brought in by the sponsor of the mosque, but it is reasonable to assume that, giving the scale of the mosque, the construction work may have

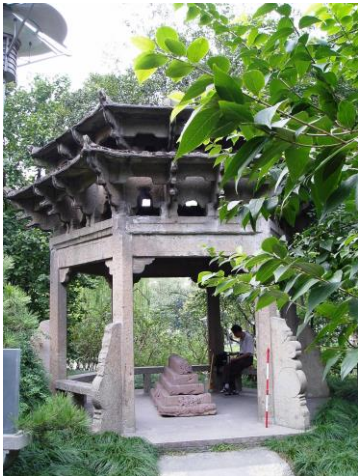


Fig.21. A Yuan period grave, Hangzhou.

been mainly carried out by local Chinese, perhaps under the direction of master-builders imported from the lands of Islam.

It is not possible to determine whether these Chinese elements represent a conscious experiment in blending together Chinese and Islamic architectural traditions, as clearly occurred in the later architectural phase of Yuan mosques, or whether they were a practical adjustment to suit the methods of construction of the Chinese builders. The transition from the square to circular structures of the dome and semi-domes employs simply a type

¹⁹⁶ Gao Yang, *Zhongguo Chuantong Jiangzhu Zhuangshi*, Baihua Wenyi Chubangshe, Tianjin, 2009, p. 55.

¹⁹⁷ This pavilion used to stand in the Muslim cemetery in Hangzhou, which was outside the former Qingbo city gate. It was relocated to the current position in Republican times when building the road circling around the lake. It is said that three early graves were found beneath the city wall during the construction work, one of which was put together with this pavilion. See Liu Zhiping, *op. cit.*, p. 197. The grave was attributed to the famous late Yuan Muslim poet Ding Henian (丁鹤年) later in the 1990s, however, it seems to be an assumption rather than being based on any firm archaeological evidence.

of corbels composed of a single stone slab resting on the corners of the square structures, rather than a variety of squinches or *muqarnas*, as usually seen in the transitional zones of Islamic architecture elsewhere at that time. The limited scope of this change may simply a desire to simplify construction techniques to make the task easier for the Chinese builders.

Although the vaulting system had been developed in China since the Han dynasty, the techniques of executing squinches and *muqarnas* for the transitional zones of the domes, as highly developed in the world of Islam must still have been unfamiliar to the Chinese builders at that time. This can also be seen in the remains of other Yuan period mosques, as noted below. Whatever the real explanations for these Chinese elements seen in the portal of the Ashab Mosque, the overall architectural form is still essentially Islamic. This, then, represents the first phase of Yuan period mosques.

The alleged tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs in Guangzhou (Fig.23) presents the features of the first Islamic architectural phase of the Yuan period. As noted in previous chapters, although the Maritime Muslim community adheres to the tradition of dating the tomb to the early Tang period, the structure of the surviving tomb is unlikely to be of any date before the Song period and is possibly of early Yuan date, regardless of whether or not it is the burial place of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs.

There are no early texts or epigraphic information and no archaeological evidence from studies of the building materials supporting this Muslim tradition of the tomb's origin. No any stela recording the presence of this tomb found so far are dated before the

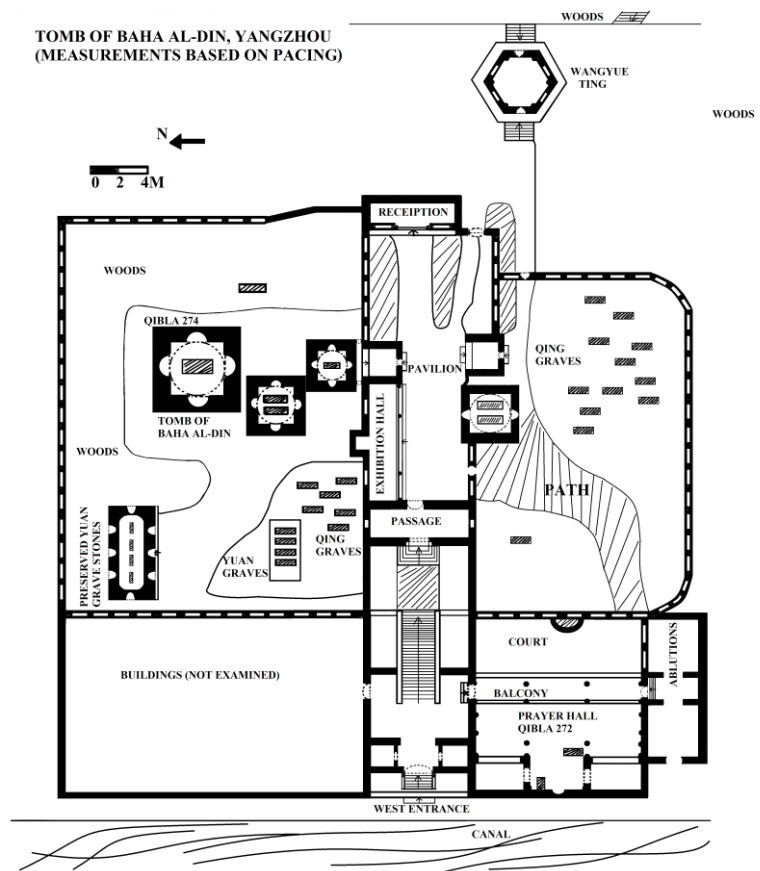


Fig.23. Elevation of the tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, looking southwest, Guangzhou.

Qing period. As already noted in the previous chapters, there are extant Song texts and epigraphic information of Yuan date that mention the Huaisheng Mosque, in particular taking note of the significant architectural form of the Guangta. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 2, one of these Song writers especially noted the Muslim burials in Guangzhou. It would be surprising, therefore, if such a domed tomb in an alien architectural form was already present, that it would have escaped the notice of these writers.

Moreover, it is clear that the architectural form of the tomb is not related to the funerary architectural tradition of China. Its domed structure, however, obviously reflects one of the two Islamic funerary architectural prototypes - the canopy tomb. This type of a cubic structure, with a large central dome, first appeared in the Iranian lands in the 10th century, and spread across the Islamic lands, becoming common in Egypt since Fatimid times.¹⁹⁸ One early examples of the canopy tomb was the Mausoleum of the Samanid in Bukhara. The tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs is, therefore, unlikely of Tang date, i.e., before the 10th century, since it does not fit into the chronology of the development of funerary architecture in the world of Islam.

It may be suggested, however, that the tomb may have been built during the Yuan period, but only becoming attached to or associated with Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs in the late Ming or more likely Qing periods. That would offer an explanation as to why there is no mention of the tomb in the commemorative stelae of the Yuan and the Ming periods, although there is an account of the arrival and activity of the Companion in Guangzhou, as in the Guangzhou stele of 1350, and details of the founding of the Huaisheng Mosque by Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, as in the Quanzhou stele of 1507.



Plan II. Plan of the Muslim cemetery, Yangzhou.

A question arose as to whom may actually be buried in the tomb. As has been already discussed in previous chapters, the Maritime Muslim tradition, preserved in *Epitaph of the Great Human Wangeshi (Waqqâs)* by Lan Xi in 1852, states that Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs was

¹⁹⁸ Ettinghausen, Grabar, et al., op. cit., pp. 110-111.

buried outside the city of Guangzhou, suggesting the location of the surviving Muslim cemetery. A mosque and numerous other graves are present in the immediately vicinity of the alleged tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs. In other ports too, it has generally been the case that large Muslim cemeteries have developed around the tombs of those revered by Chinese Muslims as people of great worth or persons of particular religious significance. This is the case, for example, with the Muslim cemetery in Yangzhou, built around the tomb of Baha al-Din (Plan II), who is said to be a 16th generation descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, as noted below, and that in Quanzhou, where an alleged tomb of the two Companions of the Prophet Mohammad is situated. Mosques were also erected in the cemeteries. The mosque built in mid-Qing period in the Yangzhou cemetery survives today, whereas the mosque or prayer hall by the alleged graves of the two Companions in Quanzhou, indicated in the local history record,¹⁹⁹ has vanished. It is said that there was also a mosque in the old Muslim cemetery in Hangzhou.²⁰⁰

Lan Xi's text describes that the sound of chanting the heavenly classics, i.e., Qur'an verses, from the tomb can be heard in a distance of some 5000 meters away, so the tomb is locally known as *xiangfen* (響墳), i.e., literally 'sounding grave'.²⁰¹ This hints that the tomb may have been associated with Sufi practices. Thus the chant heard from the tomb may have well been the Sufi practices of *dhikr* (ذِكْر), i.e., remembrance of God.²⁰² It is noteworthy that there is one passage in Ibn Battuta's account referring to a 200-year-old man whom he visited while he was in Guangzhou. He describes that this man 'lived in a cave without the city, in which his devotions were carried on...He had marks of a devotional character about him; but had no beard'.²⁰³ This man was seen to have acolytes around him. Ibn Battuta carries on giving information on this man that he gathered from the *qadi* and the sheikh and other merchants in the Muslim town in Guangzhou. He reports:

He had disappeared for about fifty years, but returned to this place within the last year;...In the cave in which he lives there is nothing to attract the attention; and his discourse is of times that are past. He will occasionally speak off the Prophet...He

¹⁹⁹ Chen Menglei, and Jiang Tingxi, *Gujin Tushu Jicheng: Ji Suoyin*, op. cit., Chap. Fangxing Huibian • Zhifang Diang, vol.1050, Quanzhou Bu • Yiwen 2. Huai Yinbu, *Quanzhou Fu Zhi*, op. cit., Chap. Shanchuan 38.

²⁰⁰ See *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., p. 210.

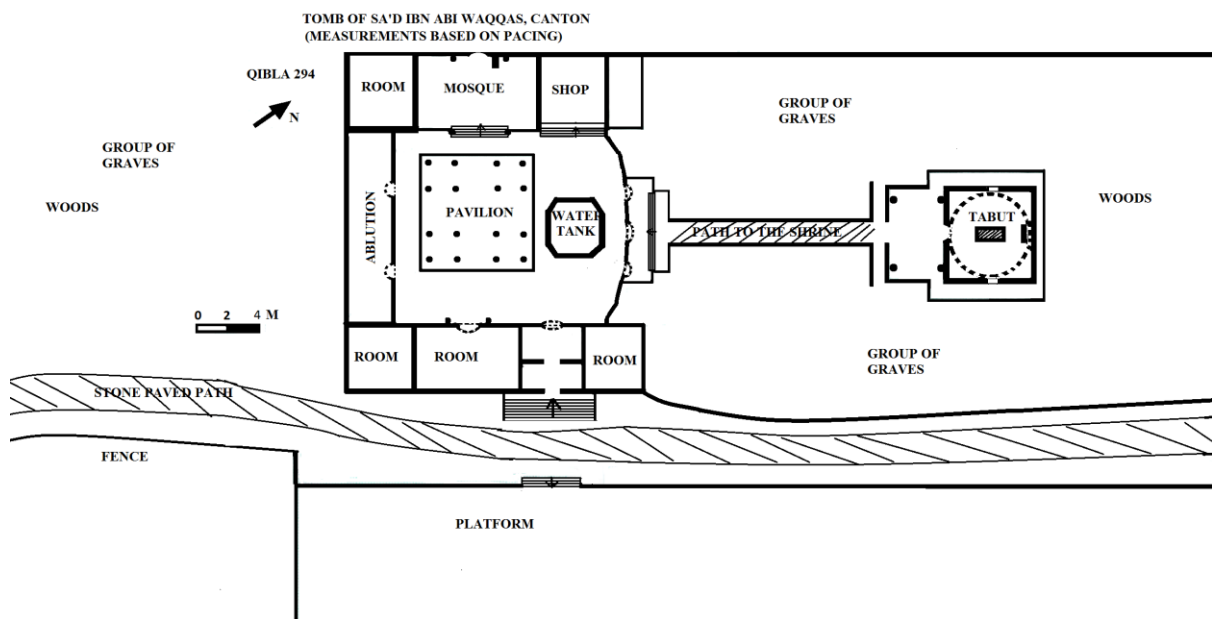
²⁰¹ Lan Xi, op. cit., see the copy of full text in Appendix.

²⁰² Sufi masters stress *dhikr*, a devotional act for Sufi adherents in which short phrases or prayers are repeatedly recited.

²⁰³ Ibn Battuta, trans. and eds. S. Lee, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829, p. 213. It should be noted that the passage on the old man is not in Gibb's translation.

also speaks of Omar Ibn Khatab, and with peculiar respect of Ali son of Abu Talib...²⁰⁴

Ibn Battuta was also told by other merchants some rather mystical stories associated with this aged man. This account hints that the man was likely an itinerant Sufi master, thus indicating the presence of Sufi practices in Yuan times in Guangzhou. Whether this man may have had any link with the alleged tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, we cannot tell. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the tomb may have been originally a burial place of a respectable Sufi preacher, revered by his disciples.



Plan III. A section of the plan of the Tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs. Guangzhou.

The tomb is situated in the outskirts of the city of Guangzhou, surrounded by immense woods. The compound of the tomb consists of a domed shrine, a small mosque, and a pavilion, a decorative archway leading to the tomb, and other functional structures, and also a Muslim burial ground around the shrine (Plan III). Apart from the tomb, as indicated in epigraphic information,²⁰⁵ the other structures in their present forms were gradually developed during the Qing period including the mosque (Fig.24), the decorative archway (Fig.25), and the pavilion and rooms that perhaps used to be accommodations and teaching rooms (Fig. 26).

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

²⁰⁵ There are stelae recording the restorations of the tomb site, dated from the Qing period onwards, which indicate there has been major restorations at least for six times in between 1723 and 1848. Some structures were added during these renovations. See Li Xinhua, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

We cannot tell how the compound was laid out and what structures it would have contained before the Qing period, since there is no mention of the tomb until the end of the 17th century. This, however, does not preclude possibility of the existence of the tomb in the Yuan period.



Fig.24. Mosque in the compound of the Tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, Guangzhou.

Unlike in the northwest regions of China, the Sufi practice has never had a strong presence in the coastal regions (which is noted in Chapter 5). Presumably, there was only a small group of Sufi adherents present in Guangzhou at the time of Ibn Battuta's visit. Their practices may have remained in discreet, not drawing much attention of the others. It is, therefore, possible that the tomb was originally built by the Sufis in the middle of the woods away from the city as a memorial of their master, and for their devotional practices. Some functional structures, such as the prayer room, and the accommodations, may have been gradually developed serving the needs of their devotions. Thus it may be compared with the funerary *khanqah*, i.e., an abode, or monastery, of Sufis.²⁰⁶ These functional buildings first developed around the tomb were likely of simple basic structures without any significance architecturally, just serving as a reclusive place for this small group of Sufis for carrying on their devotional acts. It is,



Fig.25. Decorative archway, looking south, Tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, Guangzhou.

therefore, likely that the place and their practices have escaped from the notice of the others at that time.

As to how this tomb site became attached to the name of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, it may be suggested that the followers of this Sufi order, preached by the Sufi master for whom the tomb was erected, left Guangzhou for somewhere else, sometime probably in late Yuan or early Ming times, and never returned. At that time that the Maritime Muslims were struggling to recover from the destruction of the decade long Muslim conflicts mentioned above, and the chaotic dynastic changes, as noted in previous chapters. As a result, some Muslims, especially of the merchant background, left for their

²⁰⁶ Funerary *khanqahs* are normally built around shrines of Sufi saints, consisting of mosques and madrasas, which are gathering places of Sufis for spiritual retreat and devotional acts.

original homeland, or that of their ancestors, in the Middle East, while others relocated to remote places away from the port cities, as mentioned in Chapter 2. The introduction of a new maritime policy after the founding of the Ming dynasty further affected the presence of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China (which is discussed in Chapter 4). Despite



Fig.26. Courtyard of the mosque in compound of the Tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, looking southwest, Guangzhou.

leading a reclusive life, these Sufis may have also been affected by these events in the late Yuan and the early Ming period, since they were Muslims too. Thus in the absence of this Sufi adherents in the city, the tomb site gradually fell into decayed and eventually became a forgotten place in the wilderness. Epigraphs of the early Qing period clearly indicate the decayed condition of the tomb site at that time, which suggests that the tomb must have been neglected for a long time.²⁰⁷ Perhaps it was not until the late Ming or early Qing period that the tomb site was rediscovered by the then Sinicized Maritime

Muslim community. It was then attributed to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs after the Muslim tradition of the presence

of the four Companions in coastal China had been fully developed sometime during the later Ming and early Qing period, as discussed in Chapter 1.

This may be compared with the origin of the alleged tomb of the two Companions in the outskirts of Quanzhou (Fig. 27).

Chen Dasheng has suggested that this tomb of the two Companions was originally connected with Sufi devotions, and became associated with two of the four Companions because of the Muslim tradition developed in Ming times.²⁰⁸ This may well be the case.

Firstly, there is no record of this tomb before the Yuan period, while a text by Lin Zhiqi of the Southern Song period, as noted in Chapter 2, records the Muslim burial in Quanzhou but



Fig.27. Tomb of the Two Companions, showing the graves and the commemorative stelae, Quanzhou.

²⁰⁷ On the references of the earliest epigraphs recording the restoration of the tomb site, see Li Xinhuan, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

²⁰⁸ Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Lingshan Shengmu Niandai Cutan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-176.

without mentioning this tomb. Secondly, a Yuan stele preserved at the tomb site that bears an Arabic inscription recording the restoration in 1322 also makes no mention of any connection of the graves with the Companions. This shows that up until Yuan times these graves had not yet been attached to any Companions, as claimed in the Muslim tradition that developed later.

The tomb of the two Companions is situated on the Lingshan Mountain outside the city of Quanzhou, set in woodland and reached up a flight of steps (Fig.28). The graves seen today are in a stone pavilion that was built in 1812, as stated in the inscription on a stele at the tomb site, dated to 1812. It is surrounded by a covered stone



Fig.28. General view of the Lingshan Shengmu, Quanzhou.

colonnade. It is not clear whether this was built at the same time as the restoration of 1812. This inscription states that there had been subsequent restorations taken place during the Kangxi (r.1661-1722) and Qianlong (r.1735-1796) reign period, and that the pavilion was rebuilt because the old structure collapsed. It does not specify what kind of form the old structure had taken. Chen Dasheng has proposed that it may have been of the domed tomb type, sharing the architectural feature with the Yuan period tomb that has been discovered in the nearby city of Fuzhou. This has been dated to 1306, and was identified as the burial place of a Muslim of a righteous and charitable character, and has also been revered by the local Muslims as a tomb of some sanctity.²⁰⁹

The earliest record of the Lingshan Shengmu, i.e., the tomb of the two Companions, is found in a Ming text, which provides us information on the layout and the buildings of the tomb site in Ming times.²¹⁰ There had been a prayer hall in front of the tomb to its right, and a room or

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 173, 175. Fuzhou (福州), the capital city of Fujian province, like Quanzhou it had been frequented by the Muslim traders, known to them as *Quanjanfu*, especially during the Song and Yuan periods. Ibn Battuta wrote detailed accounts of the Muslim merchants there. See Ibn Battuta and Gibb, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-292.

²¹⁰ The text is cited in the local history records, see Chen Menglei, and Jiang Tingxi, *Gujin Tushu Jicheng: Ji Suoyin*, *op. cit.*, Chap. Fangxing Huibian • Zhifang Diang, vol.1050, Quanzhou Bu • Yiwen 2. Huai Yinbu, *Quanzhou Fu Zhi*, *op. cit.*, Chap. Shanchuan 38.

pavilion to its left. We may see some similarities, in terms of its setting and its structures that it contained, with the tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs. Thus it may have also been a funerary *khanqah* that had earlier been developed around the tomb for the devotions of the Sufis who may have been present in Quanzhou at some point, and possibly left for the same reason as those in Guangzhou. The Ming text hints that the tomb seemed to have been unattended for quite some time by then. It later became associated with the Companions, since the local Muslim community had lost track of the origin of these graves there, just as in the case of the Xianxian Gumu in Guangzhou, i.e., the tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs.

Studies of the recovered architectural fragments in Quanzhou and the archaeological discovery of a domed tomb in Fuzhou indicate that the canopy tomb type was not uncommon during the Yuan period.²¹¹ Seen in this light, the Xianxian Gumu, may have originally been a burial place for a Sufi master and was likely of early Yuan date.

The brick dome of the tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, especially the form of *muqarnas* serving as the transitional zone (Fig.29), may be compared with the other Yuan remains. This appears to have been a characteristic of funerary architecture as well as the mosques built by the Maritime Muslims during the Yuan period. This surviving funerary architecture of the Yuan period further supports the assumption of the existence of different architectural phases in the mosques built during the Yuan period.

Fig.29. Interior of the Tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, Guangzhou.



The Second Phase of Yuan Mosques

The tomb of Baha al-Din in Yangzhou provides another example of this characteristic of the Yuan structures. According to the local history records and epigraphic information,²¹² Baha al-Din is said to come to Yangzhou at the end of the Song dynasty, living there for ten years and

²¹¹ Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*, op. cit., pp. 52-54.

²¹² The commemorative stele of 1904 bearing the epigraphic information on Baha al-Din is preserved in the tomb site. And also see Yin Huiyi, and Chen Mengxing, *Yangzhou Fu Zhi* (Qing Yongzheng ed.), Chengwen

travelling between the ports of China and Arabia, suggesting that he was of a merchant background. He was buried in Yangzhou when he died in 1275. Yangzhou, referred as a place of Faghfūr, i.e., the emperor, in early Arab writings, had been a well-established trading port in the lower Yangtze valley since the Tang period.²¹³ As mentioned in Chapter 1, there had already been a large number of Arab and Persian merchants residing in the port of Yangzhou by the 8th century. Many mosques are said to have been in Yangzhou at an early date. Baha al-Din is said to have been responsible for the founding of the Xianhe Mosque in Yangzhou.²¹⁴

Fig.30. Elevation of the Tomb of Baha al-Din, looking northwest, Yangzhou.



The tomb of Baha al-Din is a domed cube that opens on all sides (Figs.30, 31). The dome is, however, not seen from outside, since it is topped with a pyramidal or spire roof that is commonly used in Chinese pavilions of various types, and is known in Chinese architectural terms as *cuanjian ding*(攢尖頂).²¹⁵ It is not clear whether this combination of the Islamic and Chinese architectural forms was the result of a single phase of construction. Records referring to later restorations do not specify whether these had modified the original form. The cube with an arched opening on four sides, supporting a central dome, seems to be the original form related to the canopy tomb type. The interior of the tomb is similar to the tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs, especially the



Fig.31. Elevation of the Tomb of Baha al-Din, looking southeast, Yangzhou.

Chubanshe, Taipei, 1975, vol.24, p. 393. Qian Xiangbao, and Gui Bangjie, *Xuixiu Jiangdu Xian Zhi*, op. cit., vol.13, pp. 959-960. Zhu Jiang, op. cit., p. 28. Liu Zhiping, op. cit., 203.

²¹³ There has been debate over the origin and meaning of the term 'Faghfur' in early Arab writings, it is now generally accepted, it is a term referring to the Chinese emperor in general. Yangzhou, located on the Yangtze River and Jinghang Canal, historically had been seat of kings and emperors. See Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Lingshan Shengmu Niandai Cutan*, op. cit., pp. 171-173.

²¹⁴ Qian Xiangbao, and Gui Bangjie, *Xuixiu Jiangdu Xian Zhi*, op. cit., vol.12, p. 942.

²¹⁵ Gao Yang, op. cit., p.14.

rendering of the dome and *muqarnas* (Fig.32). If the tomb itself can be dated to 1275, the time of the death of Baha al-Din, then the pyramidal roof is likely to have been added in later renovation or restoration in the late Yuan period. This bold combination of two architectural traditions, Islamic and Chinese, especially the alteration of the appearance of the exterior,



Fig.32. Interior of the Tomb of Baha al-Din, Yangzhou.

signals the second Islamic architectural phase of the Yuan period. The vaulted hall with a centred-dome, covered with a Chinese style roof of different types, became a characteristic of Yuan mosques in the second architectural phase.

The preserved old prayer hall of Fenghuang Mosque in Hangzhou (Figs.33, 34) is a typical example of the second phase of Yuan

mosques. Hangzhou had risen to prominence as a major centre for the maritime trade in the lower Yangtze valley when it became the capital of the Southern Song, and it continued to be one of the leading centres for foreign trade during the Yuan period. Marco Polo remarks that



Fig.33. Back elevation of the prayer hall, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.

‘it is without doubt the finest and most splendid city in the world’,²¹⁶ while to Ibn Battuta, ‘it is the largest city I had ever seen on the face of the earth’.²¹⁷ Like the great port of Yangzhou in the lower Yangtze valley, the trading centre had attracted a large number of Muslim traders during the Song and Yuan periods.²¹⁸

Ibn Battuta especially noted the enormous number of Muslims in Hangzhou and the Muslim quarter

there could be compared with any Islamic cities, as cited earlier. Marco Polo recounts that ‘as for the merchants, they are so many and so rich and handle such quantities of merchandise

²¹⁶ M. Polo, and Latham, op. cit., p. 213.

²¹⁷ Ibn Battuta, and Gibb, op. cit., p. 293.

²¹⁸ Gong Jiajun, and Li Rong. *Hangzhou Fu Zhi* (1926 ed.), Chengwen Chubanshe, Taipei, 1974, vol.4, pp. 293-294, & vol. 6, p. 317.

that no one could give an account of the matter; it is so utterly beyond reckoning.²¹⁹ Textual sources indicate that several mosques were built during the Yuan period, but the Fenghuang Mosque, with modern additions, is the only one still standing in the city that reflects its Islamic heritage.

According to the history records and epigraphic information, the Fenghuang Mosque, known as Zhenjiao Si (真教寺) before the late Qing period, was first founded in the Tang period and was destroyed at the end of the Song period. It was then rebuilt in 1281 by Ala al-Din. Local history records and epigraphic sources offer different information on the date of the rebuilding. While the epigraphy of Ming and Qing date records that the mosque was rebuilt in 1281, the local history records say that it was rebuilt in the Yanyou years (延祐), i.e., 1314-1320.²²⁰ The date given in the epigraphy is generally accepted, and the later date given in the local history records is considered as the possible date of one of the major restorations and renovations that are recorded in the texts.²²¹

We know very few about the life of Ala al-Din. It is said that he was of Persian origin and took up the position as the sheikh of the local Muslim community.²²² Presumably he had a merchant background and was among those rich Muslim merchants of Middle Eastern origins residing in Hangzhou, since the epigraphic information clearly indicates that he donated funds for rebuilding the mosque. It has been also suggested that he may have been the rich merchant Othman ibn Affan referred in Ibn Battuta's text,²²³ with whom Ibn Battuta stayed while he was visiting Hangzhou. He accounts that the



Fig.34. Interior of the prayer hall, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.

family of Othman ibn Affan was very wealthy and influential, and were responsible for the congregation mosque in the city, and 'endowed it with large benefactions'.²²⁴ It is plausible

²¹⁹ M. Polo, and Latham, op. cit., p. 217.

²²⁰ Gong Jiajun, and Li Rong. *Hangzhou Fu Zhi*, vol.34. p. 799. Two commemorative stelae (dated to 1493, 1670) are preserved in the Fenghuang Mosque, which provide information on the founding of the mosque and records of the later restorations in the Ming and Qing periods.

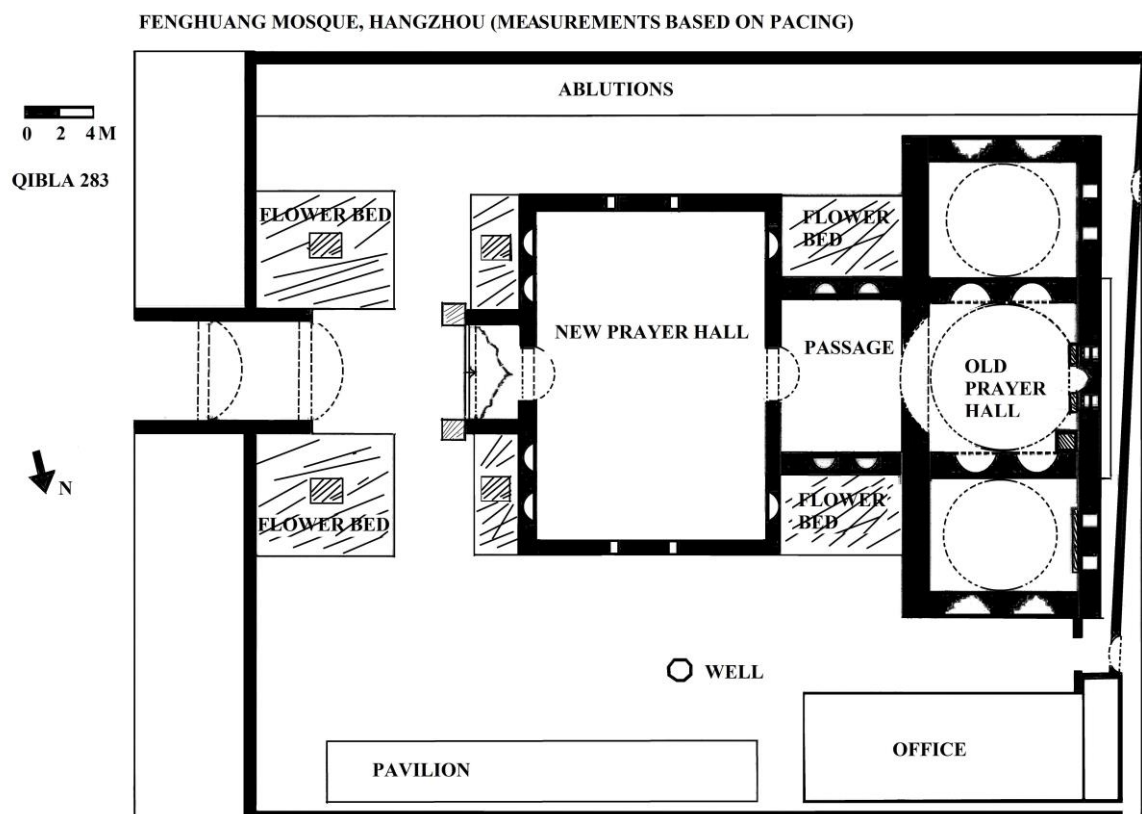
²²¹ See *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., p. 153.

²²² *ibid.*, p. 26.

²²³ Bai Shouyi, *Yuandai Huijiaoren Yu Huijiao*, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

that the mosque referred by Ibn Battuta may have been the Fenghuang Mosque. If so, Ala al-Din could have been the same person or connected with this wealthy family to which that Ibn Battuta referred.

As the mosque is much restored, it is difficult to determine what the original plan may have been. Epigraphic information indicates that there was an additional or extended prayer hall in front of the domed prayer halls, which was restored, presumably in a Chinese style, in the Ming restorations of 1451-1493. It was burned down in 1614, with several subsequent renovations and restorations during Qing times.²²⁵ It is unclear why the recorded Ming restoration is said to have taken such a long time. This may indicate that several restorations or different phases of restoration took place over the 42- year period. In one of those restorations, a five-storey wooden minaret of Chinese type was added to the original entrance portal (Fig.35). The original entrance portal with the minaret was demolished in 1929 to allow for urban expansion.²²⁶ Old photographs show that the original portal resembled portals



Plan IV. Plan of the Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.

²²⁴ Ibn Battuta, and Gibb, op. cit., pp. 293-294.

²²⁵ Information on the event of the fire is provided in documentation in the Fenghuang mosque.

²²⁶ Liu Zhiping, op. cit., p. 26. Wang Shilun, and Zhao Zhenhan, *Hangzhou Shi Hua*, Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, Hangzhou, 1979, pp. 61-62.

in the 13th century mosques and madrasas across the central and Eastern Islamic lands, especially Anatolia, such as the entrance gate of the mosque in Divrik.²²⁷ The present prayer hall of the Fenghuang mosque, in front of the domed halls, connected by a covered passage, and the entrance portal are modern additions.

The only remains of the mosque from the Yuan period is the old prayer hall, which consists of three domed chambers connected through arched openings (Plan IV). This indicates that the mosque perhaps was originally the type of *iwān* mosques. An *iwān* is a vaulted hall, walled on three sides, with one end entirely open, a Sassanian architectural tradition in Persia, which quickly became incorporated into Islamic architecture.²²⁸ The *iwān* mosque featuring domed chambers and *iwāns* that are vaulted spaces open at one end became very popular during the medieval period, to be seen particularly in the Iranian-influenced Islamic world.²²⁹ *Iwāns* were also evidently favored by the Maritime Muslims in Yuan China, since all remains of Yuan period mosques in coastal China are of this type. Clearly, the vaulted space rather than the hypostyle hall was extensively used in domed prayer halls, tombs and covered passageways in Yuan times. That may be linked to the fact that at this period, Persians appear to have comprised the overwhelming majority of the Muslim

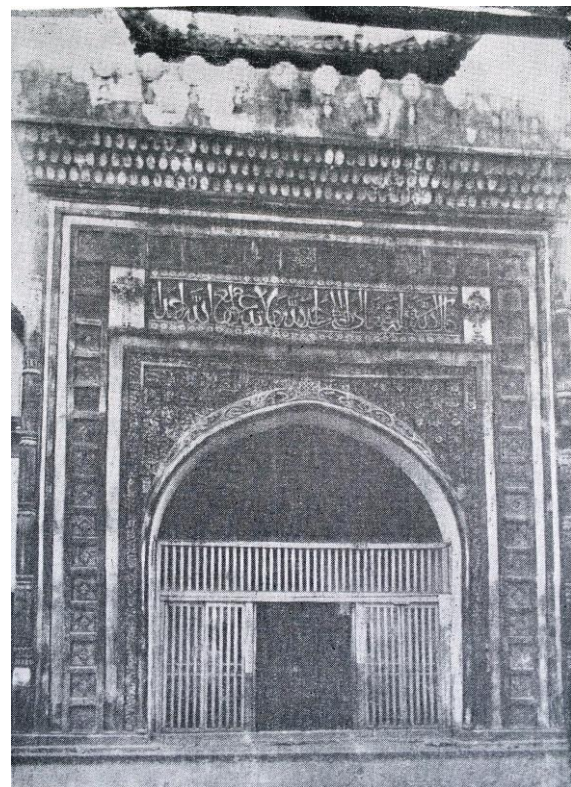


Fig.35. Original entrance portal, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou (from Wang Shilun and Zhao Zhenhan, *Hangzhou Shihua*)

merchants then resident in the Chinese ports. It would be logical for them to have chosen an architectural form closely related to their original homeland.

There is no information on the original architectural form of the additional prayer hall preceded the Chinese-style hall built during the Ming period restorations of 1451-1493, and on whether it was originally connected with the domed halls. Providing the old entrance

²²⁷ For examples of the portals, see Ettinghausen, Grabar, et al., op. cit., pp. 233-234.

²²⁸ On the tradition of *iwān*, see A. Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 130.

²²⁹ For examples of the *iwān* mosques, see Ettinghausen, Grabar, et al., op. cit., pp. 139-142.

portal was built at the same time as the vaulted halls, which is likely, since they agreed stylistically, the space in between may well have been a long hall, most probably a hypostyle hall, leading up to the domed *mihrab* chamber. If the long hall was, indeed, a hypostyle hall, the mosque would have been a combination of two types - *iwan* and hypostyle. The much restored remains, however, gives no hint how the vaulted hall may have been connected with the hypostyle structure.

It has been suggested that the *mihrab* chamber or at least part of the structures, may date to the Song period, since it appears not to have been constructed at the same stage as the other two chambers.²³⁰ There is a Song text describing a mosque that is thought to be the Zhenjia Si, i.e., Fenghuang Mosque. This reads:

回回堂在南大街文錦坊地方,係回回教門聚眾禮拜之所,故名禮拜寺。其堂四方壁立,高五六仞,迎面彩畫,有回教字匾額。中開圓門,內造鷄籠頂,遠見猶如自鳴鐘一座...其屋內若何裝飾不知其詳,此亦杭城之獨有者也。(Huihui tang [i.e., Muslim hall] is located in the Wenjin area in the South Street, [which] is the place where the *huihui jiaomen* [i.e. Muslim community] gathers together worshipping, so it is called Libai Si [i.e., mosque]. Its hall is square rising steeply high up to 5 or 6 ren [i.e., around 10 meter], [there are] colored paintings on the façade, [and] there is a signboard with *huijiao* letters [i.e., Arabic scripts]. [There is] a round door in the middle, a chicken coop ceiling [i.e., dome] is built inside, it looks as if a bell from afar...It is not known how the interior is decorated, this is unique in the city of Hangzhou).²³¹

It is, therefore, possible that some parts of the destroyed Song mosque were still visible when Ala al-Din decided to build a new mosque on the same site in 1281. The domed halls were built of bricks that are comparably durable materials. Any remains from the mosque seen by the Song writer could have been part of the *mihrab* chamber. However, the passage here only tells us that there had been a domed prayer hall before Yuan times. It does not offer more details that would allow a comparison to be made with the present structure, since the domed chamber and *iwan* appear to have been the preferred construction forms throughout the Yuan period, as addressed above. Thus the domed *mihrab* chamber need not have been the remains of the Song period building. It may, instead, have been entirely rebuilt in Yuan times, taking

²³⁰ Liu Zhiping, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²³¹ Fan Zushu, 'Hangsu Yifeng' (Song), *cit. in Chinese Encyclopedia of Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

the same architectural form that appeared to be popular at that time. Even though the three domed chambers seem to have been constructed in different stages, one explanation for this could be that the smaller chambers flanking the *mihrab* chamber were added in the later restorations that the texts indicate took place in the late Yuan period. The pyramidal roofs covering the domes were probably also added later in the Yuan restoration in 1341. This is said to have been sponsored by a descendant of Ala al-Din. While the pyramidal roofs over the two smaller chambers are six-sided with a single eave, the *mihrab* chamber is emphasized by an eight-sided pyramidal roof with a double eave (Fig.33).

Regardless of the issue of whether or not any Song remains are preserved, the passage cited above confirms the point, already addressed in the previous chapter, that the mosques built by the Maritime Muslims during the Song period reflected the artistic tradition of the Islamic world. It also confirms that the early phase of Yuan period mosques continued the artistic development and ideology represented in Song period mosques.

In the later phase of mosque building during the Yuan period, there was an architectural experiment in consciously blending two significant architectural traditions - Chinese and Islamic. This is best represented in the Yuan period remains of the Songjiang Mosque.

Located in the lower Yangtze valley, Songjiang, although only a district of greater Shanghai today, was a center for foreign trade, especially for the spice trade during the Song and Yuan periods. It had been the regional governmental seat for Songjiang Fu, administering the surrounding areas, including today's Shanghai, since Yuan times. Its population included had been a large number of the Muslim merchants as well as Muslim administrators and soldiers of the Mongols during the Yuan period.²³² The Muslim



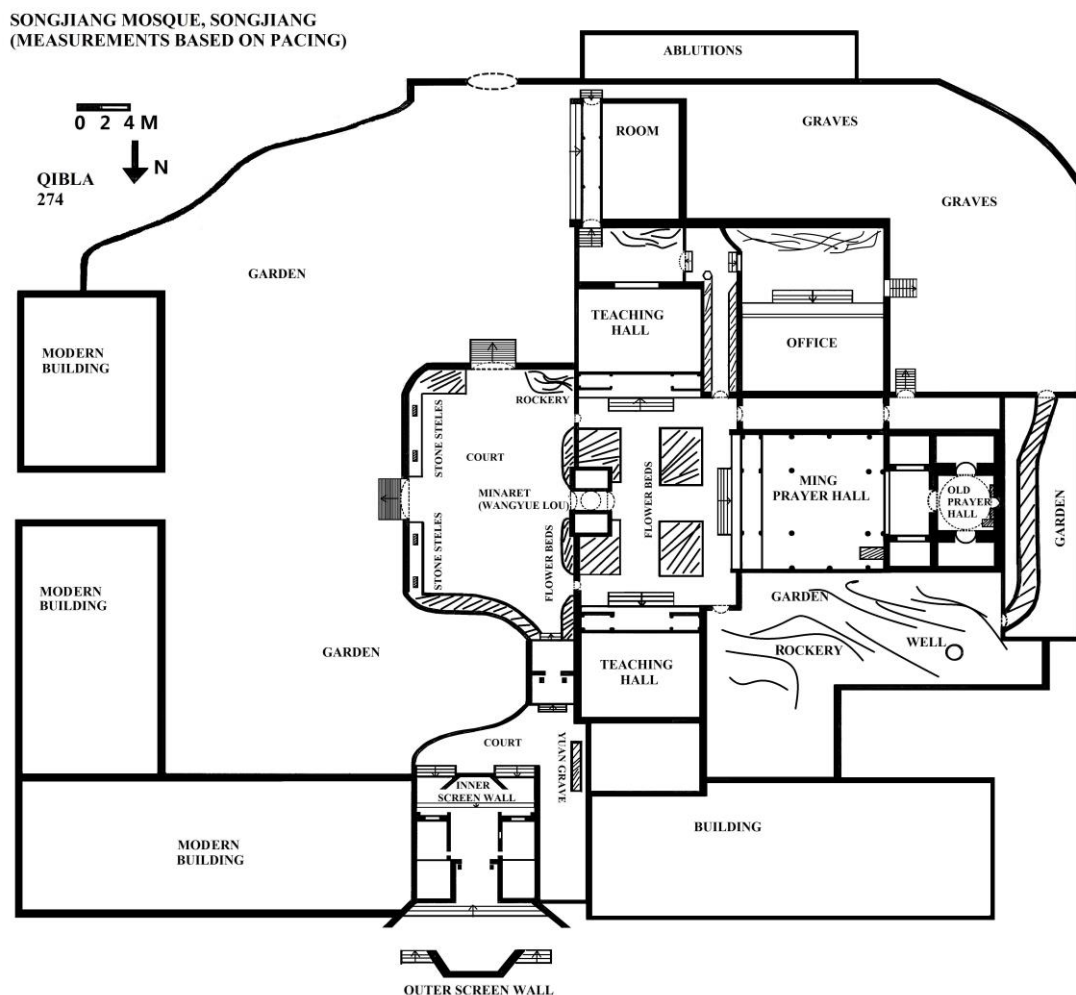
Fig.36. A Yuan period grave preserved in the compound of the Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

cemetery, where the mosque is located, is said to have already been in existence before the mosque was built, evidence of the presence of a large number of Muslims of different origins in Songjiang during the Yuan period.

²³² Sun Xingyan, and Song Rulin, *Songjiang Fu Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 107, 112-113, vol.74, p. 1656. Information on the presence of the Muslims in Songjiang is also provided in the documentation preserved in the Songjiang Mosque

The inscription, dated to 1677, on a stele preserved in the Songjiang Mosque records that the mosque was founded by a Mongol governor in the Yuan Zhizheng reign period (至正 1341-1368). There have been debates over the identity of this Mongol official mentioned in the inscription, since there is no text specifying who he was. There is a Yuan period grave by the entrance gate of the compound of the mosque that has been attributed to the founder of the mosque since 1675, when a commemorative stele was erected on the grave, which states that the person buried there was a Mongol governor(Fig.36).²³³ Whoever this official may have

Plan V. Plan of the Songjiang Mosque. Songjiang.



²³³ Both stelae are preserved in the Songjiang Mosque.

been, he was clearly one of the Muslim allies in the service of the Yuan court. It has been suggested that this governor is Sayyid Nasreddin. According to the local history records, he was appointed as the governor of Songjiang in 1295, being buried there after his death.

Despite the lack of firm evidence, the documentation from the mosque states that the mosque was founded by Sayyid Nasreddin in 1341, having obtained permission from the Yuan court to build on the site of the already existing Muslim cemetery.²³⁴ Regardless of the identity of the individual associated with the founding of the mosque, it is clear that a Yuan Muslim governor founded it, thus demonstrating his personal devotion and, at the same time, serving the large Muslim population in the Songjiang region at that time. The information, therefore, given in the stele of 1677 on the history of the founding of and subsequent restorations of the mosque is likely to be accurate. In addition, the available records of restorations in the early Ming period indicate that the mosque must have already been founded in Yuan times.²³⁵

As is the case with the Fenghuang Mosque, the original layout of the Songjiang Mosque cannot be clearly established, since it was much restored in the Ming and Qing periods. Many of the structures in the present mosque are of Ming and Qing date (Plan V), as recorded in the stele of 1677. Only the old prayer hall can be safely dated to the Yuan period. The third gateway leading to the main court is on the same axis as the *mihrab* and may originally have been the main entrance, also as a minaret (which is discussed in Chapter 7). The north entrance, however, is the main entrance today. The third gateway is composed of a domed passage covered by a double-



Fig.37. Entrance gateway as the minaret, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.



Fig.38. Elevated roof of the *mihrab*, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

²³⁴ This documentation is presented in the exhibition room in the Songjiang Mosque

²³⁵ The documentation in the Songjiang mosque indicates there were restorations took place in 1407.

eaved cross-ridge roof that is known in Chinese architectural term as *shiziji* (十字脊) (Figs.37, 39), and often used in watchtowers at the corners of the city walls,²³⁶ echoing the roofline of the domed prayer hall that was rendered in the same fashion at the western end (Fig.38). This indicates that they were probably laid out and built in the same phase of construction.

Although the inscription on the gateway records that it was restored or rebuilt in 1511 and restored again in 1683, it is not very clear whether the gateway was entirely rebuilt or just restored, since the wording in Chinese is rather ambiguous. Whatever work these restoration involved, they seem, at least, to have been faithful to the original architectural form.

The interior of the domed prayer hall shares the same feature as the domed *mihrab* chamber in the Fenghuang Mosque. It is clearly of *iwan* type - the vaulted hall has a large central dome with *muqarnas* serving the transition from square to circular structure, with vault openings in three sides (Fig.40). This simple form of *muqarnas* in transition zones appears in all Yuan



Fig. 39. Domed passage of the minaret, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.



Fig.40. Interior of the domed *mihrab* chamber, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

remains wherever there are domed structures. While in the Islamic world, the *muqarnas* are often seen of great variety and highly decorative, apart from serving architectural functions, the *muqarnas* here appear barely decorative, even if they are meant to be decorative elements. This simple yet uniform *muqarnas*, seen in all remains of mosques and tombs from the Yuan period, is one of the typical features of Yuan structures. This may suggest that the Chinese builders were unfamiliar with the use of the architectural form of *muqarnas*.

The significance of the Songjiang mosque, however, lies in its creative blending of different artistic traditions. Whereas the domed chambers of the Fenghuang mosque seem to have had the

²³⁶ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 14.

Chinese elements added at a later date, the Yuan period remains of the Songjiang mosque suggests that the idea of combining Chinese and Islamic architectural elements was present in its original plan. This created a distinct architectural form, displaying a fusion of two architectural traditions, yet signaling the beginning of the process of the development of the syncretic tradition. This form with mixed Chinese and Islamic styles is elsewhere seen neither in Chinese architecture, nor in buildings in the world of Islam, thus representing a regional style of mosque architecture of the Muslim world.

It could be compared with the development phase of Mughal architecture in India, another regional variation evolved in the Muslim world. When the Mughals settled in India, an ancient land, like China, with well-developed architectural traditions of its own, they absorbed Indian architectural traditions into their architectural practices. From early architectural experiments in Fatehpur Sikri to the later architectural practices in Agra and Delhi, a distinct style of Mughal architecture was eventually developed with a sophisticated fusion of Indian and Islamic architectural traditions, as is best represented in the magnificent Taj Mahal (1630–1648) in Agra.²³⁷

Furthermore, the Songjiang Mosque provides evidence that, toward the end of the Yuan period, new ideas and new elements introduced by the Central Asian Muslim allies of the Mongols began to affect the architectural practices, as well as the daily life, of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China.

The Yuan mosques represent a transition in the development of Islamic architecture in coastal China from a pure Islamic form, imported from the heartlands of Islam, to an architectural form in which Chinese architectural elements are incorporated. This reflects the gradual changes of the nature of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China during the Yuan period. As Muslim subjects of the Mongols of Central Asian origins merged into the Muslim community in coastal China, the once trade-orientated maritime Muslim community, dominated by Arab and Persian merchants, so, during the late Yuan period, the community changed, with leadership being provided by elites of rich merchants and powerful officials of different origins. The Maritime Muslims, like the Muslim officials of Central Asian origins, became active participants in political and social life as well as the economic life of Yuan

²³⁷ For the development of the Mughal architecture, see E. Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526-1858)*, Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1991.

China. As the separate life of the community began to break down, this was followed by integration into wider Yuan Chinese society.

The process of merging of the Muslims of different origins varied from one port or trading centre to another in coastal China. While in some ports and trading centres, like Nanjing, they merged in comparatively peaceful way, in some other ports, like Quanzhou, there were years of conflict between competing groups, culminating in the Isbah rebellion, as noted above. This led not only to a reduction of the numbers of the Maritime Muslims of Middle Eastern origin, but also provoked the hostility of the Chinese, who had long been good hosts for the once peaceful merchant community. Although the Mongol Yuan dynasty had initially displayed tolerance towards its Muslim subjects, of whatever origin, and had, indeed, often favored them, the violent conflicts within the Muslim community eventually provoked a change in policy and Yuan troops were sent to restore peace.²³⁸ It has been suggested that these events may have led to the loss of hundreds of thousands lives in Muslim community. In any event, the disturbances brought to an end of centuries-old mercantile dominance of the Maritime Muslims in the ports of China.

As the Yuan dynasty itself weakened and then collapsed during the mid-14th century and the Isbah conflict and its crushing by Yuan forces wreaked havoc in the ports of China, many surviving Muslim merchants returned to their original homeland, further reducing the presence of the Muslim community in coastal China. The Ming dynasty which followed, in 1638, introduced new policies on overseas trade and adopted a different approach to that of the Yuan with regards to Muslims and foreigners in general. As a result, there were changes in the way in which Islamic practices and the Muslim community developed in China. This was reflected in changes in the style of construction of mosques in coastal China in the centuries that followed.

²³⁸ Chen Dasheng, *Guangyu Yuanmo Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu De Jige Wenti*, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

Chapter 4

Mosques of their Own: Formation of a Distinct Chinese Style Mosque in the Ming (1368-1644)

The Political, Economic, and Social Conditions of Ming China

While the previous dynastic changes had not in any way affected the maritime connection between coastal China and the Muslim world, with the break-up of the Yuan dynasty and the founding of the Ming dynasty, the new policies enforced by the founder of the Ming effectively brought to an end the maritime trading pattern that had endured since early Tang times. It also led to major change in the development of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China.

The determination of the founding father of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (r: 1368-1398 with the reigning title Hongwu) to reinstate the Han Chinese rule is well-known. The Ming dynasty, in fact, was the last dynasty in imperial China to be comprised of Han Chinese. After restoring a Han Chinese dynasty and establishing his dominion over China, the Hongwu Emperor issued a series of laws in his first years as ruler that reflect his determination to quickly restore Han Chinese culture and social norms. His foreign, economic and cultural policy is well reflected in *The Real Record of Ming Taizu (Ming Taizu Shilu 明太祖實錄)*.²³⁹

His rule was marked by a strong sense of isolationism, which was in sharp contrast to the open door policy adopted by the previous dynasties, especially the Mongol Yuan. The trading ports in coastal China, thus, were closed for free trade. Instead, overseas trade was conducted by the imperial court and regulated by the guidelines of the ancient tributary system.²⁴⁰ Consequently, both Chinese and foreign merchants were banned to trade privately, even offshore on the open sea. The imperial court tightly controlled both the items allowed to be traded as well as the volume of trade. This reflected the economic policy of the Ming in emphasising the agriculture rather than trade, which had been the cases with previous

²³⁹ Dong Lun, Li Jinglong, et al., 'Ming Taizu Shilu' (1399) in *Ming Shilu (Ming)*, vol.1,2,3,4., Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo, Nangang, 1962-1966.

²⁴⁰ Under the tributary system, the foreign trade was carried out in a form of paying the tribute to the imperial Chinese court. Then the court would fix the returns both the type of goods and volumes that strictly controlled only by the court. It was an ancient system but had been marginalized since early Tang times after the opening of the ports for free trade.

dynasties.²⁴¹

As discussed in the previous chapter, as the Mongol Yuan dynasty disintegrated, there was a period of chaos from 1357 to 1366 in coastal China from which the Ming dynasty eventually emerged. During the insecurity of this period, many foreign merchants had already started to leave coastal China for their original homeland. The major shift in foreign policy including maritime policy, in the early Ming period had a direct impact on the weakening Maritime Muslim community. By the 15th century, the majority of the foreign merchants, including those Muslims of Middle Eastern origin, had left the Chinese trading ports, because of the Ming policy of prohibiting maritime trade. As a result, the surviving Muslim community was largely comprised of the former Muslim officials and soldiers of the Mongol Yuan who subdued to the Ming and those who were descendants from generations of Muslim intermarriage with the Han Chinese.

Furthermore, the Ming emphasised a cultural policy of reviving Chinese traditions, harking back to the forms and the traditions of the past, of the Han, the Tang and the Song. Thus Confucian learning was reinforced through the reinstatement of the imperial examination which had been marginalised by the Mongol Yuan.²⁴² These, based on Confucian classics, were used to select candidates for the civil service of the state, from which the scholar-bureaucrat or scholar-official class was formed.

The Hongwu Emperor also issued a ban on the use of foreign languages and of names of foreign origin, as well as one on foreign organisations, as part of his policy of eliminating foreign customs.²⁴³ Further legislation forbade foreigners to marry within their own communities, forcing them, by law, to marry Han Chinese.²⁴⁴ As a result of the enforcement of these laws, the process of ‘Sinicization’ of the maritime Muslim community was accelerated. As already discussed in the previous chapter, the ‘Sinicization’ of the Muslim community in coastal China had already begun to take place towards the late Yuan period, a process in which intermarriage between Muslims of foreign origin and the Han Chinese played an important role, in addition to the increasing involvement of the Muslims in the political and social life in late Yuan China. Adopting the Han culture and customs, however,

²⁴¹ Dong Lun, Li Jinglong, et al., *Ming Taizu Shilu*, op. cit., vol.1, pp. 0148-0177, 0785-0789, vol.3, pp. 0903, 0987, 1279,1300, vol.4, pp. 1400-1401, 1564-1565.

²⁴² *ibid.*, vol.1, p. 0194, vol.3, p. 1020.

²⁴³ *ibid.*, vol.2, pp. 0524-0525, vol.4, pp. 1352-1354, 1441, 1471.

²⁴⁴ Jiang Yonglin, trans., *The Great Ming Code: Da Ming Lu*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2005, p. 88. Also see *Ming Lu* (Ming), vol. 6, cit. in *Nanjing Huizu Yisilan Jiao Shigao*, Wu Yiye (eds.), Nanjing Yisilanjiao Xiehui, Nanjing, 1999, p. 61.

had been the Muslims' own free choice, rather than being forced upon them by law, as now became the case under the Ming authority.

This racial policy of the Hongwu Emperor, however, did not discriminate further against foreigners of different origins, but sought, rather, to integrate and assimilate them into Chinese society, in line with the Emperor's ambition of recreating a Han dominion over China. It was true that many Muslims were killed when the Ming troops pushed into the coastal regions of China, especially in Quanzhou, making use of the already prevailing anti-foreigner mood provoked by the Muslim-led conflict in the area to crack down the power of the alliance between the Muslim merchants and officials of the Mongol Yuan, as discussed in the previous chapter.

It was said that there was a specific instruction to persecute the pre-eminent Pu family in Quanzhou, because of the role played earlier by the family in helping the Mongols to extinguish the Song regime in the late Song and early Yuan periods.²⁴⁵ This initial harshness towards the foreigners, however, was limited in terms of time and was implemented as part of the process of establishing unchallenged Ming authority. In fact, upon his ascension to the throne, the Hongwu Emperor immediately issued a series of decrees concerning the treatment of the former Yuan soldiers, generals and officials who submitted to the Ming. These imperial decrees state emphatically that such individuals should not be treated harshly but mercifully and generously. In particular, it was noted that those who had special skills, for example, in science or astronomy, should be welcomed with respect into the service of the science division of the Ming court.²⁴⁶

Despite his tough racial policy, the Hongwu Emperor, however, did not suppress Islam. Rather, he introduced a sustained policy of support for his Muslim subjects. There was a Song dynasty precedent for this sympathy and tolerance to Islam. Arising out of the Ming desire to model themselves on the Song and earlier dynasties, which had preceded the Yuan period, there was a willingness to show a benign attitude to the Muslims just as the Song emperors had done. Given the tolerance shown to Islam by the Tang and, especially, by the Song, the

²⁴⁵ Huai Yinbu, *Quanzhou Fu Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 75, Chap. Shiyi, 36, 37. Fang Ding, Zhu Shengyuan, et al., *Jinjiang Xian Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 15, p. 462. Chen Menglei, and Jiang Tingxi, *Gujin Tushu Jicheng: Ji Suoyin*, op. cit., Chap. Fangxing Huibian • Zhifang Diang, vol.1052, Quanzhou Bu • Jishi 3. Xi Halunding, 'Quanzhou Huizu Zhi Jinxi Guan', in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Yanjiu Lunwen Xuan*, Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan, and Quanzhou Shi Quanzhou Lishi Yanjiuhu (eds.), Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, Fuzhou, 1983, p. 42.

²⁴⁶ Dong Lun, Li Jinglong, et al., *Ming Taizu Shilu*, op. cit., vol.1, p. 0039, vol. 2, pp. 0637, 0817, vol.3, pp. 1147-1148.

acceptance of China's Islamic tradition by the Ming is no great surprise.

Furthermore, although the collapse of the Mongol Yuan was a result of the military rebellion, the founding of the Ming dynasty was in fact achieved with substantial support from many former Yuan Muslim soldiers. It is well-known that several former Yuan generals, who revolted against the Yuan and allied with the forces of Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming emperor, in overthrowing the Yuan, were Muslims. They played an important role in the establishment of the new dynasty. In addition, many former Yuan Muslim soldiers were incorporated into the Ming forces, later being turned into *tuntian* soldiers after order was restored by the Ming. Thus many mosques were built for or by the Muslim soldiers in the locations where they were stationed, as noted below.

Some Chinese Muslims have even suggested that the first Emperor became a convert to Islam when he served in the Yuan military, although there is insufficient evidence to support this suggestion. Regardless of whether he was Muslim or not, the Emperor certainly supported his Muslim subjects, which is evident from an edict issued by him in 1392 (Fig.41), providing the sponsorship of the Ming court for the construction of two Libai Si, i.e., mosques - one of them in Nanjing, the Ming Capital, and another in Xi'an, the old Tang capital. The edict also gave permission for the rebuilding or restoration of the old mosques that were destroyed or seriously damaged during the tumultuous events that occurred during



Fig.41. Stele after the original in the Huajue Mosque in Xi'an, bearing the imperial edict of 1392, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

dynastic change in the late Yuan and early Ming periods.²⁴⁷ There is an unproven Muslim tradition insisting that permission was given by Tang Taizong for the building of the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou, although, as already discussed in Chapter 1, this tradition was more likely later invention in the Ming period. It may have been inspired by this imperial edict of the Ming. Although the Tang and Song had supported and tolerated Islam, this was the first time in the Chinese history that mosques appear to have been founded with royal patronage.

²⁴⁷ This imperial edict is recorded in a stele preserved in the Huajue mosque in Xi'an, dated to 1405. There is a copy of the stele in the Jingjue mosque in Nanjing. These two mosques are said to be the two grand mosques sponsored by the Emperor.

In addition, there is a eulogy praising Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, dated to 1368, known as *Baizi Zan* (百字讚 Fig.42), i.e., *The Hundred-word Eulogy*.²⁴⁸ It is traditionally attributed to the Hongwu Emperor, although it has been much questioned by scholars. The eulogy is said to have been recorded in a commemorative stele dated to 1492 that was preserved in the great mosque of Nanjing, the Jingjue Si (淨覺寺), which is now lost, but the text is collected in *Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu* (天方至聖實錄), i.e., *The Real Record of the Last Prophet of Islam*, by Liu Zhi, a Muslim scholar of the early Qing.²⁴⁹ The Emperor is said to have written the Eulogy on the occasion of issuing a decree giving a permission to build two mosques in Nanjing, as noted below. Although the Emperor did, indeed, show great sympathy towards Islam, it is questionable whether he would have felt the need to write a Eulogy praising Islam personally. The text of the Eulogy is very similar in tone with other Ming texts, discussed in Chapter 1, and it may be suggested that it was another Ming period invention by the Muslims for the same reason-to emphasis their legitimacy and the protection afforded to them. If, indeed, the eulogy was mentioned in the lost stele of 1492, this was the period when the Maritime Muslims were trying to re-establish their community in coastal China after the serious destruction in the late Yuan period, and the low ebb in the early Ming period. It would have been logical for them to try to find ways to secure the social position of their religion, thence, of the community. Alternatively, it is possible that it may have been written by one of the high ranking Muslim officials, many of whom were well-known influential advisors in the close circle of the Emperor in the early years of the Ming, but with contents that may, perhaps, have been approved by the Emperor.



Fig.42. Stele after the original of 1492, bearing 'Baizi Zan', Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

This tradition of protecting Islam and offering support to his Muslim subjects set by the first

²⁴⁸ *Baizi Zan*. While the original stele of 1492 bearing the Eulogy has been lost, there is a stele with text said to be a copy of it in the Jingjue Mosque. See the copy of the text in Appendix,

²⁴⁹ Liu Zhi, 'Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu' (Qing), in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol.21-23.

Ming emperor was carried on through the Ming period in subsequent centuries. There are a series of imperial edicts from the Ming emperors insisting on protection and toleration for their Muslim subjects, for example, the Yongle edict of 1407, as mentioned in Chapter 1, issued by the third Ming emperor Zhu Di (r.1402-1424 with the reigning title Yongle). Many mosques were built for the *tuntian* Muslim soldiers such as in Guangzhou, and Hainan during the reign of the Chenghua Emperor (r.1464-1487).

During the Yongle years under the third emperor Zhu Di, regarded as the most enlightened Ming emperor, the China trade into the Indian Ocean was revived but in a very different manner to the way in which it had operated in earlier times, where it was controlled by Muslims from the West who had sailed in great numbers to China. The Ming fleet, under the command of the eunuch admiral Zheng He, a Muslim descended from a former Yuan official of Central Asian origin, launched a series of expeditions into the Indian Ocean in a manner and on a scale that had never previously occurred. Starting in 1405 and ending in 1433 the Chinese sent as many as seven naval expeditions into the western Indian Ocean. The expeditions sailed to South East Asia, Southern India and Sir Lanka, the Persian Gulf, and to the East African coast, as far south to Mozambique. The Large Chinese fleets set out from Changle,²⁵⁰ heavily manned and armed. The first of these fleets went to Calicut on the Malabar Coast of India, with later fleets sailed as far as Hurmûz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, Aden and East Africa.²⁵¹

The date of the Ming naval expeditions to the West coincides with the revival of the commercial system in the Persian Gulf, first under the rulers of Kish, an island off the Iranian coast, and, then more importantly under the Shahs of Hurmuz from the later 14th C. It is in this period that growing evidence of trade with the Far East begins to be reflected at certain sites in the Persian Gulf where 14th-15th century Longquan celadon regularly appear, sometimes in great quantity²⁵². It was this trade between the Islamic world and the ports of southern and southeastern China of which the Portuguese seized control in the early 16th century.

²⁵⁰ Changle is a harbour near Quanzhou in Fujian province.

²⁵¹ Zheng He's expeditions are well recorded and studied, see Ma Huan, *Yingya Shenglan* (Ming), with commentary by Wang Ming, Haiyang Chubanshe, Beijing, 2005. Zhongguo Guojia Bowuguan (eds.), *Yunfan Wanli Zhao Chongyang: Jinian Zheng He Xia Xiyang liubai Zhounian*, Zhongguo Guojia Bowuguan, Beijing, 2005, pp. 11-16.

²⁵² Communication, Dr. G.R.D. King, referring especially to the Hurmuzi outpost at Julfâr, in Ra's al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates.

The great scale of these Chinese fleets seems to have been associated with the intention of putting down piracy in the Indian Ocean as well as being an unusual projection of Chinese power and commerce. The despatching of the fleets was eventually abandoned, however, because of internal Ming politics following the death of the Yongle Emperor in 1424 while campaigning against the Mongols. The Yongle era and its naval expedition had a strong impact on the development of the Muslim community in coastal China. The Yongle Emperor, like his father, the first Emperor of the Ming, not only tolerated Islam, but also drew a large numbers of Muslims of various talents into the service of the Ming court. He revised the agricultural-orientated economic policy of his father, and re-introduced and revived Chinese overseas trade. The new policy provided chances to the Maritime Muslims on the Chinese coast once again to exercise their ability in trade. As is well-known, many were recruited to join the naval expeditions under Admiral Zheng He. This raised their social status, thence, speeding up the process of recovery of the community. Many Muslims once again became actively involved in state affairs, some rising to become influential figures. Indeed, the most famous Muslim personality of the time was Admiral Zheng He himself, although the power and influence of the Muslim community as a whole was not comparable to that enjoyed during the Yuan period.

Towards the mid-Ming period, there was, once again, an efflorescence of the Muslim community in coastal China. The nature of the community, however, had changed; once distinguishably foreign; it had now become assimilated into Chinese society through intermarriages and the tough racial policy of the Hongwu Emperor. While during the previous dynasties, the foreign Muslim community in coastal China had permission to run *fanxue*, i.e., foreign school, as noted in Chapter 1, under the Ming rule the maritime Muslims were encouraged to join *ruxue* (儒學), i.e., the Confucian school, which is evident in appearances of many Muslim Confucian scholars in the Ming period, and some of them became very influential figures and played an very important role in the development of Islam in China, as noted below. The *ruxue* provided the Muslims with equal opportunities, through the imperial examination system, to obtain civil positions in the Ming court, at the same time, they gradually lost their own culture and customs, as well as the strong tie that had formerly linked them to the Islamic lands of the Middle East. This change in the Maritime Muslim community during the Ming period is reflected in the changing characteristic of the mosques that they built, especially from the mid-Ming onwards.

Mosques of the Ming: the Phase of Restoration

As already discussed in previous chapter, the event of the Muslim conflict involving the Muslim community in coastal China in the last decade of the Yuan resulted in serious destruction of the mosques of the Maritime Muslim community. It was then followed by the chaotic times of the dynastic change, during which the Muslim community in coastal China struggled to survive. When order was restored with the creation of the Ming dynasty, there was a period during which the Muslim community tried to adapt to the new conditions set by the Ming authority. There were no building activities of the mosques recorded in the coastal regions, until the times when the Hongwu edict was issued, as noted above, giving permission to build and restore mosques. The occasion of declaring this imperial decree was documented in different forms in old



Fig.43. A 'chijian' signboard, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

mosques, for example, a signboard elaborated with royal motifs of golden dragons bearing the characters *chijian* (勅建), i.e., built under the imperial decree, hanging above the entrance door (Fig.43). That confirms the importance for the Muslim community of preserving their source of protection after the destruction of the previous period.

Apart from the building of the great mosque in Nanjing, the Jingjue Mosque, however, the building activities of the Muslim community in coastal China were mainly confined to restorations of the old Yuan period remains, especially before the mid-Ming period. Although epigraphic information indicates that almost all surviving Yuan period mosques had undergone restoration by the mid-Ming period, only a few structures from the Ming period have survived to present times, since subsequent restorations took place later in the Qing period and thereafter. For example, the inscription on the stele of 1609 preserved in the Ashab Mosque,²⁵³ as noted in Chapter 2, indicates that there were earlier restorations in Ming times, but no structures from this restoration remain now. The northern part of the Ashab Mosque formerly had living quarters for imams with reception rooms, which were converted to a mosque consisting of the prayer hall and a teaching quarter (Plan I) during the Ming period. Although it is unclear when those structures had first developed, they were in

²⁵³ Li Guangjin, op. cit., see the copy of full text in Appendix.

existence by the Ming period, as indicated in restoration records on the stele. The main hall in the living quarter that is located in the northeast corner of the mosque compound, named Mingshan Tang (明善堂), was converted to prayer hall after the superstructure of the old prayer hall collapsed in the Qing period. The Mingshan Tang today still functions as a prayer



Fig.44. Elevation of the Mingshan Tang, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

hall, as the old prayer hall still remains in ruins. It is, however, a modern restoration but modelled after the form of the restoration of the late Qing period (Fig.44),²⁵⁴ which took an architectural form of the traditional residential architecture of Minnan (閩南), i.e., South Fujian, as discussed further in Chapter 5. The stele of 1609 does not specify the architectural form of the Mingshan Tang at the time of the restoration, but provides a

picture of the view of the northern quarter after it. The living quarter, thus, with the added *ting* (庭) i.e., courtyard, *lou* (樓) i.e., multi-storey building, and *ting* (亭) i.e., pavilion to the east of the Mingshan Tang, where the kitchen quarter used to be located, projected a



Fig.45. Entrance gate to the former teaching quarter, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

harmonious view as a whole. This converted kitchen quarter, now lost with only an entrance gate being preserved (Fig.45), functioned as the place for religious teaching, thus performing part of the functions of a madrasa. The passage mentioned above on the stele implies that there was no alternation of the Mingshan Tang, and the added parts were Chinese in character. Documents preserved in the Ashab Mosque suggest that the

structure of Mingshan Tang at the time of 1609 restoration was a mix of Islamic and Chinese architectural forms. It is not clear whether this mixed form was created in the earlier restoration of the Ming period, or it was originally built in that form. Providing the living quarters with the main hall of Mingshan Tang were already in existence during the Yuan period, the suggested Chinese elements may have well been added at the time when the five-

²⁵⁴ Information from the documentation preserved in the Ashab mosque, also personal communication with the members of the community during fieldwork.

storey wooden minaret of a Chinese style and the possible Chinese superstructure on the original prayer hall, now vanished, as discussed in Chapter 2, were added in the restoration sometime around the mid-Ming period.

It seems to be the case that the Ming restoration tended to preserve the surviving Yuan period remains, but built new structures in a Chinese style around them or connected with them. The surviving example of this kind of Ming restoration is found in the Songjiang Mosque, as noted in Chapter 3.



Fig.46. Elevation of the extended prayer hall, Songjing Mosque, Songjiang.

According to the epigraphic information preserved in the mosque, since the issuing of the Hongwu edict,

the mosque underwent several restorations several times during the Ming period. There were three structures being added in these Ming period restorations: the extended prayer hall (Figs.46, 47) connected with the domed prayer hall of the Yuan period remains through a covered passage, and the structures flanking the courtyard at the side, reserved for teaching of Islam (Plan V).²⁵⁵ It was a feature of restorations in the Ming period that separate rooms were added to the old mosques for the purpose of religious teaching, these being known as

jiangjing tang (講经堂), namely the teaching hall (Fig.48). This reflects the awareness of the Muslims of the importance of religious teaching at the time of the restoration of their community, accompanying the restoration of their mosques in the coastal China. As already noted in previous chapters, after the events in the coastal regions in the late Yuan and early Ming periods, many Muslims escaped to remote places or had to



Fig.47. Interior of the extended prayer hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

disguise their religious identity out of fear of persecution. As a result, many Muslims lost touch with the community, and, therefore, with the guidelines of religious practice during that chaotic period. After the order was restored in the coastal region, in particular, after the Hongwu edict was issued, as noted above, these Muslims started to re-establish their ties with the community. Their knowledge of Islam, however, had become marginalized, especially with the younger generation. The need for a framework within which religion could be taught

²⁵⁵ Information on restorations is from the inscription on the stele of 1677 preserved in the Songjiang Mosque.

had, therefore, become a necessary part of the process of recovery of the Muslim community. This mosque-based teaching became a prototype which later developed into the Chinese Islamic Education System, known as *jingtang jiaoyu* (經堂教育), a mosque-based education



Fig.48. Elevation of the north teaching hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

system.²⁵⁶ It still dominates Chinese Islamic education today, especially in the northwestern province of Gansu, where the *jingtang jiaoyu* were systematically developed in the Qing period.

The extension of the prayer hall and the building in the north side of the courtyard are structures preserved from the Ming period, while the

building in the south side, balancing the one in the north side, is from the Qing period restoration.

They are of a typical type of Chinese traditional architecture. Built of wood on a raised stone platform, the building, with a balcony to the front, is framed by wooden timbers of columns and beams supporting a roof. Here the structure of the halls features the type of *chuandou shi* (穿斗式), i.e., crossbeam type (Fig.49), which is one of the oldest structural types of traditional Chinese architecture, commonly used in southern architecture. Another structural type is the *dieliang shi* (叠梁式), i.e., piling girder type, which suits better for the larger scale buildings because it offers ample yet more flexible spaces, commonly used in palace buildings.²⁵⁷ Perhaps since the Islamic buildings in the coastal regions are rarely grand in their scale, the crossbeam type appears to have been the choice for the structures of these buildings. In both structural types, columns and beams are seen often to be jointed with a



Fig.49. Detail of the structural frame of the prayer hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

structure of *dougong* (斗拱), i.e., interlocking brackets, as well as a structure of *queti* (雀替),

²⁵⁶ The mosque based teaching system was first introduced by Hu Dengzhou(胡登洲) of a Shanxi Muslim in the late 16th century. It became popular and gradually developed into a mosque based education system of three levels in the Linxia region of Gansu province: primary school, middle school and college. The schools are open to all Muslims with free accommodations and tuitions provided by the mosques to which the schools are attached. Arabic and Persian grammars and literatures, Qur'an and Islamic philosophies are taught in the schools. See *Chinese Encyclopedia of Islam*, op. cit., pp. 223-224, pp. 759-760.

²⁵⁷ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 1.

i.e., decorative brackets, in Chinese architectural terminology. Both *dougong* and *queti* brackets are characteristic structural elements as well as decorative elements in traditional Chinese architecture. They are supporting structures, helping to shift the weight loads of the wood frame of the buildings, and at the same time, the often intricate designs of *dougong* and elaborate carvings of *queti* are highly decorative (which is further discussed in Chapter 8).²⁵⁸ The wooden columns typically rest on stone pedestals, the *zhuchu* (柱礎) in Chinese architectural terminology, providing stronger foundation, since the columns usually are load-bearing columns.²⁵⁹ The room is divided into multiple bays by the rows of columns. Such buildings are normally classed or identified according to numbers of bays, for example, the *wujian* (五間), i.e. the five-bay room, should not be mistaken as five rooms but a room with five bays.

The extension of the prayer hall was originally a larger structure, with at least five bays, but it was scaled down to a three-bay building, like the teaching hall, in the modern renovation.²⁶⁰ The both buildings have wooden screen doors and windows on the front side, another typical feature of Chinese traditional architecture. It is noteworthy that the roofs of both buildings are of very simple type with a straight single incline, termed *yingshan* (硬山), i.e., a flush gable roof, which is often used in residential buildings of the commoners or less important buildings.²⁶¹ That may reflect the different state of the Muslim community in the early Ming, in comparison with previous dynasties, having a sense of insecurity rather than confidence, despite the protection offered by the Ming authority through a series of imperial decrees. They, therefore, chose to build modest, rather than lavish, buildings as part of the process of recovery of their community.



Fig.50. Elevation of the new prayer hall, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou

Another example is the Ming restoration of the Fenghuang Mosque. As noted in Chapter 3, and as in the case of the Songjiang Mosque, an extended prayer hall connected through a covered passage to the domed chambers of the Yuan remains was added in the Ming restoration of 1451-1493 (Plan IV). Perhaps the five-storey wooden

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 73-77.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 1-8, on characteristics of traditional Chinese architecture in general.

²⁶⁰ Liu Zhiping, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁶¹ Gao Yang, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

minaret was also added to the original entrance portal during this restoration. Although these added structures during the Ming period no longer exist, they are well documented, as noted in Chapter 3. The epigraphic information preserved in the stele of 1493 hints that the added hall was a five-bay hall of Chinese style,²⁶² hence similar to the Ming prayer hall in the Songjiang Mosque. As documented, there had been subsequent restorations of the hall during the Qing period, and the Qing structure survived until 1953, when it was replaced by the hall seen today (Fig.50) because of its poor state of preservation.²⁶³ The Qing structure was clearly a wooden timber building of a traditional Chinese style, which also confirms the style of the original Ming structure, since there is, in terms of traditional architectural form, no different between the Ming and Qing periods in general. The minaret may be compared with the previously - mentioned five-storey wooden minaret in the Ashab Mosque, which, as noted earlier, is a Ming period addition in the same manner (which is further discussed in Chapter 7). The demolished minaret in the Fenghuang Mosque may also have been of the same style.

Building of the Mosques in the Ming

Towards the mid-Ming period, following the recovery of the Muslim community in coastal China, the building activities of the Muslim community resumed. Records show that many mosques were built for the needs of the garrison soldiers in Guangzhou and Hainan Island during the Chenghua reign period, most of which, however, are lost now. In Guangzhou, the Haopan Mosque (濠畔寺) and the Xiaodongying Mosque (小東營清真寺 Fig.51) are



Fig.51. Entrance gate, Xiaodongying Mosque, Guangzhou.

preserved in comparatively good condition and remains in use by the Muslim community, whereas, in Hainan Island, all of the Ming period mosques were destroyed during the Japanese invasion in the early 1940s.²⁶⁴

In the Jiangnan (江南) regions of the lower Yangtze valley,²⁶⁵ the new building activities were mainly confined to the early Ming capital of Nanjing. Here the Muslim community began to grow strong since the Ming period, while weakening in the trading ports like

²⁶² The stele is preserved in the Fenghuang Mosque.

²⁶³ Information on restorations during the Qing period is from the stele of 1670 preserved in the Fenghuang Mosque, also in documentations preserved in the mosque, especially the reference to the modern restoration.

²⁶⁴ Chen Leji et al., op. cit., pp. 253-256

Quanzhou and Yangzhou. Although there was a presence of Muslim merchants in Nanjing before Ming times, it was never comparable with the presence of the Maritime Muslims in the great port of Yangzhou nearby and in the other trading centers in the Jiangnan regions, such as Hangzhou and Songjiang. The center of the Maritime Muslim community, however, shifted from the major trading ports to Nanjing during the Ming period. Following the founding of the Ming dynasty, Nanjing, established as the Ming capital by the Hongwu Emperor, rose to importance as political, economic and cultural center of China, the Muslim community, thus, benefited from the direct support of the Ming court and from the influential Muslim personalities serving in the court in the process of its recovery, as noted earlier. Most importantly, the initiatives that the Muslims took in trying to adapt to the new political, social and economic conditions set by the Ming effectively helped the reestablishment of their community in coastal China. One of their efforts, in particular, was to promote Islamic education. It was this intellectual activity of the Muslim community that made Nanjing a center of Islamic studies in China towards the mid-Ming period. It retained its dominance as a center of Islamic studies till the mid-Qing period. There were 36 mosques in Nanjing alone recorded by the time of the Taiping Rebellion in the late Qing period, most of which were destroyed during the time of this Rebellion.²⁶⁶

Although the Muslim community tended to preserve and continue to make use the remains dating to the Yuan period, whether of pure Islamic form or in the forms with mixed architectural traditions, as shown in the restorations or rebuilding work carried out in the Ming period, the new structures that were added to mosque complexes were of purely Chinese architectural form. This signals the next architectural phase of development of mosques in coastal China.

As discussed in Chapter 3, a distinct Islamic architectural style, blending both Islamic and Chinese traditions, had been developed in coastal China in the late Yuan period. However, it appears that this process of blending of two different architectural traditions to achieve a sophisticated and refined style, as had happened with Mughal architecture, did not continue. Surviving mosques suggest that this architectural practice in the late Yuan period was purely

²⁶⁵ Jiangnan, literally, south of the river, i.e., Yangtze River, it is comprises the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai area in the lower Yangtze valley.

²⁶⁶ The Taiping Rebellion was a movement led by Hong Xiuquan in southern China from 1850 to 1864, against the Manchu Qing Dynasty. This massive civil war cost at least 20 million lives. Hong established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom with its capital at Nanjing. Information on records of the Mosques built in the Ming period, see Wu Yiye, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

a temporary innovation that was not continued into the Ming period. This innovation of combining both Islamic and Chinese styles, however, represents a transition in terms of incorporating the Chinese architectural elements into the Islamic architectural practices in coastal China. When the Maritime Muslims started to build new mosques after the community recovered from its low point in the Ming period, they began to build in a purely Chinese form, the Islamic element being reduced to its essentials, related to specifically liturgical requirements in Islam, such as the orientation of the *qibla* wall.

It has been suggested that the first mosques built by the Muslim community in coastal China during the Ming period are the Jingjue Mosque and Huihuiying Mosque (回回营清真寺) in Nanjing. They were said to be the two mosques mentioned in the inscription on a stele dated to 1492, built in 1388 following permission by the Ming court as a reward to two *xiyu* Muslims for their achievement in the Ming military campaigns.²⁶⁷ As noted earlier, the Hongwu edict of 1392 preserved in a stele dated to 1405, mentions the sponsorship of the Ming court for the building of two mosques, one of which should be located in Sanshan Street, Nanjing. It is, therefore, generally accepted that the present Jingjue Mosque in Sanshan Street is the mosque originally founded in 1392 under imperial sponsorship. This is supported by another text, the imperial edict issued in 1430 regarding the request of Admiral Zheng He for permission to rebuild the burnt down Libai Si in Sanshan Street. As stated in this edict, the court gave permission to the Admiral to restore the mosque while he was waiting in Nanjing for the monsoon to arrive so that he could commence a voyage.²⁶⁸ The inscription of 1492 mentions one mosque named Jingjue Si but does not indicate the location, saying only that one of the *xiyu* Muslim families is assigned to live there. It is, therefore, debatable as to whether this was the Libai Si mentioned in the Hongwu edict and the edict of 1430. If it was, it may be that there was originally a small mosque at the location, built for or used by a particular



Fig.52. Detail of the decorative archway, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

²⁶⁷ The stele is lost, but the copy of the inscription is preserved, see Wu Yiye, op. cit., p. 396. In Chinese writings, *xiyu*, literally western regions, comprised Central Asian, Middle East and beyond. The two *xiyu* Muslims mentioned in the inscription have not been identified where exactly they came from.

²⁶⁸ See the copy of the inscription of 1430 in Wu Yiye, op. cit., p. 397.

family, as suggested by the text. This could then have been rebuilt, on a grand scale, under the sponsorship of the court in 1392, as documented. It is not clear when the mosque became known as Jingjue Si, if the mosque mentioned in the stele of 1492 was not the Libai Si recorded in the imperial edicts of 1392 and 1430. The earliest we know of this name being used is from the Jiajing reign period (嘉靖 1522-1566), when the court gave permission to erect a decorated archway, granting a signboard bearing the name Jingjue Si. This can still be seen today inlaid in the restored decorated archway at the entrance of the Jingjue Mosque (Fig.52).

Despite the confusion over the foundation date of the Jingjue Mosque, it, together with the Huihui Ying Mosque, is still the earliest recorded Ming period mosques. Although only a few structures from the Ming period have survived to modern times, the original style of both mosques were documented, suggesting that both mentioned mosques were built in a distinctly Chinese style and on a significant scale, especially the Jingjue Mosque. The Huihuiying mosque, which was destroyed during the Taiping Rebellions in the Qing period, is said to have been modelled after the palace building type, with an impressive nine-bay prayer hall.

²⁶⁹ This type of the hall is termed *jiujian* (九間), i.e., nine bays, and was for use in palace construction, this mosque being an extremely rare example of another use.²⁷⁰

The Jingjue Mosque was also seriously damaged in the Taiping rebellion, being restored during late Qing times.²⁷¹ It was in a much decayed condition before the last major restoration, completed in 1985, that is said to have been based on a principle of recreating the original structures. Hence, although what had remained has been



Fig.53. Elevation of the prayer hall, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

much restored and rebuilt, the original structures, at least the mosque as it appeared after the Qing period restoration, may still be traced in the present-day Jingjue Mosque. According to

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁷⁰ Gao Yang, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Hu Chengfang, 'Mantan Zhongguo Gudaijianzhu De Dengjiguangnian', in *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, 28 October 2011, Zhongguo Guojiabowuguan, viewed on 13 January 2015, [http://www.chnmuseum.cn/\(X\(1\)S\(tp154nizycrbni55o3eds13h\)\)/Default.aspx?TabId=138&InfoID=69176&frtid=110&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](http://www.chnmuseum.cn/(X(1)S(tp154nizycrbni55o3eds13h))/Default.aspx?TabId=138&InfoID=69176&frtid=110&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)

²⁷¹ Epigraphic information is preserved in the Jingjue Mosque.

the available documentation, the mosque originally covered an area of over 6.5 acres and was built of very durable and valuable Chinese Cedar wood. At some point, the Jingjue Mosque was a center for Islamic learning.

The original prayer hall, like the prayer hall of the Huihuiying Mosque, also had nine bays.²⁷² The present prayer hall, however, has been reduced to a five-bay hall (Fig.53), framed by timbers supporting a gable-on-hip roof (Fig.54), termed *xieshan* (歇山), this being a type of structure that was reserved for higher class buildings like palaces or important religious structures. The wood frame is of the crossbeam type. Presumably, the prayer hall of the Huihuiying Mosque also had this type of roof rather than a hip roof, termed *wudian* (庑殿),²⁷³ the highest class of roof, reserved for royal buildings and Confucius temples only. It is logical that, while both prayer halls were nine-bay structures of the palace building type, a slightly lower class roof was used, thus distinguishing from the royal buildings. These two mosques, if the records are accurate, were allowed to use the royal structural forms. This may be taken as an indication of the recovery of the Muslim community, and of a gradual increase in the social status of the Muslims in coastal China after the difficult years of the early Ming period.



Fig.54. *Xieshan* roof of the prayer hall, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

The other restored structures, such as the *jiangjing tang* (Fig.55), i.e., teaching hall, suggest that, apart from the prayer hall, the rest of the buildings took a common architectural form, similar to the halls added to the Songjiang Mosque, as noted above. The original brick archway built in the Jiaping period is said to have survived until the time of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Soon after the Revolution, the restoration of the mosque began with the destroyed archway (Fig.56).²⁷⁴



Fig.55. Elevation of the teaching hall, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

²⁷² Wu Yiye, op. cit., p. 234.

²⁷³ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 13. Hu Chengfang, op. cit.

²⁷⁴ Wu Yiye, op. cit., p. 234. Also see Liu Zhiping, op. cit., p. 41.

Erection of a decorated archway or memorial archway, termed *pailou* (牌樓) or *paifang* (牌坊), has been a common Chinese architectural practice since ancient times. It can be seen marking the street sections, the entrance to market places, temples and palaces and so on. Many preserved decorated archways in various forms are still seen today in many places in China. One can, for instance, find good examples of different types of decorated archway within the vicinity of Beijing.²⁷⁵

The archway here, in terms of its structures, follows the type of ceramic glaze decorated archway known as *liuli pailou* (琉璃牌樓) that evolved in the Ming Qing period. The basic form of this type is a brick panel rising on a stone base composed of four pillars, and three bays with arched openings and decorative roofs or eaves, in this context termed *lou* (樓) and usually on the top of the brick panel and down in the panel marking the partitions.



Fig.56. Decorative archway, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

The *lou* takes the form of gable-on-hip roof type, thus indicating the importance of the building as a place of worship. The panel is usually embellished with yellow and green ceramic glazes, from which the name of this type is derived.²⁷⁶ The decorative scheme here, however, did not follow the precise type of *liuli pailou*, but also included some decorative features of the *shi pailou* (石牌樓), i.e., stone decorated archway, of which the elaborated carving work is its characteristic, as is seen in the *shi pailou* marking the entrance of the



Fig.57. Decorative archway, Xianxian Gumu, Guangzhou.

Xianxian Gumu (先賢古墓) in Guangzhou (Fig.57), datable to the Qing period. It is composed of four pillars extending over the top of the panel and dividing the panel into three sections with rectangular openings, which represents a typical *shi pailou*.

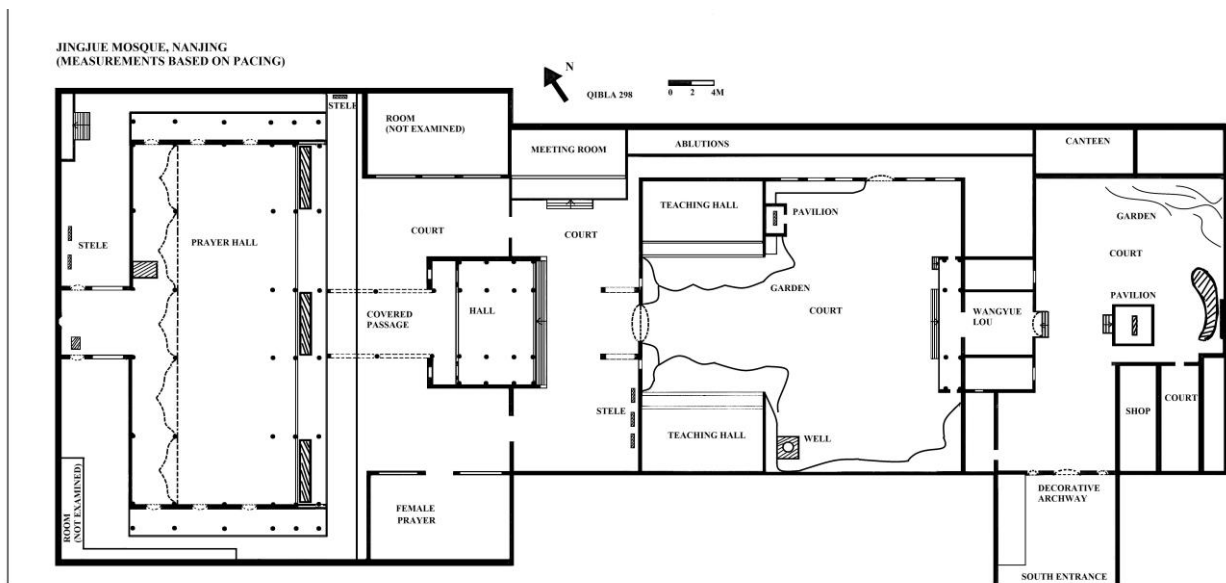
Although the present-day mosque is much restored and smaller than the initial building, the original layout is still traceable (Plan VI). Well-articulated and well-

²⁷⁵ For examples of the *paifang* or *pailou*, see Ma Xin, and Cao Lijun, *Paifang, Gateways to Beijing*, Beijing Chubanshe Chubanjituan, Beijing Meishusheyang Chubanshe, Beijing, 2005.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 81-86, on structures of the *liuli pailou*.

balanced, the multi-courtyard complex shows the characteristic accents of traditional Chinese courtyard architecture in its plan. Apart from the orientation aspect, i.e., facing towards Mecca, the mosque complex reflects all the concepts inherent in classical Chinese architecture that are derived from Chinese cosmology. These features have played a crucial role in traditional Chinese town planning as well as in plans of individual buildings since ancient times.

The concept of cosmic harmony reflected in the traditional Chinese architectural plan is displayed by the emphasis on articulation and bilateral symmetry, shown through maintenance of a south - north orientated central axis. In the case of a multi-courtyard complex, there are normally side wings, symmetrically flanking the courts, with a series of buildings on the central axis connecting the courts leading up to the north end, where a south facing building, the most important building of the complex, is located.²⁷⁷



Plan VI. Plan of the Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

The mosque complex here, however, is east-west orientated, representing an adjustment to the Islamic ritual requirement, since the *qibla* orientation has to be taken into consideration in the architectural plan. The orientation towards the *qibla* in south and southeast China lies to the west, conflicting with the traditional Chinese south-north orientation. The solution here in the plan of the Jingjue mosque is to turn the complex orientation to east-west, while maintaining bilateral symmetry as well as a south facing main entrance.

²⁷⁷ Gao Yang, op. cit., pp. 1-12, on planning principle of traditional Chinese architecture.

Another structure related to Islamic ritual is seen in the plan of the prayer hall, which has its central bay projecting from the *qibla* wall, thus forming a *mihrab* chamber that has wooden screen windows and doors at the sides, providing access to the outside (Fig.58).

It emphasises architecturally the liturgical function of the hall in terms of both the interior and the exterior, thus distinguishing it from other type of buildings, such as Chinese temples, since the rear elevation of the structure is different from that seen in Chinese traditional architecture. The front elevation, however, does not differ from



Fig.58. Interior of the *mihrab* chamber, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

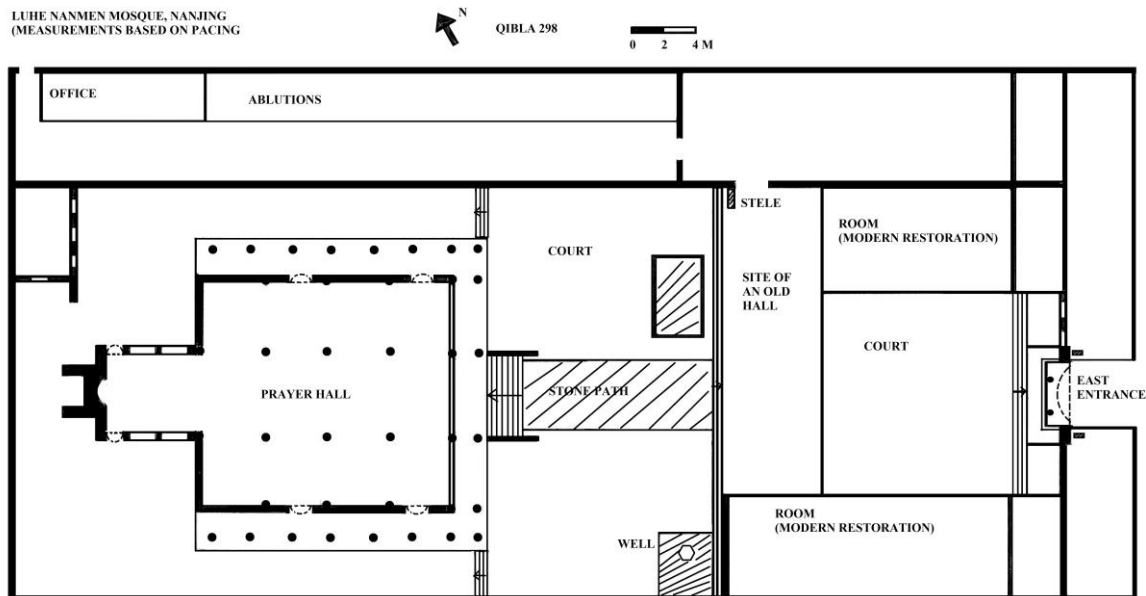
any given traditional Chinese buildings. This may well have been a matter of conscious choice by the Muslim community in the process of adapting to the new social conditions of the time and integrating but, at the same time, trying to retain their religious identity.

The most important hall in a Chinese complex is traditionally rectangular in plan, with wooden screen windows and doors on the front side, but having a windowless rear side, to protect against the harsh north winds. This alternation in plan of the prayer hall here may have been inspired by the plan of the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou (Plan I), or with references to the idea of the structure of *maqsurah* in early Islamic architecture. A *maqsurah* is an enclosure near the centre of the *qibla* wall, which first appeared in Umayyad Mosques. The original idea of this design was to protect a ruler from assassins.²⁷⁸ It gradually lost its original meaning, however, became more symbolic- as a symbol of authority rather than a real structure to provide protection. As a result, it became more open, in contrast to the enclosed structure of early times. Regardless of the origin of the structure of the *qibla* wall of the Jingjue Mosque, this plan featuring a reversed T-shape, later became standard structure of the prayer hall and consistently used in the Jiangnan regions.

The only surviving example of a Ming period mosque in its original form is the Luhe Nanmen Mosque (六合南門清真寺) in Nanjing. According to the epigraphic information

²⁷⁸ E. J. Grube, and G. Michell, *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1978, p. 281.

preserved in the mosque, it was founded in 1404 and was restored in 1553.²⁷⁹ The layout of the mosque reflects the principles of traditional Chinese courtyard architecture with the exception of the orientation like the plan of the Jingjue Mosque (Plan VII).



Plan VII. Plan of Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

The prayer hall from the restoration of 1553 survived to the present-day, although it is not in an optimal condition. Standing on a raised stone platform with balconies running along three sides, the timber- framed prayer hall has wooden screens at the front. The lofty gable-on- hip roof is of typical classical Chinese architectural form (Fig.59). The *mihrab* is emphasised in the same way as in the Jingjue Mosque, with the *qibla* wall being interrupted to form an additional chamber accommodating the *mihrab* (Fig.60). The timber frame structure is of typical crossbeam type as well (Fig. 61).

Here again the *mihrab* bay is seen to be framed by wooden screen windows and doors, while the *mihrab* itself is framed by wooden panel. This later became characteristic of the mosques in the Jiangnan region.

Other than the prayer hall and the east



Fig.59. Elevation of the prayer hall, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

²⁷⁹ The stele recording the restoration of the mosque, dated to 1827, is preserved in the Luhe Nanmen Mosque, also see Wu Yiye, op. cit., pp. 240-241.



Fig.60. Interior of the *mihrab* chamber, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.61. Detail of the structural frame of the prayer hall, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

entrance gateway, the rest of structures of the original mosques were demolished or have been replaced by modern additions. The east entrance features a small gateway executed in a different style on each side. While the side facing the inner court is of pavilion type with a gable-on-hip roof, the outer side features a brick *pailou* (Figs.62, 63), as noted above. Both of the types used for marking an entrance are Chinese architectural elements, which can be found in mosques since the Ming period, especially were seen in smaller entrance gateways. Larger entrances, usually main entrance, took the form of multi-storey gateways, traditionally used for a city gate or the gateway of a large building complex, such as palaces, big temples. Surviving examples dated to the Qing period are found in the entrance gateways in the Ningbo Mosque in Ningbo and the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou, which is addressed in Chapter 7.

Although the *pailou* and the pavilion are common forms in Chinese traditional architecture, the entrance gateway here, interestingly, has combined two different types of gateway. This was a rather creative way of applying Chinese architectural elements in the building of mosques, although this experiment was not commonly copied elsewhere.



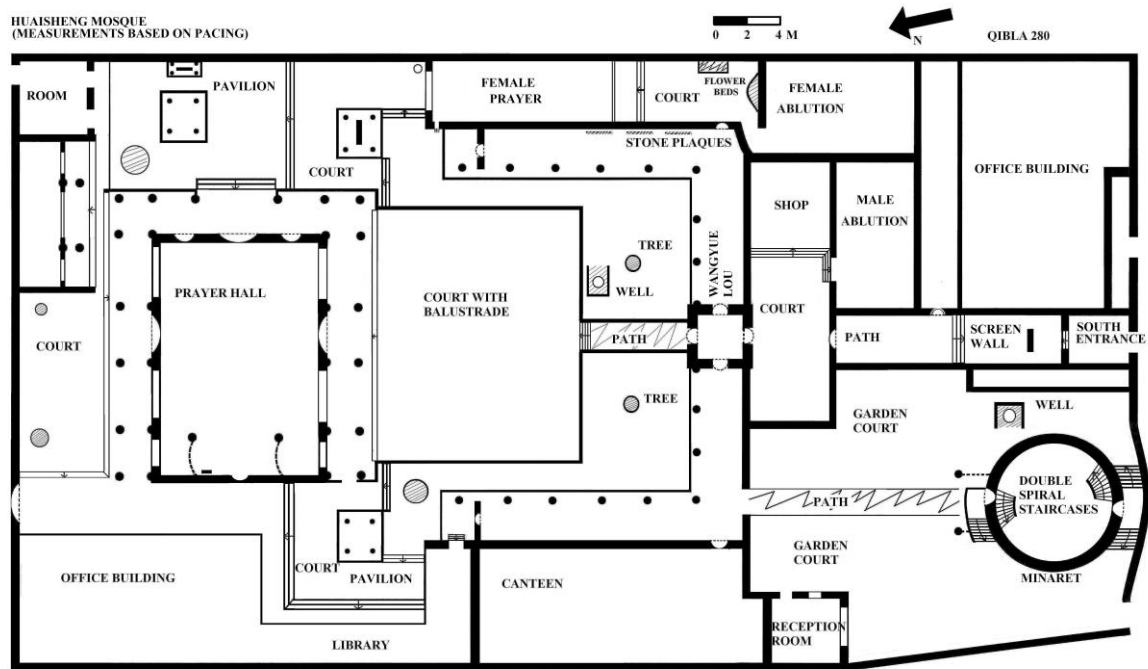
Fig.63. Front elevation of the east entrance gate, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

As already discussed in Chapter 2, although the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou was one of the earliest mosques founded in coastal China, apart from the Guangta minaret, structures dating from before the Ming period can no longer be traced. The Yuan period stele of 1350, as noted in previous chapters, records the restoration of 1350.



Fig.62. Back elevation of the east entrance gate, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

However, it gives no clue of either the plan or the form of the mosque. As is recorded, it was rebuilt during the Chenghua reign period with



Plan VIII. Plan of the Huaisheng Si, Guangzhou.

several restorations taking place in the Qing period.²⁸⁰ The present-day Huaisheng Mosque may still reflect the layout of the mosque after the Ming period restoration, since the restorations in the Qing period do not seem to have altered the overall structure of the mosque laid out in the Ming period but, rather, seem to have attempted to restore to the Ming period structures including the architectural forms. This is discussed further in Chapter 5. Such an extensive use of Chinese architectural vocabularies was not the case in Islamic architectural practice during the Yuan period, as already discussed in Chapter 3.

It is clear that the layout of the Huaisheng mosque follows all of the principle to be found in traditional Chinese architecture including the orientation aspect (Plan VIII). The mosque is south-north orientated with its main entrance at the south and the south-facing prayer hall at the north end (Fig. 64). There has been some discussion as above over the way in which the issue of the *qibla* orientation and its relationship to the entrance



Fig.64. Elevation of the restored prayer hall, looking north, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

²⁸⁰ All restorations were recorded in commemorative stelae preserved in the Huaisheng Mosque, also see Chen Leji, op. cit., pp. 3-11.

has been addressed in the architectural plan. The door at the eastern side of the prayer hall seems to be the original solution, which directs the faithful around the court to the east side and then entering the prayer hall through eastern entrance opposite the *qibla* wall. This avoids the necessity of entering the prayer hall from the south and then turning at an angle of 90 degrees to the left. However, this does not seem to be in use today as the south entrance is most used by Muslims entering for worship.²⁸¹

The solution here probably is not of the best, since it is easy to feel disorientated when reaching the court in front of the south facing prayer hall, after using the south entrance, and being obliged to make a right-angle turn to the left immediately after entering the prayer hall to be correctly orientated towards the *qibla*. The solution found in the Jingjue Mosque is better in comparison. Although, one still enters into the mosque compound from the south,



Fig.65. Interior of the prayer hall, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

once in the court, the orientation towards the *qibla* is unmistakable, since the mosque is east-west orientated with the east-facing prayer hall at the west end. This plan, maintaining the principle of bilateral symmetry in traditional Chinese architecture, as well as meeting the requirement of the *qibla* orientation in Islamic architecture, and fixing a south entrance, desirable in the Chinese concept wherever it is feasible, evidently became common practices in the building of mosques in coastal China from the Ming period onwards. The unsatisfactory experiment in the plan of the Huaisheng Mosque appears not to have been repeated in the surviving mosques in coastal China.

The present-day prayer hall of the Huaisheng Mosque is the modern restoration done in 1934. It is built in concrete, replacing the original timber framed prayer hall from the Qing period restoration that had much decayed by that time but it is said to be modelled after the original form.²⁸² The structure of an additional *mihrab* bay in the Jingjue Mosque and the other mosques in the Jiangnan region, as noted earlier, is not seen here. Instead, the *mihrab* is emphasised by a canopy structure near the middle of the *qibla* wall (Fig.65), which also may suggest a *maqsurah*. That is also the case in the mosques in the Guangzhou region, for example, the prayer hall of the Haopan Mosque in Guangzhou (Fig.66), a Qing restoration of

²⁸¹ A Friday prayer in the Huaisheng Mosque was witnessed during fieldwork in Guangzhou.

²⁸² Chen Leji, op. cit., p. 4.

an original Ming period mosque, and the Zhaoqing Chengdong Mosque (肇慶城東清真寺) of the Qing period (Fig.67).



Fig.66. Interior of the prayer hall, Haopan Mosque, Guangzhou.

With the shift of the center of gravity of the Maritime Muslim community to Nanjing, there was a shift of the emphasis of the community life as well, from the previous commercially orientated life to an actively intellectual life. It was in Nanjing that the first Chinese Islamic scholars emerged in the late Ming period. The leading figure was Wang Daiyu (王岱輿 ca.1584-1670), a descendant of a Muslim family of *xiyu* origin with classic Arab, Persian and Chinese education background. Based in Nanjing, he devoted his life to translate and mostly interpret Islamic doctrines, with the aim of making it accessible to the Maritime Muslims, as noted earlier, most of who had lost their Arab or Persian roots, as well as to the Han

Chinese, enabling them to understand that, according to his theological approach, Islam was a religion compatible with Confucianism.²⁸³ His works, such as *The Real Commentary on the True Teaching* (*Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮), published in 1642, were a manifestation of a new theological approach to Islam, using Confucian principles to interpret the Qur'an, known

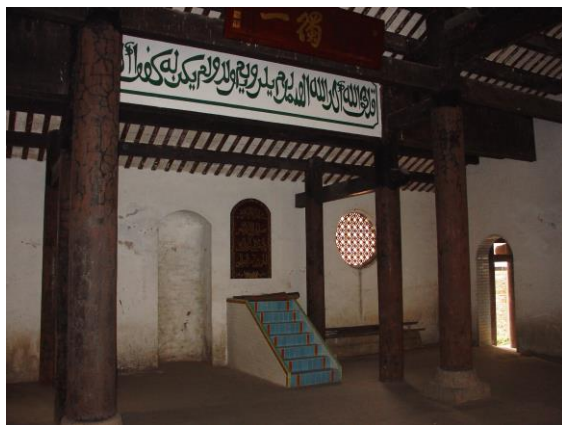


Fig.67. Interior of the prayer hall, Zhaoqing Chengdong Mosque, Zhaoqing.

as *yiru shijing*, (以儒釋经),²⁸⁴ thence, demonstrating the compatibility between Islam and Chinese culture. This cultural syncretism thus led to the creation of one of the most distinct regional traditions of Muslims, as comparable with the creations of the Swahili culture by the seafaring Muslim communities on the coast of East Africa, representing the cultural diversity of the Muslim world. Wang Daiyu's theory influenced the generations of

²⁸³ The exact dates of his birth and decease dates are unknown, different dates being given in available texts. The date quoted here is derived from the information on his life given in the documentation collected in *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., p. 580. It is certain that he was active in late Ming and early Qing times, producing his major works during this time. His ancestor was said to be a Muslim coming from the *xiyu* to pay tributes to the Ming court during the Hongwu regin period, who was asked to stay by the Hongwu Emperor because his expertise in astronomy. The family then settled in Nanjing.

²⁸⁴ On *yiru shijing*, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., pp. 705-706.

Muslim scholars to come, and laid the foundation for the Jinling School of Islam (*jinling xuepai* 金陵學派), which later was incorporated into the Han School of Islam (*hanxue pai* 漢學派). His works were later included in the *han kitab* (i.e., Chinese Islamic texts) that has remained the basis of the Chinese Islamic school of thought until the present day in China. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.²⁸⁵

This new intellectual approach to Islam that emerged in the late Ming transformed the Islamic practice and, therefore, the Muslim community in coastal China. Islam was absorbed entirely into a purely Chinese grammar of forms and symbols and aesthetic considerations. The Maritime Muslims re-established themselves in coastal China by the end of the Ming period, but with a new identity that pronounced-they were no longer a Muslim diaspora but Chinese Muslims. Thus, ‘a new breed of Hui race was born’, as Lynn summarised, ‘with a Han appearance carrying a mixture of blood and cultures’.²⁸⁶ The intrigued nature of the Hui, however, is a far more complex subject of studies, which has attracted much scholarly attention especially in recent decade.²⁸⁷ Although, the Maritime Muslims, from now on, were generally identified as or classed as the Hui Muslims along with other groups of Chinese-speaking Muslims in inland China, despite not sharing a common history, the development of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China continued to display its own characteristic in subsequent centuries as is discussed further in next chapters.

The mosque restoration phase in the early Ming period remained very modest, in terms of the choice of forms and scales, thus avoiding the public’s attention, which reflected the caution of the Maritime Muslim community as it recovered from the trauma of the late Yuan and early Ming destruction. Once the community had been re-established, however, a very distinctive Chinese type of mosque evolved, which constitutes a synthesis of the formulae of Islamic worship brought from the West with a very conscious adaptation to Chinese cultural tradition. The very pronounced Chinese form was now consciously chosen by the Maritime Muslims as a statement of their confidence based on the recognition and acceptance, by both the public and the state, of their new identity, being Chinese Muslims but with their own code

²⁸⁵ Wu Yiye, op. cit., pp. 128-137.

²⁸⁶ Lynn, op. cit., p. 6.

²⁸⁷ The origin of the term Hui has sparked a century- long debate among Chinese scholars, and it has been joined by the western scholars in recent decades, thus many publications are found dealing with the subject of Hui Muslims. Examples of the works of those scholars: Yang Zhimei, ‘Huihui Yici De Qiyuan Yu Yanbian’, in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol.146, p. 79. M. Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects*, Curzon, Richmond, Surrey, 1999.

of conduct and faith. The development of Islamic architecture by the Maritime Muslims in the Ming period was followed by extensive intellectual development of the new generations of Maritime Muslims in the subsequent centuries.

Chapter 5

Mosques in the Qing (1644-1911): Development and Destruction

The Political, Economic and Social Conditions of Qing China

The Manchu conquest of China once again brought to an end the Han Chinese dominion that the Ming dynasty had re-established over China. However, the Manchu Qing, like the Mongol Yuan, adopted the Chinese administrative system quickly after they had consolidated their power in China.²⁸⁸ The Manchu rulers continued many of the policies of the Ming Emperors, such as the policy on maritime trade. In fact, from the Ming to the Mid-Qing period, the periodic bans or restrictions on foreign trade became a policy that lasted for centuries, although as we have seen, in the reign of the third Ming emperor, foreign trade was actively encouraged, but in different way. As already discussed in the previous chapter, this internal policy towards foreign trade effectively changed the nature of the presence of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China from the Ming period and thereafter.

It was this Ming policy regarding maritime trade, adopted by the Manchu Qing that caused disputes between Great Britain and Qing China, that eventually provoked the Opium War in 1840.²⁸⁹ The coming of European powers from the 16th century onwards, the Portuguese, followed by Dutch and the British, had the effect of driving the Arab and Persian merchants out of the eastern trade generally, including with China. Although The Qing court was forced to open the Chinese ports for trade after the Opium War, the Europeans had by this time already seized control of the Indian Ocean trade. This development, which began shortly after the arrival of the first European fleets in the Indian Ocean in the early 16th century, coupled with China's own policy on overseas trade, meant that the Arab and Persian merchants who used to dominate the Indian Ocean trade were excluded from the ports of China from the Ming period onwards. They never recovered their influence. The Maritime Muslims, therefore, were further separated from their Middle Eastern origins, and the process of Sinicization continued during the Qing period.

²⁸⁸ This is reflected in the policies of the Shunzhi Emperor (顺治 r.1644-1661), who was the first Qing emperor to have ruled from Chinese soil. See 'Shizu Shilu', vol.10, 18, 29, in *Qing Shilu*, vol.4, Wikisource, 19 August 2014, viewed on 3 February 2015,

<http://zh.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=%E6%B8%85%E5%AF%A6%E9%8C%84%E9%A0%86%E6%B2%BB%E6%9C%9D%E5%AF%A6%E9%8C%84&oldid=414833>

²⁸⁹ The Opium Wars between Britain and China were prompted by several disputes, particularly with regards to the British desire to open China ports to foreign trade. The First War was in 1840-1842, and the Second in 1856-1860.

The Manchu emperors, like the Mongol rulers, showed great affection for Chinese culture. They promoted the Confucian classics and encouraged Chinese learning even more than the Mongols had. As is well-known, under the reign of the Kangxi Emperor (康熙 r.1661-1722),²⁹⁰ a monumental dictionary of Chinese characters, known as *Kangxi Zidian* (康熙字典), i.e., *Kangxi Dictionary*, was compiled on imperial orders. Although, it is said that the purpose of it was to woo the support of the Han scholar-official class that still had deep reservations about Manchu rule and still retained some loyalty to the Ming at that time, the Kangxi Emperor himself enjoyed studying the Confucian classics and had great fondness for Chinese calligraphy. Another cultural achievement under his reign was a compilation of Tang poems, known as *Quan Tangshi* (全唐詩), i.e., *Complete Tang Poem*, which is the longest collection of Tang poems ever compiled in the history of Chinese literature.²⁹¹ As a Manchu ruler, most notably, he elevated the significance of the Imperial Examination that had been restored by the Ming authority, as noted in the previous chapter, thus maintaining stability of the Han scholar official class, as well as incorporating them into the administrative service of the Qing court.²⁹² This also reflects the Qing racial policy of conciliation towards the Han Chinese, by promoting *man-han yijia* (滿漢一家), i.e., Manchurians-Chinese as one family.²⁹³ It was a strategic policy designed to ensure control over the vast land of China, and thus the highly civilized Han Chinese. The Manchu conquest of China, therefore, did not result in a dramatic change in cultural and intellectual life of China, which largely remained as it was in the Ming period.

The Qing emperors continued the policy of showing toleration towards Islam and their Muslim subjects within China itself. As in the previous centuries, the Chinese policy was one

²⁹⁰ Although the Kangxi Emperor was the 4th emperor of the Manchu Qing dynasty, and the 2nd emperor ruled from Chinese soil, he is considered the first emperor to rule over China proper, since the Manchu Qing established itself first in its home territories north-east of China before its conquest of China. It was under the 61 years long reign of the Kangxi Emperor that the Manchu Qing rule over China was consolidated.

²⁹¹ It was completed on the order of the Kangxi Emperor in 1705. See Peng Dingqiu, Shen Sangzeng, et al., *Quan Tang Shi* (Qing), with commentary by Peng Dingqiu, Shen Sanzeng, et al., Zhonghua shuju, Beijing, 1960.

²⁹² The Kangxi Emperor's cultural policy of promoting Confucian classics is well reflected in the court records of the reign of Kangxi. See 'Shengzu Shilu', vol.69, 70, 126, 127, 142, 240, 241, in *Qing Shilu*, vol.5, Wikisource, 19 August 2014, viewed on 3 February 2015, <http://zh.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=%E5%BA%B7%E7%86%99%E6%9C%9D%E5%AF%A6%E9%8C%84&oldid=414834>

²⁹³ This policy was introduced in the reign of the Shunzhi Emperor soon after the Manchu conquest of China. See 'Shizu Shilu', vol.25, 30, in *Qing Shilu*, vol.4, Wikisource, 19 August 2014, viewed on 3 February 2015, <http://zh.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=%E6%B8%85%E5%AF%A6%E9%8C%84%E9%A0%86%E6%B2%BB%E6%9C%9D%E5%AF%A6%E9%8C%84&oldid=414833>

of showing respect for the Muslim community, recognizing the Muslims among them with respect. Although many Muslims were killed by Qing troops during the Hui Muslim revolts against the Manchu rule, the policy of the Qing court was to put down all those who challenged its rule, regardless of whether they were Hui Muslims or Han Chinese. This may be compared with the events involving Muslims in coastal regions in the late Yuan and early Ming periods, when, as already discussed in the previous chapters, the Muslim riots and rebels were brutally crushed by the Yuan and Ming troops, although both the Yuan and Ming had a sustained policy of tolerance towards Islam and their Muslim subjects. The implementation of this religious policy, indeed, had to be within a framework that provided assurance that the imperial authority remained unchallenged. The Muslim revolts in the early Qing period initially began with the Hui Muslims joining with the Han Chinese to resist Manchu rule over China. Later, after the Han Chinese had submitted to the Manchu rule, the Hui Muslims carried on fighting alone, not simply against the Manchus, but also demanding that they should be fairly treated.²⁹⁴ This reflects the fact that the Hui Muslims by the Qing period had already identified themselves as Chinese but with the faith of Islam.

It is noteworthy that these Muslim revolts were confined to inland China, especially in the northwest province of Gansu and the southwest province of Yunnan, where there were a concentration of Hui Muslims who were mainly descendants of generations of Muslim intermarriage with the Han Chinese, often with one side of their ancestral lineage traced back to the former Muslim officials and *tuntian* soldiers, of Central Asian origin, who had served the Mongol Yuan dynasty.

As noted in the previous chapter, after the emergence of the Hui ethnic-religious group (classed by the authorities as a separate nationality since the Republican period) by the end of the Ming dynasty, all Chinese-speaking Muslims were generally identified as Hui Muslims. The Muslim communities of different regions, of course, may not share a common history, and may neither present the same characteristic of community development, nor follow the same form of Islamic practices. In particular, the Hui Muslim community in Gansu or in the northwest provinces of China in general, and the Maritime Muslim community in coastal regions had very different characteristics in terms of community organization and the nature of their religious practices.

While the Hui Muslims in the northwest regions of China, where had an agricultural-based

²⁹⁴ On Hui Muslim revolts of the Qing period, see Lynn, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

economy, tended to live closely together, thence more tied to the rest of their community, the Muslims in the coastal regions, which had historically hosted a more complex society in terms of economy and culture, had a higher level of education and were, thus, less dependent on the community from which they originated. This was particularly apparent as they became integrated into Chinese society, and completed the transition from being members of a Muslim diaspora, of foreign origin, to being Chinese Muslims.

Since Sufism made its way to the northwest regions of China in the early Qing period, it soon came to dominate religious practices among the Hui Muslims in this region, especially Gansu. A small county in Gansu called Linxia, known today as ‘China’s Mecca’ to Chinese Muslims, became a leading centre of Sufi practices. One can still find there many adherents of the Qadiriyya (القادرية), and Kubrawiyya (الكبراوية) orders as well as those of the two main Chinese Sufi sects of the Naqshbandi (النقشبندية) order, Naqshbandi Khufiyya (虎夫耶 i.e., خفية) and Naqshbandi Jahriyya (哲赫林耶 i.e., جهرية).²⁹⁵ Although Sufi practices were present in the coastal regions, the majority of maritime Muslims by the Qing period were followers of Qadim (قديم), a Hanafi (حنفي) school of the Sunni tradition, the oldest school of Islam in China. This was first introduced by the Maritime Muslim diaspora to coastal China in the early centuries of Islam, and has remained for centuries as one of the leading Islamic school in China.

Later, a unique way of organizing Sufi practices emerged in the Ganshu regions. Called *menhuan* (門宦), this was a system derived from organization of a *tariqa* (طريقة), i.e., an order of Sufism, but with elements of the Chinese feudal system incorporated.²⁹⁶ The adherents, largely Muslim peasant agriculturalists, aligned themselves with different *menhuan* following different Sufi teachings, which formed around individual Sufi masters. These then came to take on the role of feudal landlords. One result of this was that a very distinct funerary architectural type, known as "*gongbei*" (拱北), developed in this region, these generally being highly-decorated Sufi shrines.²⁹⁷ The Muslim community in coastal China, however, continued with its own Islamic practices following the mainstream Islamic

²⁹⁵ On Sufi practices in the west regions of China, see Chen Qing, ‘The Secret of China’s Mecca’, in *The National*, 08 August 2013. Chen Qing, ‘Respected Traditions, Sufism in China, the Shrine of Khawja Abdullah’, in *The National*, 12 July 2014.

²⁹⁶ The *Menhuan* system is still in practice especially in the Ganshu regions. The development of the *Menhuan* system is a rather complex issue. Studies by Chinese Islamic scholars provide an insight into the *Menhuan* system, see Ma Tong, *Zhongguo Yisilan Jiaopai Yu Menhuan Zhidu Shi lue*, Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, Yinchuan, 1983.

²⁹⁷ The name *gongbei* is in the local Chinese dialect, it being thought to originate from the Arabic قبة (*qubba*) or Persian گنبد (*gonbad*).

school of thought, Qadim, with individual Muslim intellectuals continued to develop a new approach to Islamic theology that had begun in the late Ming period, as noted in Chapter 4.

The Maritime Muslims did not involve themselves in the Hui Muslim fights against the Manchus, but continued to focus on cultural and intellectual life, as well as their economic activities, as had been the case during the Ming period. Under the Manchu Qing, the cultural policy of promoting the Confucian classics, and the policy of tolerance towards Islam, enabled the Maritime Muslims to continue to pursue their intellectual activities in studies of Chinese classics and Islamic doctrines.

As noted in the previous chapter, Nanjing had become not just the new centre of gravity of the Maritime Muslim community, but also the centre of Islamic studies by the Ming period. It remained a centre of religious learning until the mid-Qing. Among the many active Muslim scholars, one of the most influential figures was Liu Zhi (1655-1745), a native of Nanjing, like Wang Daiyu, who had extensive knowledge of Chinese classics as well as the Qur'an and Islamic doctrines.²⁹⁸ His principal publications, such as *The Metaphysics of Islam* (*Tianfang Xingli* 天方性理), *The Rites of Islam* (*Tianfang Dianli* 天方典禮), and *The Real Record of the Last Prophet of Islam* (*Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu* 天方至聖實錄), reflect the theological approach of Wang Daiyu to Islam, as discussed in Chapter 4, and reinforce the idea that Islam could be understood through Confucian classics. Like the books of Wang Daiyu, all the works of Liu Zhi were written in Chinese, these being widely read and approved. His works were regarded as the most influential Chinese Islamic texts and formed an essential part of the *han kitab* (هان كتاب), a collection of Chinese Islamic texts. In addition to his efforts in developing Wang Daiyu's theory, Liu Zhi is also well-known for his awareness of the need for early Islamic education for young Muslim Children, as shown through his work *Three Character Classics of Islam* (*Tianfang Sanzi Jing* 天方三字經).²⁹⁹ This was a practical adoption of the formula of the Chinese classic texts, known as *Three Character Classics* (*Sanzi Jing* 三字經), i.e., which is the embodiment of Confucian morality, written in triple-character verses suitable for young children to learn because they can be easily memorized.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ On the life of Liu Zhi, see *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., pp. 318-319.

²⁹⁹ Liu Zhi, 'Tianfang Sanzi Jing', in *Huiyu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol.26.

³⁰⁰ The *Three Character Classics* was developed during the Song period. It remained widely accepted as the first fundamental education for children at home, before reaching the age to go to school, until the Communist

These intense intellectual activities by Chinese Islamic scholars resulted in the formation of China's very own Islamic school of thought, the *hanxue pai* (漢學派), first in the Islamic center of Nanjing by the early Qing period, later spreading inland. The *han kitab* has remained the basis of the teachings of the Chinese Islamic school of thought that is known today as *xidaotang* (西道堂).³⁰¹ The *han kitab* was a manifestation of the firm roots that Islam had established in China. Originally a foreign religion and a guest culture-or one followed primarily by a diaspora of Middle Eastern origin, Islam, over the course of centuries had become integrated into Chinese culture, a process that had been completed by the Qing period. Many Chinese Islamic terms appeared and were commonly used by that time. Thus, Islam now was referred by the Chinese Muslims as Qingzhen Jiao (清真教), i.e., the pure and real teaching. Thus a mosque was referred to as Qingzhen Si (清真寺), i.e., the temple of pure and real or purity and truth. Qingzhen is said to have first been used in the Yuan period, when the famous Yuan general, Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar, completed his mission of rebuilding the Chang'an Mosque, he is said to have asked the Yuan court to bestow the name 'Qingzhen' on the mosque.³⁰² If this is accurate, Qingzhen here, however, was first used for an individual mosque rather than as a general term for mosque, as later became the case when Islam was referred as Qingzhen Jiao.

As noted in previous chapters, until the late Ming period, the Muslims referred to Islam sometimes as Zhenjiao (真教), i.e., the real or true teaching, or Qingjing Jiao (清淨教), i.e., the pure teaching; and referred to mosques, therefore, sometimes as Zhenjiao Si (真教寺), or Qingjing Si (清淨寺). This is evident in the commemorative stela, as previously mentioned. Thus, for example, the Fenghuang mosque in Hangzhou was recorded as Zhenjiao Si. It was in the time of Wang Daiyu, that Allah was referred to as Zhenzhu (真主), i.e., the lord of real or truth,³⁰³ and Islam was interpreted by Chinese Muslim scholars as the pure and real teaching, that Qingzhen Si first appeared as a general term for mosque. The concepts of 'real' and 'pure' are closely associated with Chinese thought, from which Chinese Islamic scholars had drawn their inspiration.

The 17th century saw a renaissance in the development of Islamic culture in China. Apart

period. However, today, with the Communist government seeking to restore Confucian ethics, it is once again being promoted as parts of children's early education.

³⁰¹ *Xidaotang* is the only Chinese Islamic school in China today; see Ma Tong, op. cit., pp. 155-207.

³⁰² Information in documentation presented in the Songjiang Mosque.

³⁰³ Wang Jinping, *Glossary of Chinese Islamic Terms*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 2001, p. 8

from the intellectual activities of Muslim scholars, building activities continued in the coastal regions. It is recorded that many Ming mosques were finely restored while as many new mosques were built by the Muslim community.

Mosques before the Mid-Qing

The continuous activities of the Maritime Muslims in the development of their community were also reflected in the building of new mosques, apart from the efforts in preserving and maintaining old mosques. However, most of the mosques originally built before the mid-Qing period did not survive, especially those in Nanjing, which were all destroyed in the Taiping Rebellion, as noted in Chapter 4. The surviving



Fig.68. Elevation of the south teaching hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

Qing period mosques, including those old mosques restored or rebuilt later, are mainly dated to the late Qing period.

The Islamic architectural practice of the Maritime Muslims in the Qing period continues the development noted in the Ming period. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the restorations of the Ming mosques in the Qing period showed no alterations of the original architectural forms and layout in general. Indeed, the newly built mosques in coastal China are characteristic of Islamic architecture developed in the Ming period. Structures added to the Ming mosques often took the same architectural forms. For example, the south teaching hall (Fig.68) added in the Qing period in Songjiang Mosque is almost identical to the north teaching hall, as noted in Chapter 4, which dates to the Ming period.

For mosques restored or newly built in the early Qing period, where they show any difference from Ming mosques, this is because elements of a Chinese character are more openly displayed and more pronounced. This is especially the case in the most important structure of a mosque - the prayer hall. The Haopan Mosque in Guangzhou is a good example, as already mentioned in Chapter 4. It was founded in the Ming Chonghua reign period, and was rebuilt in 1706.³⁰⁴ The prayer hall displays all the characteristics of Chinese classical architecture (Figs.69, 70), sharing the features of the prayer halls dated to the Ming period in terms of

³⁰⁴ Chen Leji, *op. cit.*, p. 26. Also the inscription on the commemorative stele preserved in the Haopan Mosque provides information on the date of the mosque.

architectural forms and building materials. The structural frame, however, represents the piling girder type, mentioned in Chapter 4. It is a rare instance found in the Islamic buildings



Fig.69. Elevation of the prayer hall, Haopan Mosque, Guangzhou.

in coastal China. The choice for this type of structural frame here suits the comparatively large scale of the building. The significance here is the use of a gable-on-hip roof with double eaves. This roof type, termed *chongyan xieshan* (重檐歇山) is sometimes considered to be equal the roof type of *wudian*, a roof of the highest class, as noted in the previous chapter. This confidence of the Maritime Muslims in asserting their self-image of being

Chinese, yet of Islamic faith, conveyed their affirmation of a new form of Islamic practices that had evolved in the Ming period, synthesizing the formulae of Islamic worship with heavy



Fig.70. Interior of the prayer hall, Haopan Mosque, Guangzhou.

Chinese cultural overlays. The origins of this synthesis lie in the continuous and extensive intellectual activities of the Maritime Muslim community. Although the present prayer hall of the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou is a modern restoration, it is documented that it had been restored to its original architectural form of the Qing period.

A double-eaved gable-on-hip roof was also used (Fig.64). The preserved original early Qing period structure, the entrance gateway to the inner court, is shown dominated by a lofty *chongyan xieshan* roof with intricate *dougong* brackets (Fig.71), which are characteristic elements of traditional Chinese architecture. This entrance gateway topped with multi-roofs came to be one of the various types of Chinese minarets, which is discussed in Chapter 7.



Fig.71. Entrance gateway as the *wanyue lou*, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

There is another Chinese architectural element that has often appeared in mosques since the early Qing period. That is the screen wall, termed *yingbi*

(影壁), or *zhaobi* (照壁), which was part of ancient Chinese architectural practices. The screen wall placed outside, facing the entrance gate, is called the external screen wall, which is normally used in palaces, temples and other high class buildings.³⁰⁵ That placed inside, immediately behind the entrance gate, is known as internal screen wall. A large building complex sometimes has both external and internal screen walls. Examples are found in the mosques built or in structures added in the Qing period. For instance, a wooden screen wall was placed behind the street entrance of the Huaisheng Mosque (Fig.72); an external screen wall (Fig.73) was executed in the Jiaxing Mosque, as noted below, while there are both external and internal screen walls in the Songjiang Mosque complex (Fig.74).

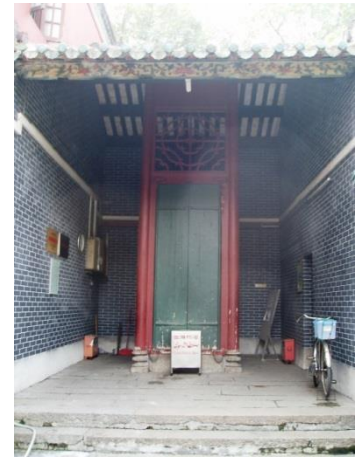


Fig.72. Screen wall, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.73. Screen wall, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.



Fig.74. Screen wall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

While the origin of the screen wall is unclear, the practical function, however, is apparently to provide privacy. This is in line with the structural principles of traditional Chinese architecture, which emphasize enclosed spaces. As can be seen, a traditional Chinese building is usually designed to be inward looking. In other words, it is designed as an enclosure with all structures opening onto the enclosed courtyard, with only the entrance gate opening outwards. The entrance gate

traditionally should remain open during the daytime and the screen wall facing or behind the entrance gate, thus, prevents the passers-by from seeing into the building. There has been debate over the original meaning of the screen wall. It has been suggested that it stemmed from Chinese cosmology, especially concepts from *fengshui*, which believe an evil spirit travels in straight lines. That is why the bridges and paths in Chinese gardens are often seen

in zigzag lines. In particular, zigzag bridges are a typical element of Chinese garden

³⁰⁵ Gao Yang, op. cit., p.206.

architecture. The screen wall, thus, is seen as a propitious device, preventing the evil spirit from entering into the house.

As is in the case of Chinese roofs, apart from functional aspects and decorative values, the use of screen walls also projects hierarchy. In ancient times, a screen wall was only allowed to be built in royal palaces, residences of the Dukes and temples, and with time, it was also allowed for the private residences of high ranked scholar-officials and wealthy merchants.³⁰⁶ There was, however, a strict code applied to the use of screen walls, like the use of different types of roofs, according to the building types or the social class of the owners of the buildings in terms of private residences.³⁰⁷ For example, the type of *liuli yingbi* (琉璃影壁), i.e., ceramic glazed screen wall, was reserved for royal palaces and temples.³⁰⁸ The best-



Fig.75. Screen wall, Ningbo Mosque, Ningbo.

known screen wall probably is the Nine Dragon Screen Wall (*jiulong bi* 九龍壁) in the Forbidden City in Beijing, which was decorated with the royal motif of nine dragons in lavish ceramic glazes. This type of screen wall is not found in private residences. The screen walls found in mosques show very modest decoration, often with the wall surface left unadorned and with only decorative roofs. The use of this Chinese

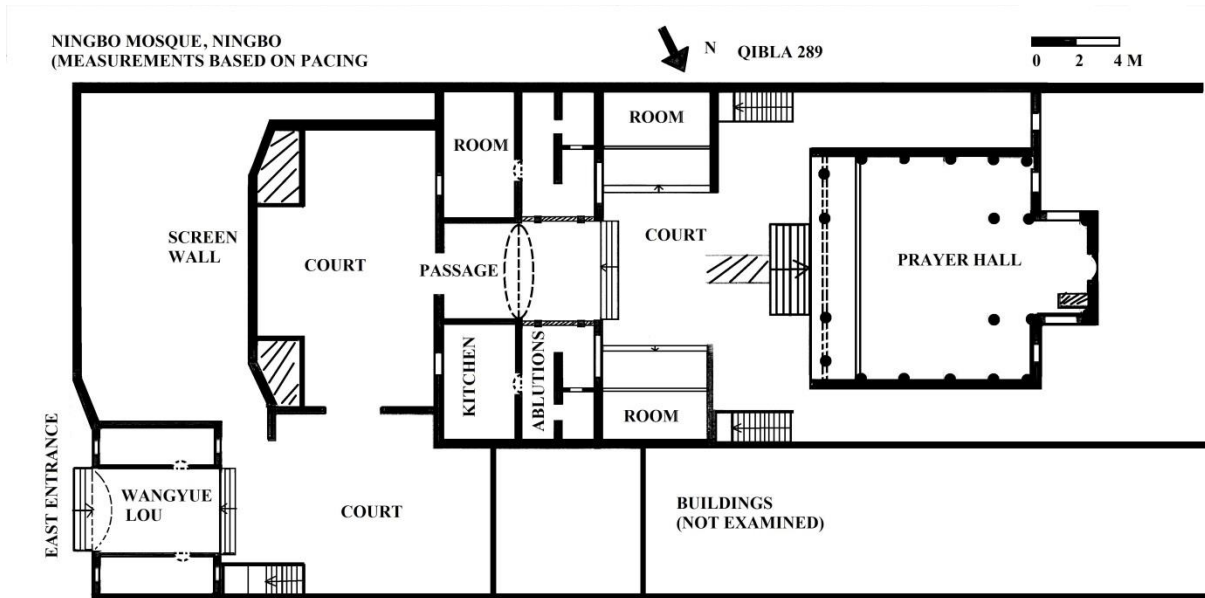
architectural element itself, however, may be seen as a conscious adoption of its social meaning by the Muslims, thus marking the existence of their worship places, and thence, openly expressing the importance of their faith.

One of the few surviving early Qing mosques preserved largely in its original form is the Ningbo Mosque (寧波清真寺) in Ningbo in the lower Yangtze valley. Known as Mingzhou (明州) in ancient times, Ningbo was one of the four great ports in Tang Song China. Like Guangzhou, Quanzhou and Yangzhou, there were already a large number of Muslim merchants of Middle Eastern origin residing in Ningbo by the Song period. It was these Muslim traders who founded the first mosques in Ningbo. One of those was the Ningbo Mosque, the only mosque in Ningbo that has survived to the present day. It was first founded during the Song Xianping regin period (咸平 998-1003), and was then relocated twice. The

³⁰⁶ Wang Zhenhong, and Chen Qianyu, 'Yingbi Zai Minju Zhong De Yiyi', *Shanxi Jianzhu*, vol.33, no.11, April 2007, p. 42.

³⁰⁷ On hierarchy reflected in traditional Chinese architecture, see Hu Chengfang, op. cit.

³⁰⁸ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 206.



Plan IX. Plan of the Ningbo Mosque, Ningbo.

first relocation took place during the Yuan Zhiyuan regin period (至元 1271-1294) to a site to the east of the city. The mosque was rebuilt in 1699 after it was once again relocated to the present position, west to the famous lake Yue Hu (月湖), i.e., the Moon Lake. The mosque, therefore, is also known locally as the Yue Hu Mosque.³⁰⁹

The mosque provides good evidence that the development of Islamic architectural practices in the Ming period continued into the Qing period. The layout of the mosque follows the type of the



Fig.77. Interior of the prayer hall, Ningbo Mosque, Ningbo.

traditional courtyard architecture but with adjustment of the orientation (Plan IX), this being the solution introduced by the Maritime Muslims in the Ming period to the conflict between the *qibla* orientation required by Islamic architecture and Chinese



Fig.76. Balcony of the prayer hall, Ningbo Mosque, Ningbo.

concepts involved in traditional Chinese architectural plans. The mosque is east-west orientated with two identical teaching halls flanking the court and the prayer hall at the west end. The structure of the prayer hall is of the type of reversed T-shape plan

³⁰⁹ Information on the history of the Mosque is preserved in documentation in the Mosque, and also from the communication with the family of the imam of the Mosque, which is based in the mosque compound.

with the *mihrab* projecting out from the *qibla* wall, which evolved in the Jiangnan regions in the Ming period, as already discussed in Chapter 4. An additional structure was integrated into the plan of the mosque - a large screen wall facing the entrance passage leading to the inner court (Fig.75), which is not seen in Ming mosques, as noted above.



Fig.78. Balcony of the prayer hall of the mosque in the tomb of Baha al-Din, Yangzhou.

The prayer hall is a three-bay hall framed by wood timbers with wooden screens running through on the front side and curtain walls on the other sides (Figs.76, 77). The structural frame is of the crossbeam type. There are openings in the *mihrab* chamber, now featuring large glass windows, but which presumably originally had wooden screen windows like in other older mosques, as noted in Chapter 4. In addition to all these features that appeared in the Ming

period mosques, there are additional openings on the *qibla* wall. This, is often



Fig.79. Interior of the prayer hall of the mosque in the Tomb of Baha al-Din, Yangzhou.

seen, especially in mosques on a modest scale, such as the small mosque attached to the Tomb of Baha al-Din in Yangzhou, which was built around mid-Qing period.

The timber framed prayer hall has all characteristics of the mosques developed in the Jiangnan regions by that time (Fig.78). There are large openings in a form of screens running through the *qibla* wall (Fig.79). The prayer halls of the mosques on a larger scale, especially the congregation mosques, often appear to have had openings on side curtain walls as well. For instance, the prayer hall of the Haopan Mosque in Guangzhou features large openings with wooden screens on the side curtain walls (Fig.80).



Fig.80. Interior of the prayer hall, Haopan mosque, Guangzhou.

This architectural feature especially came into use since the early Qing period. It was, however, not derived from traditional Chinese architectural practice but rather was a practical adaptation to the function of prayer halls. The structure of openings is a simple ventilatory device to allow for a supply of sufficient fresh air, especially during communal prayers.

The Regional Variations and Exceptions

By the early Qing period, the mosque types evolved in the Ming period in the coastal regions of China had become a common architectural practice in the building of mosques by the Maritime Muslims. This continued into the later period. As already discussed in Chapter 4, the mosque types evolved in the Ming period in the Guangzhou regions and the Jiangnan regions included some features reflecting regional architectural traditions, despite following the same principles of traditional Chinese architecture with an emphasis on symmetry and articulation in plans. The existence of regional variations continued throughout the Qing period.



Fig.82. View of the garden, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

As previously noted, the reversed T-shape plan of the prayer hall had become one of the characteristic of the Jiangnan mosques since Ming times. It appears consistently in the Qing



Fig.81. View of the garden, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

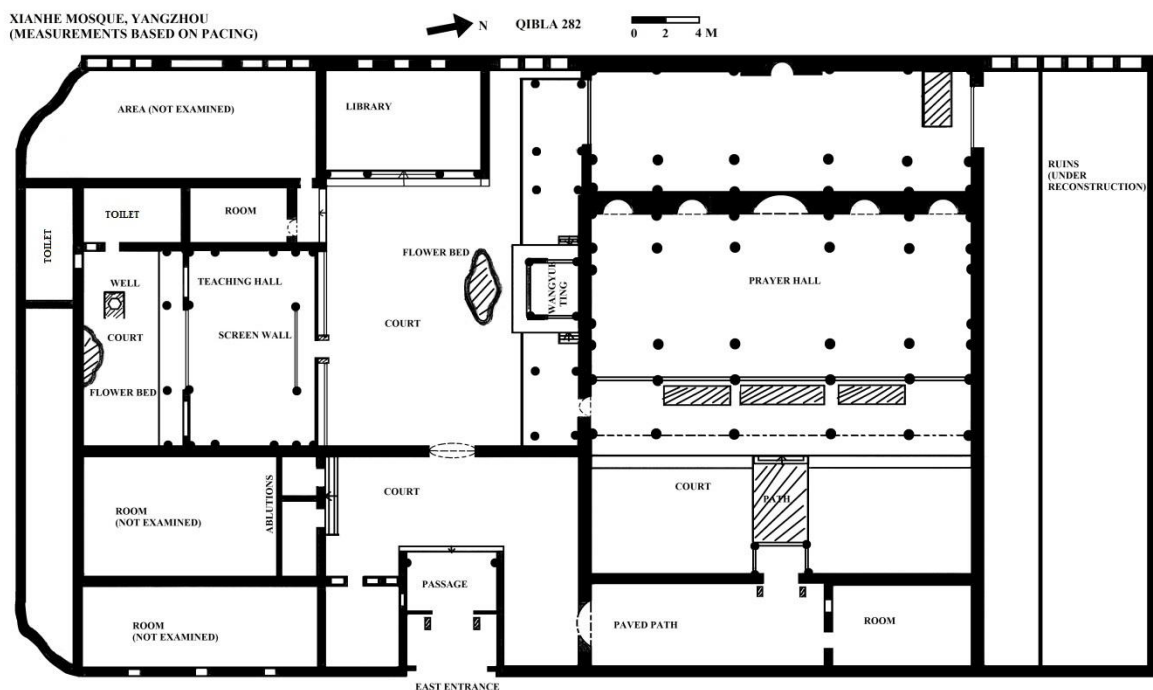
mosques in the Jiangnan regions. In addition, there were some elements of Jiangnan garden architecture (*Jiangnan yuanlin*, 江南園林),³¹⁰ which often appeared in the Jiangnan mosques, from decorative elements to the layout of the gardens. For example, the garden of the Songjiang Mosque that gradually took on its present form from origins in the Ming and, primarily, Qing periods bears striking resemblance to the well-executed gardens in the Jiangnan regions. The immense garden surrounding the main structures of the mosque (Plan V) offers a range of views of the constantly changing spaces, filled with decorative rockeries, a wide variety of trees and exotic plants and flowers (Figs.81, 82).

These are essential elements of the design of

³¹⁰On design of Jiangnan gardens and elements of Jiangnan garden architecture in general, see, Fang Puhe (eds.), *Chinese Classical Gardens: classical personal gardens in Jiangnan area of China*, Zhejiang People's Fine Arts Publishing House, Hangzhou, 2002.

Jiangnan gardens. Although the gardens of the mosques in the Jiangnan regions, regardless of their scale, often reflect some influence from the designs of Jiangnan garden, the concepts of Jiangnan garden architecture do not seem to have extended to the overall plan of the mosques but to have been confined to the garden design. The layout of the main structures of the mosques still, with only a very few exceptions, follows the principle of traditional Chinese courtyard architecture with an emphasis on balance, especially on maintaining a central axis as a focal viewpoint. This is, therefore, quite opposite to the concepts of Jiangnan garden architecture, which do not emphasize articulation, and, therefore, do not require maintaining a central axis. Rather, they create a wide range of views within intricately arranged spaces through integrating the buildings into the garden wherever appropriate.

Plan X. Plan of the Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.



One exceptional case in the layout of the mosques in the Jiangnan regions is the Xianhe, i.e., Crane Mosque, in Yangzhou. As noted in Chapter 3, although the Xianhe Mosque is documented to have been founded in 1275 by Baha al-Din, who is said to be a 16th generation descendant of the Prophet Muhammad,³¹¹ there are hardly any remains from the date of its foundation, since the mosque was rebuilt several times over centuries.³¹² The present-day structures of the Xianhe Mosque are mainly dated to early and mid-Qing periods. The layout of the mosque is rather unusual and it does not share the characteristic plan of the Jiangnan

³¹¹ Yin Huiyi, and Chen Mengxing *Yangzhou Fu Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 24, p. 393. Qian Xiangbao, and Gui Bangjie, *Xuixiu Jiangdu Xian Zhi*, op. cit., vol.12, p. 942, vol. 13, pp. 959-960.

³¹² Zhu Jiang, op. cit., p. 34.

mosques, as noted above. Instead, more of the concepts of Jiangnan garden architecture are reflected, rather than the principles of traditional courtyard architecture (Plan X). The space is arranged in a rather flexible way, regardless of the concept of articulation that is essential element of traditional Chinese architecture. There is no central axis visible in its plan, the space being divided into separate quarters accommodating different functions, yet connected through well-kept small courts with gardens and intricate paths (Figs.83, 84). The arrangement of the buildings, like the arrangement of the space, also shows a great flexibility, and does not follow the rule of rigid bilateral symmetry displayed in traditional courtyard architecture. These elements displayed in the layout of the Xianhe Mosque are typical features of Jiangnan garden architecture.



Fig.83. Round door, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

The south quarter, used to mainly accommodate the teaching function, has a three-bay teaching hall from the early Qing period and a very small court (Fig.85) carefully paved with the pebbles that are typically seen



Fig.85. Small court in the south quarter, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.



Fig.84. Arched door, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

in Jiangnan gardens.³¹³ A wooden screen wall in red is placed behind the entrance to this quarter

(Fig.86). There used to be an external screen wall standing in front of the east entrance, the main entrance of the mosque, but this was removed in the 1950s.

The prayer hall is located in the north quarter, where there was once a large three-bay hall to the north of the prayer hall itself, this now being replaced by modern structures. There is no record of the date of construction of the prayer hall, although it is generally accepted that it was built around mid-Qing period, if not earlier.³¹⁴ The large five-

³¹³ Fang Puhe, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

bay prayer hall is a timber-framed structure with wooden screens running through the front side of the hall, and with balconies along three sides on the raised stone platform (Fig.87). This is a common feature of Qing period buildings, and hence the Qing mosques. Apart from the decoration of the *mihrab*, the exposed timber structures in the interior of the prayer hall



Fig.87. Elevation of the prayer hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

provide the decoration as well as carry the loadbearing function, as seen in other mosques, mentioned above. The timber frame shows in combination of the two structural types: the crossbeam and the piling girder structures, which is not uncommon in practices of traditional Chinese architecture. The prayer hall, thus, without additional decorative elements, remains simple but elegant. This rather austere style was a

characteristic of classical Chinese architecture in the Ming period, and until the early Qing periods, at which point the tendency of favouring rich decorations in architecture began to develop.³¹⁵ This was reflected in the mosques of the late Qing period, as noted below.



Fig.86. Entrance to the south quarter, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

The layout of the prayer hall of the Xianhe Mosque is exceptional as well. It is the only recorded mosques in the Jiangnan region that was not constructed with the reversed T-shape plan. Instead of extending the central bay to form an additional *mihrab* chamber, there is a partition wall featuring five arched openings that divide the prayer hall into two rectangular sections: the main hall and the *mihrab* section (Figs.88, 89). There are wooden screen doors on both sides of the *mihrab* sections allowing access from outside. The *mihrab* is marked by an elevated gable-on-hip roof visible from afar (Fig.90). It is, thus, reminiscent of the way in which the *mihrab* was emphasised through its elevation in Yuan period

mosques such as the Songjiang Mosque and the Fenghuang Mosque, as noted in Chapter 3.

³¹⁴ Liu Zhiping, op. cit., p. 37.

³¹⁵ On characteristic changes in Chinese architecture from the Ming to the Qing period, see Su Dazhang, 'The Qing Dynasty', in *Chinese Architecture*, N. S. Steinhardt (eds, and expn), Yale University Press, New Haven, Beijing, 2002, p. 262.

The small mosque attached to the tomb of Baha al-Din, as noted above, was built in the same



Fig.90. Elevated roof above the *mihrab*, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

period in the same port of Yangzhou, but it apparently follows the type of the Jiangnan mosque. This feature displayed in the prayer hall of the Xianhe Mosque appears to be unique with regards to Jiangnan mosques in the Qing period. Since there is no document providing information on the form of the older structures that preceded the Qing period structure, we cannot tell whether this may have been a reflection of the styles of earlier structures of the mosque in the Song or Yuan periods, if it existed, as is indicated in the historical records. It is, however, not implausible.



Fig.89. Interior of the prayer hall, showing the *mihrab* section, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

Another exceptional case is that of the plan of Jiaxing Mosque (嘉興清真寺) in Jiaxing in the lower Yangtze valley. Benefiting from its location close to the great port of Ningbo and the maritime trading centre of Hangzhou, Jiaxing had been frequented by the Muslim traders since the Song Yuan period. There



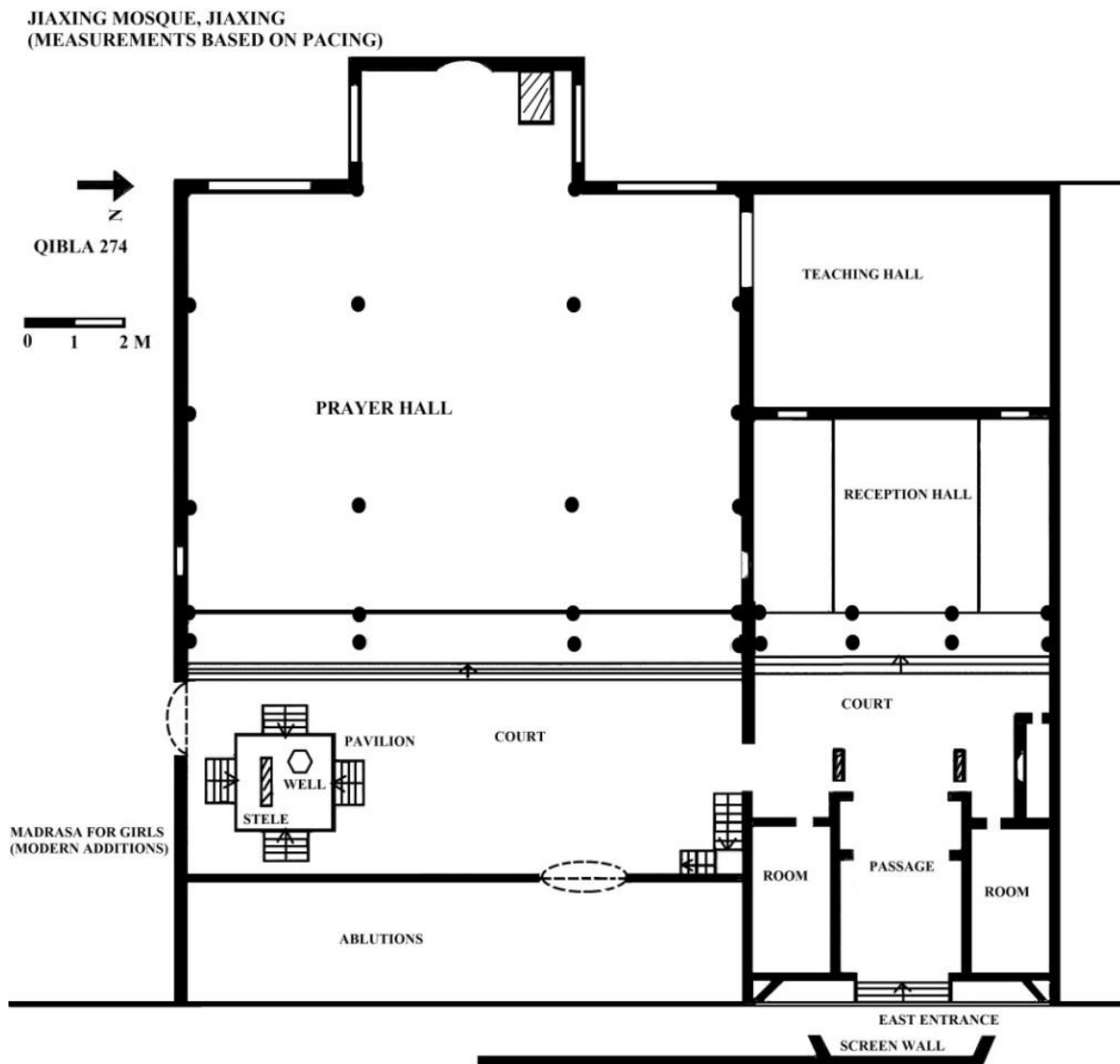
Fig.88. Interior of the prayer hall, showing the partition wall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

is, however, no record of mosques being built before the Ming period. Founded in 1602, the Jiaxing Mosque is the only mosque recorded and in existence in Jiaxing today. It was rebuilt in 1746, with a restoration in 1774.³¹⁶

Although the plan of the prayer hall, in a reversed T-shape, follows the Jiangnan mosque type, the overall layout of the mosque is not in line with the principles of traditional courtyard architecture. The arrangement of the space shares features with the Xianhe Mosque, which reflects the traditions of Jiangnan garden architecture (Plan XI). The mosque is divided into separate quarters, as seen in the Xianhe Mosque, accommodating different functions. Through the street entrance from the east, it enters the

³¹⁶ Two inscriptions dated to the Ming and Qing periods were inscribed on the different sides of one stele preserved in the mosque, which provide information on the date and restoration of the mosque.

north quarter of the mosque comprised of a small court and a three-bay timber framed teaching hall (Fig.91). The south quarter accommodates a madrasa for girls, which is a large quarter with the buildings being modern additions, and the form of original structures in this quarter is not documented. The prayer hall is located in a quarter in between, with a small court on its front side. There is a pavilion in the court accommodating an old well and the commemorative stele, which is commonly seen in mosques (Fig.92). Opposite to the prayer hall across the court is the quarter serving the function of ablutions, which is accessed through a round door (Fig.93). The use of doors in various shapes as a decorative element is a



Plan XI. Plan of the Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.



Fig.91. Elevation of the teaching hall, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.



Fig.93. Entrance to the ablutions, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.

characteristic of the Jiangnan gardens, which is best represented in the scene of well-known Suzhou gardens.³¹⁷

The prayer hall shares the common features of the Jiangnan mosques. The three-bay hall with exposed timber structures is kept very simple in decoration (Fig.94). There are large windows on the *qibla* wall to provide

sufficient ventilation in addition to the screens on the front side of the hall. It is connected to the teaching hall through screen doors on the north wall, showing the flexibility in the arranging of spaces.

There is another regional variation presented in the Mingshan Tang (明善堂) in the compound of the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou. As noted in Chapter 4, it was originally built as accommodation for the imams serving the Ashab Mosque, and was converted to mosque

after the superstructure of the prayer hall of the mosque collapsed in the

Qing period. According to epigraphic information and historical records,³¹⁸ the Mingshan Tang passed through a variety of architectural forms as a result of several restorations that took place during the Ming and Qing periods, as already discussed in the previous

chapter. It took its present-day form of traditional Minnan (閩南), i.e., south Fujian, residential architecture in 1871, this replacing a predecessor that followed a form of traditional courtyard architecture. Although the present-day Mingshan Tang is modern restoration, sponsored by a Jordanian couple in 1998, it is documented that this is faithful to



Fig.92. Pavilion, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.



Fig.94. Interior of the prayer hall, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing

³¹⁷ Fang Puhe, op. cit., pp. 68-74.

³¹⁸ See references are given in Chapter 4.

the original form of 1871.³¹⁹

The Mingshan Tang follows the traditions of the Minnan residential architecture. The mosque is laid out in four connected bays enclosing a small open space, termed *tianjing* (天井), literally ‘sky well’ (Plan I). The ‘sky well’ is a typical feature in residential architecture in south China, sharing the concept of an open space with the layout of quadrangle residential architecture type (*Siheyuan*, 四合院) as found in north China. The small opening of the ‘sky well’ is formed through the roof space of the closely structured bays from the floor up. The ‘sky well’ is a common feature of Minnan residential architecture,³²⁰ and is often carefully paved with stone slabs with vents for draining the rainwater collected in it, as seen here in the Mingshan Tang (Fig. 95).



Fig.95. Courtyard of the Mingshan Tang, showing the ‘sky well’, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.



Fig.96. Elevation of the Mingshan Tang, looking southwest, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

The play with different textures and shades offered by various building materials is a typical feature of Minnan architecture. The bays here are paved with reddish square ties and the same shade of stone slabs, as used in the ‘sky well’, at the edges. The outer wall features red bricks on a base composed of stone slabs (Fig.96), which is another characteristic of Minnan residential architecture.³²¹ Covered with red ties, the roof appears in a concave line with its ridges looking like a bird’s tail, hence termed *yanwei ji* (燕尾脊), literally ‘swallow tail ridge’. This type of roof was traditionally used in the residence of high ranked scholar-officials and temples in the Minnan regions,

³¹⁹ Huang Qiurun, *Quanzhou Yisilan Qingjingsi*, Quanzhou Qingjingsi Guanli Weyuanhui, Quanzhou, 2004, pp. 17-18.

³²⁰ Ning Xiaozhuo, ‘Minnan Caishi Guominju Jianzhu Zhuangshi Yiyi De Yanjiu’ (2005), in *Hailiang Wendang*, 14 November 2013, viewed on 3 Feb 2015, pp. 32, 147.

<http://max.book118.com/html/2013/1114/4964767.shtm>

³²¹ *ibid.*, pp. 19, 147.

symbolizing power and authority.³²²The Minshan Tang, thus, displays essential features of Minnan residential architecture.

The only architectural element that suggests that the building is a mosque, a worship place, is the *qibla* wall, of *maqsurah* type visible in the interior (Fig.97). This is typical of the type found in the Guangzhou region, with a *maqsurah* structure near the center of the *qibla* wall. Unlike the simple look of the prayer halls in earlier mosques, with barely any decoration other than exposed timber structures, the prayer hall of the Mingshan Tang is richly decorated with beams being colourfully painted. That became a characteristic of the late Qing mosques.



Fig.97. Interior of the prayer hall, Mingshan Tang, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

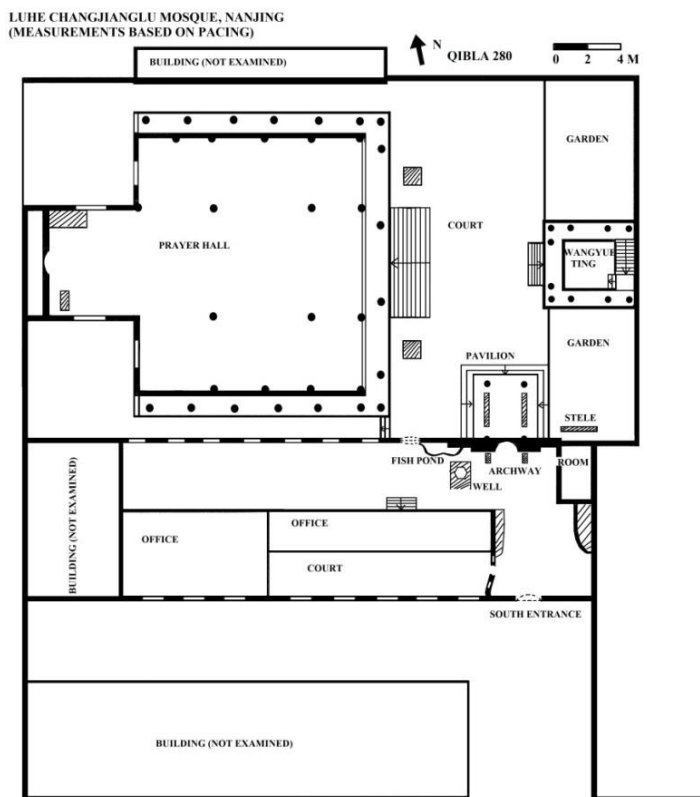
Mosques of the Late Qing Period

Although, as mentioned earlier, the coastal region was not affected by the destruction that resulted from the Muslim rebellions against the Manchu Qing rule, since the Maritime Muslims was not involved, many mosques that had been built by the Maritime Muslim were destroyed during the Taiping rebellion (1850-1864), especially in the Jiangnan regions. In addition, the so-called Opium Wars with Britain, which resulted in the opening up of the Chinese ports to foreign trade, had a direct impact on Islamic architectural practices in the coastal regions. As noted in Chapter 4, many mosques were destroyed during these chaotic times. Thus, for example, records show that a group of mosques built around mid-Qing period in Nanjing was destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion, then being rebuilt in the late Qing period.

The Luhe Changjianglu Mosque (六合長江路清真寺) in Nanjing is one of these mosques. Founded in the Qianlong reign period (乾隆 1735-1796), the mosque was destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion, and was rebuilt in the Guangxu regin period (光緒 1875-1908). It is documented that the original mosque was, in terms of its layout and architectural forms, modelled after the Luhe Nanmen Mosque, dated to the Ming period in the same district of

³²² *ibid.*, pp. 43, 50. Also see Lin Xiuqin, 'Qianxi Minnan Chuantong Jianzhu Wuding Wenhua De Xingcheng', *Fujian Wenbo*, 2009, vol. 1, pp. 51-52.

Nanjing, as noted in Chapter 4.³²³ This provides a good example of a mosque that was built, in a Chinese style, in the Ming period being used as a model in the Qing period.



Plan XII. Plan of the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.98. Front elevation of the south entrance, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.99. Back elevation of the south entrance, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

The present-day mosque, however, had been much restored with large parts of the current building being modern additions that include some elements of the style of Jiangnan gardens. The original layout of the mosque, which followed the traditions of Chinese courtyard architecture, can, therefore, only be traced with considerable difficulty (Plan XII). The prayer hall and an entrance gateway are the only structures preserved from the Qing period. The minaret was restored during the Republican period.³²⁴ According to the available documentation,³²⁵ supported by personal discussion with members of the local Muslim community, in this mosque, as was the case with the Jingjue Mosque and Luhe Nanmen Mosque, in addition to the prayer hall, there were other functional structures. These include teaching halls that were symmetrically laid out in the courts along the east-west orientated central axis and the main entrance and reception halls on the central axis with passages connecting the courts. This is a typical layout of a Chinese traditional courtyard complex,

³²³ Wu Yiye, *op. cit.*, p. 241. Inscription on the commemorative stele recovered and now preserved in the mosque provides information on the date and restoration of the mosque.

³²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 242, also epigraphic information on the stele preserved in the mosque

³²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 241.

with the exception of the orientation, as already discussed, as had been adopted by the Maritime Muslim community in its architectural practices since the Ming period.

While the main entrance on the east side had vanished, the south entrance gateway has been preserved, known as the red gate after the colour of its door. It features a *Pailou*, i.e., decorative archway, in its front elevation and a pavilion with a



Fig.100. Elevation of the prayer hall, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.102. Interior of the prayer hall, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

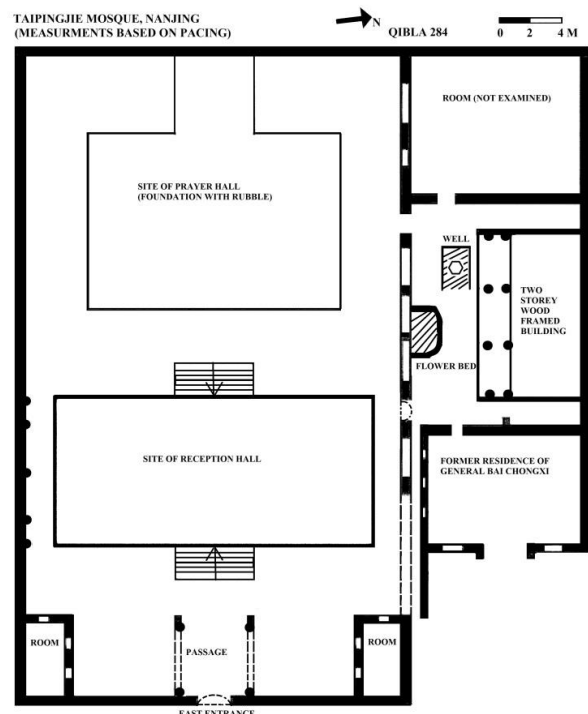
gable-on-hip roof in its back elevation (Figs.98, 99). This combination was apparently modelled after the entrance gateway in the Luhe Nanmen Mosque, as noted in Chapter 4.

As can be seen, both the plan and the architectural form of the prayer hall show typical features

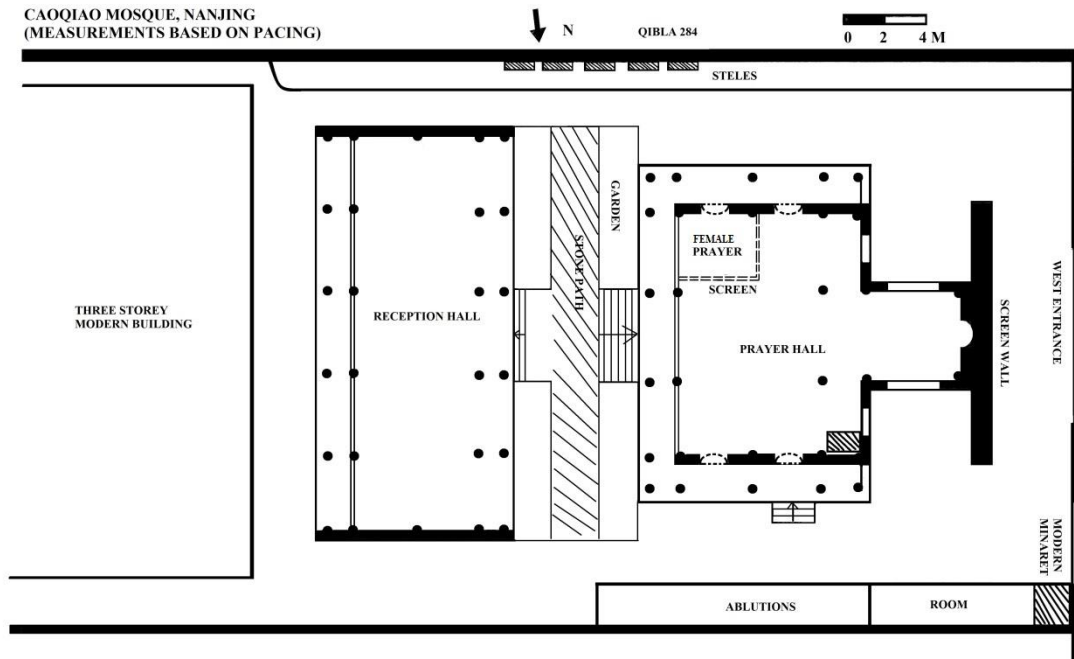


Fig.101. Roof of the prayer hall, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

of the Jiangnan mosque type. The timber-framed structure, in particular, has a very pronounced gable-on-hip roof with finely carved wooden screen panels on the front elevation (Figs.100, 101). There are openings in the *mihrab* and on the *qibla* wall as well as the side curtain walls, whose glass windows have a rather contemporary look (Fig.102). This provides evidence of the way in which, towards the late Qing period, the previous practice of using the wooden screen windows and doors in the *mihrab* chamber and along the curtain walls was replaced by another fashion that followed the contemporary trend in building in the coastal regions.



Plan XIII. Plan of the Taipingglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Plan XIV. Plan of the Caoqia Mosque, Nanjing.

This new trend is also reflected in other members of this group of rebuilt mosques during the late Qing period, following the destruction of the Taiping Rebellion, such as the Taipinglu Mosque (太平路清真寺), the Caoqiao Mosque, (草橋清真寺) and the Jizhaoying Mosque (吉兆营清真寺) in Nanjing. Although these mosques are much restored or rebuilt, all of them originally were of the Jiangnan mosque type. The available information on the original layout and architectural forms of the Taipinglu Mosque and the Caoqiao Mosque indicates, that, like the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque and the Luhe Nanmen Mosque, both were large complexes with all functional buildings laid out in line with the principles of traditional courtyard architecture (Plans XIII, XIV). They survived to modern times, but they were much scaled down, especially after the Cultural Revolution, both having fallen into a very poor state. In 2003, members of the Muslim community decided to remove remaining old structures in the Taipinglu Mosque, to the Caoqiao Mosque, then being restored. It is, therefore, these restored and preserved old structures including the prayer hall and the reception hall from the late Qing period, now in the Caoqiao Mosque, that provide evidence of the original architectural form of the original Taipinglu Mosque, on the original site of which a modern mosque stands now.³²⁶

³²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 235, 237. Epigraphs on the stelae preserved in the Caoqiao Mosque provide information on the history of both mosques, also communication with the local Muslim community. At the time that fieldwork was

Founded in the Qianglong reign period, the Caoqiao Mosque was destroyed in the Taiping Rebellion, and rebuilt in 1866, with a restoration in 1876.

Although there are no remains of the original structures of the mosque, available information suggests that they share the architectural features that are represented in the surviving remains



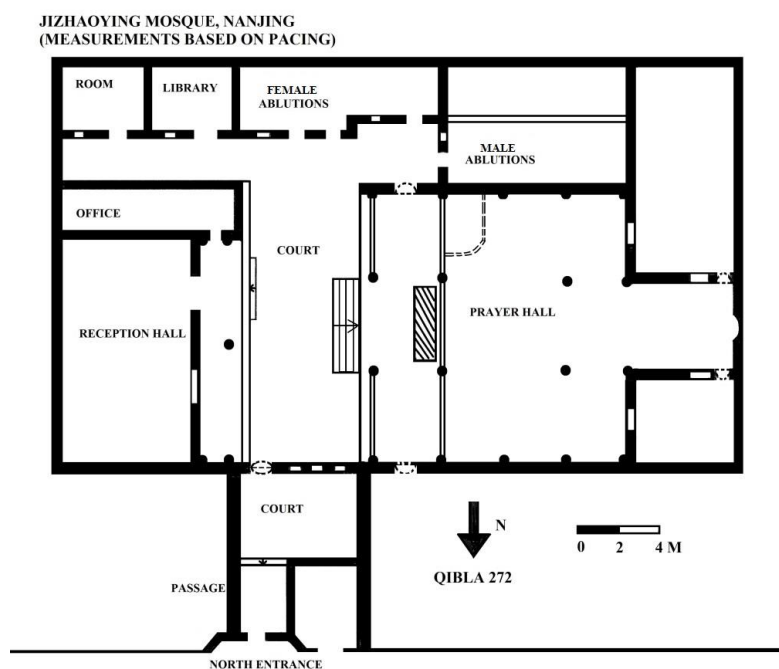
Fig.103. Elevation of the prayer hall, Caoqiao Mosque, Nanjing.

of the Taipinglu Mosque. The prayer hall is structured in the reversed T-shape plan of a common Jiangnan mosque type. The wooden screens appear



Fig.104. Interior of the prayer hall, Caoqiao Mosque, Nanjing.

on the front side of the hall, while the design of the glass windows on the walls of the *qibla* side reflect the fashion of the time (Figs.103, 104), as noted below.



Plan XV. Plan of the Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.

Founded in mid-Qing period, the Jizhaoying Mosque was rebuilt in the late Qing period, and the prayer hall was restored in 1922.³²⁷ It is a small courtyard mosque with garden architectural elements (Fig.105), representing a typical Jiangnan mosque on a smaller scale (Plan XV). The restored prayer hall still remained its timber framed structure from the Qing period, but the interior was modernised, especially the

mihrab chamber, whose windows were modified in the latest fashion of its day (Fig.106).

taken, the Taipinglu Mosque was still in ruins with only the foundations being traceable, upon which the sketch of the ground plan was based. A modern mosque was planned to be built on the site.

³²⁷ *ibid.* p.237, also epigraphic information on the stele is preserved in the mosque.

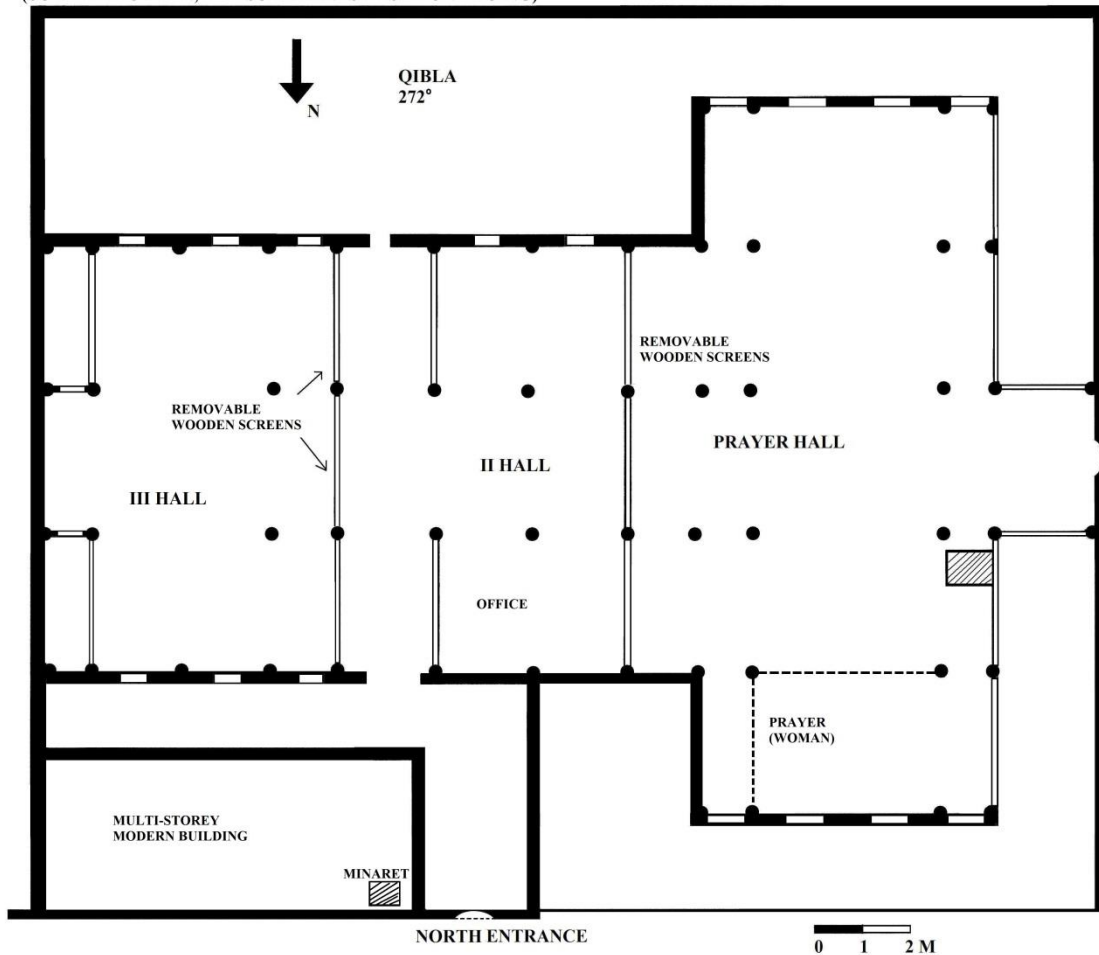


Fig.106. Interior of the prayer hall, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.105. View of the forecourt, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.

FUYOULU MOSQUE, SHANGHAI
(SCHEMATIC PLAN, MEASUREMENTS BASED ON PACING)



Plan XVI. Plan of the Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

Another example of the mosques from the late Qing period is the Fuyoulu Mosque (福佑路清真寺) in Shanghai. Built in 1870, it was the first mosque to be built in Shanghai. It was

originally a small courtyard mosque type, like the Jizhaoying Mosque, but with a large five-bay prayer hall that follows the Jiangnan mosque type. However, after the extension of 1897



Fig.107. Screen door of the prayer hall, Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

and 1905, in which two three-bay halls were added, aligned to the prayer hall on the central axis,³²⁸ it took on a T-shape with a long extended hall resembling an older mosque types in the Islamic world (Plan XVI). Despite this, the intension of these extensions, in fact, was of more practical concerns and still within the traditions of Chinese architectural practices. This resemblance to a much earlier, non-Chinese type, may well have been a coincident, rather than a result of a conscious intention to adopt this style.



Fig 108. Interior of the prayer hall, Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

The three halls are of the traditional type of Chinese buildings, as is commonly seen in all other Chinese style mosques in the post-Yuan period. The timber-framed halls with large openings on all sides, featuring wooden screens and glass windows, especially share features with the prayer halls and other functional halls of the mosques from the mid-Qing period onwards (Figs.107, 108, 109).

Here again the structural frame shows in combination of two types: the crossbeam and piling girders types, as is the case in the structure of the prayer hall of the Xianhe Mosque, noted earlier. However, a special feature shown in the Fuyoulu Mosque here is that it makes use of the flexibility of timber structures to organize the space in a most efficient way. The wooden screens fixed in the halls are removable, thus also severing as partitions. The hall at the east end is used for funerals, while the middle hall is used for administrative purposes. However, at the time of Friday prayers, the screen



Fig.109. Interior of the prayer hall, Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

³²⁸ Personal communication with the leader of the Muslim community on the history of the mosque. Also see Liu Zhiping, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

panels can be removed, thus forming a large hall that can accommodate some thousands of the faithful for congregation prayers. The beams were delicately painted, reflecting the tendency to decorate exposed plain timber structures that were once seen in the earlier mosques, as noted above.



Fig.110. Elevation of the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

The forms and composition of the timber structures here still play a decorative role, along with the subtly painted elements, thus achieving a balance between different decorative elements. In contrast, the interior of the prayer hall in later mosques appears to be dominated by the richly painted beams. The Shanxiang Mosque (山巷清真寺) in Zhenjiang(镇江) is a fine example, reflecting the late Qing taste for rich architectural decorations.

Close to the great port of Yangzhou, Zhenjiang had been frequented by the Muslim merchants since the Tang period. The textual sources indicate that mosques were founded in the city as early as the Tang period, although none of these have survived to the present day. The Shanxiang Mosque, also known as the Chengxi Mosque (城西清真寺), i.e., West City Mosque, since it is located outside the western ancient city gate, is the only mosque in Zhenjiang that is preserved largely in its original form from the late Qing period. According to epigraphic information and local history records,³²⁹ the Shanxiang Mosque was founded in the Kangxi reign period with only three simple thatched cottages that was destroyed in 1853. It was rebuilt in 1873, although the present form of the mosque complex appeared, however, only after completion of major extension works that took place in 1902.

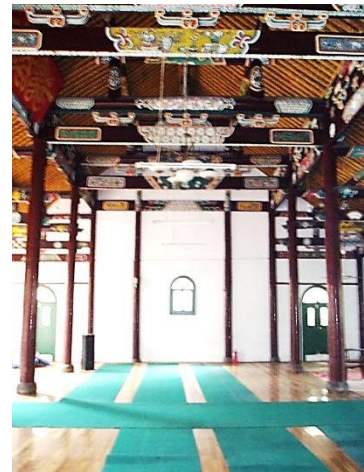


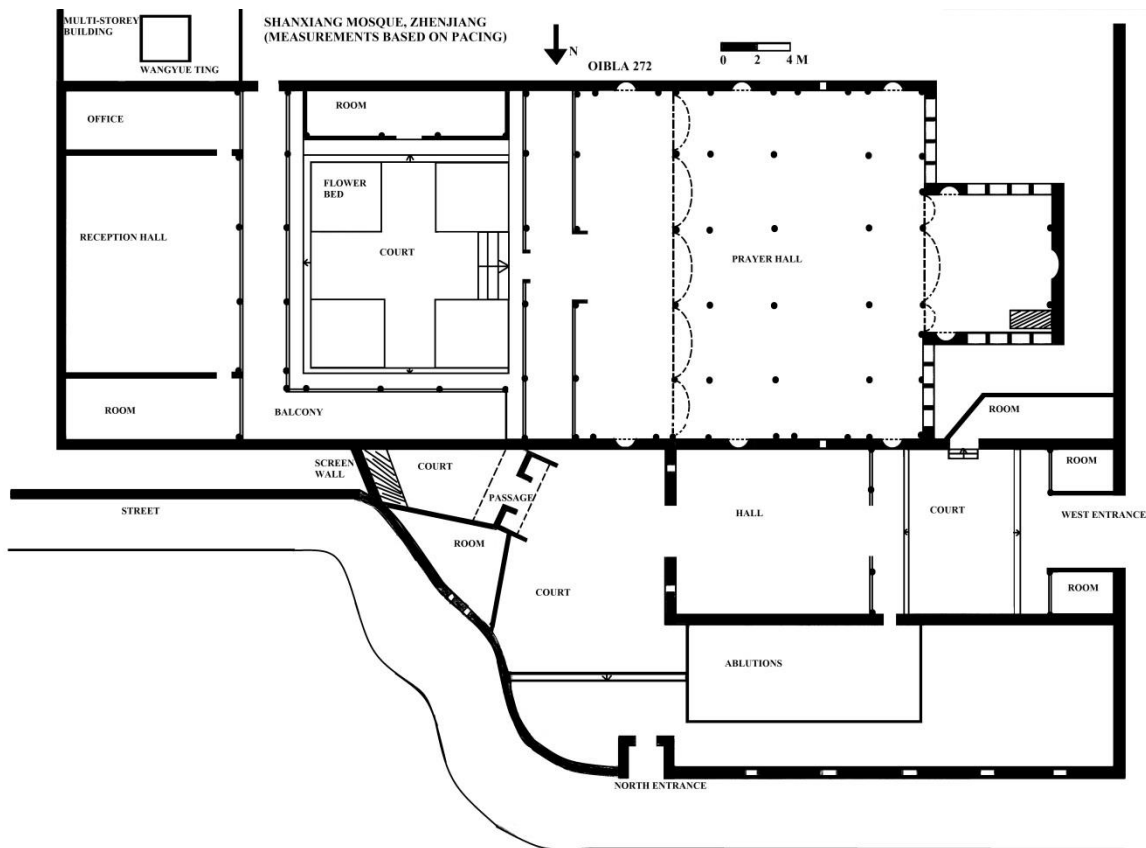
Fig.111. Interior of the prayer hall, showing the painted beams, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

Located close to Nanjing, Zhenjiang became a regional centre for Islamic studies in the late Qing period, thanks to the sponsoring and promoting of such studies by the wealthy local Muslim community, a beneficiary of the thriving local economy. This was evident in the building of extensions of the Shanxiang mosque in order to accommodate all of its activities.

³²⁹ Epigraphs on the stelae preserved in the mosque provide information on the history of the mosque.

Historically, the mosque hosted a well-known madrasa, a branch of the Jinling School of Islam (金陵學派) that had its center in Nanjing, as previously mentioned. It was also home to a famous publishing house that printed the *Han Kitab*, especially the works of the most influential Muslim scholars, Wan Daiyu and Liu Zhi, thus playing an important role in spreading the Chinese Islamic school of thought.³³⁰

The five-bay large prayer hall displays the characteristics of classical Chinese architecture in its elevation (Fig.110). The intricate *dougong* brackets supporting eaves of the roof now appear to be well painted, which was the aesthetic approach of the late Qing period in architectural decoration. This taste for rich decorations is well displayed in the richly painted timber beams in the interior of the prayer hall (Fig.111), which is further discussed in Chapter 8.



Plan XVII. Plan of the Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

The structure of the prayer hall still follows the Jiangnan mosque type, with the additional feature that a wooden arched panel appears at the first row of columns by the entrance and another in front of the *mihrab* chamber (Plan XVII. Figs.112, 113). This may have been

³³⁰ Information is provided by the Muslim community during fieldwork.

inspired by the arched partition in the Xianhe Mosque in Yangzhou, as noted above.

As is seen in other prayer halls dated to the late Qing period, especially in larger ones, there



Fig.113. Interior of the prayer hall, showing the large French windows, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

are large openings on all sides. They have French windows and doors with arched tops (Fig.113). This type of decorative window or door began to appear in prayer halls towards the late Qing period, as can be seen in the mosques of this period noted above.

For example, the openings along both sides of the walls of the *mihrab* chamber in the Fuyoulu Mosque are designed as large French windows. It is, however, here in the Shanxiang Mosque that this European architectural element became more extensively

applied, thus signalling the arrival of European influence along with the presence of the European powers in coastal China after the Opium Wars.



Fig.112. Interior of the prayer hall, showing the arched panels, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

The Islamic architectural development in the Ming period in coastal China was followed by intellectual achievement of the maritime Muslims in the Qing period. By the mid-Qing period, Islamic architecture with its Chinese style, which had evolved in the Ming period, reached its

maturity. Thus the centuries-long process of the evolution of mosques in coastal China from a pure alien import from the heartland of Islam to a distinctly Chinese style mosque had been completed, following the creations of the syncretic traditions and yet the new identity of the Maritime Muslim community. This combination of both cultures and the evolution of a Chinese Islamic architecture led inexorably, at least in terms of architecture, to Islam being interpreted in purely Chinese terms. From this point onwards till the end of the Qing period, the structural principles reflected in the Ming and early Qing mosques remained unchanged. Thus the appearance of the mosques largely remained the same, with the main changes being only some decorative details and practical adaptations to functional uses. Towards the end of the Qing period, European influences began to be reflected in the mosques in the coastal regions, marking the emergence of a new trend in mosque architecture in the years that lay ahead.

Chapter 6

Emergence of a New Style in the Republican Era (1912- 1949): Colonial Style Mosques

The Political, Economic and Social Conditions of the Republican Era

Following its defeat in the First Opium War (1839-1842), the Manchu Qing dynasty began to decline rapidly, its rule being challenged by both internal uprisings and by external pressures from European powers. As China's central government disintegrated, the activities of the various revolutionary groups eventually led up to the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命) in 1911, which resulted in the overthrow of Manchu rule.³³¹ With the declaration of the establishment of the Republic of China on 1st January 1912 in Nanjing by the first elected Provisional President Sun Yixian (孫逸仙),³³² the thousands of years of imperial rule, thus, came to an end.

The founding of the Republic, however, did not bring to an end the disintegration of the country. Instead, the Republican era was marked by constant warfare. Disputes between the republican nationalists resulted soon after the founding of the Republic in a division of the government into two separate administrations, one in the south and one in the north, both backed by warlords.³³³ Fighting between regional warlords was prevalent in the early decades

³³¹ On history of the Republican period of China in general see: J. K. Fairbank, and D. Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 12, Republican China, 1912-1949, Part 1: Republican China, 1912-1949*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983. J. K. Fairbank, and A. Feuerwerker (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 13, Republican China 1912-1949, Part 2: Republican China, 1912-1949*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986. The Xinhai Revolution was democratic movement consisting of a series of uprisings and revolts against the imperial rule across China, which took place in 1911, the Xinhai year according to Chinese calendar; it was, therefore, called the Xinhai Revolution. The Wuchang Uprising (武昌起義) which broke out on 1st October 1911, also known as the Double Tenth Revolution served as a pivotal point in the final overthrow of the Manchu dynasty.

³³² Sun Yixian (1866-1925) was a forerunner of democratic movement in China, and is regarded as founding father of the Republic of China

³³³ The conflict among the republicans began soon after the founding of the Republic with the transfer of the power to Yuan Shikai (袁世凱), the second Provisional President of the Republic. He ruled from Beijing and his rule was widely criticised by the pro-republicans as being dictatorial. In particular, Yuan's attempt to restore the monarchy and making himself emperor provoked revolts and uprisings across China. Upon Yuan's death in 1916, government power in the north of the country fell into the hands of a succession of warlords. In the south, a separate government was founded in Guangzhou under the leadership of Sun Yixian with the support of the loyal republican nationalists and in collaboration with regional warlords. The confrontation between the two governments divided China along the south-north border. The Guangzhou government launched a series of military campaigns calling for the restoration of the constitutional republic.

of the Republican period which have, therefore, become known as the Warlord Era.³³⁴ There was also conflict against foreign invaders while China was also involved in the First World War on the side of the Allied Triple Entente.

The turmoil lasted until 1928, when a united republic was again restored, with its seat at Nanjing.³³⁵ Led by Jiang Jieshi (蔣介石),³³⁶ and known as the Nationalist Government, this brought the nation a break from chaotic warfare for the first time since the Revolution. China then enjoyed comparatively stability until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1936. This lasted until 1945 and, in conjunction with China's involvement in World War II, once again threw the country into chaos. Following the end of the war, a Civil War then broke out between the Nationalist and the Communists. This ended in 1949, after the loss of millions of lives, with the Nationalist Government retreating to Taiwan and the Communist party establishing the People's Republic of China.

The Republic Era saw fundamental changes in China. Besides the ending of imperial rule, traditional Chinese values were challenged by nationalist intellectuals who led the well-known New Culture Movement(新文化運動) of the mid 1910s and 1920s. This challenged Confucian ideology, seeking to modernize China through the promotion of Western civilizations. It reached its peak in a massive student demonstration, known as the May Fourth Movement (五四運動) in 1919, which had a strong impact on the intellectual life and also the political sphere in the years that followed.³³⁷

Since the late Qing period, the coastal regions of China had been a strong base for republican

³³⁴ This period of confrontation between the separate governments in the north and south, backed by regional warlords (1916-1928) was called by historians the Warlord Era. The Beijing-based government was known as the Beiyang Government (北洋政府). Constitutional Protection Movement (1917-1922 護法運動) led by Su Yixian was in conflict with the Beiyang Government.

³³⁵ Until the death of Sun Yixian in 1925, his nationalist vision of uniting the nation under a democratic republic had not been achieved. It was his successor Jiang Jieshi who turned Sun's vision into reality after success in his northern military campaigns.

³³⁶ The Nationalist Government (中華民國) ruled China from 1928-1949. It withdrew to Taiwan after the ending of the Civil War in 1949, where its successor remains. The conflict between the Nationalist Party and Communist Party was the origin of the Civil War. Although the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party formed the so-called United Front to fight together against the Japanese invasion, soon after the ending of the Sino-Japanese War, they broke apart and a full scale Civil War was began.

³³⁷ Radical nationalist intellectuals blamed traditional Chinese values for the country's weakness. The May Fourth Movement in 1919 was focussed on the weak response of the Beijing government to the Treaty of Versailles, at the end of World War I, arguing that it had failed to meet the conditions that the Chinese government set for its involvement to the War. The main issue was that China's demand to recover control over the German concessions in China, including the treaty port Qingdao was ignored. Instead, Japan received these territories surrendered by the Germans, which triggered much anger among the Chinese. The Culture Movement then took on a political tone.

and revolutionary groups which played an important role in the democratic movement and the establishment of the Republic. Guangzhou became the seat of the south government during the Warlord Era, while Nanjing later became the capital of the Nationalist Government, Apart from its brief retreat to Chongqing (重慶) during the Japanese invasion, Nanjing remained the seat of government until the withdrawal to Taiwan in 1949. Shanghai was one of the two centers of the New Cultural Movement.

Since the coastal regions of China were at the forefront of the Revolution, what was the stance of the local Muslim community? Available evidence suggests that the community openly displayed sympathies for republican movement and offered its strong support to the South government. It later provided support for the Nationalist Government, in particular during wartime.

Although, as for other Chinese, the coastal Muslim community faced severe problems during the constant warfare of the Republican era, the community's intellectuals did not confine their activities to the promotion of Islamic studies. Instead, they played an active part in nationalist propaganda, especially during the period of conflict. Thus, while the publishing house based in the Shanxiang Mosque in Zhengjiang, mentioned in Chapter 5, continued to print the *han Kitab*, it also published journals that were in tune with the nationalist movement. Intellectuals, merchants and high profile politicians from the Muslim community established a number of associations and organizations covering culture and business activities as well as others dealing with political topics. For example, one of the earliest Muslim associations established to promote Islamic culture and education was the 'Eastern Asia General Association for the Religious Education of the Muslim People' (*Dongya mumin jiaoyu zonghui* 東亞穆民教育總會) based in Zhenjiang; while in Shanghai, merchants formed the 'Islamic Society of Merchants' (*Qingzhen shangtuan* 清真商團), which was based in the Fuyoulu Mosque, referred to in Chapter 5. In 1938, at the initiative of the leading Muslim General Bai Chongxi (白崇禧), and with the approval of President Jiang Jieshi, the 'Friendly Association of the Hui People of China for the Salvation of the Country' (*Zhongguo huimin jiuguo xiehui* 中國回民救國協會) was founded in Nanjing. Its headquarter was later moved to the wartime capital Chongqing.³³⁸ Whatever the specific nature of these associations, all

³³⁸ On Muslim associations in the Republican era, see F. Aubin, 'Islam on the Wings of Nationalism: the Case of Muslim Intellectuals in Republican China', in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*, S. A. Dudoignon, K. Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 2006, pp. 242-273.

had a common goal of uniting Muslims and making them aware of their role, as Chinese Muslims, at times of national crisis. These associations were particularly active in wartime, disseminating propagandas with strong overtones of patriotism, reflecting the consciousness of identity among the Maritime Muslims. As already discussed in previous chapters, the community had identified itself as Chinese, but of Islamic faith, since the completion of the process of Sinicization in the late Ming period.

As mentioned earlier, the New Culture Movement attracted considerable support. However, the leaders of the Nationalist party were opposed to its radical critiques of traditional Chinese values. Whereas the Movement sent out a strong anti-traditional message, the Nationalist Party emphasized the importance of Confucian ethics while, at the same time, seeking to adopt a Western system of political democracy. In particular, the National Government under the leadership of Jiang was against the iconoclasm of the May Fourth Movement, as was clearly reflected in its educational system, which included modern subjects while, at the same time, emphasizing the importance of the Chinese classics.

The impact of the New Culture Movement on the coastal Muslim community is reflected in the community's adoption of various modern ideas. For example, the Western styles of journalism that introduced by, and which flourished in, the New Culture Movement, were adopted by the coastal Muslim community as a means of disseminating Islamic learning and transmitting Western ideas as well as making patriotic propagandas. Many Muslim journals were founded in the Jiangnan regions, such as that produced in Zhengjiang, noted above. The introduction of vernacular Chinese into literature, replacing Classical Chinese, and the introduction of the Western education system sparked much discussion among the Muslim intellectuals. While the coastal Muslims were active participants in the Revolution, they were very selective in adopting new ideas. Thus while vernacular Chinese was used in the printing presses, most imams in the coastal regions continued to use Classical Chinese in a religious context, such as preaching. The Chinese Islamic texts developed in the previous centuries, especially the translation of the Qur'an, remained in Classical Chinese.³³⁹ Most importantly, as the *han kitab* still remained as the basis of Chinese Islamic school of thought, the Confucian principles adapted to Islamic practices since the late Ming period remained unchallenged. This reflects the pro-Confucianism and yet pro-Nationalist government stance of the coastal Muslims. It is also evidence of the firm roots of the Chinese Islamic school of

³³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 242-273, on the intellectual life of the coastal Muslims in the Republican era.

thought developed by generations of influential Muslim scholars, especially in coastal China.

The Role of Mosques in the Life of the Muslim Community in the Republic Era

Despite the impact of the modern style of education promoted by the intellectual modernists



Fig.114. Site of the former Muslim primary school (Muguang Xiaoxue), Suzhou.

in the New Culture Movement, the mosque-based education, the *jingtang Jiaoyu*, which, as noted in previous chapters, evolved in the late Ming period and well developed in the Qing period, continued to dominant Islamic education during the Republican era.

Several modern Islamic schools were founded in the coastal regions, such as the ‘Shanghai Normal Islamic School’

(Shanghai Yisilan Shifan Xuexiao, 上海伊斯兰师范學校).³⁴⁰ Most of them, however,

still attached to mosques, such as the Muguang Xiaoxue (穆光小學) in Suzhou, a modern style primary school for Muslim children founded in the Republican period in an old Qing period mosque that is now lost (Fig.114).³⁴¹ The

Shanghai Normal Islamic School itself was first set up in the Xiataoyuan Mosque (小桃園清真寺), as noted below. The new style of education meant that new subjects such as science, music and foreign languages were included in its curriculums, but Arabic as well as *han kitab* and the Chinese classics remained essential parts of Islamic education. This was, to some extent, at least, in tune with educational policies of the Nationalist Government.

The garden city of Suzhou near Shanghai, known as a ‘paradise on earth’ together with the great port of Hangzhou, had been famous for its silk production



Fig.115. Entrance portal, Taipingfang Mosque, Suzhou.

³⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp.247-249.

³⁴¹ Personal discussions with members of the local Muslim community in Suzhou during fieldwork.

since ancient times and had, naturally, attracted many merchants. Records show that there was a well-established Muslim community there by the Qing period, and several mosques were built to serve the community.

In addition to their business activities, the local Muslims were also devoted to Islamic education, this been particularly evident during the Republic period. The only mosque still

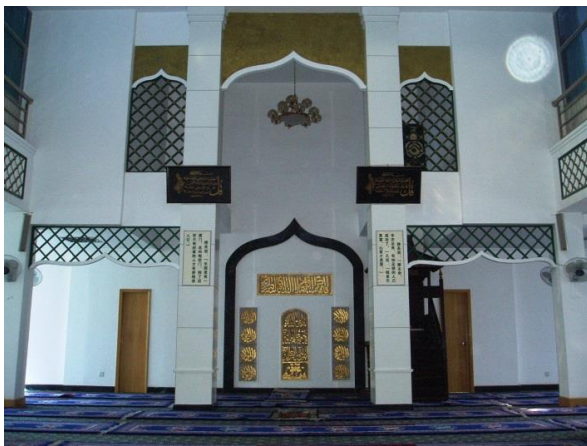


Fig.116. Interior of the prayer hall, Taipingfang Mosque, Suzhou.

servicing the Muslim community in Suzhou is the Suzhou Taipingfang Mosque (蘇州太平坊清真寺 Figs.115, 116). According to documentation preserved in the mosque, it was founded around 1928 as a free Muslim school and originally named Qingzhen yixue (清真義學), implying that it was purposely built with a focus on Islamic education. Its mosque, however, also served the local Muslim community.³⁴² It is not clear from

when the education function was given up, and it became a mosque only. Since the mosque was rebuilt after the Cultural Revolution in at least two stages and there are no reliable documents indicating its original style, we cannot determine whether it followed the style of the late Qing period mosque, as already discussed in Chapter 5, or built in a different style, as discussed below.

In addition to its traditional role in Islamic education and as a meeting place of the community, together with its religious function, during the Republican period, the mosque often became a center for the dissemination of information about current affairs, both national and international, as well as a place for charitable activities and relief for those affected by conflict. For instance, an orphanage was founded in the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque in Shanghai, while the Shanxiang Mosque in Zhenjiang provided shelter for wartime refugees and free medical services for all, regardless of faith, through its clinic.³⁴³ The large mosques in the coastal regions often provided services, including full board accommodation, for Muslims from the inland China who planned to go on the *haji* pilgrimage to Mecca by sea, while they were waiting for their trip to be arranged with assistance of the local community.

³⁴² Information on the history of the mosque in documentation provided by the local Muslim community in Suzhou.

³⁴³ Personal discussions with members of the local Muslim community in Zhenjiang during fieldwork.

The Restoration and Building of Mosques in the Republic Era

As mosques now played such multiple roles in the life of the Muslim community, their maintenance was more than a matter of simply providing a place for worship. Despite the difficulties faced by the community during the chaotic years of the Republican period, the community made considerable efforts to preserve and maintain its mosques, most of which



Fig.117. Balcony of the prayer hall, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.

had suffered serious damage due to the constant unrest since the late Qing period. Available documents indicate that the restoration and renovation of the old mosques were now mainly undertaken on the initiative of Muslim individuals, most of whom were merchants, and therefore able to provide financial support to their community at these difficult times.

In Nanjing, for example, several mosques originally built in the Qing period, as noted in Chapter 5, like Luhe

Changjianglu Mosque, the Jizhaoying Mosque and the Taipinglu Mosque, were restored with funding provided by Muslim merchants during the early Republican period.³⁴⁴

These restored mosques remained as centres of the local Muslim community throughout the Republican period. Surviving examples from the restorations of this period show that the features of Islamic architectural developed in the late Qing period, discussed in Chapter 5, were all retained. For instance, the Jizhaoying Mosque was restored in 1922, sponsored by two individuals.³⁴⁵ The wood-framed prayer hall of Chinese architectural form but with the contemporary French windows along the *qibla* wall was the typical of works of the late Qing period (Figs.117, 118), as shown, for example, in the prayer halls of the Shanxiang Mosque in Zhenjiang and the Caoqiao Mosque in Nanjing, as noted in Chapter 5. As the Muslim community, together with the rest of the nation struggled through this chaotic period, maintaining the physical condition of its old mosques for the functional needs of the community was perhaps the most that could be achieved. It was

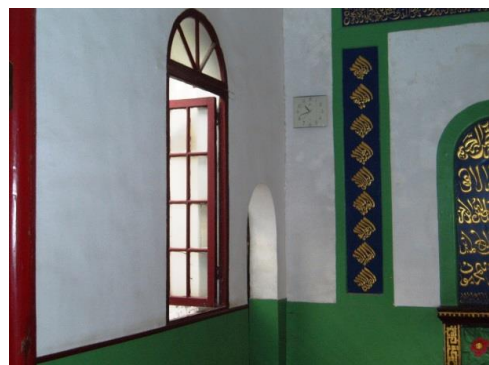


Fig.118. French windows in the *mihrab* chamber, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.

³⁴⁴ Wu Yiye, op. cit., pp. 235-242.

³⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 237.

no time for architectural innovation. Besides the maintenance of existing structures, most construction activity was confined to the addition of some simple functional buildings to accommodate the additional roles that the community was now playing, as discussed above. Restoration of the old mosques without any modification of their late Qing period style, therefore, does not necessarily indicate the then-current aesthetic views on architectural



Fig.119. Elevation of the upper storey of the prayer hall, Huxi Mosque, Shanghai.

practices of the community or the attitude towards the changes in the new era.

It is not surprising that, under these circumstances, there was little building activity by the Muslim community in the coastal regions in the Republican period. Only a few mosques were founded in the region during this period, most of which, however, can hardly be seen as displaying new architectural innovation. As

available records indicate, most were originally residential buildings that were converted to mosques for the convenience of the Muslims in the neighbourhood. This suggests a practical and functional approach, not dissimilar to that employed in the restoration of the old mosques

The mosques founded in Shanghai during the Republican period provide examples. Thus both the Huxi Mosque (沪西清真寺) and the Pudong Mosque (浦东清真寺) started as one leased room available for communal prayers. Later, with the assistance of the Muslim associations and of devout individuals, more rooms were gradually acquired to serve the needs of the growing community in the neighbourhood. These rooms gradually developed into proper mosques, playing the same multiple roles in community life as the old mosques that had been restored. Eventually, the community obtained the ownership of the properties. Both mosques were converted to other uses during the Cultural Revolution, and were returned to the Muslim community soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution. In 1990s, the mosques were demolished, with new mosque complexes

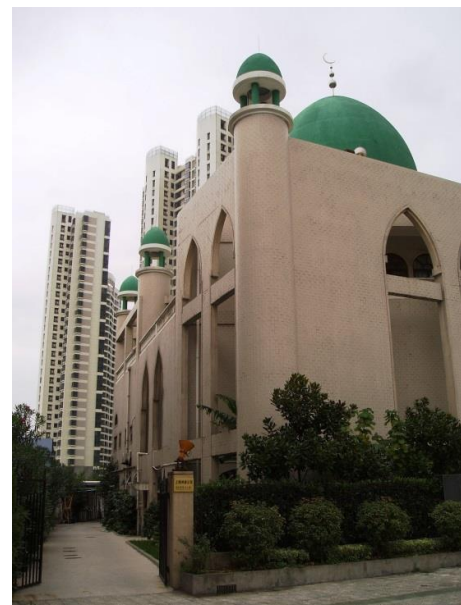


Fig.120. Elevation of the Pudong Mosque, Shanghai.

being built elsewhere in a modern style (Figs.119, 120).³⁴⁶ No photographic documentation of the demolished mosques has been traced. They presumably shared, to a large extent, the features of old residential buildings in Shanghai in the Republican period. This could either have been the traditional Chinese architectural form with some Western architectural elements, as in the late Qing period mosques, or a purely Western style following the latest fashion in coastal China, especially in Shanghai, at that time. This later can be seen in the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, discussed below.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, after the Opium Wars, China was forced to open its major ports for foreign trade. One of these treaty ports was Shanghai, where territorial concessions were also granted to the European powers by the Chinese government as a result of its signature of a series of unequal treaties. As a result, Western culture and lifestyle were introduced into the port cities of China. The presence of a European community in Shanghai had a strong impact on the life of the inhabitants. Having been the centre of the New Cultural Movement, Shanghai was always ready to embrace new ideas. In addition to its role as China's trade and financial centre from the beginning of the 20th century, it also became a well-known modern metropolis leading the fashions of China in the Republican period.

European architecture made its first appearance in the foreign concessions, and this soon led a new architectural fashion in Shanghai, with many public and private buildings across the city built in a European style. Some iconic buildings from this period of colonial influence can still be seen in the location of former foreign concessions in Shanghai today



Fig.121. View of the colonial buildings in the former foreign concession, Shanghai.

(Fig.121). Leaders of the merchant community, in particular, adopted the new style of architecture, which they saw as part of the Western lifestyle that they were wished to imitate.

It was in this context that the mosque built by wealthy Muslim merchants in Shanghai began

³⁴⁶ Information on the history of both mosques is found in the documentation centre located in the Songjing Mosque; also from personal discussions with the local Muslim community during fieldwork.

to display a new style. The Xiaotaoyuan Mosque is one of the two mosques in Shanghai that have been preserved largely in their original forms. Another being the Fuyoulu Mosque, a late Qing period mosque, discussed in Chapter 5. Founded in 1917, the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque was originally a villa with a garden that was purchased by a wealthy Muslim merchant named Jin Zhiyun (金子雲). He donated it to the local Muslim

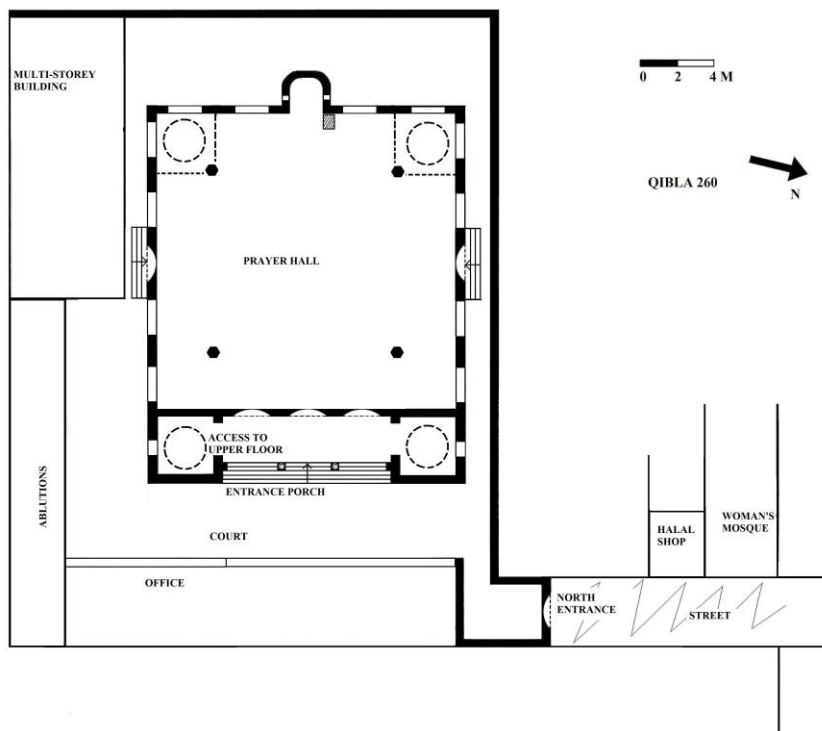


Fig.122. Street view of the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, showing the domes and minaret, Shanghai.

community to use as a mosque. He later initiated the building of a new mosque, providing some of the funding himself and raising the rest. It has been reported that he also arranged for

the professional architect involved in the design of the new mosque. It took three years to build and was completed in 1925.³⁴⁷ The architectural form of the mosque has many parallels with buildings found throughout the former colonies of the European powers with the addition only of

XIAOTAUYUAN MOSQUE, SHANGHAI (MEASUREMENTS BASED ON PACING)



Plan XVIII. Plan of the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

some essential Islamic elements.

³⁴⁷ Information on the history of the mosque is found in the documentation centre in the Songjiang mosque.

The plan of the mosque is completely different from mosques of the Ming Qing periods, or from earlier periods, discussed in the previous chapters. The two-storey mosque is laid out in a square with four corner towers, crowned by a central dome and accessed through a columned entrance porch (Plan XVIII). This is similar to the plan of a Palladian villa, with modifications suiting the religious function of a mosque. Derived from classical Greek and Roman architecture, the Palladian style villa was initially introduced by Andrea Palladio, a 16th century Venetian architect, in the state of Venice during the Renaissance period, but its influences went beyond the Italian Peninsula and lasted for centuries.³⁴⁸ The best examples of the Palladian villas are found in the city of Vicenza, now part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, these inspiring generations of builders and architects across Europe, especially in the period of the classical revival, known as the Neoclassical period in the 18th and 19th centuries. Palladian- inspired Georgian architecture became very popular not just in Britain, but also in British colonies across the world. The Neoclassicism reached coastal China along with the arrival of Europeans to reside in the foreign territorial concessions in the Chinese treaty ports and neoclassical style villas were soon favoured as private residences by members of the



Fig.123. Street entrance, Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

Chinese elite, especially businessmen in Shanghai, in the Republican period.

Although the layout of the mosque reflects the neoclassical style of a Palladian villa, there are modifications in its plan with reference to Islamic architecture. This is not surprising, since it was a purpose-designed mosque, not a villa. Four small domes tops the corner towers, and a minaret rises above the central dome while the *mihrab* indicating the *qibla* direction is integrated in its plan, an essential requirement in mosque design (Fig.122). Other than these

Islamic references, the layout and the architectural form of the mosque display the characteristics of neoclassical architecture, representing the architectural idiom of the colonial era.

³⁴⁸ On Paladian villa see, C. Ruhl, 'Palladianism: From the Italian Villa to International Architecture', *European History Online*, Institute of European History, Mainz, 17 April 2011, viewed on 12 January 2015, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-on-the-road/educational-journey-grand-tour/carsten-ruhl-palladianism>

The mosque compound is entered through the street entrance from the north, via an arched gateway neither Chinese nor Islamic in character but of a purely European architectural form (Fig.123).



Fig.124. Front elevation of the prayer hall, Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

A series of functional buildings surround the prayer hall, these also sharing the features of the colonial period buildings in Shanghai. They accommodate the library, exhibition hall, teaching room, ablutions, the reception and offices.

The elevations of the two-storey mosque with a rusticated ground floor also display the neoclassical architectural style inspired by Palladianism (Fig.124). The front façade is dominated by a portico

allowing entry to the prayer hall, reached by a flight of steps (Fig.125). This is composed of columns supporting frieze with triglyphs and metopes of the Doric order, characteristic of the Palladian style. Palladio's interpretation of these classical vocabularies inherent in Greek temple architecture was widely adopted in Georgian architecture in Britain, and in its colonies. The design of the corner towers can also be compared to that of Palladian villas, such as the well-known Villa Trissino near Vicenza. This architectural element was often adopted in English country houses of the Palladian style. Crowned by a vasiform balustrade, the side elevation features large arch openings finished with French windows (Fig.126), often seen in colonial buildings of the period.

The interior of the ground floor features a squared hall with the *mihrab* marking the *qibla* direction (Fig.127). The square layout is commonly seen in Palladian villas, such as the plan of Villa La Rotonda, also just outside Vicenza and designed by Palladio himself. The plan of the mosque, however, was modified to suit the function of the space as the prayer hall. Instead of dividing the square into functional rooms, as in the Palladian villas,



Fig.125. Entrance porch to the prayer hall, Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.



Fig.126. Side elevation of the prayer hall, Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

the spaces both in the ground floor and the upper floor are reserved for a religious function, being connected through the *mihrab* to the upper floor, where a balcony opens to the *mihrab* (Fig.128), with the large central dome dominating the space. This, crowned with a cupola with openings, allows light to flood into the prayer hall is again executed in Palladian style, resembling the cupola in the Villa La Rotonda rather than any type of Islamic dome.³⁴⁹ The Islamic element here is marked by the minaret that rises above the cupola, which is discussed in Chapter 7.



Fig.127. Interior of the prayer hall, Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

Another surviving example of this new Palladian-influenced style is the Jamia Mosque in Hong Kong, also known as the Shelley Street Mosque. Early Muslim settlers in Hong Kong, which became a British colony after the Opium Wars, congregated in this area.



Fig.128. Balcony on the upper floor of the prayer hall, Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

The history of the Muslim community in Hong Kong can be traced back to the early 19th century, with the settlement of Indian sailors who arrived on vessels of the British East India Company. After the Opium Wars, there was an influx of Chinese Muslims from the Guangzhou regions to Hong Kong.



Fig.129. Entrance porch of the prayer hall, showing the old minaret, Jamia Mosque, Hong Kong.

As the community grew, there was a need for a communal center and mosque, and the first such structure was recorded in 1849. A simple, stone-built one room building, it had no distinguishing architectural features indicating its purpose.

The first proper mosque in Shelley Street, on Hong Kong Island, was built in 1870. It was then rebuilt in 1915 with only the minaret rising above the entrance porch being preserved from the original structure. Other than the minaret, there is no

available document indicating the original architectural form of the mosque. The minaret, which is discussed in Chapter 7, displays features of the Islamic architectural tradition in India. It

is plausible, therefore, that the style of the original mosque may also have been influenced by

³⁴⁹ The upper floor of the mosque was not inspected while surveying the mosque during fieldwork, since the imam refused to grant permission. The point made above is based on the notes by Liu Zhiping, see Liu Zhiping, op. cit., p. 34.

the Islamic architectural tradition of India, perhaps because of the Indian origins of the local Muslim community.

The structures of the mosque that can be seen today are mainly dated to 1915, and are typical of the new type of mosque architecture, like the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque in Shanghai, which followed the architectural fashion of the time, the colonial architectural style inspired by neoclassicism.

Crowned by a balustrade and accessed through an entrance porch, the elevation of the mosque displays the pronounced features of neoclassical architecture (Figs.129, 130). The form of the porch is often seen in the colonial buildings especially in the former British colonies. While the Islamic elements, such as the small domes, seen in Xiaotaiyuan Mosque appear to be referable to Ottoman architectural tradition, the Islamic elements in the Shelley Street Mosque display the influence of the Indian architectural practice, especially from the Mughal period. For example, the multi-lobed archs forming the entrance gateway, and the onion bulb crowning the minaret are typical features of Islamic architecture extensively used during the Mughal period. The interior of the prayer hall is simple in design with the *mihrab* marking the *qibla* wall and arched windows along the walls keeping the space well ventilated (Fig.131), sharing the simplicity of the prayer hall of the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque



Fig.130. Side elevation of the prayer hall, Jamia Mosque, Hong Kong.

The wood-framed hall with curtain walls, screens on the front and load-bearing wood columns and beams supporting the superstructures featuring various types of Chinese style roofs, as seen in the Ming and Qing period mosques, is absent here. Instead, the square or rectangular structure has a simple interior serving the religious function of the mosque, but with its elevation featuring the classical elements of European architecture. The centuries-long Islamic architectural practice of following the principles of classical Chinese architecture that began in the Ming period had now been replaced with a practice following Western



Fig.131. Interior of the prayer hall, Jamia Mosque, Hong Kong.

architectural traditions, typical of the fashion in coastal China in the Republican period.

As noted in the previous chapters, although the Maritime Muslims in coastal China have been identified as part of the Hui Muslims group or nationality, along with other groups of Chinese-speaking Muslims in inland China since the emergence of the Hui nationality in the late Ming period, the coastal Muslim community and its material culture have always



Fig.132. Elevation of the prayer hall, Huajue Mosque, Xi'an.

preserved their own characteristics. The Chinese Islamic school of thought and the Chinese Islamic texts first developed in the coastal regions during the Ming period later spread inland and were widely accepted by the urban Muslim groups in inland China. As a result, from the Ming period onwards the development of the Islamic practices of the Maritime Muslim community and the inland Muslim community appear to have shared some characteristics. The same

appears to be the case with the architectural practices. Thus mosques built in inland regions during the Ming and Qing periods display a distinctly Chinese style, as do the Ming Qing period mosques in the coastal regions. The best examples are the Huajue Mosque (化覺寺) in



Fig.133. Interior of the prayer hall, Nuijie Mosque, Beijing.

Xi'an, and the Nuijie Mosque (牛街清真寺) in Beijing, which can be compared to the Jingjue Mosque in Nanjing, discussed in Chapter 4. Despite the presence of some regional features, these mosques are all distinctly Chinese, following the principles of classical Chinese architecture (Figs.132, 133).

Whereas the mosques of the inland Muslim community often appear austere and sometimes grand, especially those built in big urban centres that were influenced by the northern architectural tradition, the mosques of the Maritime Muslim community reflect features of southern architecture, as discussed in previous chapters.

However, the new style of mosques that emerged in the coastal regions in the Republican period, such as the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque and the Shelley Street Mosque, is not found in inland regions. This phase of Chinese Islamic architectural development appears only to have occurred in the coastal regions. Although there are only two surviving examples representing

this architectural phase, they reflect the different characteristics of the development of the Maritime Muslim community, representing both the response of the coastal Muslims to the changes in China, and a reflection of European influence. It thus demonstrates the effect of fashions and decorative and architectural trends, as well as social contexts on the development of a regional style of architecture.

The style, reflecting the influence of Western architecture during this period, did not, however, survive the end of the foreign territorial concessions in coastal China and the founding of the People's Republic of China. After 1949 and the founding of the PRC, the Communist promotion of atheism directly affected the Muslim communities. In the early decades of Communist rule, no new mosques appear to have been built in the coastal areas. Muslims continued, however, to practice their religion and to maintain their mosques, until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, when most of the mosques were taken over and converted for other uses by the government. Thus the practice of the Islamic faith effectively ceased in public in coastal China. The Maritime Muslim community, the oldest Muslim community in China, appeared to have come to an end.

Having now considered the distribution and character of the mosques of the Maritime Muslim community, we now turn to a detailed consideration of the main features of these buildings.

Chapter 7

Minarets: Chinese Concepts and Islamic Traditions

The origin of the minaret, both the functional and architectural, has sparked much discussion among Islamic scholars. We know today that the function of the minaret is for *muezzins* (مؤذن) performing the Call to Prayer, summoning the faithful to prayer. However, it has been generally agreed that neither the Call to Prayer nor the *muezzin* existed in the very earliest years of Islam. It has been suggested that the idea of calling to prayer stemmed from the Jewish and Christian traditions of summoning the worshippers. According to some Islamic traditions, the Prophet was proposed the adoption of the Call to Prayer but, instead the horn or clappers used by the Jews and Christians at the time, the post of a *muezzin* was created by the Prophet to perform it, thus distinguishing between Islam and the other religions.³⁵⁰

The earliest mosques had no minaret. According to the Arab historians, in the time of the Prophet, the Call to Prayer was performed from the highest roof in the neighbourhood of the mosque and later from the city walls in the time of the Umayyads before the appearance of the first minaret in the world of Islam.³⁵¹ Creswell suggests that the typical Syrian church tower of square type that existed before the time of Islam served as a model for the first minarets, particularly referring to the four square towers at each corner of the outer walls of the great temenos, which became the then Great Mosque of Damascus. Some refer these corner towers taken from the pre-Islamic structure of the great temenos as the first minarets. However, it was not until 673CE that the first construction of minarets was carried out by the order of the Caliph Mu'awiya in the occasion of enlarging the Mosque of Amr in Fustat, Egypt. Thus these structures added at the four corners of the mosque may be seen as the first purpose-built minarets in the world of Islam. Later minarets constructed in the same fashion, of square towers, often appeared in Uymayyad mosques.³⁵²

The Artistic Traditions of Minarets in the World of Islam

Although the first mosques lacked minarets, such structures have become, with a few exceptions, an essential part of Islamic architecture since the Uymayyad period. Originally purely functional, the minaret has evolved to take on various forms, often with elaborated

³⁵⁰ K.A.C. Creswell, op. cit., p. 1.

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 1-2 &7.

surface decorations, in different regions across the Islamic world. It is now one of the distinctive features of Islamic architecture. This artistic development of minarets is best represented by the sophisticated form and elaborated decoration displayed in the minarets built by the Mamluks in Egypt. Some of these minarets, regarded as ‘one of the glories of the Muslim architecture of Egypt, and excel all others in beauty’,³⁵³ are still seen today dominating the skyline of the city of Cairo (Fig.134).



Fig.134. View of the minarets in the city of Cairo.

The evolution and development of minaret in the world of Islam had been studied by many Islamic scholars. Creswell’s studies on the evolution of the minaret and his proposals on the topic have received wide acceptance. According to his theory, the first minaret of the square



Fig.135. Minaret of the Koutoubia Mosque, Marrakesh.

type was derived from the Syrian church tower. This form was widely used by the Umayyads for centuries throughout its territories they controlled and remained dominance in North Africa (Fig.135).

From this, the minaret of square-octagonal-circular type evolved (Fig.136), this being the type developed by the Mamluks. The Persian minaret had a different form, that of a great tower (Fig.137), represented by a series of freestanding towers in a tapering

Fig.136. Minarets of the Sultan Hassan Madrassa, Cairo.



cylindrical form found in Persian-controlled areas and dated from the 11th to the 13th century.³⁵⁴ Later the Ottomans developed a new type of minarets featuring a slender pencil-shaped form, as seen in many of the mosques preserved from the Ottoman period (Fig.138).

³⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 7.



Fig.137. Minaret in Khosrawgird, Sabzavar, Iran. (From <http://archnet.org/sites/5491>)

These appear to be the main types of minarets developed in the world of Islam before modern times

Examples of other types also exist, such as the spiral minaret of Samarran type, exemplified in the minaret at the Great Mosque of Samarra of the 9th century, and also the minaret of the late 9th century mosque Ibn Tulun in the greater Cairo

(Fig.139), said to have been modelled on the Samarra minaret.³⁵⁵ An Indian type of minarets characterized by the onion-shaped top is also found in mosques across the

Indian continent, especially those from the Mughal period.

To what extent did these existing traditions influence the development of the minaret in China? The minaret was first introduced into coastal China by Muslim merchants of Middle Eastern origins. Being part of the conventional practices of mosque architecture, like the mosque itself, early minarets in China initially followed the existing artistic tradition developed in the world of Islam. They then evolved their own characteristics, in line with the evolution of the Chinese style mosque and the development of a specifically Chinese form of Islamic practices in coastal China, as discussed in the previous chapters.



Fig.138. Minaret of the Mosque of Sulayman Pasha, Cairo.



Fig.139. Minaret of the Ibn Tulun Mosque, Cairo.

Chinese Concepts in the Shaping of Architectural Practices of the Minaret in China

As noted in the previous chapters, the Maritime Muslim community gradually lost its Arab and Persian roots during the process of Sinicization. Chinese was adopted by the Maritime

³⁵⁴ See examples given in Creswell, op. cit., p. 7-13. And the photography of the minaret in Khosrawgird is from <http://archnet.org/sites/5491>, viewed 27 December 2014.

Also see examples given in the article: A. Hutt, 'Three Minarets in the Kirmān Region', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1970, issue No.2, pp. 172-180, Cambridge University Press, viewed on 26 December 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25203208>

³⁵⁵ Behrens-Abouseif dated this minaret to 1296, see D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: an introduction*. E.J. Brill, Leiden & New York, 1989, p. 55.

Muslims as their everyday language from the Ming period onwards. Chinese transliterations of many Arabic or Persian terms, especially those used in the religious context, began to appear, such as *yimamu* (伊瑪目) for ‘imam’ (إمام), and *mihalabu* (米哈拉布) for *mihrab* (محراب). Arabic terms also appear in a mix of translation and transliteration. For example, the term *chaohanzhi* (朝罕志), which means going on *hajj*, i.e., pilgrimage to Mecca, is formed by ‘*chao*’, a Chinese word used in this context as *chaojin* (朝覲), meaning ‘to take pilgrimage’ and ‘*hanzhi*’, the transliteration, being the corruption of Hijaz (الحجاز),³⁵⁶ the district of the Arabian peninsula where Mecca, the destination of the pilgrimage, is situated. The *han kitab* is another hybrid term introduced by Chinese Muslim scholars when Chinese Islamic texts were created, as noted in Chapter 5.

Later more translation of Arabic terms began to be commonly used, especially by the Maritime Muslims in the coastal regions. The translation of some specific Arabic terms, especially related to Islamic practices, however, appears rarely to have been completely literal. Instead, the translation often reflects certain Chinese concepts, as in the case of the translation of the Islamic texts, as already discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. For instant, we have Chinese transliteration of Allah (الله) as Anla (安拉), and masjid (مسجد) as *maisijide* (麦斯吉德), then in translations, Allah is referred to as Zhenzhu (真主), i.e., the lord of real or truth, and masjid or mosque is referred to as Qingzhen si (清真寺), i.e., the temple of pure and real or purity and truth, which, as noted in Chapter 5, clearly reflect Chinese thought.

This is also the case with the translation of the term minaret. The Chinese transliteration of the term minaret is *bangke lou* (邦克樓), *bangke* being the corruption of *mi'dhanah* (مئذنة), with this then having been translated as *xuanli ta* (宣禮塔), i.e., the tower for the Call to Prayer. However, another translation of the minaret as *wangyue lou* (望月樓) or *wangyue ting* (望月亭) was later more commonly used by the then Sinicized Hui Muslim communities, being commonly seen inscribed on the minarets in the coastal regions. The application of either *wanyue lou* or *wangyue ting* depends on the architectural form, as discussed below. *Wangyue lou* literally means the *lou*, i.e., multi-storey building, for watching the moon, while *wangyue ting* logically means the *ting*, i.e., the pavilion, for watching the moon. The concept of the moon watching is closely associated with Chinese thought.

³⁵⁶ See more examples in Wang Jinping, op. cit.

The special fondness of the people of China for the moon is well reflected in Chinese literature, whether poems, proses or myths. The moon and moonlight have been widely used by Chinese poets for works of a sentimental nature and by writers in fairy tales. The most famous example, is the poem ‘*A Quiet Night Thought*’ (*Jingyesi*, 静夜思) by the great Tang poet Li Bai (李白),³⁵⁷ a recollection of his feeling of homesickness evoked by the moonlight on a quiet night. The myth of the Moon Goddess Chang’e (嫦娥), who is traditionally believed to dwell in the moon, has been the inspiration for many moon tales and was the origin of many rituals relating to the worship of the moon that existed in ancient China. The moon festival, also known as the mid-autumn festival and celebrated on the 15th day of the lunar month of August each year, is also associated with the myth of the Goddess Chang’e and is the second most important traditional Chinese festival, after the spring festival. Traditionally, families gather together, watching the full moon and making sacrifices to the Moon Goddess Chang’e. It is, therefore, also a celebration of family re-union. It takes place outdoors in the garden and is normally accompanied by the music and dance performances. Pavilions are an essential architectural element in traditional Chinese gardens and in the past people gathered in the pavilions, watching the performances and enjoying the traditional food made for the festival, such as mooncakes, while making offerings to the Moon Goddess. Such pavilions, as found in the well-know Jiangnan gardens, are called *wangyue ting*, and apparently linked with this tradition of celebrating the moon festival.

This Chinese concept of the moon was clearly incorporated into the architectural practice of the minaret by Chinese Muslims. Apart from its function for performing the Call to Prayer, the minaret, for Chinese Muslim communities, was also used in the past for the ceremony of sighting the crescent moon that marks the beginning and the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Descriptions in Chinese texts indicate that the sighting of the moon was led by the imams and other community leaders, sometimes accompanied by celebrations. This indicates that the event was to some extent ritualized, reflecting the influence of the ancient Chinese ritual of moon worship and especially the mode of celebration of the moon festival. It is this particular Chinese concept of the moon that gave rise to this use of the minaret in the process of its development in China, whereby it served as the *wangyue lou* or *wangyue ting*.

The First Minarets in Coastal China: Fanta 番塔

³⁵⁷ The poem reads: 静夜思 (A Quiet Night Thought): ‘床前明月光, 疑是地上霜, 舉頭望明月, 低頭思故鄉’.

The appearance of minaret in coastal China can be first detected through Chinese texts where they are referred to as *fanta*, i.e., foreign tower or pagoda. As noted in previous chapters, until the mid-14th century, the Maritime Muslims evidently had continued to conduct their religious and social lives independently of the Chinese. The Islamic practices of this Muslim diaspora were, therefore, still little known to the Chinese. The minaret, although part of the functional structures of mosque architecture, only attracted the attention of Chinese writers because of its unusual appearance. As noted in Chapter 2, the first minarets in the coastal regions, like the first mosques, had a non-Chinese architectural form. It is, therefore, not surprising that this imported form was recorded as ‘foreign tower or pagoda’ in early Chinese texts.³⁵⁸ No early Arabic texts are known that provide information on the early minarets in coastal China.

Despite the insistence of the Maritime Muslims on dating the earliest minarets in coastal China to the Tang period, there is no firm evidence, either textual sources or architectural remains, that supports this claim. The only surviving example of the early minarets is the Guangta, the preserved old minaret in the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou, which can be dated to the Song period, as already discussed in Chapter 2. Although some new studies in recent decade have attempted to date the minaret to the Tang period, thus agreeing with the exiting Muslim tradition, these studies are not based on any firm archaeological or textual evidences.³⁵⁹



Fig.140. Guangta Minaret, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

The Guangta minaret (Fig.140) has been recorded as a *stūpa*, foreign tower or pagoda, and also been referred to as the Huaisheng tower, especially in the later texts and epigraphs, as cited in Chapter 2.³⁶⁰ Not until the Qing period did it come to be known as Guangta, literally light tower, i.e., lighthouse. The associated mosque has been also known as the Guangta Mosque since that time. It is not very clear why the name Guangta became attached to the minaret. One explanation has been that it may have functioned as a lighthouse for vessels coming into the harbour.

³⁵⁸ See the Song texts quoted in Chapter 2.

³⁵⁹ Chen Zehong, *op. cit.*, p. 42. Song Xin, *op. cit.*, p.42.

³⁶⁰ See the texts and epigraphs referring to this minaret in Chen Leji et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 5-18.

The Guangta certainly may have had another practical function related to the role of Guangzhou as a busy trading port. As noted in Chapter 2, the original design of the finial of the minaret was a golden rooster, suggestive of a weathercock, or a weathervane, for indicating wind direction. This would have been of value to merchants planning sea voyages. It is, therefore, plausible that, given the height of the minaret and its location close to the harbour, it may have well been functioned as a lighthouse as well at some point. Certainly it has been suggested that some early minarets of Persian type, especially those great towers located on the major trading route, may have served not only the liturgical function of a minaret, but also the secular function of a lighthouse, or beacon for arriving caravan traffic.³⁶¹



Fig.141. Base of the Guangta, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.142. Arched entrance to the Guangta, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

There have been other explanations for the origin of the name ‘Guangta’, such as a derivation from the Cantonese pronunciation of the *bangkelou*, the Chinese transliteration of the minaret, as noted above; or that it may have derived from the appearance of its smooth plastered surface, since the Chinese word ‘*guang*’ also means ‘smooth’.³⁶² These explanations, however, are not very convincing.

Built of brick, the Guangta measures 36.3 meter in height and 8.85 metres in diameter at the base, where two arched doorways, one in the south side and another in the north side, allow entry to the minaret (Figs.141, 142). There are two spiral stairs inside that lead to the top of the minaret. The elevation of the minaret features a tapering cylindrical shaft surmounted by a domed lantern, resembling a candle from afar. The surface is smoothly plastered with slits to admit light and air. The finial of the minaret is a modern addition from the Republican period, this being recorded in the Arabic inscription on the stone panel mounted on the south side of the minaret. The original finial had been a golden rooster, which was destroyed by strong wind, as noted in Chapter 2.

³⁶¹ Ettinghausen, Grabar, et al., op. cit., pp. 151-152.

³⁶² Li Xinhua, op. cit., p. 94.

The architectural form as well as the construction method of the Guangta minaret has no relationship to any Chinese architectural tradition. Despite being recorded as a stupa or pagoda, apart from its height, it appears to share neither the characteristics nor the construction techniques of the Chinese pagoda, derived from the Indian Buddhist architectural tradition of stupa, but shaped by Chinese architectural traditions, as noted below. The Guangta minaret clearly follows the Persian tradition of the great tower of cylindrical freestanding type, as mentioned above. A series of surviving early minarets in Iran, such as the minaret of Damghan of the mid-11th century (Fig.143) and the minaret in Khosrawgird, dated to 1111, in northern Iran,³⁶³ the minaret of the Ali Mosque and the Sarban minaret in Isfahan, dated to around the mid-12th century,³⁶⁴ provide good examples of this type. These minarets are all freestanding cylindrical towers, built of bricks. Studies show that spiral staircases, leading to the top of the great towers, appear as a common element of this type of Persian minaret.³⁶⁵ Stylistically, the Guangta minaret can clearly be compared with these early Persian minarets. Although the majority of the surviving Persian examples are dated to the 12th century, the tradition appears to have begun considerably earlier, and one cannot rule out the possibility that the type provided the inspiration for the Guangta minaret, which has been dated to the Song period no later than 1088, as noted in Chapter 2. There were, of course, numerous Muslim merchants of Persian extraction residing in the great ports of China at that time while surviving early mosques in the coastal regions also display elements of Persian architecture, as already discussed in Chapter 3.



Fig.143. Minaret of the Masjid-i Jami Damghan, Damghan, Iran. (From <http://archnet.org/sites/1602>)

Epigraphic information indicates that the Guangta minaret was one of three built at that time.³⁶⁶ The location of the other two, however, is not recorded. Some Chinese scholars have

³⁶³ The date is after Creswell, op. cit., p. 12, and the photography of the Damghan minaret is from <http://archnet.org/sites/1602>, viewed 26 December 2014.

³⁶⁴ The date of both minarets is after Fatema AlSulaiti. See Fatema AlSulaiti, 'the Style and Regional Differences of Seljuk Minarets in Persia', in *Ancient History Encyclopaedia*, 30 January 2013, viewed on 24 December 2014.

<http://www.ancient.eu/article/484/>

³⁶⁵ Hutt, op. cit., pp. 173&175-177.

³⁶⁶ It is recorded in the inscription on the Guangzhou stele of 1350, op. cit., see the full text in Appendix.

suggested that one may have been in Quanzhou, and another in Yangzhou or Hangzhou, since three early mosques of a considerable scale were recorded in these great ports.³⁶⁷ While there are no Chinese texts referring or implying the existence of minarets either in Yangzhou or in Hangzhou before the Ming period, Ibn Battuta's text noting that he heard the *muezzins* calling to the noon prayers as he entered into the Muslim city, i.e., the Muslim quarter, in Hangzhou provides evidence of the existence of minarets in Hangzhou at the time of his visit.³⁶⁸ One of the minarets noted by Ibn Battuta could have well been the one mentioned in the epigraphic record. This, as Bai Shouyi suggested, makes Hangzhou more likely, rather than Yangzhou, to have had one of the three minarets mentioned.³⁶⁹

It is plausible that there was originally a minaret of Persian type attached to the Fenghuang Mosque that preceded the five-storey minaret of pagoda type, as noted below. The Fenghuang Mosque is not just the oldest mosque recorded in Hangzhou, but also was the only mosque that was evidently built in a style following the Islamic architectural tradition of Persia, as noted in Chapter 3.

There is also an extant text that implies the presence of a minaret of a great height in connection with the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, preceding the building of its five-storey wooden minaret of 1567, as noted in Chapter 2. The text describes the minaret as '*yizhu ganyun*' (一柱干雲), i.e., literally a pole or column stretching to the sky.³⁷⁰ This text has been interpreted as a tall tower of a non-Chinese form, perhaps comparable to the Guangta minaret. Another text to be found in local history records of Ming date describing the mosque as '*lou ta gaochang*' (樓塔高敞), i.e., literally, high and spacious building and tower.³⁷¹ This has been taken by Chinese scholars as suggesting the existence of a *ta*, i.e., a tall tower, like the Guangta minaret.³⁷² It is not implausible that there was formerly a minaret that, like the mosque, took an architectural form imported from the Islamic lands. These texts, however, do not specify the exact location of this assumed tall tower. We know for certain that the five storey wooden minaret was located at the south-eastern corner of the entrance portal of the

³⁶⁷ Bai Shouyi, *Ba "Chongjian Huaishengsi" Ji*, op. cit., pp. 333-336.

³⁶⁸ Ibn Battuta, and Gibb, op. cit., p. 293. Hangzhou by Ibn Battuta's time still consists of 6 walled quarters assigned to different groups, because it's walled with its own gate and its governors too, Ibn Battuta describes the quarters as cities, at that time, he observed, the first city for the governmental guards, the second city for the Jews and Christians, the third for the Muslims.

³⁶⁹ Bai Shouyi, op. cit., p. 334.

³⁷⁰ Li Guangjin, 'Chongxiu Qingjingsi Muyuanshu', in *Jingbi Ji* (Ming Wanli), cit. in Chen Leji et al., op. cit., pp. 137-138.

³⁷¹ Fang Ding, Zhu Shengyuan, et al., *Jinjiang Xian Zhi*, op. cit., vol. 15, p. 448.

³⁷² Bai Shouyi, '*Ba "Chongjian Huaishengsi" Ji*', op. cit., p. 332.

Yuan period addition, as noted in Chapter 3. It is said that this tall tower associated with the Ashab Mosque was built of stones.³⁷³ The precise location is not clear from the text. The Chinese wording ‘*silou zhi zhengdong*’ (寺樓之正東) could be read in these ways, suggesting that the tower was on the top of the eastern side of the portal, or adjacent to that side, or that it was located at the east side of the mosque itself. Given the structure of the surviving portal, however, it seems unlikely that it could ever have supported a heavy stone tower. It is, therefore, probable that the minaret, if it was of this form, was freestanding, as is the case with the Guangta minaret.

If, however, such a minaret did exist, and was of an unusual form, like the Guangta minaret, one might have expected it to have been mentioned in both Arabic and Chinese texts, that pre-date the Ming period. Ibn Batutta, for example, does not mention the presence of such a large minaret while giving detailed accounts of the activities of the Muslim diaspora there, as noted in Chapter 2. He arrived in Quanzhou in 1345, which was before the destruction of mosques caused by the Isbah Muslim conflicts, as discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. Had the minaret perhaps already collapsed at this time, due to the frequent earthquakes in the region? However, Ibn Battuta also does not mention the Guangta minaret, although it is known that he visited Guangzhou the same year. One explanation may be that he did not visit the Huaisheng mosque at all, since it had burned down, as recorded in epigraphs, in 1343 and was not rebuilt until 1350, after his visit, as noted in Chapter 2. Local Muslims may not, therefore, have taken him to the site.

The Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, as noted in Chapter 2, is the only surviving early mosque that has foundation inscriptions in Arabic recording the founding and renovation of the mosque, and also has inscriptions in Chinese of an early date. Further investigations may answer this question. However, the presence of the Persian type of minaret in coastal China and the first appearance of the minaret in this region is well represented by the Guangta minaret.

The Integral Type of Minarets: the Imposing Gateway as Wangyue lou

The next phase of the development of the minaret in coastal China appears to have seen the evolution of a completely different type that has no parallels elsewhere in the Islamic world. An example of the beginning of this phase is provided by the minaret of the Songjiang

³⁷³ Huang Qiurun, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

Mosque, founded in the late Yuan period.

The minaret, like the mosque itself, displays a mix of Islamic and Chinese architectural tradition, as noted in Chapter 3. It is composed of a domed passage with arched openings on the same axis as the *mihrab* of the mosque, topped with a double-eaved cross-ridge roof (Figs. 144, 145).

While the architectural form of the domed passageway reflects the Islamic architectural tradition of the gateway rather than any type of minarets evolved in the world of Islam, noted above, the cross-ridge roof is clearly of a Chinese addition. Thus, the significance of the Songjiang minaret lies not only in its creative blending of different artistic traditions, but also in its reinvention of a distinctly architectural form of the minaret.

One could argue that adoption of the gateway form into the architectural purpose of the minaret may well have been a practical step, rather than a pure architectural innovation. If the higher roofs in the neighbourhood of the mosques or the city walls had been used formerly as places for performing the Call to Prayer in the early decades of Islam, as noted above, the construction of an imposing gateway serving also as a minaret would certainly have offered a practical alternative, with the advantage of being part of the mosque compound. However, unlike the early years of Islam in Arabia, prior to the appearance of minarets, by the late Yuan period, minarets of Persian type were already present on the Chinese coasts, as noted above. The appearance of the gateway-minaret, therefore, is clearly an innovation that is markedly different from that which had gone before.

It is, therefore, more plausible, that the minaret of the Songjiang Mosque, being part of architectural structures of the mosque compound as a whole, like the mosque itself, was



Fig.144. Minaret of the Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.



Fig.145. Dome of the minaret of the Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

designed as an experiment at the time when the Maritime Muslim community was in the process of transition from Muslim diaspora to Chinese Muslims, as discussed in Chapter 3. The community may have been consciously engaged in an attempt to create something new, reflecting its Chinese and Muslim identity. Whatever the reason for the creation of the Songjiang minaret, the practice of building gateway-minarets continued for several centuries, with the eventual emergence of a style of minaret with obvious features of gatehouse, as noted below. The Songjiang minaret, may, therefore, be considered as an antecedent of this new type, widely used by Hui Muslim communities across China.

The next example, representing the continued evolution of this new type of minarets, is the minaret of the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou. It should be noted that this should not be confused with the remaining elements of the original mosque, the Guangta minaret, mentioned above. This minaret was probably first built in the Ming period, during the rebuilding of the mosque itself noted in Chapter 4 and 5. As with the



Fig.146. *Wangyue lou* of the Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

case of the Songjiang minaret, the last gateway, here the third gateway of the mosque, which leads to the prayer hall through the main court, was also built so that it could serve as a minaret. By this time, however, the architectural form of the minaret was purely Chinese in style, with the Chinese characters, *kanyue lou* (看月楼), i.e., *wangyue lou*, inscribed on the northern side of the minaret (Fig.146), reflecting the progressing Sinicization of the Maritime community in the Ming period. The minaret, built of brick and wood, reflects the influence of the gatehouse tradition in Chinese architectural practices. The present, surviving, structure can be largely dated to the restoration in the early Qing period. It is composed of a passageway with arched openings on four sides, topped with a very noble double-eaved gable-on-hip roof (a *chongyan xieshan* roof in Chinese architectural term, noted in Chapter 5). This is often seen in classical Chinese gatehouses. The intricate *dougong* brackets of three tiers supporting the roof display the taste of the Qing period, increasingly decorative while, at the same time, preserving the original architectural functions.

As mentioned earlier, this integral type of minaret, the *wangyue lou*, was used by the inland Muslim groups as well. It continued to evolve in style in inland China well into the Qing period, with the elements of Chinese gatehouses becoming more predominant. The restored minarets in the Ox Mosque and the Dongsi Mosque (東四清真寺) in Beijing, and the Huajue Si in Xi'an provide good examples of this development (Figs. 147, 148). Instead of the gatehouse being suggested only by the presence of high lofty roofs, as seen in the minaret of the Huaisheng Mosque, these have rooms or pavilions built of wood rising above the brick passageways. This had been a characteristic



Fig.147. *Wangyue lou* of the Dongsi Mosque, Beijing.

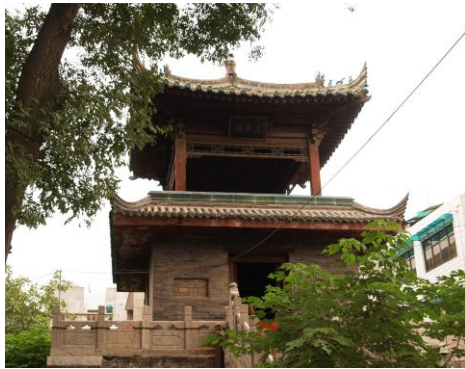


Fig.148. *Wangyue lou* of the Huajue Mosque, Xi'an.

of traditional Chinese gatehouses since ancient times.

While this would seem to be a logical development of this integral type of the minaret, no examples of this type appear to survive in the coastal regions of China, while no texts have yet been identified to suggest that they may have existed there.

There are, however, *wangyue lou*, minarets of the integral type, in the coastal regions, of much later

dates yet still displaying features that can clearly be linked to the gatehouse-minaret tradition. Among the examples are the minarets in the Jingjue Mosque in Nanjing, in the Ningbo Mosque in Ningbo, and the Yancheng Mosque (鹽城清真寺) in Yancheng (Figs. 149, 150). Some of the architectural features of these minarets suggest that they are later additions, the mosques themselves having been constructed in the Ming and Qing periods. Built of bricks, these two-storey minarets reflect the same idea of integrating the minaret into the structures of the entrance gateway, as was the case with early minarets of this type. Some elements, such as the French windows, displaying the contemporary taste of the late Qing, especially the Republic period in the coastal regions, as noted in Chapter 5 and 6, add modern touches to the elevations of the buildings, while the building materials used also have led to some alterations in the traditional gatehouse-minaret form.

These minarets may be seen as a modern version of the integral type of minarets derived from the traditional gatehouse structure, like those to be found in inland areas, as noted above. If this is seen as a logical phase of the evolution of this integral type of minaret, it may explain why gatehouse-minaret in a pronounced traditional form are absent from mosques in the coastal regions. It is



Fig.149. *Wangyue lou* of the Ningbo Mosque, Ningbo. (Courtesy of Dr. Liu Zhihong)

possible either that the latter have not been well preserved and recorded, or that they were later replaced by this modern type.

Alternatively, since the minarets featuring the structures of the traditional gatehouse mainly appear

in the royal cities and also in large mosques, their absence from mosques in the coastal areas may

have been due to the fact that these, while often sophisticated in terms of architectural design, were rarely a large size.

The Pagoda Type of Minarets

In parallel to the development of the integral type of the minaret, the *wangyue lou*, another type of minaret was also developing in the coastal regions. This type appears to share the features of Chinese pagodas. The Chinese pagoda itself was derived from the stupa of Buddhist architecture of India but was also influenced by the design of ancient Chinese towers erected for worship purposes. As Buddhism developed deep root in China, this essential Buddhist structure of stupa from India was gradually developed into a distinctly architectural form - known as the Chinese pagoda. It had long become part of traditional Chinese architectural practices by the time Islam reached China. This architectural form, sharing the feature of tall towers with the first minarets of Persian type, appeared in the coastal regions and was then adopted as part of Chinese traditions and should not be interpreted as any specific reference to Buddhist architectural practices being adopted by the Maritime Muslim community in the process of its Sinicization.



Fig.150. *Wangyue lou* of the Yancheng Mosque, Yancheng. (Courtesy of Dr. Liu Zhihong)

This type of minarets was first recorded in the coastal regions, having been used by the Maritime Muslims in the early Ming period. It was later also used by the Hui Muslim communities in inland China. Despite having made its first appearance in coastal China, none of this pagoda type of minarets in this region that are indicated in the texts survived to the present day. However, we have texts and also photographic documentation that provide evident of the existence of this type of minarets in the coastal regions from the Ming period onwards. The vanished minaret of 1567, for example, of the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, was documented as a five-storey pagoda built of wood.³⁷⁴ It was recorded to have stood on the Yuan period entrance portal, a replacement of an older structure. As mentioned earlier, we cannot tell the exact form of the minaret which preceded this one, although information on this 1567 replacement provided by the texts clearly indicates that it took a form of a Chinese pagoda. Thus, it can be compared with the minaret of the Fenghuang Mosque in Hangzhou, which survived to the late 1920s. As noted in Chapter 3, the minaret was built of wood, and was probably added in restorations of the Ming period to the original entrance portal of the Yuan period. According to available documentation,³⁷⁵ it was originally built in a form of five-storey pagoda, and was reduced to a two-storey one sometime in the Qing period, following periodic orders from the court to remove or reduce the size of such tall structures, as a result of the Qing policy on restricting public expressions of ethnicities.

This Qing policy may have contributed to the lack of remains of this pagoda type of minarets, and also to the discontinuation of this practice, in the coastal regions. This type of minarets, however, appeared to

have been continued to be built in comparatively rural areas in the northwestern region. There are restored and preserved minarets of mainly late Qing date found in this region, providing good examples of the pagoda type, such as the minaret of the Huasi Mosque (清真華寺) in Linxia in the north-western province of Gansu (Fig.151). The minaret is composed of five



Fig.151. Minaret of the Huasi Mosque, Linxia.

³⁷⁴ Chen Menglei, and Jiang Tingxi, *Gujin Tushu Jicheng : Ji Suoyin*, op., cit., Chap. Fangxing Huibian •Zhifang Diang, vol.1050, Quanzhou Bu •Zalu, 5.

³⁷⁵ Liu Zhiping, op. cit., pp. 27, 30, 237. Li Guangjin, stele of 1609, op. cit. Wang Shilun, and Zhao Zhenhan, op.cit., pp. 61-62.

storeys that are marked by tiered eaves supported by *dougong* brackets, displaying a characteristic feature of the Chinese pagoda. It stands on the entrance gateway, also of Chinese style. While in the early phase of the development, the minarets of the pagoda type were added to the existing entrance portals of an imported Islamic style, noted in previous chapters, the stylistic agreement displayed here may be seen as the logical development, following the process of the evolution of a Chinese style mosque. This development should have been expected in the coastal regions, had not the practice of this type of minaret been discontinued there.

The Pavilion Type of Minarets: Wangyue Ting

The first mention of a pavilion associated to the minaret is found in the inscription by Li Guangjin.³⁷⁶ He noted a pavilion in the Ashab Mosque as *zhusheng ting* (祝聖亭), i.e., literally pavilion of saluting sage. This was located on top of the entrance portal at the eastern side, having a pagoda, i.e., minaret, to its south. It is not clear what architectural traditions it followed, since there had no mention of its style in Li's inscription. Both structures were destroyed in the recorded severe earthquake of 1607. The text indicates that the pavilion, at that time, had not yet taken on the liturgical functions of the minaret, but it apparently had a close association with the event of observing the crescent moon that, as noted above, took place in the minaret. It is suggested that the pavilion was a gathering and resting place for the community leaders after the sighting of the crescent moon.³⁷⁷ The very name of this pavilion itself hints that the event of observing the crescent moon may have been followed by celebrations in the pavilion, as part of the event itself. It thus reflects the influences of Chinese traditions and rituals related to the moon, mentioned earlier.

The co-existence of the pavilion and the minaret here hints that the erection of a pavilion was not intended to take over the functions of a minaret, or to replace it altogether. Although this pavilion later was referred to as *wangyue ting*, i.e. literally pavilion of moon sighting, one of the Chinese terms applied to the minaret in translation, as noted above, it did not seem to have taken over the role of the adjacent minaret at this time. However, later the pavilion, as *wangyue ting*, become a form of minaret, especially popular in the coastal regions, and thus the pagoda type of minarets with which the Maritime Muslims had earlier experimented eventually gave way to the *wangyue ting*, the pavilion type of minarets. This may have been

³⁷⁶ Li Guangjin, stele of 1609, op. cit.

³⁷⁷ Huang Qiurun, op. cit., p.11.

partly an effect of the discouragement from the Qing court of building tall towers especially in urban areas, as mentioned earlier.

In addition, although the adoption of the Buddhist structure of pagoda was merely a borrowing of a Chinese architectural form by the Muslims without any reference to Buddhist practices, which can be compared with the adoption of Christian church towers to form the first minarets in the world of Islam, the physical appearance of the pagoda itself can still be misleading, especially in the eyes of those Chinese who had little knowledge of Islamic practices but who were already very much familiar with Buddhist culture at that time. This appeared to have been a matter of special concern for the Maritime Muslim community that became increasingly conscious of its Muslim identity in the Qing period, as discussed in Chapter 5. Hence, this may have also contributed to the idea of replacing the pagoda type of minarets with the pavilion type, thereby consciously avoiding a comparison with Buddhist practices, since the pagoda is one of the characteristic structures in Buddhist architecture. As in early times of Islam, although the Christian church towers were adopted, different rituals were developed and thence distinct forms of minarets evolved, thus distinguishing them from Christian practices.

We cannot tell when exactly the *wangyue ting* began to be used for all functions of the minaret. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the process of the development of the pavilion type of minarets may have begun with the implementation of the court policy on restricting public expressions of ethnicities in the Qing period. Although the *zhusheng ting* in the Ashab Mosque was of an earlier



Fig.152. Minaret of a Qing period mosque, Linxia.

date, it was not built originally as a minaret as was the case later, even it was the first known instance of a pavilion being associated with part of the functions of the minaret. The minaret of the Fenghuang Mosque, after being reduced to two storeys, appears to have shared features with the storeyed pavilions, as indicated in the old photography (Fig.35). It is comparable with another instance found in a Qing period mosque in Linxia, Gansu province. The wooden minaret rising above the entrance gateway appears like a small pavilion, which apparently had been the top tier of the original pagoda- form minaret (Fig.152). Thus, we may suggest

that the pavilion type of minarets was first evolved from the much scaled- down minarets of the pagoda type. At least, there would appear to have been a close link between the idea of erecting a pavilion on the entrance gateway, to serve as a minaret, and the practice of the pagoda type of minarets. The *zhusheng ting*, regardless of its style, may have also inspired this idea. It is noteworthy that the pavilion, as *wangyue ting*, here should not be confused with the upper structures of the integral type of minarets, the *wangyue lou*. Despite sometimes taking a form of the pavilion, these structures are an integral part of the gatehouse architectural form, while the *wangyue ting* is a separate architectural element from the gateway structures of whatever styles to which it is attached.

The early *wangyue ting* appears to take on a traditional pavilion form, standing on top of the entrance buildings of different styles. The *wangyue ting* in the Shanxiang Mosque in Zhenjiang, for example, represents the early pavilion type of minaret. The *wangyue ting* was built of wood, the most common materials for the traditional pavilion, especially in the Jiangnan regions. It is covered by *cuanjian ding*, i.e., a pyramidal roof, noted in Chapter 3, which is a characteristic of classical Chinese pavilions (Fig.153).

Despite beginning with dealing with some social pressures generated by the restriction of public expression of ethnicities, mentioned earlier, the development of the pavilion type of minarets in coastal China later was affected by the life and conditions of the Muslim community, as well as by regional architectural traditions. Although the practice of the pagoda type of minarets began



Fig.153. *Wangyue ting* of the Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

in the coastal regions, this practice eventually ceased within the Maritime Muslim community, while it was continued to be used in other regions. Its replacement by the pavilion type was perhaps an adjustment to the change in social conditions of the time, as noted above. It may have also been shaped up by the growing consciousness and confidence of the community in its Chinese Muslim identity, something that had been promoted by the Muslim intellectuals,

in particular in the the Jiangnan regions of the coastal China from the late Ming period onwards, as noted in the previous chapters. It is, therefore, suggested that the community eventually abandoned its early architectural experiment of the pagoda type of minarets, adopting another traditional Chinese form that had no historical link to any other religion.

The next phase of the development of the *wangyue ting* saw a change in its location. Now the *wangyue ting* was no longer placed high up on the entrance buildings, but instead they were built in the gardens, thus becoming an integral part of the garden scene as a whole. Examples are found particularly in the Jiangnan regions, where the development of mosques, especially the layout of their gardens, had been much influenced by the design of Jiangnan garden architecture since the Ming period onwards, as noted in Chapter 5. The pavilion is an essential architectural element of classical Chinese gardens, best represented by the well-known Jiangnan gardens. Hence, architecturally and stylistically, this development of integrating the *wangyue ting* into the garden settings suits perfectly the overall design of mosques, especially those inspired by the garden architectural design. This may explain why the pavilion type of minarets remained popular in the Jiangnan regions until modern times.

This development also reflects some aspects of the community life of the time. The community life of the Maritime Muslims in the process of Sinicization in the Ming to the Qing period has already been extensively discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. The maritime Muslims were historically business-orientated, later also becoming active in intellectual life, became effectively integrated into Chinese society in the Qing period, while maintaining their religious identity. Unlike the Hui Muslims in the northwestern regions, the Maritime Muslims became more dispersed, living among a large Han population, and becoming so intermingled with the Han Chinese that there was no longer any apparent concentration of Muslim quarters in port cities, comparable with the *fanfang*, i.e., the foreign quarter, as had been the case earlier, as noted in previous chapters. As we know, the main function of the minaret is to provide a focal point from which the Call to Prayer is performed, which is the very reason for the height requirement of the minaret. This traditional aspect of the minaret and its liturgical function was modified by the Maritime Muslims, thanks to the circumstances in which the coastal Muslim community lived now. The traditional way of performing the Call to Prayer publicly became impractical or unnecessary, since the coastal Muslims were now living among the Han Chinese and often scattering across the cities. In addition, it would have been insensitive to perform the Call to Prayer publicly, while the community had to deal with the

social pressures generated by the Qing court policy of restricting public expressions of ethnicity. The height requirement of the minaret gradually, therefore, became irrelevant to the architectural practices of minarets within the coastal Muslim community. If there was no longer a need to summon the faithful publicly, then, logically, there was no need to build tall towers, or of placing any structures, such as pavilions, high up. This also may help to explain that the terms ‘*wangyue ting*’ or ‘*wangyue lou*’ were more often used than the term ‘*xuanli ta*’ or ‘*bangke lou*’ from the Qing period onwards in the coastal regions. While the former is with an emphasis on the function of observing the crescent moon, the latter refers to the function of the Call to Prayer. This indicates that the Call to Prayer, the main function of the minaret was overtaken by the function of sighting the crescent moon. This does not mean that the Call to Prayer was no longer performed, but may indicate that it was no longer restricted to a minaret. As was noted during fieldwork in coastal China for this thesis, today the performance of the Call to Prayer was mainly carried out in front of the prayer hall or in the courtyard of the mosque rather than in the minaret. This may have well been the case within the coastal Muslim community since the Qing period.



Fig.154. *Wangyue ting* in the complex of the Tomb of Baha al-Din, Yangzhou.

Despite the change in locations, the form or style of the *wangyue ting* remained unaltered. Examples show the preferences of the coastal Muslim community for



Fig.155. Detail of the pyramidal roof of the *wangyue ting*, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.

traditional Chinese pavilions, such as the *wangyue ting* in the complex of Baha al-Din, consisting of the Muslim cemetery centred on the tomb of the Baha al-Din, a mosque, and an immense garden, as noted in Chapter 3. This minaret has two storeys with a classical pavilion on top (Fig.154). The date of this *wangyue ting* is unknown. Presumably it was first built in the mid-Qing period at the time when the mosque in the compound was built. The present-day form can be a later restoration or rebuilding. The structure may suggest that it was probably an early example of the development of the change in locations of the pavilion type of minarets, since the additional ground floor built of brick, not seen in other

examples, may indicate still a concern in its height. Thus, it may serve as a transitional phase. Other examples of the *wangyue ting* form stand on a platform of a rather moderate height, but they share the elements of traditional Chinese pavilions, such as the pavilion in the Jiaxing Mosque in Jiaxing of the Qing period (Fig.155), mentioned in Chapter 5.

The *wangyue ting* built in the garden is often freestanding, as is the case with the example above. The restored *wangyue ting* in the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque in Nanjing, noted in Chapter 5, provides another example. The minaret was founded in the Qing period as was the mosque, but was rebuilt in the early Republican period. The original form of the minaret is not known. Covered with a double-eaved pyramidal



Fig.156. *Wangyue ting* of the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

roof, the present *wangyue ting* is walled with windows and screens, displaying elements of



Fig.157. *Wangyue ting* of the Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

the *xie* (榭), i.e., pavilions or houses on platforms or terraces, and the *ge* (閣), i.e., storeyed pavilions (Fig.156). The *ting*, *xie*, and *ge* all are common architectural elements of classical Chinese gardens.³⁷⁸

The design of the *wangyue ting* here, therefore, is within the architectural tradition of Chinese gardens, and yet still retains the traditions of Chinese pavilions.

While the minarets of pavilion type are generally freestanding, integrated harmoniously in the garden settings, the *wangyue ting* in the Xianhe Mosque in Yangzhou, noted in Chapter 5, provides an example of an attached type. Dated to the Qing period, there were

formerly two, both attached to the walls of the prayer hall. The one attached to the northern wall has been demolished, while the one in the southern side is preserved. Standing on a raised platform, the *wangyue ting* is topped with a gable-on-hip roof, having one side attached to the wall of the prayer hall and the other sides fitted with wood framed windows

³⁷⁸ Fang Puhe, op. cit., pp. 48-60., on architecture of Chinese gardens.

and doors (Fig.157). This resembles the *xie* type of pavilion often seen in the Jiangnan gardens.

After it evolved, the pavilion type of minaret soon became a popular minaret form in the coastal regions. It has remained in use by the coastal Muslims until modern times, like the



Fig.158. *Wangyue ting* of the Zhaoqing Chengxi Mosque, Guangzhou.

integral type of minaret, the *wangyue lou*. However, while the basic concept of the *wangyue ting* survives, it does not always follow the classical forms of Chinese pavilions. Modern elements, including the use of different building materials appear in new versions of the *wangyue ting*, as is the case with versions of the *wangyue lou*, as noted above. Examples are provided by the *wangyue ting* of the Zhaoqing Chengxi Mosque (肇慶城西清真寺) in Zhaoqing, Guangzhou, and the Huihui Xibei Mosque (回輝西北清真寺) in Sanya, Hainan Island. Both were built in the 1980s, and are of the storeyed pavilion type but with a modern twist (Figs.158, 159). Despite the modern touches, the tradition of Chinese pavilions can still be traced.

However, it is noteworthy that some other examples found in the coastal regions, represented by the minarets in the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque and the Fuyoulu Mosque in Shanghai, and the Suzhou Taipingfang Mosque in Suzhou, appear to have completely broken with the traditions of Chinese pavilions, but displays instead the European-influenced architectural trend of the Republican era in China's treaty ports, noted in Chapter 6. Despite being almost miniatures in size, these small pavilions are visible afar because of their locations. The minaret in Xiantaoyuan Mosque, for example, is composed of a two-storey pavilion rising on the roof of the prayer hall and topped with a cupola of a European style (Fig.160), which, stylistically, agrees with the mosque of a neoclassical style, discussed in Chapter 6. The minaret of the Fuyoulu Mosque takes even a simpler form composed of four columns supporting a small helmet dome (Fig.161), positioned on the roof of a multi-storey building by the entrance of



Fig.159. *Wangyue ting* of the Huihui Xibei Mosque, Sanya.

the mosque. It is probably an addition of the Republican period to this late Qing mosque. The minaret in the Suzhou Taipingfang Mosque stands on the top of the entrance portal, which is also a small pavilion of a simple form (Fig.162). It is not clear whether this structure is a modern addition or restoration of an earlier structure from the Republican period, since the mosque, dating to the Republican period, has been much restored and also largely rebuilt later, as noted in Chapter 6. Regardless of the different artistic features shown in these minarets, these pavilions appear to share no characteristics with traditional Chinese pavilions, but reflecting the contemporary architectural trend at times in the coastal regions.

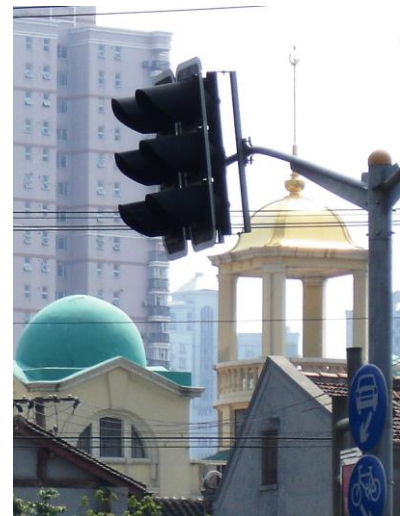


Fig.160. Minaret of the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, Shanghai.

Although the minarets were positioned high up, as in earlier times, they appear to have no functional use for the Call to Prayer, since the performance of the Call to Prayer publicly still



Fig.161. Minaret of the Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

remained impractical or unnecessary under the circumstances in which the community lived, as noted above. These small pavilions, however, are of some decorative values as architectural elements.

One exceptional case is the minaret of the Shelley Street Mosque in Hong Kong, dating to the Republican period. It does not take a form of a pavilion, of



Fig.162. Minaret of the Suzhou Taipingfang Mosque, Suzhou

whatever style, as was popular in coastal China at that time, but is of rather conventional, non-Chinese, form with an octagonal shaft topped by an onion-shaped dome that follows the Islamic tradition of India (Fig.129). Standing on the entrance porch, the two-storey minaret with a balcony, displays a mix of European and Indian Islamic architectural elements. The partly Indian origins of the local Muslim community, as noted in Chapter 6, may be responsible for the appearance of this exceptional minaret. In addition, unlike in the other

ports, the local Muslims still largely remained concentrated in an area around the mosque, which may explain the conventional form and use of the minaret at that time.

The Modern Minarets

After 1990s, many mosques in the coastal regions that had survived the destruction of the Cultural Revolution were rebuilt in a modern style following the contemporary trend of modern architecture in the world of Islam, which reflect the Chinese Muslims' willingness to re-connect with the outside Muslim world from which they had long been isolated. The minarets of these mosques, logically, follow the modern style as the mosques to which that they are attached.

The design of modern mosques embraces ideas of modernism in contemporary architectural practices through creatively re-interpreting traditional Islamic forms. There has, therefore, been a proliferation of modern mosques across the world of Islam reflecting the latest building technology and the latest fashion in architectural designs yet displaying recognisable characteristics of Islamic architecture. Some modern mosques appear so much transformed that the minaret is often the only architectural element that makes the purpose of entire architectural structures recognisable.

These modern minarets, with their modern twists, even in a very abstract form, appear always to make a reference back to the basic element of conventional minarets, that of being a tall structure resembling a tower.

This modern trend is reflected in the design of the modern minarets in coastal China. The minaret, for example, of the Huxi Mosque in Shanghai, the first modern mosque built in coastal China, signals the arrival of modernity in Islamic architectural practices in China. It takes a form of a tall tower designed stylistically in accordance with the appearance of the mosque (Fig.163). The minaret in the Pudong Mosque in Shanghai (Fig.164), and the minaret in the Kowloon Mosque in Hong Kong (Fig.165), and several minarets in the newly-built mosques in Sanya, Hainan Island, provide more examples of modern minarets in the coastal



Fig.163. Minaret of the Huxi Mosque, Shanghai.

regions. These modern minarets share one distinct feature, that of resembling a tower structurally, regardless of their styles, which are determined by the design of the mosques to which they are attached. Most of these modern minarets appear to lack any references to Chinese artistic traditions. Despite being tall towers, they do not necessarily carry the traditional function of the minaret, as a place from which the Call to Prayer is made, but rather are architectural element as an expression of the presence of Islam.



Fig.165. Minaret of the Kowloon Mosque, Hong Kong.

From its beginnings with the style of the great tower imported from Persia, the minaret in coastal China had developed into diverse forms, yet distinctly Chinese in characteristics, by the modern period. This Chinese reinterpretation of the very Islamic form of minaret finds no



Fig.164. Minaret of the Pudong Mosque, Shanghai.

parallel elsewhere in the Muslim world. It was a result of a process of synthesising Chinese cultural concepts and Islamic ritual requirements. Thus the notion of regional diversity and cultural syncretism are best exemplified by the development of the minaret in coastal China. The conditions and life of the Maritime Muslim community in different phases has been reflected in the evolution of the minaret in coastal China. The phenomenon of the appearance of modern minarets in coastal China reflects the impact of modernism on Islamic architectural practice as well as on the community life of the Maritime Muslims.

Chapter 8

Architectural Decoration and Epigraphic Tradition

As is in the case with the evolution of the minaret, the traditions of Islamic architectural decoration as well as the Islamic epigraphic tradition in coastal China began with the traditions that already were present in the heartland of the Islamic world. They then evolved and developed their own characteristics during the course of the process of the development of the syncretic traditions by the Maritime Muslim community, with the result that there was the evolution of a distinctly Chinese-style mosque in the coastal regions. While the concept of hierarchy and symbolism inherent in Chinese artistic traditions played a major role in the development of Islamic architectural decoration, the evolution of Islamic inscription was much influenced by the Chinese epigraphic, and calligraphic traditions.

The Development of Architectural Decoration in the World of Islam

In early times of Islam under the Umayyads, the style of architectural decoration, both techniques and motifs, displayed a direct continuation of the classical repertoires of the world of late antiquity, characterised by a mix of Graeco-Roman elements and Eastern influences.

³⁷⁹ This legacy left by the Byzantines is apparent in Umayyad architecture, both in religious and secular buildings, and is particularly represented in the early Umayyad monuments, such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Great Mosque of Damascus and the palace Qusayr Amra in Jordan. Mosaics covering the walls and floors of these monuments, for example, are unmistakable inheritance of the artistic tradition of the late antiquity.

The same classical heritage continues to be represented in buildings from the early periods of the Abbasid Caliphate. However, gradually the use of the Classical motifs became more stylised. The classical elements of the vine scroll and palmettes, for example, became more abstract, eventually evolving to become characteristic ornament that came to be known as the arabesque in Islamic art



Fig.166. Elevation of the Al-Salih Tala'i Mosque, Cairo.

³⁷⁹ D. Jones, 'The Elements of Decoration: Surface, Pattern and Light', in *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*. G. Michell (eds.), Thames and Hudson, London, 1978, pp. 165-168, on the historical development of Islamic architectural decoration.

and architecture. The Classic motif of shell niches became elongated and more angular, as is seen, for instance, in the Fatimid mosque of Al-Salih Tala'i Mosque in Cairo (Fig.166).³⁸⁰

This stylised shell niche appears to have been favoured by the Mamluks, who used it on the walls of their buildings as well as the surfaces of the minarets

(Fig.167). There also emerged a tradition of extensive use of stucco



Fig.167. Minaret of Zawiyat al-Humud (1250s), Cairo.

panelling to decorate the surfaces of the buildings, such as the stucco work in the Fatimid mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo (Fig.168).

Towards the 10th century, the mosaics that had dominated the surface decorations in early Umayyad buildings had gradually given way to the use of stone, bricks and stucco in various combinations, creating the contrasts of plane and texture. Other than the use of different-

textured materials, inscription bands or sometimes rows of blind niches, now large architectural surfaces were left comparatively plain. Instead, attentions were increasingly paid

to the decorations of portals and *mihrabs*.³⁸¹ This is well represented in the Mamluk buildings. The façade of the mosque of al-Nasir Muhammad at the citadel of Cairo (1318-1335), for example,

appears rather plane, but its *mihrab* is well decorated with marble

mosaics (Fig.169).³⁸²

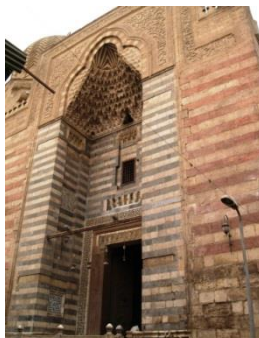


Fig.170. Portal of the complex of Sultan al-Muayyad (1415-20), Cairo.

This architectural idiom of sobriety and simplicity of the mediaeval Muslim world is evidently in the Mamluk buildings throughout the Mamluk period.

However, from the 14th century onwards, a tendency for rich architectural decoration can be traced across the Islamic world,

emphasising colour instead of textures. Thus there was a widespread use of glazed ceramic tiles, covering the outer and inner surfaces of



Fig.168. Stucco decoration in the Ibn Tulun Mosque, Cairo.



Fig.169. Marble decoration of the *qibla* wall of the mosque of al-Nasir Muhammad at the citadel (1318-1335), Cairo.

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

³⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁸² According to Behrens-Abouseif, this *mihrab* is a later rework example, but similar to the original marble inlays. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and its Culture*, op. cit., p. 178.

buildings, especially in Iran and Central Asia,³⁸³ although this was never the case with the Mamluk buildings. They, instead, continued to have a simple façade with ornaments of ablaq in most cases (Fig.170), the richness in the decorations of the interior being displayed not with lavish glazed tiles but with sumptuous marble mosaics.³⁸⁴

Over centuries, the characteristic elements of Islamic decoration - calligraphy, geometry and foliation or arabesque – evolved. Decorative principles became well-established, being applicable to all type of Islamic buildings and throughout all periods to modern times. The intricate and complex designs of geometric patterns and arabesques form the basis of the decorative scheme of Islamic architecture. These provide buildings an complex overlay, and yet create a rich visual effect of the fluidity of space.³⁸⁵

Chinese Traditions in Architectural Decorations

Islamic decoration generally tends to cover the entire buildings ‘like a mantle’,³⁸⁶ thus concealing the structures. The Chinese tradition of architectural decoration, however, involves a limitation of the decoration of architectural surfaces in order to keep the structures visible both in its exterior and interior. As noted in the previous Chapters, apart from being functional, the exposed wooden structures in traditional Chinese architecture often appear highly ornamental, thanks to their well-designed structural forms and intricate compositions. Whereas Islamic decoration emphasises visual effects, the decorations in Chinese architecture are always closely linked with the functions of the structures, and are rarely purely decorative, which characterises the decorative principles of Chinese architecture. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the structures of *dougong* and *queti*, for example, are architectural elements that strengthen the wood frame of the buildings, yet at the same time, with their elaborate designs, they are also ornamental elements.

The wooden frame and the joints of the frame, such as the ridges of the roof, the beams, and *dougong* and *queti* brackets, as well as the parts that provide a connection between the outer and inner spaces, such as the doors and the windows, are the foci of Chinese architectural decoration. Moreover, the decorations of certain structures that are intended to reveal social meanings are emphasised.³⁸⁷ Thus, apart from architectural functions, the purpose of the

³⁸³ Jones, pp. 166-167.

³⁸⁴ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and its Culture*, op. cit., pp. 90-95.

³⁸⁵ On the general principles of Islamic decoration, see Jones, *ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 144.

³⁸⁷ Gao Yang, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

application of different structural forms in traditional Chinese buildings is sometimes intended to reflect the concept of hierarchy. The different types of roofs, for example, indicate the category or class of the buildings, as noted in Chapter 4 and 5.³⁸⁸ This may explain why the structural cores of traditional Chinese buildings are rarely overall covered with complex overlays, even in the late Qing period when there was a taste for rich architectural decorations, noted in Chapter 5. If the notion of hierarchy is revealed through particular structures, it is important to keep a balance between surface decorations and structural frames. Thus, the decorations emphasise the particular structures, but do not conceal or obscure the structural forms through applications of unnecessary ornamental elements or over-elaborate decorations.

The same concept of hierarchy as well as Chinese symbolism appears to have dictated the key elements in the decorative scheme of traditional Chinese architecture. The colour scheme and the decorative motifs, as well as the composition of the motifs, are carefully chosen and applied strictly in accordance to the rules that reflect traditional Chinese culture and symbolism, as well as the prevailing hierarchy.

The application of different colours of the roofs in traditional Chinese buildings, for example, has a strict code. Yellow glazed tiles are reserved only for the royal palaces and the important religious buildings, mostly Confucius temples, while the residences of the dukes or other nobilities could only use green glazed roof tiles. The motifs decorating the ridges of the roofs, termed *jishou* (脊獸), i.e., roof-figures or roof charms, are not permitted on commoners' buildings. The *jiaoji* (角脊) at the corners of the drooping ridges (*chuiji* 垂脊) of the hip and gable-on-hip roofs in imperial buildings and important religious buildings is often decorated with roof-



Fig.171. Roof-figures of the Taihedian in the Forbidden City, Beijing (courtesy of Gao Yun and Li Wei)



Fig.172. Roof-figures of the Baohedian in the Forbidden City, Beijing.

³⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 13-14. Hu Chengfang, *op. cit.*, on the concept of hierarchy in traditional Chinese architecture in general.

figures, called *dunshou* (蹲獸), i.e., literally squatting animals. The complete set of the *dunshou* is composed of a procession of ten figures called *zoushou* (走獸), i.e., literally walking animals, led by an Immortal riding a phoenix. The compositions and also the number of the *dunshou* are determined by the class of the buildings. The full set of eleven roof-figures, for example, is only seen on the corner ridges in the Hall of Supreme Harmony (Taihedian 太和殿) in the former imperial palace, the Forbidden City (Zijincheng 紫禁城),³⁸⁹ whereas ten roof-figures are seen in the Hall of Preserving Harmony (Baohedian 保和殿) behind it (Figs.171, 172). It is noteworthy that the highest category of roof, the double-eaved hip roof (重檐庑殿) is used in the Taihedian, while the roof of the Baohedian is a double-eaved gable-on-hip roof (重檐歇山), a slightly lower category of roof. It is clear that the numbers of the roof figures are determined in accordance with the category of the roofs used in the buildings. This again reflects the notion of hierarchy inherent in classical Chinese architecture.

The elements of decorations in traditional Chinese architecture, unlike those in Islamic buildings, are characterised by figurative and animal motifs. Floral and Daoist motifs are also used, which are often applied symbolically. However, the geometric patterns that dominant Islamic decorations are also seen, especially in the designs of wooden screen doors and windows in traditional Chinese buildings. Whereas the geometric patterns in Islamic decoration are purely decorative, designed to create a visual effect on architectural surfaces, the geometric designs that primarily follow the Chinese traditions and their applications in Chinese architecture normally are not only decorative but also symbolic. For instance, the pattern featuring connected swastikas, termed *wanzi budaotou* (萬字不到頭), i.e., literally endless *wan* letter, symbolises infinity and immortality,³⁹⁰ which is one of the geometric patterns frequently applied in the surface decorations in all type of traditional Chinese buildings. Although calligraphy is an important Chinese art form practiced since ancient times, it appears not to be extensively used as an element of architectural decoration, as is in the case of Islamic architectural decoration.

Exterior Decorations of Islamic Architecture in Coastal China

³⁸⁹ Gao Yang, op. cit., pp. 18-21. Hu Chengfang, op. cit. It should be noted that sometimes the full set of the roof-figures on the *jiaoji* is mentioned as a set of ten figures, when referring specifically the *zoushou*, the walking animal figures.

³⁹⁰ W. Eberhard, trans. G. L. Campbell, *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought*, Routledge, London, New York, 1986, pp. 280-281,

The Early Period

As the early mosques in coastal China are built in a style imported from the Islamic lands, it is reasonable to expect that their decoration was also derived from the decorative schemes of the Islamic world. Although there are only very few remains of early mosques of the Maritime Muslim community, the architectural decoration of their buildings can be detected to some extent.



Fig.173. Elevation of the Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.



Fig.174. Inscriptions on the entrance to the prayer hall, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

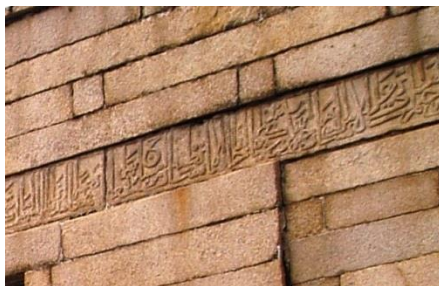


Fig.175. Inscription band on the exterior wall, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

As already discussed in Chapter 2, the earliest remains is the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou, dateable to 1009 (the date of foundation), and 1310 (the date of major renovation). Despite being in a ruinous condition, the surface decoration apparently represents the taste for simplicity that was common in architectural decoration in the mediaeval Islamic world. The façade of the mosque features dressed stone, dominated by a tall portal dressed in green stones (Fig.173). The inscription band runs above the clearly rectangular-cut windows and the arch of the portal and also the lintels of the entrance door to the prayer hall (Figs.174, 175). Both the masonry work and the style of inscription bands are comparable to those early Mamluk buildings in Cairo, such as the madrasa of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars (1263), the funerary complex of Sultan al-Mansur Qalawun (1284-1285) and the funerary madrasa of Sultan al-Nasur Muhammad Ibn Qalawun (1295-1303) (Figs.176, 177).³⁹¹ The design of the corbels supporting the lintels of the entrance door to the prayer hall and the doors at the passageways of the portal are reminiscent of Chinese architectural element of *queti* but in stone. They were probably installed during the later renovation of the late Yuan or early Ming period. That was the period which, as noted in Chapter 3, some Chinese architectural elements began to appear in

³⁹¹ The dates of these Mamluk buildings are after Behrens-Abouseif, see Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and its Culture*, op. cit., pp. 119, 132, 152.

Islamic buildings in coastal China.



Fig.176. Inscription band on the exterior wall of the funerary complex of Sultan al-Mansur Qalawun, Cairo.



Fig.177. Inscription band on the exterior wall of the funerary madrasa of Sultan al-Nasur Muhammad Ibn Qalawun, Cairo.

perhaps simply too complex to have been feasible for those who built the Guangta minaret. This may be a possible explanation for the fact that the exterior surface was simply plastered, to conceal the brickwork.

There are insufficient remains of early structures to permit a clear assessment of the nature of the decorative scheme generally applied to the early mosques in coastal China. However, archaeological studies of architectural fragments unearthed in Quanzhou indicate that, at least that the Arabic inscriptions, one of the key elements of Islamic decoration, appear to have been applied to all these vanished early mosques that are dateable from the Song to Yuan periods, as is in the case with the decoration in the Ashab

Apart from the Guangta minaret of the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou, there are no other remains of early mosques dated to before the Yuan period. The surface of the exterior of the minaret is smoothly plastered without any brick patterns

being visible. The Iranian prototype of the great towers, noted in Chapter 7, however, often display ornamental designs achieved through composing the bricks in various geometric patterns. The Guangta is dateable to 1088, and, given the level of the construction techniques at that time in Guangzhou, it was already a very ambitious structure to have been built by the Maritime Muslims. The sophisticated pattern-making brickwork in the Persian great towers was

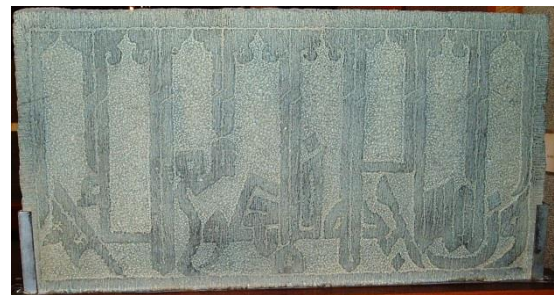


Fig.178. Architectural fragment of an early mosque, in the collection of the Maritime Museum, Quanzhou.



Fig.179. Architectural fragment of an early mosque, in the collection of the Maritime Museum, Quanzhou.

Mosque. It has been suggested, for example, that a fragment bearing inscriptions on both sides in different styles may have been the lintel of the door at the main entrance of a mosque founded by a Yemeni merchant (Figs.178, 179).³⁹² The Quranic inscription on one side follows the *kufic* style, the oldest Islamic calligraphic style, whereas the foundation inscription on the other side is in a later, cursive script, as are the inscriptions on other fragments from mosques that have been recovered (Figs.180, 181).³⁹³ Chen Dasheng has dated this vanished mosque of presumed Yemeni affiliation to before the Southern Song period because of its use of *kufic* script.³⁹⁴ However, it should be noted that although cursive scripts, especially *thuluth* script, have been favoured in architectural decoration in the form of the inscription band since it evolved in the 10th century, the older *kufic* script did not die out. *Kufic* script, for example, was still occasionally used by the Mamluks for inscription bands, and there was even a revival of the use of *kufic* script in 15th century Mamluk buildings, although the monumental inscriptions in *thuluth* script generally remained dominant as decorative elements in Mamluk buildings.³⁹⁵ This purported mosque with a Yemeni connection, along with other early mosques of the Yuan period, is likely to have been destroyed during the Muslim conflicts in Quanzhou in the late Yuan period, mentioned in Chapter 3.



Fig.180. Architectural fragment of an early mosque, in the collection of the Maritime Museum, Quanzhou.



Fig.181. Architectural fragment of an early mosque, preserved in the Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

Although there are a few early architectural remains from the Yuan period in the Jiangnan regions, they are much restored or rebuilt. It is, therefore, difficult to propose the general decorative scheme of these mosques. In particular, the facades of these mosques are later additions in Chinese style, displaying primarily decorative elements of Chinese architecture, as discussed below. The old prayer chambers in the Fenghuang Mosque in Hangzhou and the Songjiang Mosque in Songjiang, for example, are preserved Yuan period structures but both

³⁹² Chen Dasheng, and Zhuang Weiji, op. cit., pp. 110-111. This fragment is in the collections of the Maritime Museum in Quanzhou.

³⁹³ The fragment showing in Fig. 179 is in the collections of the Maritime Museum in Quanzhou. The fragment showing in Fig.180 is preserved in the Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou.

³⁹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

³⁹⁵ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and its Culture*, op. cit., pp. 97-99.

have additional halls in front of, and connected to, them (Plans IV, V). They were built or rebuilt in the Ming period with restorations in the later periods, as discussed in Chapter 3. The Chinese style roofs covering the domes of these old structures are only visible decorative element from the elevations of these early remains (Figs.33, 38).

As previously noted, the Fenghuang mosque, both in terms of the original layout and the architectural form of the entire mosque, may have followed Islamic architectural traditions developed in the heartland of Islam, as is evident both from early textual material and the existing remains. The Chinese-style roofs topping the domed chambers of the Fenghuang Mosque were added in one of the restorations in the Ming period. We cannot tell whether the exterior of the brick domes were originally decorated or, if so, what that decoration may have been. Given that the overall design of the mosque was essentially Islamic, the original prayer hall was probably covered with a flat roof, with the domes, whether plain or decorated, being visible from afar, to indicate the location of the *qibla* wall. Presumably the roof was also furnished with a crenelated parapet similar to the elevation of the purported tomb of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqâs in Guangzhou (Fig.23). Crowning buildings with a crenelated parapet is not uncommon in Islamic Architecture. In fact, such parapets have been developed into a more decorative element, as is seen, for instance, in many Mamluk buildings.

Old photographs show that the original entrance portal was decorated with an inscription band and foliation motifs (Fig.35). Inscriptions and foliations decorating the façade of the original mosque are also indicated in an early text cited previously.³⁹⁶ The text refers to the inscription as Huijiao letters, i.e., Arabic scripts, and describes the coloured paintings on the façade. Although the text refers to the older structure pre-dating to the Yuan structures, as noted in Chapter 3, it is logical to assume the rebuilt mosque of the Yuan period may have been decorated in a similar manner to its predecessor, since they were apparently built in the same architectural style. The overall decoration of the Fenghuang Mosque thus is likely to have originally followed the scheme of Islamic decoration. The added pyramid roofs topping the domes are apparent Chinese in characteristics in



Fig.182. Elevated roof of the domed *mihrab* chamber of the Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.

³⁹⁶ Fan Zushu, 'Hangsu Yifeng' (Song), cit. in *Chinese Encyclopedia of Islam*, op. cit., p. 153.

terms of the structural forms and decorations (Fig.182).

Roofs

As noted above, the roof is one of the foci in the decorative scheme of Chinese architecture. One of the key decorative elements of the roof is the ridge-figures. Apart from decorating the *jiaoji*, the corner ridges, with ridge-figures, mentioned earlier, the horizontal ridge topping the roofline, termed *zhengji* (正脊), i.e., literally central ridge, is also decorated with ridge-figures, those at each ends of the *zhengji* with heads turning inwards to the ridge being called *wenshou* (吻獸), i.e., literally animal's mouth, while heads looking outwards are named *wangshou* (望獸), i.e., literally watching animals. The *wangshou* is normally used for a comparatively lower class building such as the watchtowers on the city wall. The *wenshou* featuring the head of the dragon with its month open holding the central ridge is known as *longwen* (龍吻), i.e., dragon's mouth. This can be seen in imperial buildings as well as in important religious buildings, becoming very popular in the Ming-Qing period. While in ancient times, the *wenshou* often depicted auspicious birds, such as the phoenix, or the rosefinch, it then evolved into the image of a creature with a dragon's head and a fish's tail, recorded as *chiwei* (鴟尾), i.e., literally owl's tail, because the tail also resembles the tail of the *chi*, i.e., the ancient Chinese name for a type of bird belonging to the owl family. It is suggested that this creature displaying the mixed features of dragon and fish or owl represents a mythological fish that has the power to make rains, thus protecting the buildings from fires, obviously something of great importance for wood-framed architecture. It later came to be known as *chiwen* (鴟吻), from which the *longwen* was derived.³⁹⁷

The *wenshou* is not only decorative element, but is also functional structure to reinforce the central ridge and prevent leaks. While the *wenshou* is an essential element of the *zhengji* on the imperial buildings, sometimes the entire *zhengji* in temple architecture is decorated with various motifs. Another roof-figure called *chuishou* (垂獸) is often see on the *chuiji*, the drooping ridges, right behind the procession of the *dunshou* on the *jiaoji*, the corners of the *chuiji*, as mentioned earlier. In the case of the pyramidal roof, apart from the ridge-figures, the apex of the roof is decorated with a finial normally in the shape of round and girdled round or pagoda, termed *baoding* (寶頂), i.e., literally precious top. The added pyramidal roof in the Fenghuang Mosque, for example, is decorated with a common type of finials in

³⁹⁷ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 18.

the girdled-round form (Fig.182), resembling the shape of a bottle-gourd, one of the eight symbols of the Daoist Immortals. This is one of the symbolic decorative motifs that appears frequently in Chinese decorative art. The finial of the pyramidal roof is designed to cover, and therefore, protect the lightning rods from getting damaged. It serves, therefore, as a protective device for the buildings, as well as being decorative.³⁹⁸ Again, the close association of function and decoration is apparent in traditional Chinese architecture. In addition, the motifs of these roof-figures all have symbolic meanings that are either propitious or protective in traditional Chinese beliefs.

As Chinese architectural elements become incorporated gradually into the building of the mosques by the Maritime Muslims, so Chinese decorative elements began to appear



Fig.183. Roof of the minaret of the Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

together with Islamic decorative elements. One good example is the decorations of the roofs of the Yuan period remains of the Songjiang Mosque. The architectural forms of the roofs covering the minaret and the domed prayer chamber are of the same type and the decorations are similar. There are *wenshou* with their mouth open holding the central ridge that features geometric patterns composed of roof tiles in its body (Figs. 183, 184). This pattern, known as *tao shaguotao* (套沙锅套), i.e., literally interlocking sand pot, is composed of interlocking half-round tiles made of a mixture of clay and sand, the same material used in traditional Chinese sand pot. It is one of the geometric patterns often used for decorating the wall enclosure of a building complex, and can be seen, in



Fig.184. Detail of the roof of the domed *mihrab* chamber, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

³⁹⁸ Gao Yang, op. cit., pp. 14, 17

particular, in Jiangnan garden architecture, as noted below, and the body of the central ridges as seen here.³⁹⁹ The feature of the fish is emphasised here in the design of the *wenshou* through the refined carvings on the hollowed fishtail, which reflects the southern Chinese architectural tradition.⁴⁰⁰ The converging point of the two central ridges is decorated with a *baoding*, of the same form as the one on the roof of the Fenghuang Mosque. The corner ridges are decorated with a few *zhoushou*, while the *chuishou* is seen on the end of the drooping ridges.



Fig.185. Detail of eaves-tiles, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.



Fig.186. Detail of eaves-tiles, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

Another characteristic decorative element of the roof in traditional Chinese architecture is the eaves-tile. The eaves-tile is of two types, as demonstrated here (Fig. 185). One type of the eaves-tile, where above the eave line often has a round shape, functions as a device for fastening the *tongwa* (筒瓦), i.e., imbrex. Another type of the eaves-tile overhanging along the eave line is called *dishui* (滴水), i.e.,



Fig.187. Detail of an eaves-tile, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.



Fig.188. Detail of eaves-tiles, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

literally dropping water, designed to conduct rainwater from the roof and thereby protecting the eave from weathering. The *dishui* eaves-tile is normally designed in a shape of *ruyi* (如意), a symbolic decorative element meaning ‘as one wishes’. It

originated from the design of the head of the Chinese sceptre, known as *ruyi*.

³⁹⁹ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 183.

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 18.

The decorative motifs in eaves-tile show great diversity, ranging from exotic plants and flowers, and propitious birds and beasts to the precious things of the Immortals and symbols of Buddhism, and to auspicious Chinese characters and geometric patterns. They are all applied symbolically, either against an invasion by evil spirits, or to channel the positive energies of luck and happiness. The decoration of the eaves-tile is among the best examples of the notion of symbolism inherent in Chinese decorative art of all kind. The eaves-tiles of Islamic buildings in the coastal regions indicate that the decorative scheme of the eaves-tile in traditional Chinese architecture had been fully adopted. They display a wide range of motifs, such as propitious characters: *fu* (福), i.e., good fortune, and *shou* (壽), i.e., longevity, and an auspicious bird: *bianfu* (蝙蝠), i.e., bat, symbolising a good fortune, and abstract pattern: *yunwen* (雲紋), i.e., cloud pattern, and geometric pattern: *huiwen* (回紋), i.e., a design resembling a related Chinese character *hui*, symbolising happiness and good fortunes (Figs.185, 186, 187, 188).



Fig.189. View of the roof of the prayer hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

Once a Chinese style of mosque evolved after the transitional phase best represented in the old remains of the Songjiang Mosque, discussed in Chapter 3, the decorative scheme of traditional Chinese architecture became fully integrated into Islamic architecture in coastal China. There would appear to be a conflict between Chinese tradition and Islamic concepts in terms of decorative art. As mentioned earlier, whereas the figurative motifs dominate the decorations of traditional Chinese buildings, they are discouraged at all time in Islamic architecture, and particularly frowned upon in religious buildings because of their potential association



Fig.190. Detail of the roof decoration, Luhe Namen Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.191. Detail of the roof decoration, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

with the idea of icons. As is well-known, the Umayyad caliphs pursued a highly aristocracy way of life, as is shown by surviving wall paintings depicting hunting and banquet scenes in their palaces in the desert of Jordan and Syria. This use of figurative art, however, appears to be restricted to secular buildings. The Mamluk sultans showed similar tastes as the Umayyad rulers, best expressed through the medium of their famous metalwork, and not, in any case, present in their religious buildings.



Fig.192. Detail of the roof-figures on the decorative archway, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

In the case of the Chinese Muslims, who appear to have completed a process of Sinicization by the late Ming period, there was no such proscription of figurative art. Indeed, such art is an essential element in the decorative scheme of Chinese religious architecture, including Confucius, Daoist and Buddhist temples, and other temples built for folk deities. Figurative motifs appear almost in all Islamic buildings, including mosque architecture dated from the late Yuan period and thereafter, in coastal China. There is, however, a compromise in these figurative applications, which may represent the way in which the Maritime Muslims sought to resolve the conflict between Chinese tradition and Islamic concepts. This compromise, if such it is, is the avoidance as far as possible of figurative decorations in the interiors of prayer halls, in particular, with a very few exceptions, in *qibla* walls, especially *mihirabs*, if not in the entire prayer hall.

The roofs of prayer halls structured in Chinese style mostly display the two key decorative elements of Chinese-style roofs: the roof-figures and the ornamental eaves-tiles (Figs.189, 190, 191). The best presentation of the *wenshou*, both in terms of artistry and technique, in Islamic buildings in coastal China is the *longwen* on the roof of the decorative archway in the Jingjue Mosque (Fig.192). Whereas the roofs of Chinese temple architecture are often colourfully decorated

in all Islamic buildings, including mosque



Fig.193. Inscription on the central ridge, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjiang.



Fig.194. Inscription on the central ridge, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

with various motifs, especially in the central ridges, the decorations of the central ridges of the prayer halls of mosques are rather modest. Other than the *wenshou*, an essential element for important religious buildings, as mentioned earlier, the central ridges are normally free from any other figurative elements. Instead, the body of the central ridges is often decorated with geometrical fretworks, normally with a propitious meaning, interrupted by plaques with Arabic inscriptions (Figs.193, 194). This may be seen as part of the compromise made by the Maritime Muslims to solve the issue that arose while transposing Chinese culture and traditions into an Islamic context.

Exterior Walls

The decorations of the exterior of the walls for a single building in traditional Chinese architecture primarily focus on the *shanqiang* (山牆), i.e., the gable wall on the sides, the *yanqiang* (檐牆), i.e., the eaves-wall (or the peripteral wall) on the front and back, the *jianqiang* (檻牆), i.e., the sill-wall below the windows, and the screen wall.⁴⁰¹ They are



Fig.195. Decoration of the gable wall of the reception hall, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

normally decorated with the brick carvings found in almost all type of traditional Chinese buildings. The ceramic glazed tiles are present but are primarily used in the imperial buildings, sometimes, important religious buildings. The decoration of these walls, both the decorative scheme and technique, is a fine display of Chinese decorative art of brick carvings.

Although the exterior walls of mosque architecture in coastal China appear comparatively simple in terms of decorations, and some are left unadorned with the surfaces only being plastered, there are some examples that do display this Chinese decorative tradition. The gable wall of the reception hall in the complex of the tomb of Baha al-Din, for example, is decorated with refined, carved lotus pattern (Fig.195). The lotus motif travelled to the Muslim world as a result of the flourishing maritime trade, along with the greatly-desired Chinese porcelains and textiles. As a result, lotuses can be found on Mamluk buildings, though they are purely decorative in function. As

⁴⁰¹ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 182.

is well-known, however, the lotus is of great importance in Chinese traditional beliefs and symbolism, being a general symbol of purity and appearing in almost every form of Chinese



Fig.196. Decoration of the gable wall of the prayer hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

art. However, the design of the lotus motif shows a great variety, often being combined with different decorative motifs, thus representing an almost limitless range of symbolism.⁴⁰²

Another popular symbolic decorative element, the cloud pattern, decorates the gable wall of the prayer hall of the Xianhe Mosque (Fig.196). It is framed

by inlays of stone slabs forming the *ren* pattern, after the shape of the Chinese character *ren* (人). This pattern also



Fig.197. Gable wall of the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

composed of brick inlays or alternating different shades of stone slabs, is sometimes the only ornament seen on the gable walls in most of the Islamic buildings in coastal China (Fig.197). This type of structure of gable wall is designed with a functional purpose, to prevent fires spreading from one building to another, which is especially a southern architectural tradition.⁴⁰³

Whereas the eaves-wall of traditional Chinese architecture, especially temple architecture, is often richly decorated with brick carvings, the eaves-wall of the Islamic buildings in coastal China is largely left plain, with occasional elements of Islamic inscriptions or geometric patterns (Fig.198).

This appears to be the same with the decoration of screen walls. As noted in Chapter 5, the structure of the screen wall has been adopted by the Maritime Muslims for use in Islamic buildings since the Qing period, the surface of these screen walls, in particular early ones, often being unadorned. Modern restorations or additions show some modest surface decorations of brick carvings, following the decorative tradition of the screen walls. The restored screen wall in the Jingjue Mosque, for example, is decorated with a peony motif in

Fig.198. Inscription on an eaves wall, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.



⁴⁰² Eberhard, and Campbell, op., cit., pp. 168-170.

⁴⁰³ Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 210.

carved brick in the *hezi* (盒子), i.e., the central area of the wall surface (Fig.199). The peony is regarded as the queen of flowers in Chinese folklore, being the symbol of wealth and



Fig.200. Screen wall, Caoqiao Mosque, Nanjing.

distinction. The peony motif, therefore, is another propitious form of ornamentation favoured in Chinese decorative art. The screen wall of a modern addition in the Caoqiao Mosque in Nanjing displays a common design of surface decoration of the screen wall, having the



Fig.199. Screen wall, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

centre and the *chaojiao* (岔角), i.e., four corners of the screen, decorated with brick carvings (Fig.200). The screen surface displays the rhombus pattern, another propitious geometric pattern derived

from one of the eight precious things, also known as the eight signs of the scholars, in Chinese folklore. This pattern is frequently used for decorating the wall surfaces, screen panels and floors.

The rhombus pattern, for example, is seen in the walls of the entrance gate and the sill-walls of Islamic buildings (Figs.201, 202). The sill-wall, as *jianqiang* in Chinese architectural terminology, and is applied to the wall below the windows in the front elevation of a building, since the windows normally only occur in the front side in traditional Chinese



Fig.201. Sill-wall of the reception hall, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

buildings. The design of the decoration of the sill-wall, therefore, is intended to suit front elevation. As already discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, this traditional wood -framed structure was adopted by the Maritime Muslims for the building of mosques, but with



Fig.202. South entrance, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

modifications to suit the purpose of the buildings. One of the modifications is to have additional openings in the form of screen doors or windows along the side and back walls of the prayer halls for purposes of ventilation. The walls below these additional

windows, however, appear not to be decorated. The use of a rhombus pattern as a desirable ornament for the sill-walls is frequent in Islamic buildings, often appearing to echo the geometric design of the window screens above, thus making the front elevation rather stylish, sometimes elegant, in appearance.



Fig.203. Decoration on the entrance gateway, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.204. Decoration on the entrance gateway, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

The fine brick carvings in Islamic buildings in the coastal regions are mainly seen in the surface decoration of the entrance gateways often alongside the inscriptions, either Arabic or Chinese or both (Figs.203, 204). The decorative archway in Jingjue Mosque is the finest presentation of the art of Chinese brick carving, in terms of its design and techniques (Figs.205, 206, 207). The elaborate design displays special attentions to details and yet has a refinement achieved through the fine craftsmanship in brick carving, representing the southern tradition.⁴⁰⁴ The brickworks here involve the low relief and deep carving techniques, creating multiple planes with a three-dimension effect on the flat wall surface. Most remarkably, the surface ornamentation displays a wide range of traditional designs in Chinese decorative art. The panel is filled with scrolls of foliations, floral designs and the cloud, termed *juancaowen* (卷草纹), *caohuawen* (草花纹) and *juanyunwen* (卷云纹) respectively. A stone plaque bearing the characters *chijian* (敕建), i.e., built by imperial decree, mentioned in Chapter 4, is inlaid in the panel and framed. The frame is in the form of a high relief that is composed of a *shoumian* (兽面), i.e., beast's face, in the cloud at the top, a pair of *qilin* (麒麟), i.e., Chinese unicorn, flanking the sides and a *lianhuazuo* (莲花座), i.e., lotus petal seat, at the bottom. The frame of the stone plaque



Fig.205. Detail of the decorative archway, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

⁴⁰⁴ On the styles of the brick carving in general, see Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 182.

bearing the name of the mosque features the design of a cloud scroll. A pair of rising or flying dragons amidst scrolls of the cloud flanks the arched opening in the central panel. Geometric designs of the rhombus and the swastika pattern, as well as the design of the *tuanhuawen* (團花紋), i.e., round decorative pattern, are also employed.

The decorative motifs chosen here cover the well-known themes in a field of symbolism in Chinese traditional beliefs. They range from the protective beast's face and divine creatures to auspicious flowers, plants and fruits, also including geometric patterns and the Buddhist emblems. The beast's face is often seen on the front facades of temple buildings as well as



Fig.206. Detail of the decorative archway, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.207. Detail of the decorative archway, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

private residences, especially at main entrances of buildings, since it is believed to provide against evil spirits. The dragons and Chinese unicorns are two of four creatures of divinity in Chinese culture, known as *siling* (四靈), i.e., four divinities, which are the Chinese unicorn, phoenix, turtle and dragon. They are believed to have divine powers, and thus are favourite motifs in Chinese decorative art, symbolising prosperity, longevity and happiness in general. The dragon also represents imperial power and is regarded as the totem of the Chinese, which, naturally, gives it unique importance in the hearts and minds of Chinese people. The element of the lotus appears almost in every section of the panel, evidence of its importance in Chinese folklore and symbolism, as mentioned earlier.

Its importance stems from Chinese tradition as well as its association with the emblems of both

Daoism and Buddhism. The plum blossom, orchid and chrysanthemum are other propitious flowers shown here, which are incorporated into the round pattern. Together with the lotus, they represent the four seasons, which is a well-known theme in Chinese paintings. The lychee fruit or Logan fruit, deemed auspicious in Chinese culture, is also represented in the panel. The decorative motifs of the endless knot and the vase associated with the emblems of

Buddhism are also seen among the rich symbolic ornaments in the panel. The designs of the geometric patterns, the endless swastika and the endless *hui* character, also used here, have further symbolic meanings, as noted earlier.

The decorative scheme of the perimeter wall of a building complex and the enclosures of the gardens within a building complex, commonly found in traditional Chinese architecture also appears to have been adapted for use in Islamic buildings in the coastal regions. The traditional decorations of the wall enclosure are primarily shown through the structural elements, with the *louchuang* (漏窗), i.e., pierced window, and *dongmen* (洞門), i.e., open door, being the key decorative elements (Figs.208, 209, 210). The *dongmen* cutting through the wall enclosure serves as a device to connect the spaces divided by the walls, notably being seen in the garden enclosures in Jiangnan garden architecture, as mentioned in Chapter 5. In particular, the *dongmen* that provides a connection between the various elements of the gardens is designed in distinct forms that relate to the specific settings and layout of each of the gardens,



Fig.208. Garden enclosure, showing a *dongmen* and flanking *louchuang*, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.



Fig.209. Garden enclosure, showing a *dongmen*, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.



Fig.210. A *dongmen*, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

thus creating an effect as if the garden scenes become picturesque landscape paintings, framed by the open doors. The most striking example of this is the remarkable *dongmen* in the well-known Jiangnan gardens in Suzhou.

The architectural function of the pierced window is to admit light and air, the various designs used, in terms of their shape and in the geometric patterns of the screens, serve as ornamental elements. On occasion, the upper part of the wall enclosure is also composed of pierced screens, sharing the functional and artistic approach of the pierced window. This design of a enclosing wall with a pierced



Fig.211. Garden enclosure, showing the *yunqiang* design, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

enclosure of the garden in the Songjian Mosque provides a good example of this design (Fig.211). The design of the *yunqiang* here closely resembles the *yunqiang* in the Yuyuan (豫園), the famous Jiangnan garden in Shanghai, built during the Ming period. Both have the same pattern of geometric design in the pierced screens and similar curving top lines. The *yunqiang* in the Yuyuan, however, terminates at each end with a dragon's head, these then curving to meet each other, thus suggesting that the *yunqiang* is intended to represent the dragon motif (Fig.212). The *yunqiang* in the Songjiang Mosque may have a similar purpose, but this is certainly not as overt, since there is no dragon's head, although the undulations of what may be described as the dragon's body are more expressive.

This modification may have been made because of the purpose of the building. Although, unlike elsewhere in the Muslim world, the figurative art in Islamic buildings in coastal China appears not to have been excluded or discouraged at any time, the presentation of the dragon in such a bold way as seen in the Yuyuan garden may still have been regarded as inappropriate in the wall enclosure of a mosque complex.



Fig.212. *Yunqiang* in the Yuyuan Garden, Shanghai.

screen on its upper part, known as *huaqiang* (花牆), i.e., literally fancy wall, is a common practice, especially in Jiangnan garden architecture. The designs of the pierced screen are achieved through the use of roof tiles, as is the case with the decorations of the body of the central ridges of the roof, noted earlier. Sometimes, the top of the wall enclosure is designed in a form of curving waves, known as *yunqiang* (雲牆).⁴⁰⁵ The

⁴⁰⁵ On the elements of the wall enclosure in general, see Gao Yang, op. cit., p. 182.

Platforms, Balustrades and Drum Stones

As already noted in Chapter 4 and 5, traditional Chinese architecture is built on a platform, usually of stone that serves as a foundation for the wood-framed buildings. The use of the different designs and also the height of the platform were strictly regulated, again reflecting the concept of hierarchy.⁴⁰⁶ The most



Fig.213. View of the platform and the balustrade, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

elaborated design of the platform is the *xumizuo* (須彌座), i.e., literally Meru base, derived from the design of the base or seat of Buddha in Buddhist art. This type of platform is



Fig.214. Detail of the platform, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

normally seen in imperial buildings and the main hall of the famous, and major, temples.⁴⁰⁷ This variant of the design is not seen in the platforms in Islamic buildings in the coastal regions. These, in contrast, are of a simple design and generally, although not always, of a modest height. The platform in the prayer hall of the Luhe

Changjianglu Mosque, for example, despite its considerable height, is very simple in design, composed

of dressed stones without additional decorations (Fig.213). The platform of the prayer hall of the Luhe Nanmen Mosque shares the height and the simple form with that in the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque. It is, however, decorated with propitious motifs in relief on the stone



Fig.215. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

panels (Fig.214).

Other than these two cases, the platforms of Islamic buildings elsewhere in the coastal regions of China are much lower in height, with no decorations.

There are, however, balustrades often built on the platforms, some of which are elaborately decorated.

Balustrades had been used in traditional Chinese

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 167.

architecture as early as the Han period. They are seen at the side of staircases, pavilions and balconies on the platforms in traditional Chinese buildings. There are various structural forms



Fig.216. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.217. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

of balustrades, but the panel in between the pillars, whether built of stones, bricks or woods, are generally the focus of the decorations. Although the stone platforms in the Islamic buildings appear to be little decorated, the art of Chinese stone carvings is well represented in some of the stone balustrades found in them. For example, the white marble balustrade at the side of the staircases and on the platform surrounding the prayer hall of the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque adopts one of the much older, but common, type of balustrade forms (Fig.213). This form, known as *xunzhang langan* (尋杖欄杆), i.e., literally hand-rail balustrade, features an additional handrail supported by short pillars above the panels. This short pillar, termed *shuzhu* (蜀柱), can be in different shapes, but its head normally retains the same form, known as *yungong* (雲拱). As the name suggests, it is designed

as a ‘*gong*’,

namely a supporting structure like the *dougong* or *queti*. At the same time, it has decorative function, through its form and also because of the surface decorations, here representing the ‘*yun*’, i.e., the cloud, motif. As is shown here, the short pillar is of a common type, resembling the shape of the vase and topped by the *yungong* (Figs.215, 216, 217, 218).

The panels below the handrails are decorated with propitious motifs in the form of low reliefs. The

decorative motifs here are almost free from the figurative images, with a single exception being two little birds in the scene of plum blossom that appears on a few panels (Fig.215).

Motifs of plants and flowers here dominate the decorative scheme, in particular plum blossom, chrysanthemums, bamboos and orchids are repeatedly depicted on both sides of the



Fig.218. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

panels. As noted earlier, each is an auspicious motif in its own right with its own symbolic meanings. Together, however, they represent the four seasons of the year, the orchid for spring, the bamboo for summer, the chrysanthemum for autumn and plum blossom for winter. They are also known as the Four Gentlemen (*sijunzi*, 四君子), a well-known theme in traditional Chinese ink paintings. The design of the low reliefs here is perhaps intended to subtly convey the elegant beauty of the Four Gentlemen through the medium of stone. Although they are not comparable with the gentle mood and refined beauty created in ink paintings, in the absence of the geometric patterns and stylised scrolls that are often seen in



Fig.219. Drum stones on the balustrade, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

stone and brick carvings, the naturalistic approach presented here serves as a reasonable attempt to imitate the presentation of the same theme in ink paintings. The relief depicting the plum blossom (Fig.215), for example, resembles the genre of flower and bird painting in Chinese art.

Unlike the head of the short pillar on such balustrades, the head of the long pillar often displays various designs, both in its form as well as its decorations. As is seen here, the head of the long pillar is designed in a simple cylinder form but is finely carved with a cloud pattern (Fig.218). The balustrade at the side of staircases, called *chuidai langan* (垂带栏杆), i.e., literally drooping balustrade, in Chinese architectural terminology, includes an additional element, the *baogushi* (抱鼓石), i.e., the drum stone, at the end of the balustrade. The *baogushi*, also known as the *mendun* (门墩), i.e., the door pier, is a functional structure designed to support the door frames in traditional Chinese architecture. Since it is often elaborately carved, as noted below, it also serves as a decorative element. Besides its function as a support for door frames, the *baogushi* is also employed in balustrade at the side of bridges and staircases, as is seen here (Fig.219). The cloud motif is employed both in the design of the structural form as well as in the surface decorations in this example, echoing the designs of the short and long pillars of the balustrade, while complementing the



Fig.220. Balustrade, Huai Sheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

simple artistic approach revealed in the overall design of the balustrade.

In comparison, the decorative scheme shown in the stone panels of the Balustrade in the Huaisheng Mosque is much more complicated while the balustrade itself extends to run around the whole of the court front of the hall (Fig.220).

Structurally, it represents a simpler type



Fig.222. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.223. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.221. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

of stone balustrade, known as the *lanban langan* (欄閘欄杆), i.e., literally panel balustrade. It is composed of the pillar and the panel without the additional top hand-rail as seen in the type of the *xunzhang langan*. The shape of the head of the balustrade represents the pomegranate, one of the three fortunate fruits in Chinese folklore, which symbolises fertility and abundance.⁴⁰⁸ Although a simpler form of balustrade, its stone panels have a complex combination of decorations in terms of the subject matters and the artistic styles. Although presented within a uniform frame designed in the auspicious form of *ruyi*, mentioned earlier, different subject matters are present, in different styles.

There are bold figurative presentations of propitious animals, both real and mythical, such as dragon, turtle, Chinese unicorn, oriole, rosette (Fig.221). A wide range of auspicious plants and flowers, such as bamboo, pine, plum blossom, peony, are also present, both in the naturalistic style and the stylised forms. The lotus, for example, is presented in the stylised *tuanhuawen* design (Fig.222), mentioned earlier, but also appears in a naturalistic presentation of the lotus, as shown in one panel (Fig.223), where it is associated with a pair of mandarin ducks, a well-known composition symbolising marital happiness.

The use of such propitious compositions has been a long established tradition in Chinese decorative art. Known as the traditional *jixiangtuan* (吉祥圖案), they are designs bringing

⁴⁰⁸ Eberhard, and Campbell, op., cit., p. 240.

together various elements that, together, express the wish to be blessed with good fortune, happiness and longevity. They play an important role not only in Chinese art but also in the life of Chinese people. The metaphor of these *jixiangtuan* is derived from rather diverse



Fig.224. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

sources. It can, for example, be derived from the nature of the elements depicted, as is the case of the well-known composition: the *suihan sanyou* (歲寒三友), i.e., the Three Friends of Winter, symbolising perseverance and

resilience. This depicts the pine, plum blossom and bamboo, as presented here (Fig.224). The metaphor is apparently derived from the sharing nature of these plants of being able to withstand the cold in the harsh winter season. Many of the *jixiangtuan* appear to originate



Fig.225. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

from ancient Chinese mythologies. For example, the composition, *liyu tiaolongmen* (鯉魚跳龍門), i.e., the Carp Leaping over Dragon's Gate, depicted in the panel here (Fig.225), is derived from the ancient myth of the magical transformation of a carp in the Yellow River into a

powerful dragon through its endeavour to jump over the legendary dragon's gate located in the great gorge at the mouth of the river. The legend says that the carps have to swim upstream against the strong current to reach and jump over the gate, and the one that succeed becomes a dragon. Only a very few, however, can do this, and the difficulties they faces, according to the legend, have meant that it has become a metaphor for courage, perseverance and accomplishment.

Another significant group of images appears on the panels here is the depiction of the emblems or signs of the Eight Precious Things, known as the *babao* (八寶), of Chinese traditional beliefs. These refer both to the eight emblems of the Daoist Immortals and

Buddhism, and also to the eight symbols of the scholar.⁴⁰⁹ The decoration on this balustrade in the Huaisheng Mosque cover almost the full range of these emblems, including symbols of the Immortals, such as the fan and the bottle gourd (Figs.226, 227), emblems related to Buddhism, such as the lotus and the umbrella (Figs.222, 228), and the symbols of the scholar, such as the Artemisia leaf and the paintings (Figs.229, 230). These emblems, deeply rooted in traditional Chinese belief and symbolism, came to be very popular ornaments in Chinese decorative art.

However, regardless of whether they are of a religious or non-religious nature, they are generally used for propitious



Fig.228. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.229. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.230. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.226. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.227. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou.

purposes, rather than to display a religious element. Daoist and

Buddhist emblems, for instance, are widely used in Chinese decorative art as decorative elements as is the case with the use of the traditional signs of the scholar, without any religious implication. In the decorations of the balustrade in the Huaisheng Mosque, they are presented side by side with many other auspicious signs and designs. It is clear that these applications are purely decorative ornaments adopted by the Maritime Muslims because of their place in Chinese traditions, as decorations and of a propitious nature.

The design of the stone balustrade on the side of staircases leading up to the graveyard in the complex of the tomb of Baha al-Din in Yangzhou is of the *lanban langan* type, the same structural form as that in the Huaisheng Mosque. It has drum stones at its end, commonly found as part of the ‘drooping balustrades’ along the sides of staircases, as mentioned earlier. The drum stones are in the form of the

‘propitious cloud’, as is the case with those in the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque. The heads of

⁴⁰⁹ On the lists of the Eight Precious Things, see Eberhard, and Campbell, op., cit., pp. 91, 241-242.

the pillars are alternately decorated with sculptures of lions and a square block with reliefs in the *ruyi* patterns (Fig.231). Whereas there is a wide range of subject matters in the balustrade in the Huaisheng Mosque, the decorations of the stone panels here appears to emphasise one theme, the traditional *jixiangtuan* whose figurative compositions have been selected. They are well-known propitious designs, derived from mythologies and proverbs, such as the composition of three sheep in the sunshine, known as the *sanyangkaitai* (三陽開泰), which expresses the blessing of the beginning of spring, and, hence renewal of life (Fig.232). The image of the



Fig.231. Balustrade, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

youth on a Chinese unicorn with lotus and *ruyi*, known as the *qilinsongzi* (麒麟送子), is



Fig.232. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

another example of the auspicious figurative compositions (Fig.233). The name of this design can be translated as ‘*qilin* brings sons’, expressing the desire of being blessed with sons. This design is also associated with the legend of the birth of Confucius, which states that, on the night before Confucius was born, a *qilin* appeared and spat out a *yushu* (玉書), i.e., jade book, bearing letters foreshadowing the birth of a sage. This design, therefore, can also be interpreted as ‘the *qilin* brings noble sons’, thereby symbolising the dawning an age of enlightenment. The image depicting a horse by a pavilion is a presentation of the propitious design derived from the proverb: *mashangpingan* (馬上平安), i.e., literally safe and sound on horseback (Fig.234). It expresses the wish for a safe journey.



Fig.233. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

While the images on the panels in the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque display a more naturalistic approach in their design, those on the

panels in the Huaisheng Mosque show both naturalistic and stylistic approaches to different subject matters presented, as noted above. In comparison, the images presented on the panels

in the tomb of Baha al-Din are more stylised in their designs and also show much more attentions to details. The *jixiangtuan* ‘Carp Leaping over Dragon’s Gate’, for example, is also presented here (Fig.235), but differs



Fig.234. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

from the presentation of the same theme in the Huaisheng Mosque

(Fig.225). The image is composed within a roundel against a background of geometric patterns and stylised foliations. The *hui* geometric pattern serves as the frame of the whole composition, while the main theme is framed by double circles. Despite the naturalistic depictions of the figurative elements, this design, applied to each panel, here creates an overall stylised effect.



Fig.235. Detail of the decoration on the balustrade, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

Another feature displayed in the depictions of the *jixiangtuan* here is that they are not always presented in a conventional composition. The key elements always appear in the compositions, however, thus making the theme represented recognisable. As is

seen in the presentation of the three sheep in the sunshine (Fig.232), the elements of three sheep, pine and sun make the theme recognisable, despite its unconventional composition. Some of the designs in the balustrade in the tomb of Baha al-Din are rather creative, such as the design of the *mashangpingan* (Fig.234). The design of this theme normally shows a man riding a horse during his journey, but here the desire for a safe journey is suggested through the depiction of a scene of a stopping place, with a saddled horse appearing to be hitched to the column of a pavilion, with a tree in the background. Although sometimes these unconventional compositions may be partly dictated by the roundel serving as the frame of the images, an aesthetic consideration in the designs of the *jixiangtuan* here is apparent. For instance, in the panel depicting the Carp leaping over Dragon’s gate, an additional animal

figure appears at the bottom left, filling what would otherwise have been an empty space, thereby balancing the composition within the roundel and making it aesthetically more appealing. Technically, these panels display much more refined craftsmanship in stone carvings than those in the Huaisheng Mosque, both of which are works of Qing date.

Another piece of work displaying the art of Chinese stone carvings is the drum stone seen in the exteriors of traditional Chinese architecture. As mentioned earlier, the drum stone is part of the structure of the framework of the door, also known as the door pier. The common form of the door pier appears to have straight back attached to the side of door frames at the bottom and a curving front projecting out that looks like a drum, hence the name ‘drum stone’, which is the base on which the drum itself rests. The base is normally designed in the form of the *xumizuo*, as mentioned earlier. Although this design is not used in the design of the base of the platform in Islamic buildings, it is employed in the design of the base of the



Fig.236. Drum stone, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.

drum stone (Fig.236). The *xumizuo* features a composition of divided strips or zones with its middle zone narrowed, termed the *shuyao* (束腰), i.e., literally the girded waist. Normally each zone has various decorative patterns, this being the most artistic of base designs. The upper structure is of different forms, not only reflecting different aesthetic views but also as



Fig.237. Drum stones, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

symbols of its place in the traditions of hierarchical architecture. Traditionally, the round drum stone was reserved for the use of the scholar-official class, whereas ordinary wealthy families were only allowed to use a drum stone of square design, known as ‘square drum’.⁴¹⁰ The decorative motif of a lion’s head is often seen topping the drum. Sometimes, the door pier at the main entrance of the building is designed in the form of a lion, rather than a drum, sitting on the base, as is seen in the door pier of the entrance to the tomb of Baha al-Din (Fig.237). The lion is regarded as the king of beasts in China, as is the

⁴¹⁰ Gao Yang, op. cit., pp. 102, 107.

case in the West. A symbol of authority and power, it is also regarded as an auspicious creature that has divine powers to protect people in traditional Chinese beliefs. Pairs of stone lions were often put in front of the main entrances of palaces, temples and residences of the scholar officials and wealthy families, being regarded as guardians of the buildings. Large free-standing pairs of lions sitting on much elaborated *xumizuo* base are commonly seen in front of the imperial palaces and grand temples in China.



Fig.238. Drum stone, showing lotus *baoxianghua* design, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

The elaborate design of the surface decoration of the drums complements the functional structure of the door pier. The designs of the decorative elements vary from stylized patterns of scrolls, clouds and floral motifs to naturalistic depictions of flowers and animals. The simple cloud pattern and the elaborately designed flower patterns appear to be commonly used in the decoration of the drum stones in Islamic buildings in coastal China, with figurative designs being less frequent. Whereas the drum stones in the Jiaxing Mosque and in the tomb of Baha al-Din provide good examples of the cloud design (Figs.231, 236), the pairs of drum stones in the Xianhe Mosque display elaborate designs of foliation patterns

(Figs.238, 239). The decorative designs of the bases of this pairs are identical, primarily composed of the cloud and *ruyi* patterns. The borders of the bases and the rims of the drums are decorated with scrolls. The decorations of the central zones of the drums are designed in the *baoxianghua* (寶相花) pattern, formed by stylised foliation with a lotus on one drum and peony on the other. The *baoxianghua* pattern is often seen in the designs of Chinese porcelains and textiles, and is based upon natural flowers, generally lotus and peony, but stylised through a re-working of the heads of the petals, often entangled with stylised foliated designs. The same can also be seen in the brick carvings on the pillars of the decorative archway in the Jingjue Mosque (Fig.205, 207). These pairs of drum stones are one of the few remaining parts of the Xianhe Mosque that can be dated to the Song-Yuan period and are good examples



Fig.239. Drum stone, showing peony *baoxianghua* design, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

of the fine craftsmanship in the art of Chinese stone carving. Another example of the design of the *baoxianghua* pattern is also found to be finely executed in the drum stones in the Songjiang Mosque (Fig.240).



Fig.240. Drum stone, showing lotus *baoxianghua* design, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

While the figurative element is not excluded in the decorative scheme of Islamic architecture in China in general, it is apparent that, in general, Chinese Muslims preferred various non-figurative designs, with floral designs and foliated scrolls being widely applied. This may be due, in part, to the fact that this design appears to share some characteristics with Islamic design of scrolls inherited from the classical repertoires, mentioned earlier. Moreover, the lotus motif, one of the favourite ornaments in Chinese decorative art, appears to have had a special appeal for the Muslims. As already discussed in Chapter 5, Islam has been interpreted since the late Ming period by Chinese Muslim scholars as being the pure and real teaching, with mosques, therefore, being temples of purity and truth. The lotus motif is a symbol of purity in Chinese folklore, and it is, therefore, not surprising that it is widely used in the decorations of Islamic buildings.

The lotus motif appears in different forms in the surface decorations of Islamic buildings in coastal China, some already mentioned above, such as in designs of the flora scroll, the stylised *tuanhua* and *baoxianghua* patterns, and the compositions of a propitious nature. Drum stones provide good examples of the extensive use of the lotus motif in various designs. In addition to stylised lotus patterns, for example, a composition of a propitious nature is also found

in drum stones, as is seen in the drum stone in the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque (Fig.241). The carvings on the drum display the well-known propitious design, the *bingditongxin* (並蒂同心), which depicts two lotus blooms on one stem, expressing the wish for ‘heart and harmony

period by Chinese Muslim scholars as being the pure and real teaching, with mosques, therefore, being temples of purity and truth. The lotus motif is a

symbol of purity in Chinese folklore, and it is, therefore, not surprising that it is widely used in the decorations of Islamic buildings.



Fig.241. Drum stone, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

shared'.⁴¹¹

The art of stone carvings can be also seen in the design of the stone base of load-bearing columns in traditional Chinese architecture, with designs varying in both structural form and decorations. The base of the columns of Islamic buildings in coastal China, however, is mostly simple in design, with little decoration.



Fig.242. Balustrade at the balcony of the teaching hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

Besides stone balustrades, wood balustrades are also seen in Islamic buildings in coastal China. In fact, the balustrade on the side of balconies is more often built of wood than stone, as is seen, for example, in the balconies on the platforms in front of the prayer hall and other functional halls in the Songjiang Mosque (Figs.46, 48, 68). It is normally designed with geometric fretwork, often echoing

the screen doors, windows and the *efang* (额枋), i.e., the horizontal

board between the columns supporting the eave, also known as the eave board, thus creating a harmonious appearance on the front elevations of the buildings. This type of wood balustrade is called the *huashilangan* (花式栏杆), i.e., literally fancy balustrade. It is frequently seen on the front elevations of Islamic buildings in coastal China, providing a good example of how the front elevation of the traditional Chinese building is articulated through the use of coherent decorative designs. The geometric design in the swastika pattern in the balcony of both teaching halls of the Songjiang Mosque, for example, matches well the geometric fretworks in the screen door and the decorative screen below the eave (Fig.242). The design of the *shiziruyi* (十字如意), i.e., the cross *ruiyi* pattern, in the

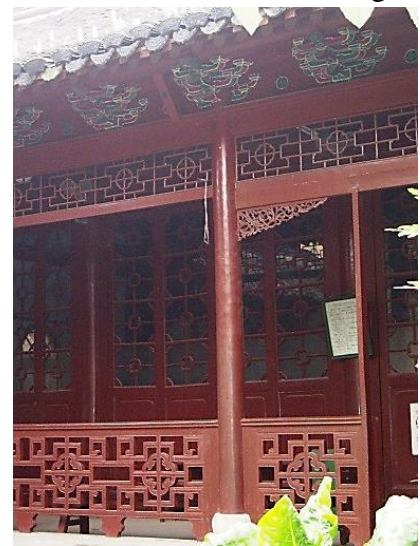


Fig.243. Balustrade at the balcony of the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.



Fig.244. Screen doors and windows of the reception hall, Xianhe mosque, Yangzhou.

⁴¹¹ Eberhard, and Campbell, op., cit., p. 169.

balcony of the prayer hall of the Shanxiang Mosque has the same design as the screen door and the decorative screen below the eave board (Fig.243).

Screen Doors and Windows

As mentioned earlier, besides the roofs, the screen doors and windows are another focus of



Fig.245. Screen doors of the prayer hall, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

decoration in traditional Chinese architecture, therefore being one of the main characteristics of the front elevation of Chinese buildings. The screen door, termed *geshanmen* (隔扇門), i.e., literally the partition door, often runs through the front side of traditional wood-framed building, especially the main or important ones, but is also sometimes given flanking screen windows,

termed *geshanchuang* (隔扇窗), i.e., literally the

partition window (Fig.244). In the case of the Islamic buildings, there may also be additional openings alongside both the curtain walls and the *qibla* wall, as well as in the walls of the *mihrab* chamber of the Jiangnan mosque type, as already noted in Chapter 4 and 5. These openings have screen doors and windows, similar to those on the front of the buildings both in terms of their structural and decorative designs.



Fig.246. Screen doors of the prayer hall, Haopan Mosque, Guangzhou.

The structure of the screen door has two main parts: the screen panel above and the board panel below, with smaller panels of board to be found both at the top and bottom and between the screen and the large board. The screen panel, or *gexin* (格心), i.e., the central screen, is normally made with geometric fretworks, admitting air and light as well as being decorative. The board panel, *qunban* (裙闌), i.e., literally the skirt panel, is often decorated with reliefs in various designs, as is the narrower board panel, *taohuanban* (縵環闌), i.e., literally the ribbon



Fig.247. Screen doors and windows of the female prayer room, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

panel. There are two types of the screen panels, distinguished by the nature of the fretwork. The *pingling* (平櫺), i.e., literally the flat lattice, has thin wood strips, while the *linghua* (菱花), i.e., literally the water chestnut bloom, has pierced openwork. Designs of the *linghua* type are more elaborated, and involving far more complicated wood carving techniques. This type is generally found in the higher class buildings, such as important buildings in palaces and temples. The *pingling* is a more common type of screens, and can be found with two different designs, the *zhiling* (直櫺), i.e., literally straight lattice, and the *guaiziwen* (拐子紋), i.e., literally crook pattern. The simplest screen design is that of the *zhiling* patterns, in which the wood strips are in straight lines without any bend. The *guaiziwen* patterns have the wood strips bent or curved in various ways.⁴¹²



Fig.248. Screen doors of the reception hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

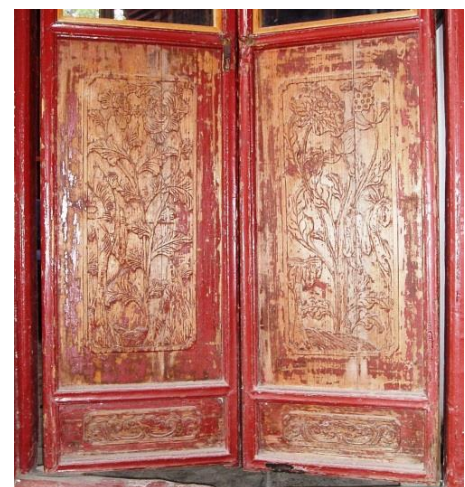
The screen doors in Islamic buildings in coastal China appear to be mostly of the *pingling* type, with the simplest *zhiling* design being commonly used (Figs.245, 246). The design of the *guaiziwen* with different patterns is also seen. In most cases, patterns believed to be of a propitious nature are chosen, such as the *hui* pattern, the swastika pattern, the cross *ruyi*



Fig.249. Screen doors of the reception hall, Complex of the tomb of Baha al-Din. Yangzhou.

pattern (Fig.243), and the rhombus pattern (Fig.247). These patterns appear frequently in decorations in other structures, as already noted above. There are some geometric patterns, however, that appear to be especially favoured, especially in the *guaiziwen* screens in Islamic buildings, such as the *yazi* (亞字) pattern, i.e., the shape of the

Fig.250. Detail of the decoration on the screen doors of the minaret, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.



⁴¹² On the elements of the design of the screen doors in general, see Gao Yang, op. cit., pp. 112-135.

Chinese character *ya* (Figs.242, 248), symbolising nobility and honour, and the *guipei* (龜背) pattern, i.e., the stylised tortoise shell pattern (Fig.249), symbolising immortality and steadfastness in traditional Chinese beliefs.

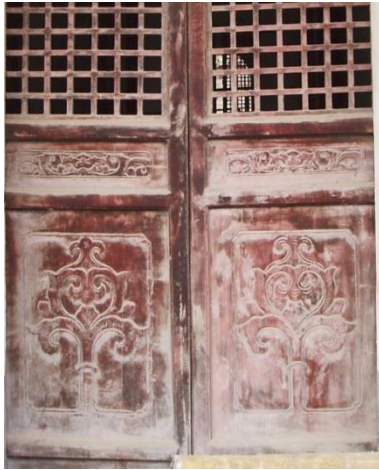


Fig.251. Detail of the decoration on the screen doors of the prayer hall, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

They are normally designed in reliefs except for the top *taohuanban*, which is often seen pierced, allowing light to enter. In such cases, however, the same decorative design as on the other *taohuanban* may also be present. The *baoxianghu* design, for example, is seen on the top *taohuanban* of the screen doors of the prayer hall of the Luhe Nanmen Mosque and also on another separating the *gexin* and the *qunban* (Figs.245, 251). The design of the *taohuanban* and *qunban* of the screen door of the prayer hall of the



Fig.253. Screen windows of the *mihrab* chamber, Luhe Nanmen Mosque, Nanjing.

Haopan Mosque in Guangzhou appears to be a rather uncommon type. The design of the *guaiziwen* is formed through the use of thin wood strips (Fig.246). This type of the *guaiziwen* also has an abstract dragon pattern, and is, therefore, also known as the *guaizilongwen*, i.e., geometric dragon pattern, which appears frequently in the decorations of screen panels. Thus both the technique and the decorative pattern are commonly used in the design of the screen panels, and not often

Screen panels of the screen door in Islamic buildings in coastal China are often elaborately decorated. Although both the *qunban* and the *taohuanban* of the screen doors in such buildings are mostly unadorned, some display fine wood carvings. Auspicious floral motifs like lotus and peony, and precious objects like vase and *ruyi* appear to be the main themes in the design of such panels (Figs.250, 251, 252).



Fig.252. Detail of the decoration on the screen doors of the prayer hall, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.



Fig.254. Screen windows of the passage of the prayer hall, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

applied in the design of the *qunban* and the *taohuanban*.



Fig.255. Screen windows of the *mihrab* chamber, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

The design of the screen window is essentially the same as the screen door (Fig.253). Some variations with modifications of the basic structure, however, are seen. Sometimes, for example, it appears in a form of a single screen without other structural parts but, in the flanking windows, the design of the fretwork is of the same pattern as the screen panel of the screen door (Fig.244). A tendency to elongate or extend the screen panel in the design of the screen windows is also sometimes through omitting the structure of the *taohuanban* between the *qunban* and the screen (Fig.254), or through changing the structure of the *qunban* into separate screen panels



Fig 256. Decorative design of the window screen of the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

(Fig.255). This is often the case in the design of the screen windows in the *mihrab* chamber of mosques in the Jiangnan regions. These modifications may have been made primarily for the practical consideration of admitting sufficient air and light. The decorative design of the screen windows is also similar to the screen doors in Islamic buildings. The geometric fretwork on the screens generally is of the simple *zhiling* design.

Some propitious patterns continued to be used in the decorative design of window screens when the traditional form of the screen window had been replaced by the newly- fashionable design of French windows following the arrival of the colonial powers in the coastal regions of China, noted in Chapter 5. The large French windows in the prayer hall of the Shanxiang Mosque, for example, feature the cross *ruyi* pattern (Fig.256), as does the decorative design of the traditional screen door at the front side of the mosque (Fig.243).

Efang, Dougong and Queti

In addition to the designs of the screen doors and balustrades, the decoration of the *efang*, i.e., the eave board or panel, mentioned earlier, is a characteristic of the elevation of traditional Chinese buildings. There may be more than one eave boards supporting the large overhanging eave, in particular in larger buildings. Sometimes additional panels are inserted



Fig.257. Detail of the decoration of the *efang*, *dougong* and *queti* of the Taihedian in the Forbidden City, Beijing.

between the eave boards, these generally being decorated with carvings. The decorative designs of the *efang*, the *dougong* and the *queti* are often well-articulated (Fig.257).

The *efang* in the grand palaces and temples are normally richly decorated with carvings and colourful paintings, as is seen,

in particular, in the Qing imperial buildings. This appears, however, not to be the case in the Islamic buildings in coastal China, perhaps because these are generally of a relatively modest



Fig.258. Detail of the decoration of the *efang*, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

size. The *efang* in Islamic buildings is generally plain and is often simply painted in red, a colour that, in China, is both propitious and desirable.

Red is one of the five basic or pure colours in the traditional colour scheme of Chinese art, the *wufangzhenshe* (五方正色), i.e., literally the five directional pure colours, green, red, yellow, white and black, representing the East, South,

Central, West and North respectively. Apart from the eave board, the columns and beams of

all types in Islamic buildings in coastal China appear to be mostly painted in red, especially where there is no additional ornamentation.

A few examples have been identified where there is modest decoration not of the eave board itself, but on the carved panels inserted between the eave boards, as is seen in the prayer hall of the Jingjue Mosque (Fig.258). The panels are designed with a lotus pattern, echoing the carved top panel of the screen door, and are painted in bright



Fig.259. Detail of the decorative screen of the *efang* of the western entrance passage, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

yellow, another pure colour, thus creating contrasting strongly with the red eave boards. A similar approach is reflected in the colour scheme applied in the decoration of the Haopan Mosque, where three of pure colours, green, yellow and red, are used for different decorative elements on the screen door (Fig.246). Sometimes decorative screens designed in propitious geometric patterns are used below the eave board, especially the *efang* structured as a single board (Figs.243, 259).



Fig.260. Detail of the decoration of the *dougong* and *queti* brackets of the Eastern entrance passage, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

The decoration of the *dougong* primarily is through the intricate design of its structural form, whereas the *queti* normally displays fine wood carvings. These functional structures became increasingly decorative in the Ming-Qing period. Besides their elaborately designed structural forms and carvings, they are also sometimes richly painted, as is seen, in particular, in the imperial buildings in the Qing period.

It should be noted that the designs of the structural form of the *dougong* also reflect the concept of hierarchy. The *dougong* was normally used in buildings of higher class,



Fig.262. Detail of the wood carvings of the eastern entrance passage, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

and its use in buildings of the commoners was strictly forbidden. Some designs, such as the nine-tiered structure, were reserved for imperial palace buildings only and the use of many different colours of paint was also restricted to higher class buildings.⁴¹³ This may explain why

the *dougong* bracket in Islamic buildings is generally rather modest both in terms of its structure and its decoration.

Despite this, some examples of well-designed *dougong* brackets can



Fig.261. Detail of the *dougong* brackets of the pavilion, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaying.

⁴¹³ Gao Yang, op. cit., p.73. Hu Chengfang, op. cit.

be found in Islamic buildings in coastal China. A bold, multi-tiered, design of the *dougong*, for instance, is found in the *wangyue lou* of the Huaisheng Mosque (Fig.71), while the *dougong* supporting the eave of the prayer hall of the Shanxiang Mosque is painted in green and red (Fig.243). Some other interesting designs of *dougong* brackets are also found, as is



Fig.263. Detail of the carvings of the eave structure of the prayer hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

seen in the entrance passage of the Xianhe Mosque (Fig.260). This does not have the loftiness displayed in the *dougong* in the Huaisheng Mosque, nor the richness of the well-painted *dougong* in the Shanxiang Mosque, but its carefully designed details bring out a touch of elegance. It also well articulates the designs of other eave structures. The design of

the *dougong* of the pavilion in the Jiaxing Mosque appears to shares the same artistic approaches (Fig.261).

The structure of *queti* is more commonly employed than the *dougong* in the Islamic buildings. The traditional designs of the *queti* brackets, both the structural form and the decorations, are well represented in Islamic buildings in coastal China. Although there are not of the size found in Chinese imperial buildings and are generally of the small type, they are often of elaborate design, especially the wood carvings (Figs.260, 262). The carvings are mostly of foliated and cloud patterns, often matching the patterns of the wood carvings of the supporting short pillars on the beams (Figs.262, 263). Artistically, they share the decorative designs of the brick and stone carvings. The decorative patterns and principles of their application indicate that they could be employed in a variety of mediums, as is the case with



Fig.264. Detail of the *queti* brackets, Jingjue Mosque.

Islamic decorative art, where, for example, the arabesque design can be found in textiles, metalwork as well as in architectural surface decorations.

Despite the domination of the foliated pattern in the decoration of the *queti* brackets, figurative motifs also occasionally appears, though rarely. The fish motif, for example, is seen in the *queti* brackets in the eave structure

of the prayer hall of the Xianhe Mosque (Fig.263). Another type of *queti*, known as the *huayazi* (花牙子), i.e., literally the fancy serrated edge, is frequently seen in Islamic buildings (Figs.243, 259). It has the common structural forms of *queti* but is purely decorative, generally sharing the decorative designs of the pierced screen. The decorative *queti* seen in a functional hall in the Jingjue Mosque displays the fine craftsmanship in wood carvings (Fig.264). A pierced decorative screen, it takes a form of the *qimaqueti* (騎馬雀替), i.e., literally horse riding *queti*. This type of design is normally used wherever the space between the columns or pillars is comparatively narrow. Two *queti* between two columns then are connected together, forming a shape that resembles a horse's saddle.

Interior Decorations of Islamic Architecture in Coastal China

Wood Structures

The decorative principles applied to exposed wood structures in the interior are the same as for the wood frames of the external eave structures in traditional Chinese architecture. Elaborate



Fig.267. Detail of the painted beam and the *queti* in the prayer hall, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.



Fig.268. Detail of the painted beam in the prayer hall, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.

designs than the small *queti* brackets often used in the exteriors.



Fig.266. Interior of the additional prayer hall, showing wood carvings, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.



Fig.265. Detail of the *queti* design in the interior of the reception hall, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

carvings, for instance, are seen decorating the wood structures like the *dougong*, especially the *queti* and the short pillars connecting the beams

(Figs.265, 266). The designs of interior wooden structures, both in form and decoration, especially in the prayer halls of mosques, are often more refined than on exterior structures. For instance, another type of the *queti* brackets, known as the *tongqueti* (通雀替), i.e., the through *queti*, is used (Figs.265, 267). It is composed of a double *queti* cutting through the column, a more complicated

Besides the carvings, the beams, especially in the prayer halls, are sometimes decorated with paintings in different styles. As is seen in the decorations of the beams of the prayer hall in



Fig.269. Painted beams in the prayer hall, Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

the Jiaxing Mosque, the designs depicting floras and foliations are boldly painted in gold against a red background (Figs.267, 268). The decorations of the beams in the prayer hall of the Fuyoulu Mosque display a rather different aesthetic approach

(Fig.269). Gold is also

used but in a rather under-stated way,

outlining the beam to

form a picture frame, while the cloud and *ruyi* motifs are subtly painted in green, creating a sophisticated composition and colour



Fig.270. Detail of the beam paintings in the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

scheme. The beams in the prayer hall of the Shanxiang Mosque are richly painted, reflecting the late Qing taste for rich architectural decorations, mentioned in Chapter 5, and artistically representing

the genre of the Su style of beam paintings, one of three styles of beam painting in Chinese decorative art. It is said to originate from

the palace decorative paintings of the Southern Song period, created by Suzhou artisans, from whom the name of this style is derived. The style reflects the Jangnan artistic tradition, displaying a taste for elegance and refinement.⁴¹⁴



Fig.271 Detail of the beam paintings in the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.



Fig.272. Detail of the beam paintings in the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

The beam painting in the Shanxiang Mosque is dominated by the composition which depicts the painting within a defined half-circle frame, one of the characteristic designs of the Su style (Figs.270, 271, 272). The colour scheme presented here is also typical of the Su style, showing the preferences for light colours.

Whereas the most famous type of beam painting of the Su style is the presentation of ancient myths and legends with vivid

⁴¹⁴ Gao Yang, op. cit., p.256.

depictions of landscapes, figural and animal motifs within the defined half-circle picture frames, the beam paintings in the Shanxiang Mosque concentrate on natural flowers and plants. Sometimes, the picture frames are also filled with geometric patterns. It is noteworthy that there are no figurative presentations seen here in the prayer hall, which may be a compromise between Chinese artistic tradition and Islamic beliefs.

Inscription is present on the wood structures (Fig.266), although not in a dominant manner. This has been largely replaced by another format featuring inscriptions on hanging boards, part of the later development of Islamic decoration in coastal China, as is discussed below.

Interior Walls

Although murals, carved stone and brick panels have long been the key decorative elements of wall surfaces in Chinese tradition, they have been generally applied to specific types of buildings. Murals, for example, are primarily seen in the decorations of the walls of caves,



Fig.275. Interior of the reception hall, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.

such as the famous Dunhuang murals.

The interior wall surfaces of grand tomb architecture are often covered by the stone carvings with various themes. These also appear in other types of buildings like temples and even private homes, but they are not so dominant or so widely applied in interior decorations, especially in traditional- designed wooden architecture. The interior wall surfaces in typical wood-framed Chinese buildings are normally plain with the decorations provided primarily by the hanging scrolls of paintings and calligraphies and, sometimes, by exposing the wood structures, especially the well-designed and decorated wood frames.



Fig.273. Interior of the reception hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.



Fig.274. Interior of the reception hall, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

Apart from the prayer hall, the decorative scheme in the interior of the functional halls in a mosque or Muslim funerary complex in coastal China appears similar to that in traditional designed Chinese architecture. In particular, the interior of these functional halls has the typical arrangement of the reception hall in traditional Chinese houses. As are seen (Figs.273, 274, 275), the wall surfaces are often plainly plastered in white, occasionally with stone or brick panels in the lower part, adjacent to where the traditional Chinese furniture, the chairs and tables, normally with elaborate carvings, is arranged. While a row of chairs and tables is normally arranged along the side curtain walls, a pair of chairs flanking a table is positioned in the middle by the back wall. Here on occasion a shelf is also placed against the wall, reminiscent of the typical arrangement of the altar for ancestry worship in traditional Chinese houses.



Fig.276. Inscription on the hanging boards in the prayer hall, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque.

Similar to traditional Chinese reception halls, the hanging scrolls of calligraphy and painting are frequently seen on the wall above the furniture. The only decorative feature displayed in the interior of the functional halls of the Islamic buildings that is different is the calligraphy scrolls. These are Arabic calligraphies but presented in a Chinese hanging scroll format. The style of these Arabic calligraphies also displays a mix of Arabic and Chinese calligraphic traditions, which is unique to Chinese Muslims.

The decorative elements of the interior walls of the prayer hall display rather different features, primarily dictated by the different purpose of the prayer hall. As noted earlier, some modification of traditional Chinese structure is seen in the prayer hall with additional openings along the curtain walls as well as the *qibla* wall, to suit the function of the prayer hall. The decorative elements of the curtain walls are mainly the screen doors and windows with patterns that match those on the screen doors at the front, discussed earlier. There are no hanging scrolls of paintings and calligraphies as are normally seen in the other functional halls. Instead, the Arabic inscriptions or calligraphies are on



Fig.277. Inscription on the hanging boards in the prayer hall, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

a board, generally to be found hanging high up over the beams or on the columns (Figs.266, 276, 277). No additional furniture is needed apart from the *minbar* to the right of the *mihrab*, although, sometimes, a small table is placed to the left of the *mihrab* as a stand for incense burners.

Mihrabs

As already noted, although the general principles of traditional Chinese architecture are used in the design of Chinese mosques, there are some modifications dictated by the function of the building. The most significant alternation is to the western wall, which serves as the *qibla* wall, i.e., that facing towards Mecca. Following the evolution of a Chinese-style mosque in coastal China, two types of *qibla* wall evolved, as discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, the *maqsurah* structure in the Guangzhou regions and the addition of a *mihrab* chamber in the Jiangnan regions. In both types, the *mihrab* itself project



Fig.278. *Mihrab* panel, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.



Fig.279. *Mihrab* panel, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

distinctly Islamic features—a rarity in Chinese mosque architecture following the Sinicization of the Chinese Muslim community.

The *mihrabs* of an earlier date found in the coastal regions of China mostly share a common design featuring the *mihrab* recess or prayer niche, framed by a wooden rectangular panel that sometimes rises on a stone or wood base. As is seen in the *mihrabs* of the Fenghuang Mosque and the Songjiang Mosque, both bases are designed in the type of the *xumizuo* (Figs.40, 278), whereas the *mihrab* of the Xianhe Mosque appears to be a single panel through without a separate base

(Fig.279). This design of Chinese *mihrabs* is apparently derived from a pre-existing tradition in the world of Islam that is characterised by setting the *mihrab* recess within a rectangular panel. This design was popular, with many such *mihrabs* being preserved in the heartland of the Muslim world, sometimes clad with marble, as in Mamluk *mihrabs* (Fig.169), and

sometimes covered with stuccos or glazed tiles, as seen in 13th century Iranian and Anatolian *mihhrabs* (Fig.280).

In Islamic tradition, the *mihhrab* is the focus of the interior decorations of the prayer hall because of its liturgical significance. Here, inscriptions are always a dominant decorative



Fig.280. *Mihhrab* panel, 13th century, Iran, in the collection of the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin.

element and this tradition is well represented in the mosque decorations in coastal China. The essence of the *mihhrab* as the central feature of the mosque is visibly stated in elaborately designed Chinese *mihhrabs*, especially in those *mihhrabs* of an earlier date in mosques in coastal China. In these *mihhrabs*, the wood panel are especially elaborate with a series of decreasing rectangles defined by bands of inscriptions or alternating inscriptions and elaborated scrolls.

Together with the sumptuous use of gold and red colours, this creates not only an impression of richness but also an illusion of depth on the flat surface (Figs.40, 278, 279). The *mihhrab* panel in the Jingjue Mosque, a later reproduction of this earlier type of *mihhrab* design,

lacks the intricate divisions of multiplied rectangles but richly covered with inscriptions (Fig.58).

It should be noted that, although the domed prayer halls of the Fenghuang Mosque and the Songjiang Mosque are datable to the Yuan period, discussed in Chapter 3, the *mihhrab* panels in both prayer halls are of later date. There is no indication of how the original *mihhrabs* were designed, although they certainly existed and were of some significance, as indicated in the Song texts cited in Chapter 3. The description in the Song texts of the tall stele or panel with inscriptions on towards which the Muslims pray suggests that the original design of the *mihhrabs* was derived from the common type developed in the Islamic world, mentioned above, perhaps later enriched with multiplied rectangular design that came to be the early type of Chinese *mihhrabs* in coastal regions. There is a clear similarity between this group of Chinese *mihhrabs* and early *mihhrabs* in the heartland of Islam. In particular, the inner or the core section of the *mihhrab* in



Fig.281. *Mihhrab* panel, Fuyoulu Mosque, Shanghai.

the Fenghuang Mosque, datable to the Ming period, is reminiscent of the decorative stucco panel depicting the *mihrab* motif in the mosque of Ibn Tulun (Fig.168), and also the design of the Iranian and Anatolian *mihrabs* (Fig.280).

The later development in the design of the *mihrab* in coastal China shows a tendency of simplifying the design, as is exemplified in the *mihrab* of the Fuyoulu Mosque (Fig.281). It still shows following the traditional formula of the rectangular panel framing the *mihrab* recess, but is simplified so that it resembling even more closely the common design of the *mihrabs* seen throughout the Islamic world. Despite being much smaller than the earlier type, it is still elaborated with inscriptions and scrolls. A newly- introduced feature is the pair of vertical boards flanking the *mihrab* panel and a horizontal board above. Although they have Arabic inscriptions, the arrangement of these inscription boards is unmistakably the characteristic composition of Chinese couplets. Practiced since ancient times, such couplets are comprised of two lines written on vertical stripes of papers or on wooden boards with an additional horizontal piece, for use either indoors and outdoors. This design later appears to be consistently used in the decoration of the *mihrab* in coastal

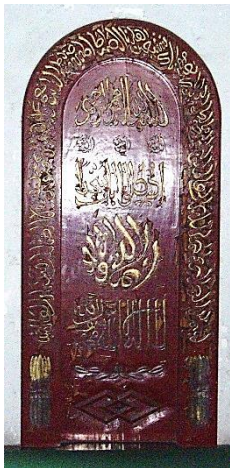


Fig.284. Decoration on the *mihrab* of the mosque, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

China, especially seen in the further simplified type of *mihrabs* that features the *mihrab* recess simply set directly against the wall (Figs.282, 283). Here, the design markedly similar to the composition of Spring couplets, a special type of Chinese couplets that are written on red papers normally with propitious words, to be posted at the entrance doorway, with the vertical stripes on each side of the door frame and the horizontal strip across the lintel.

Whether sophisticated or comparatively simple in its design, the form of the *mihrab*, as an essential religious structure, has remained Islamic in

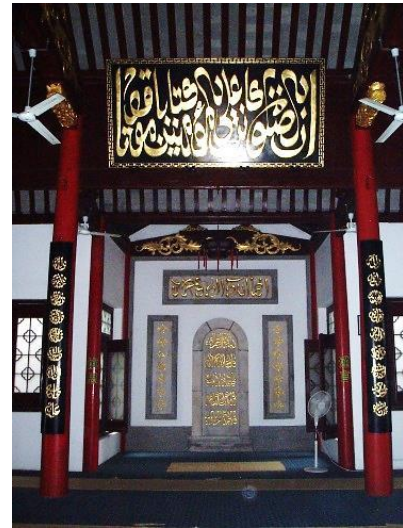


Fig.282. *Mihrab*, Caoqiao mosque, Nanjing. of



Fig.283. *Mihrab*, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

nature in the mosques of coastal China. The decorations used appear to have been less affected by Chinese traditions than other elements of mosque architecture. Although some Chinese elements are present, the use of Arabic inscription remains dominant. Whereas architectural decorations on the exterior of mosques show a free application of diverse Chinese decorative motifs, the use of Chinese elements in *mihrab* appears very selective. They are mostly geometric patterns and scrolls and figurative motifs are strictly excluded. The application of the geometric designs used seems to be restricted to only a few patterns of a propitious nature, such as the rhombus, the swastika and the *hui* patterns. The



Fig.286. Detail of the decoration on the *mihrab* panel, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.

rhombus motif, for instance, occasionally appears in the lower end of the *mihrab* recess (Figs.279, 284), the swastika pattern sometimes is seen in the background of the inner section of the panel (Figs.278, 285), and the *hui* pattern is more often used at the outer edge of the



Fig.285. Detail of the decoration on the *mihrab* panel, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

panel, as can be seen in nearly all of the early type of the *mihrab* panels (Figs.40, 278, 279). A few other motifs of Chinese nature such as the cloud and the *ruyi* are also seen (Figs.278, 281, 285). These Chinese elements, however, are generally applied in a rather subtle or sensitive manner, ensuring that the *mihrab* remains the distinctly Islamic in its overall appearance. The type of the foliated scrolls on the *mihrab* panel of the Fenghuang Mosque, for example, may have been chosen

for their similarity to the design of Islamic scrolls, while the rhombus design seen on the same panel makes the inscription stand out (Fig.286). The rhombus seen on the bottom of the *mihrab* recess of the mosque in the tomb of Baha al-Din does not have the effect of diverting attention away from the presentation of the main decorative theme (Fig.284). Most interestingly, the propitious *ruyi* motif appears as if part of the design of the arch apex of the *mihrab* recess (Figs.278, 285). The floral motifs such as the lotus occasionally appear but mostly in stylised designs and never extensively used in the decoration of the *mihrab* panel as

is the case with the exterior decorations. The chrysanthemum motif on the *mihrab* panel of the Songjiang mosque displays considerable naturalistic elements, but is integrated in the stylised foliated designs (Fig.40).

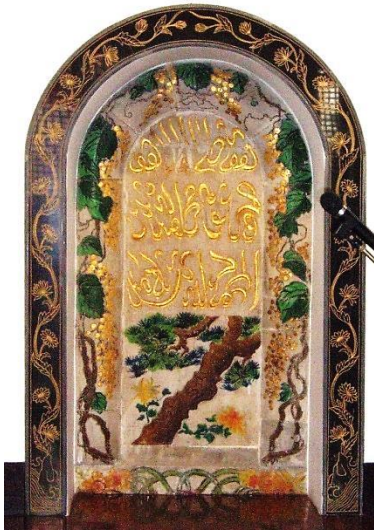


Fig.287. Decoration of the *mihrab*, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

The decoration in the *mihrab* recess in the mosques of coastal China appears virtually abstract in nature, primarily filled with Islamic inscriptions, occasionally together with some abstract patterns. An exceptional case, however, is seen in the decoration of the prayer niche of the Luhe Changjianglu Mosque (Fig.287). Here the *mihrab* shows decorative motifs of a vine with grapes and a pine with chrysanthemums, juxtaposed with inscriptions. The composition of the pine with chrysanthemums, known as the *songjuyoucun* (松菊猶存), is a well-known propitious design, symbolising perseverance, and also longevity. The same composition is used in the base of the drum stone at the same mosque (Fig.241). Although a peculiar design to be chosen for a *mihrab*, it agrees stylistically with the

overall decorative design of the mosque, in which the naturalistic approach in the presentation of the chosen theme is apparent, as noted earlier.

Thus, as is demonstrated, Islamic inscriptions remain the main theme in the decoration of the *mihrabs* of the mosques of coastal China, visible not just because of their widespread use but also because of the way in which colours are used.

Gold is exclusively used for the inscriptions on the *mihrab* recess and the framing panels, this also generally applying to inscriptions presented on hanging boards and other wood panels. One notable exception is the inscriptions on the canopy in front of the *mihrab* in the Haopan Mosque, which are in red, while the gold is used for the inscriptions on the *mihrab* panel (Fig.288). Another exceptional case is



Fig.288. Inscriptions on the canopy of the *mihrab*, Haopan Mosque, Guangzhou.



Fig.289. Inscriptions on the ceiling of the *mihrab* chamber, Shanxiang Mosque, Zhenjiang.

the inscriptions, also in red, on the ceiling of the *mihrab* chamber of the Shanxiang Mosque (Fig.289). Gold had been the royal colour since ancient times, thus symbolising the authority. The choice of gold for the Quranic inscriptions can perhaps be interpreted as a statement of the utmost importance of the holy texts, held in highest esteem by the Muslims. The *mihrab* panels, until modern times, were usually painted in red, sometimes in green. The inscriptions remain in gold. Artistically, the strong contrast of gold and red creates an effect of richness, while the use of gold against the base colour of green provides a hint of elegance. The religious significance of the *mihrab* is thus emphasised through carefully-chosen colour schemes.



Fig.290. Ceiling painting, showing lotus *baoxianghua* design in the side domed chambers, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.



Fig.291. Ceiling painting, showing peony *baoxianghua* design in the domed mihrab chamber, Fenghuang Mosque, Hangzhou.

In addition to the Quranic phrases, the 99 names of God in Islam are also popular choice for decoration of the *mihrab*. These often appear in the form of roundels, not only on the panels of the *mihrab* but also on the structure of the *maqsurah* and the ceilings of the *mihrab* chamber (Figs.58, 279, 288, 289). While the ceilings in traditional Chinese architecture usually have various elaborate designs, the ceilings in the *mihrab* chambers of the mosques in coastal China are normally decorated only with Islamic inscriptions. Only rarely are they decorated with paintings, the common decorative element on traditional Chinese ceilings.

The only exception that has been traced is decoration of the ceilings of the domed *mihrab* chambers in the Fenghuang Mosque. Here there are paintings of the *baoxianghua* design, as noted earlier. This is a common decorative element of traditional Chinese ceilings often seen in the decoration of the *zaojing*, i.e., a caisson ceiling, as noted in Chapter 3. The *baoxianghua* design decorating the ceilings of the two chambers flanking the *mihrab* chamber appears to be centred on a stylised lotus (Fig.290), while the

stylised peony, also of the *baxianghua* design is on the ceiling of the *mihrab* chamber (Fig.291). Both the lotus and peony are commonly used in the *baoxianghua* design. It is noteworthy that there are little birds appearing among the peonies in the painting on the ceiling of the *mihrab* chamber, further evidence of the exceptional nature of this case, since this is the only instance of figurative designs that has been traced in the interior decorations of the prayer halls of mosques in coastal China.

Minbars, Mosque lamps and Incense Burners

The *minbar* is the liturgical furniture required in the congregation mosque, in which the prayer-leader or imam delivers the Friday sermon. In early Islamic times, public worship was led by the ruler. The *minbar* is, therefore, a symbol of authority as much as an acoustic device. The very first *minbar* was of tamarisk wood in a simple form of three steps, from where the Prophet addressed the congregation. Over times, it has evolved into an elaborated form that may consist of folding doors and a stairway crowned with a canopy topped with a crescent finial. They are often fashioned from wood that is richly carved and adorned with various inlays.⁴¹⁵



Fig.292. *Minbar*, Jingjue Mosque, Nanjing.

There is no record of the first appearance of the *minbar* in the mosques in coastal China. The existing minibars are of late dates, mostly of the later Qing period and thereafter, many in the



Fig.293. *Minbar*, Songjiang Mosque, Songjiang.

form of simple steps. There are, however, some well-designed *minbars* to be found (Figs.292, 293). They are of wood, with a gate opening on to a stairway that is crowned with a canopy, clearly derived from the basic structure of the *minbar* in the Muslim world. As is in the case with *mihrab* design, the structure of the minibars in mosques in coastal China is but little affected by Chinese elements. Both features, *mihrab* and *minbar*, have no parallels in traditional Chinese architectural designs, since these liturgical structures are never required in any form



Fig.294. *Minbar*, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

⁴¹⁵ J. Dickie 'Alla and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs', in *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*. G. Michell (eds.), Thames and Hudson, London, 1978, pp. 36-37.

of worship hosted in Chinese temples, from which the design of the Chinese-style mosque has drawn inspirations. This may partly explain the paucity of Chinese characteristics in their designs, although the design may primarily relate to their religious function. Nonetheless, there are some visible elements of Chinese origin, as seen, for example, in the *minbar* in the Xianhe Mosque (Fig.294). Above the gate is a Chinese-style roof furnished with a *baoding* in the girded round form, while the canopy crowning the stairway resembles the style of Chinese pavilions. The overall structure, however, is still consistent with the traditional design of the *minbar* in the world of Islam. The decorative scheme applied to the *minbar* is similar to that in the *mihrab*, in which the inscription is the key decorative element. Although these *minbars* found in the coastal China are often moderately decorated, and certainly not comparable to the lavishly ornamented *minbars* found in the heartland of Islam, some do display sophisticated qualities in its design.

In addition to the *minbar*, there are other traditional liturgical furniture and quasi-liturgical items of the mosque, such as the *dikka*, i.e., the respondents' platform, the Qur'an stand, the prayers rugs and the mosque lamps. Although the *dikka* is an important component of liturgical furniture in large mosques in the Islamic world, no example of the *dikka*



Fig.296. Mosque lamp, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.

is found in mosques in coastal China. This may be due to the fact that the mosques of the Maritime Muslim community are generally modest in scale, so that the size of the congregation did not require a *dikka* to be put in place. The prayers rugs in use appear generally to be direct copies of prayers rugs in the Islamic world, and are simply made, as befits their practical use.

In contrast, the mosque lamps to be found in the coastal Chinese mosques are completely different in style from those found in mosques in the heartland of Islam. They appear all to be of one type, the *gongdeng* (宮燈), i.e., the palace lantern. This is one of the oldest designs of traditional Chinese lamps, in existence since the Han dynasty. Since the *gongdeng* was originally designed for use in palaces, it is often lavishly ornamented. The mosque lamps preserve the traditional design of the *gongdeng*. Many are elaborately carved and richly painted, displaying the characteristics of the traditional Chinese *gongdeng* (Fig.295). The only modifications are the absence of



Fig.295. Mosque lamp, Jizhaoying Mosque, Nanjing.

figurative themes, in accordance with Islamic beliefs, and, on occasion, the addition of Arabic inscriptions (Fig.296).



Fig.297. Incense burner, Luhe Changjianglu Mosque, Nanjing.

The use of incense has long been a tradition in the Arab world, but, in general, it is not used during worship in Islam. It is, however, commonly used during prayers by Chinese Muslims, although it is claimed that this is for the purpose of freshening the air, particularly during congregation prayers on Fridays, with a larger attendance, rather than for any religious reason. Incense burners, therefore, became a quasi-religious item in Chinese mosques. They are often seen to be placed on a small table or stool to the left of the *mihrab* in mosques in coastal China. This simple table sometimes also being used as the Qur'an stand (Fig.297). The traditional Qur'an stand designed in the form of a folding stool often elaborately decorated with inlays of various precious materials does not seem to be used by the



Fig.299. Incense burner in the prayer hall of the Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

Maritime Muslims in China.



Fig.298. Incense burner in the prayer hall of the mosque, Baha al-Din tomb complex, Yangzhou.

There are three types of materials used for incense burners. Those made of porcelain are commonly used in the prayer hall (Figs.297, 298), while bronze ones are normally used outside at the entrance of the prayer halls and in front of graves, although they are sometimes used indoor as well

(Fig.299). The same is true of those made of stone.

As with mosque lamps, the designs of these incense burners follow Chinese traditions, being

modified, only occasionally, by the addition of Arabic inscriptions. The

stone incense burner preserved in the Ashab Mosque, dated to the Song period, however, appears to be exceptionally elaborated. It is elaborately carved with a lotus theme, and could almost be a piece of purely decorative sculpture rather than a incense burner (Fig.300). Its craftsmanship and design is still traditionally Chinese.



Fig.300. Incense burner, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

The Development of Muslim Epigraphy in Coastal China

Muslim - and therefore Arabic - epigraphy in coastal China can be divided into three distinct groups, the largest of which is inscriptions from the Qur'an, found in every Islamic building. A second group is funerary inscriptions, found on numerous gravestones. A third and smaller group includes commemorative inscriptions. There are also a few inscriptions relating to the coastal Muslim community which appear in Chinese, these being the texts of relevant imperial decrees, as noted in previous chapters.

Islamic Inscriptions

The use of inscriptions in Islamic architecture is an element of decoration that is characteristic of all type of buildings throughout the Islamic world. The importance, of course, is due to their role in presenting texts from the Qur'an, believed to be the word of God.

Such inscriptions made their appearance in the very first mosques of the Maritime Muslim community in coastal China, as is evident in the earliest remain of the mosques and from archaeological finds as well as in textual sources. As noted earlier, the Quranic

inscriptions were evidently used in all early mosques in Quanzhou (Figs.174, 177, 179, 180). The inscription

band running through both the exterior and interior walls of the old prayer hall of the Ashab Mosque is the earliest surviving example of the use of inscriptions as a decorative element of the mosque, and also the earliest presentation of the art of Islamic calligraphy in China (Figs.174, 301). It is well-executed in the *thuluth* script, one of the cursive styles of Islamic calligraphy, mentioned in Chapter 3 and also elsewhere.

Despite the adaptation of the decorative scheme of traditional Chinese architecture in mosque architecture, the tradition of the use of Islamic inscriptions has been retained as a key decorative element, especially in mosque interiors. Over time, however, there has been a stylistic evolution in the scripts used as well as changes in the format of presentations, in which the influence of Chinese calligraphic traditions is apparent.

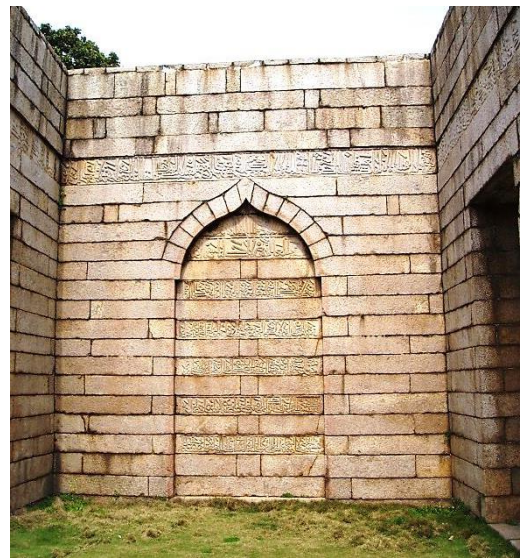


Fig.301. Inscription bands in the *mihrab* recess, Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou.

As a distinctly Chinese-style mosque was developed, Islamic inscription became much less



Fig.302. Inscriptions on the beam of the prayer hall, Jiaxing Mosque, Jiaxing.

frequent on the exterior of the mosques, although occasionally seen on the entrance gateway and the central ridge of the roof (Figs.193, 203). It appears, however, still to have been extensively used in the interior, especially in the prayer hall. The format of the inscription

band in the early mosques, however, began to be replaced in most cases by a new format of the inscription board derived from Chinese calligraphic tradition. The old format of the inscription band is still seen (Fig.302), but rarely used excepting in the *mihrab* panels, noted earlier. Instead, the inscriptions frequently appear on the hanging boards displayed on the beams (Figs.276, 277). The arrangement of pairs of vertical boards on the columns with a horizontal board above the beam in the central bay adjacent to the *mihrab* chamber is often seen (Fig.282), this being reminiscent of the composition of Chinese couplets, as also utilised



Fig.303. Hanging scroll in the reception hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

in the decoration of the *mihrab*, noted earlier. The names of God in Islam are obviously the chosen theme for the vertical inscription board, so for the hanging scrolls and the *mihrab* panels. The changes in the format of the presentation of Islamic inscriptions may be seen partly as practical adjustments to the architectural structures. The traditional Islamic design of the inscription band continuously running through the architectural surfaces, as exemplified in the Ashab Mosque, may not work as well in traditional wood-framed architecture.

While this change may have been for practical reasons, the stylistic evolution of Islamic inscription clearly reflects the notion of the important role that Chinese culture and tradition played in the shaping of Islamic architecture, and

in the development of Islam in China. In early times, the Islamic inscriptions often display pure calligraphic styles developed in the world of Islam, almost free from Chinese influences, as is the case with the inscriptions found in the early mosques in Quanzhou and in the early *mihrab* panels, noted earlier. Gradually, however, inscriptions were influenced by Chinese

calligraphic tradition and although the cursive style of Islamic calligraphy continued to be preferred in all succeeding periods, elements of the cursive script of Chinese calligraphy



Fig.304. Hanging board in the prayer hall, Xianhe Mosque, Yangzhou.

became increasingly visible. The combination of the Chinese and Islamic calligraphic traditions sometime can be seen to be very creative and imaginative, yet verging on the incomprehensible. The fanciful play with Chinese and Arabic scripts is particularly evident in the hanging scrolls decorating the other functional halls in a mosque complex (Fig.303). Sometimes the combination of Islamic scripts and Chinese propitious designs is displayed on the inscription board (Fig.304). Chinese scripts of Quranic

verses are also seen occasionally on the hanging board (Fig.302), but they are not normally used in the *mihirabs*.

Commemorative Inscriptions

The Islamic tradition of recording the history of buildings in the form of foundation inscriptions inscribed on the building was introduced to coastal China by the early Muslim settlers. This is evident in the first mosques of the Maritime Muslims, such as the foundation inscriptions providing information on the founding and restoration of the early mosques in Quanzhou (Figs.11, 179), mentioned earlier.

This tradition of making records of the buildings later evolved into the use of commemorative stone stelae, which is typical of Chinese traditions. The stele recording the renovation of the tomb of the two Companions in 1322, for example, was erected at the site of the tomb (Fig.305). Further development of the foundation inscription saw Arabic inscriptions gradually giving way to the use of Chinese scripts, as is evident in the preserved commemorative stelae discussed in previous chapters. This process began in the late Yuan period, when the Chinese language appears to have been gradually adopted by the Maritime Muslims community. The original stele bearing the inscription of *A Record of the Reconstruction of the Huaisheng Mosque* was erected in 1350 with the main texts in



Fig.305. Commemorative stele at the site of the tomb of the Two Companions, Quanzhou.

Chinese, with an introduction in Arabic, as noted in Chapter 3, which provides a good example of this process of development. This stele, according to current knowledge, appears to be the last occasion of the use of Arabic scripts on commemorative stone stelae found in mosques in coastal China.

Funerary Inscriptions

This process of the increasing use of inscriptions in Chinese by the Maritime Muslims is reflected in the funerary inscriptions. Chen Dasheng has made case studies of the gravestones primarily of Yuan date, unearthed in Quanzhou that belong to the Maritime Muslim community. These provide a general view of the epigraphic traditions of the Muslim community in the Quanzhou regions.⁴¹⁶ As is evident in the funerary

inscriptions on the gravestones preserved in Quanzhou and other port cities in coastal China, noted in previous chapters, the funerary inscriptions on the gravestones of earlier dates are primarily in Arabic, sometimes also together with Persian scripts, indicating the origin of the

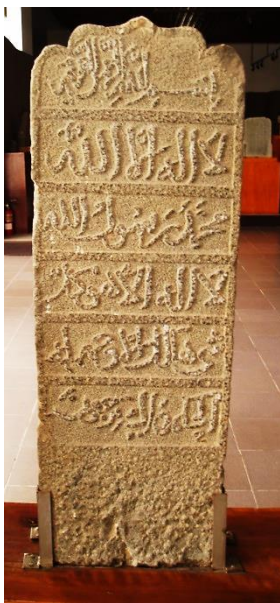


Fig.307. Gravestone, 13th century, in the collection of the Maritime Museum, Quanzhou.

deceased. Chinese inscriptions began to appear on the gravestones from the late Yuan period, often on one side of the gravestone while remaining in Arabic on the other. The use of Chinese inscriptions became common on the gravestones of a later date, with some Arabic

scripts serving to indicate the religion of the deceased (Fig.306). These Arabic scripts of later dates are of greatly reduced quality compared to the earlier gravestones of the early Yuan period (Fig.307), suggesting that the persons responsible for them had little or no knowledge of the Arabic language, at least in a written form.

As the process of Sinicization of the Maritime Muslim community progressed, Muslim epigraphy in coastal China increasingly drifts away from its Middle Eastern Arabic calligraphic origins and instead takes on a distinctive Chinese style, albeit still in Arabic language. In

the case of foundation inscriptions and the funerary inscriptions, from about the 14th century,



Fig.306. Gravestone, 14th century, in the collection of the Maritime Museum, Quanzhou.

⁴¹⁶ Chen Dasheng, *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao Shike*, op. cit. The publication is based on Chen's thorough studies of the Muslim epigraphs found in the Quanzhou and surrounding regions available to him.

there was an increasing use of inscriptions in Chinese, which eventually replaced Arabic as Chinese became the everyday language of the Maritime Muslims, and the use of Arabic was primarily in the religious context. This remains the case with the Maritime Muslims in coastal China.

The development in architectural decoration, like the evolution of the architectural form, of Islamic buildings in coastal China does not only mean the adaptation of a certain artistic style, but also illustrate the process of the development of the syncretic traditions and the creation of the identity of the Maritime Muslim community. Through the use of the decorative scheme of Chinese architecture, the concept of Chinese traditional beliefs and symbolism is transposed into the Islamic context. Thus, the architecture decoration of Islamic buildings in coastal China is further evidence of profound influences of Chinese cultural concepts on the Maritime Muslims. The cultural diversity of the Muslim world is thus well represented by the very distinct minarets and the architectural decorations of the mosques developed by the Maritime Muslim Community in China.

Conclusion

Islamic culture and practice arrived with the early Muslim diaspora to coastal China in the early years of Islam. Initially a religion of distinctly foreign origin, a guest culture, Islam was welcomed, or at least tolerated, yet remained to a very large extent distinct from the Chinese culture and community with which it co-existed over centuries, before it became integrated on a permanent basis into Chinese culture.

Over centuries, the development of Islam and the Muslim community in coastal China has seen periods of both waxing and waning. Initially composed of a few merchants and seamen, the community grew into a large economic colony throughout the Tang dynasty, reaching its peak during the Song dynasty. It then enjoyed considerable political and economic influence during the Yuan dynasty until the later years of Mongol dominance in China. Its influence then waned considerably, before recovering by the end of the Ming dynasty. Thereafter the Maritime Muslim community enjoyed a period of renaissance, prompted in part by the intense intellectual activities of the community that began early in the Qing period, which contributed to the process of creation of a new Muslim identity: from Muslim diaspora to Chinese Muslim. This involved a process of interaction with, and conscious adaptation to, the existing political realities and the social and cultural specificities of the environment, especially during periods that saw the community faced with considerable challenges.

The evolution and development of mosque architecture of the Muslim community in the coastal China reflects and illustrates this process. In the early centuries of Islam, the Muslim empire tended to absorb rapidly the artistic traditions and culture encountered in conquered lands. In contrast, the absorbing and utilising of the rich artistic traditions of China by the Muslim diaspora on the Chinese coast proved to be a long process. The architecture of mosques appears first as an alien import from western Asia, introduced by the early Muslim diaspora into the ports of China. Over subsequent centuries, a Chinese reinterpretation of Islamic forms evolved, which became recognisably Chinese yet, at the same time, retaining an Islamic religious function. This fusion of both cultures and their distillation into a distinctly Chinese style of Islamic architecture entailed the absorption of Islam into a purely Chinese context, albeit it retained its fundamental religious elements. In other words, the Islamic structural principle was thus left intact, while syncretic traditions developed within a framework of Confucianism.

Thus the Muslim religious identity and the image of the Muslim community being Chinese in terms of ethnicity and cultural orientation, yet with a Muslim faith, are manifested in the distinct mosque architecture, which uses traditional Chinese elements to a remarkable degree. Despite being distinctly Chinese in appearance, its mosque remains clearly a mosque, within which the essential features defined by the immutable requirements of the Islamic structural principles are clearly identifiable. The *qibla* orientation is fixed, and other key elements - the mihrab, minaret and so on - are present, although their forms and surface decoration are adapted to suit the context, thus varying greatly from those developed in other parts of the Muslim world. Yet the regional diversity is best exemplified by this very Chinese style of mosques that developed in coastal China. Most significantly, this unique regional style of mosque architecture exhibits how Muslim religious identity, "encapsulated within the mosque, can be adapted without breaking the structuring principle, while at the same time taking 'culture diversity' to new limits".⁴¹⁷

The syncretic tradition, exhibiting a synthesis of the liturgical requirements of Islam and Chinese cultural overlays, are manifested in mosque architecture as well as the *han kitab*, i.e., the Chinese Islamic texts. This provides the characteristics of the Islamic practices of the Maritime Muslim community, while also defining its identity. The *han kitab* has retained its dominance in Chinese Islamic education since it was fully developed in the Qing period. Indeed, it remained unchallenged even when the modern form of Muslim schooling was introduced in coastal China in the Republican period. The maintenance of the identity of the Maritime Muslim community has, therefore, been largely ensured through the Islamic education promoted by the intellectuals of the community.

After the Cultural Revolution, the coastal Muslims were initially merely identified by their ethnicity as Hui, their knowledge of Islam having become marginal or suppressed. They were aware, therefore, of the need to reintroduce teaching of the guidelines of the religion as a part of recovering their religious identity. The Islamic education thus resumed in coastal China, as did use of the mosques and other Islamic practices. The *han kitab* is, however, now questioned by imams of the younger generation who have a good knowledge of Arabic and Islam, as a result of their education, and are, therefore, able to study the Qur'an and Islamic doctrines first-hand and compare these with the *han kitab*. The global reach of modern media and the gradual relaxation of restrictions by the Chinese government on the number of people

⁴¹⁷ Insoll, op. cit., p. 51.

allowed to make the *haji* pilgrimage to Mecca have also made it possible for community leaders to remain abreast of current developments in Islam and to keep in touch with the rest of the Muslim world.

An increasing awareness of their original Muslim or West Asian (Arab or Persian) roots and an interest in searching for their Islamic cultural heritage is clearly apparent among young and educated Muslims in coastal China.⁴¹⁸ It remains to be seen whether the intellectual activities of this economically and intellectually advanced coastal community will once again lead to a renaissance in the development of Islamic culture in China, as has happened in the past. It may take some time before it becomes apparent whether such a renaissance, if it occurs, would involve the reintroduction of unmodified Islamic doctrines and culture, which would emphasise a separate identity as Muslims, attached to the cultural heritage of Islam, rather than this being overlain by Chinese Confucian culture. Alternatively, such a renaissance may simply open up the community to the modern trends of the Muslim world in terms of the creation of a pan-Islamic style, 'as a result of pressures to become more normative and international, as well as of a conscious desire on the part of Muslim community to be seen as Muslim'.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Communications with the members of the Muslim community in coastal China, especially interviews with the imams at the mosques during fieldwork in China.

⁴¹⁹ Insoll, *op. cit.*, p.59.

Appendix

重建懷聖寺記 (*A Record of the Reconstruction of the Huaisheng Mosque*)

奉議大夫廣東道宣慰使都元帥府經歷郭嘉撰文。
政議大夫同知廣東道宣慰使都元帥撒的迷失書丹。
中奉大夫江浙等處行中書參知政事僧家訥篆額。

白雲之麓，坡山之隈，有浮屠焉。其製則西域，燦然石立，中州所未睹。世傳自李唐訖今。蝸旋蟻陟，左右九轉，南北其局（局）。其膚則混然，若不可級而登也。其中為二道，上出惟一戶。古碑漶漫，而莫之或紀。

寺之燬於至正癸未也，殿宇一空。今參知浙省僧家訥元卿公實元帥，是乃力為輦礫樹宇，金碧載鮮，徵文於予，而未之遑也。適元帥馬合謨德卿公至，曰：“此吾西天大聖擗奄八而馬合麻也。其石室尚存，修事歲嚴。至者其弟子撒哈八，以師命來東。教興，歲計殆八百。製塔三，此其一爾。因興程租，久經廢馳。”選於眾，得哈只哈三使居之，以掌其教。

噫！茲教崛於西土，乃能令其徒顛頊帆海，歲一再週，堇堇達東粵海岸，逾中夏，立教茲土。其用心之大，用力之廣雖際天極地，而猶有未為已焉者。且其不立象教，惟以心傳，亦髣髴達磨。今覘其寺宇空洞，閱其無有像設；與其徒日禮天祝釐，月齋戒惟謹，不遺時刻晦朔。匾額懷聖，其所以尊其法，篤信其師，為何如哉！既一燬蕩矣，而殿宇宏敞，廣廈周密，則元卿公之功焉。常住無隱，徒眾有歸，則德卿公之力焉。嗚呼！不有廢也，其孰與興？不有離也，其孰與合？西東之異俗，古今之異世，以師之一言，曆唐宋五代，四裂分崩，而卒行乎昭代四海一家之盛世於數十萬里之外，十百千年之後，如指如期，明聖已夫。且天之所興，必付之人。雖灰燼之餘，而卒昭昭乎成於二公之手，使如創初，又豈偶然哉？

遂為之辭曰：天竺之西，曰維大食，有教興焉。顯諸石室，遂逾中土，闡於粵東。中海外內，窳堵表雄。迺立金雞，翹翼半空；商舶是脈，南北其風。火烈不渝，神幻靡窮；珠水溶溶，徒集景從。甫田莽蒼，複廈穹窿；寺曰懷聖，西教之宗。

至正十年八月初一日，當代住持哈只哈三，中順大夫同知廣東道宣慰使司都元帥府副都元帥馬合謀。

(Guo Jia, 1350, the stele bears the inscription is in the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou)

清淨寺記 (*A Record of Qingjing Mosque*)

西出玉關萬餘里，有國曰大食，於今為貼直氏。北連安息條支，東隔吐番高昌，南距雲南安南，西漸於海。地莽平，廣袤數萬里。自古絕不與中國通。城池宮室園圃溝渠，田畜市列，與江淮風土不異。寒暑應候，民物繁庶。種五穀葡萄諸菓，俗重殺好善。書體旁行，有篆楷草三法。著經史詩文，陰陽星曆，醫藥音樂皆極其精妙。製造織文，雕鏤器皿尤巧。

初，默德那國王別諳拔爾謨罕募德生而神靈，有大德。臣服西域諸國，咸稱聖人。別諳拔爾，猶華言天使，蓋尊而號之也。其教以萬物本乎天。天一理，無可像。故事天至虔，而無像設。每歲齋戒一月，更衣沐浴，居必易常處，日西向拜天，淨心誦經，經本天人所授，三十藏，計一百一十四部，凡六千六百六十六卷，旨義淵微，以至公無私，正心修德為本；以祝聖化民，周急解厄為事；持己接人，內外慎飭。迄今八百餘歲，國俗嚴奉尊信，雖適殊域，傳子孫，累世不易。

宋紹興元年，有納只卜穆茲善魯丁者，自撒那威從商舶來泉，勸茲寺於泉州之南城，造銀燈香爐以供天，買田土房屋以給眾。後以沒塔完里阿哈味不任，寺壞不治。至正九年，閩海憲僉赫德爾行部至泉，攝思廉下不魯罕丁命舍刺甫丁哈卜領眾分訴憲公。任達魯花赤高昌楔玉立至，議為之徵服舊物。眾志大悅。於是里人金阿里願以己貲一新其寺，徵余文為記其畧如此。

(Wu Jian, 1349, in He Qiaoyuan, *Min Shu* (ca.1616), vol.7, Chap., Fangyu zhi, Lingshan Tiao)

重立清淨寺碑 (*Re-erection of the Stele of the Qingjing Mosque*)

□□夏彥高，□□□阿津□□□全募

明 指揮將軍福建都指揮使司都指揮使幹公輔 許清 篆蓋

賜 進士觀戶部政使□□□□□□□事□□丁儀 書碑

西出玉門萬餘裡，有國曰大寔，於今以帖直氏。北連安息、條支，東隔土番、高昌，南距雲南、安南，西漸於海。地莽平，廣袤數萬里。自古絕不與中國通。城池、宮室、園圃、溝渠、田畜、市列，與江淮風土□異。寒暑應候，民物繁庶。種五穀、蒲萄諸果。□重殺，好善。書體旁行，有篆、楷、草三法。著經史詩文，陰陽星曆，醫藥音樂，皆極精妙。製造織文、雕鏤器皿尤巧。

初，默德那國王別諳拔爾謨罕募德，生而□□有大德，臣服西域諸國，咸稱聖人。別諳拔爾，猶華言天使，蓋尊而號之也。其教以萬物本乎天，天一□，無可像，故事天至虔，而無像設。每歲齋戒一月，更衣沐浴，居必易常處。日西向拜天，淨心誦經。經本天人所授，三十藏，計一百三十四部，分六千六百六十六卷。旨義淵微，以至公無私、正心修德為□以祝聖化民、周急解厄為事。慮悔過自新，持己接人，內外慎敕，不容毫末悖理。迄今八百餘歲，□□嚴奉尊信，雖適殊域，傳子孫累世猶不敢易焉。

至隋開皇七年，有撒哈八撒阿的幹葛思者，自大寔航海至廣，方建禮拜寺于廣州，賜號懷聖。宋紹興元年，有納只卜穆茲喜魯丁者，自撒那威從商舶來泉，勸茲寺於泉州之南城。造銀燈香爐以供天，買土田房屋以給眾。後以沒塔完裡阿合味不任，凡供天給眾具竄易無孑遺，寺因廢壞不治。其徒累抗於官，墨□不決有年矣。

至正九年，閩海憲僉赫德爾行部至泉，為政清簡，民吏畏服。攝思廉夏不魯罕丁，命舍刺甫丁哈梯蔔領眾分訴。憲公審察得情，任達魯花赤高昌楔玉立正議為之□理，複徵舊物。眾志大悅。於是裡人金阿裡質以己貲，一新其寺。來徵余文為記。

予嘗聞長老言，帖直氏國初首入職方，土俗教化與他種特異。徵諸西使、島夷等志尤信。因為言曰：天之欲平天下，由來非一日情也。莊子書佛書皆言西方有大聖人，至隋而謨罕驀德始出。其教大端，頗與理合。漢唐通西域羈縻，不盡臣服。自禮拜寺先入閩廣，其兆蓋已遠矣。今泉造禮拜寺增為六七，而茲寺之廢復興，雖遭時數年，名公大人碩力贊贊，亦攝思廣益綿之有其人也。余往年與修《清源郡志》，已著其事。今復其廢興本末，俾刻之石，以見夫善教流行，義無所不達也。

奉政赫公正議僕公，皆明經進士，其於是役，均以大公至正之心行之耳，非慕其教者。僕公治泉有惠，期年之內，百廢皆興；而是寺之一新者，亦餘波之及歟？謂非明使者與賢郡守，則茲寺之教墜矣！

不魯罕丁者，年一百二十歲，博學有才德，精健如中年人，命為攝思廉，猶華言主教也。益綿苦思丁麻哈抹沒塔完裡，舍刺甫丁哈梯卜，謨阿津薩都丁。益綿，猶言住持也。沒塔完裡，猶言都寺也。漠阿津，猶言唱拜者也。

贊其事，總管孫文順，推官徐君正，奉訓知事鄭士凱；將仕董其役者，泉州路平准行用庫副使馮馬沙也。

時至正十年，三山吳鑒志。

按：舊碑年久，朽敝無徵，掌教夏彥高者舊趙尹璋、蒲景榮、迭元高等，錄諸郡志全文，募眾以重立石；如尚書趙公榮立扁清淨寺三大金字，以輝壯之；他如參將馬公謨、張公玆，少卿趙公玆，知州馬公慶，指揮幹公輔，皆以本教為念，或茂以修葺之助，或厚以俸貲之施，而咸有功斯寺者。然教中顯于泉者尤多，以其地故漏之。是故正德丁卯夏之吉旦。

(1507, after Wu Jian's inscription of 1349. the stele is preserved in the Qingjing mosque, Quanzhou)

旺各師大人墓誌 (*Epitaph of the Great Human Wangeshi* [Waqqâs])

大人道號旺各師傅，天方人也，西方至聖之母舅也。奉旨護送天經而來，於唐貞觀六年行抵長安。唐太宗見其為人耿介，講經論道有實學也，再三留駐長安。因敕建清真寺，迎使率隨從居之。大人著各講章經典，勸化各國。嗣後生齒日繁，太宗復敕江甯廣州，亦建清真寺分駐。厥後大人期頤之年，由粵海乘海船放洋西去。既抵青石伏思奉聖命而往，未曾奉命而還。何可還厥梓里，是以復旋粵海。青石在大西洋之西，西洋海岸乃大鎮，相去克爾白大道十八站。大人在船中復命歸真，真體大發真香。墓於廣州城外，為固土補奧師，小寒節氣喜神，其地龍脈。本自西來，而墓於龍首。地方俗稱響墳，謂墓間響聲。可聞十里。墓中誦經之聲亦聞十里之遠。厥美不可勝述。朝覲虔誠，見大人乘綠轎，一擁而出，或一擁而入。閃開中門，旋合門而閉。上入靜室，寂無聲色。昔嘗有擔糞者，多歇肩於墓院之外，乃見兩金龍於門首，圍護於圍牆之外者數次。而擔糞者，大都明其所惡，不敢過此矣。昔者，舍西德四十位同時歸真，皆墓於大人墓次。亦皆為固土補奧

(Lan Xu, 'Tianfang Zhengxue'(1852), in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying & Xie Guoxi etc. (eds), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol. 35, p. 383.)

The Yongle Imperial Edict

大明皇帝敕諭米里哈只：朕惟能誠心好善者，比能敬天事上，勸率善類，陰翊皇度。故天賜以福，享有無窮之慶。爾米里哈只，早從馬哈麻之教，篤志好善，導引善類，又能敬天事上，益效忠誠，眷茲善行，良可嘉尚。今特授爾以敕諭，護持所在。官員軍民，一應人等，毋得慢侮欺凌。敢有故違朕命，慢侮欺凌者，以罪罪之。故諭。永樂五年五月十一日

(Issued by the Yongle emperor in 1407, the text is a copy from the stone plaque preserved in the Ashab mosque in Quanzhou)

百字讚 (*The Hundred-word Eulogy*)

乾坤初始，天籍注名。傳教大聖，降生西域。授受天經，三十部冊，普化眾生。億兆君師，萬聖領袖。協助天運，保庇國民。五時祈祐，默祝太平。存心真主，加志窮民。拯救患難，洞徹幽冥。超拔靈魂，脫離罪業。仁覆天下，道冠古今。降邪歸一，教名清真。穆罕默德，至貴聖人。”

(Attributed to the first Emperor of the Ming, Zhu Yuanzhang, dated to 1368, collected in *The Real Record of the Last Prophet of Islam [Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu, 天方至聖實錄]* by Liu Zhi. Liu Zhi, 'Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu' (Qing), in *Huizu Diancang Quanshu*, Wu Haiying, Xie Guoxi, et al. (eds.), Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, Lanzhou, 2008, vol.21-23.)

重修清淨寺碑記 (*A Record of the Reconstruction of Qingjing Mosque*)

清淨之教流入中土，自隨開皇始。經首言真主，以真命為天主，真心為人主，故其教主于齋戒沐浴以事天。凡一年必有一月之齋，如吾中國歲首月是也；凡一月必有四日之齋，值亢牛婁鬼之日是也；拜必沐浴，非沐浴不敢入拜；齋必素食，非見星不敢嘗食。教主遇齋，率眾誦經，西向羅列。但有膜拜，而無供養。此大教之大凡也。郡建寺樓。相傳宋紹興間，茲喜魯丁自撒那威來泉所造。樓峙文廟青龍之左角，有上下層，以西向為尊。臨街之門從南入，砌石三圓以象天三；左右壁各六，合若九門，追琢皆九九數，取蒼穹九天之義。內圓頂象天。上為望月台，下兩門相峙。而中方取地方象。入門轉西級而上，曰下樓。南級上，曰上樓。下樓右壁門從東入，正西之座，曰奉天壇。中圓象太極，左右二門象兩儀，西四門象四象，南八門象八卦，北一門以象乾元。天開柱子，故曰天門。柱十有二，象十二月。上樓之正東曰祝聖亭。亭之南為塔，四圍柱如石城。設二十四窗，象二十四氣。西座為天壇。所書皆經言云。經樓梯之，清

源在北，鴻漸在南，葵山在西，靈山在東，紫帽在西南，寶蓋、天馬在東南，鳳山在東北，朋山在西北，眾峰迤立，如屏如壘。溪水從西來，二長虹闌之，大瀛海汪洋其東。俯瞰城中，千雉如帶，雙塔插天，通衢曲巷，飛甍聯檐。西望一紫在趾踵下。樓北有堂，郡太守萬靈湖公額曰明善堂。以樓為正峰，橫河界之，通海水潮汐，短橋以濟。異時教眾，每于月齋、日齋登樓誦經，已畢，退，休息于北堂之上。寺極觀備是矣。勝國以前，遞壞遞興，無得而紀。

明興，不知凡幾繕。隆慶丁卯，塔壞，住持夏東升鳩眾修之，太守萬靈湖公捐俸以助。今萬曆三十五年，地大震，暴風淫雨而樓棟飄搖，傾圮日甚。住持夏日禹率父老子弟請余修之。余曰：“今役也，有資舍財，無資舍力。無乾沒，無冒破，以成厥勝。眾皆欣然。時丁君哲初，以吏部郎請給，里居與余謀僉同，於是始事。先是樓北無亭除，左設居房，右置灶舍，中通如甬，後為占住者圖牛之垣。余是以移去之，易居為洗心亭，除灶為小西天，庭空月碧，樓影徘徊，亭光翼之，若增一勝。樓之壞者葺、欹者正、僕者隆起，因集顏魯公遙天樓三字額之，又題曰唯天為大，以曉人尊天之意。逮及明善之堂，翕然改觀矣，余乃記之。余按淨教之經，默得那國王謨罕默德所著，與禪經并來西域，均非中國聖人之書。但禪經譯而便於讀，故至今學士譚之。而淨教之經，未重漢譯，是以不甚行于世。然以余所觀，釋氏書多祖心經，其始譯則沙門玄奘奉詔為之，豈其人通夷語、解佛理，果無魯魚亥豕之誤乎？唐一時君臣奉若天書，即二帝三王之經不啻，上好而下必甚，是以蕭瑀傅奕之徒皆言佛，而佛經滋多于是矣。吾以為玄奘之譯未必盡無訛，而金剛、楞嚴、圓覺、法華以下之書，豈必其真從西至也。禪經譯而經雜，淨經不譯而經不雜。譯者可言而亦可知，知之則愈幻；不譯者不可知而可言，徒讀之未盡舛。嘗按是以思，儒啣聲色臭味安佚，不講性之說，禪之教近之，故不有其眼耳鼻舌身意，而空之于一切，但言性而不言命。儒有仁義禮智，天道不謂命之說，淨之教近之，故有其君臣父子夫婦，而歸之于事天，但言命而不言性。之二者，習之而善各有得，習之而不善均不能無得，乃今之習淨教者，何如也？沿其跡不得其真性，往物肇于飲食之彌，文踵率其出沐之故事，曾于維天之命，一寘思否，甚則以肉食為齋，以淨為教矣。是以世俗見其然，信襍祥者，既以其無關於死生之禍福之藉而忽之；皈慈悲者，又以其多不合于斧斤芒刃之用而棄之。故清淨氏之言天堂，反不如釋氏之言地獄，雖其先守教之家，今亦掉臂而叛去，此教之所繇衰，而寺之所繇圯，乃未趨漸失使然爾，豈其初立教之本旨哉。說者謂儒道如日中天，釋道如月照地，余謂淨教亦然。韓昌黎欲于佛，火其書，廬其居，此憤激太過之論，茫茫區宇，何所不有。鄒魯六籍之外，百家九流亦足補其大道，何必盡非上帝臨汝無貳爾心。吾于斯樓取其為事天之所，多言釋道，不如冥冥。民可使由，不可使知，吾于經取其不譯而已矣。夫是以議修復之，非徒以區區靈光之跡也。是役也，郡大夫姜公，邑大夫李公，謂茲樓之勝，于文廟有關，捐俸助修，及里中諸大夫君子相與協力成之，余何力之有焉。役始於萬曆戊申歲之六月，竣于乙酉歲之九月，費金口百有奇。董役則林日耀、任才鐘、李東熾、王延華，募緣則夏日禹、何仕全、何天啟，而晝夜勩心竭力以稽工，實則日耀之功居多。例得并書。

萬曆三十七年歲在乙酉秋重陽之吉。儒林門人李光縉宗謙甫頓首拜撰

(Li Guangjin , 1609, the stele is preserved in the Ashab Mosque)

太極圖說 (*Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*)

自無極而為太極。太極動而生陽，動極而靜，靜而生陰。靜極復動。一動一靜，互為其根；分陰分陽，兩儀立焉。陽變陰合，而生水、火、木、金、土。五氣順布，四時行焉。五行，一陰陽也；陰陽，一太極也；太極，本無極也。五行之生也，各一其性。無極之真，二五之精，妙合而凝。「乾道成男，坤道成女」，二氣交感，化生萬物。萬物生生，而變化無窮焉。惟人也，得其秀而最靈。形既生矣，神發知矣，五性感動，而善惡分，萬事出矣。聖人定之以中正仁義（聖人之道，仁義中正而已矣），而主靜（無欲故靜），立人極焉。故「聖人與天地合其德，日月合其明，四時合其序，鬼神合其吉凶」。君子修之吉，小人悖之凶。故曰：「立天之道，曰陰與陽；立地之道，曰柔與剛；立人之道，曰仁與義。」又曰：「原始反終，故知死生之說。」大哉易也，斯其至矣！

(Zhou Dunyi, 'Taijitu Shuo' (Song), in *Zhou Yuangong Ji*, Zhou Dunyi (Song), vol.1, <http://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E5%A4%AA%E6%A5%B5%E5%9C%96%E8%AA%AA>)

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