



Contribution of Chines Muslim during various dynasties A timeline study in historical perspective

**Dr Hafiz zahid Latif*

*Assistant Professor, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore

Abstract

China is one of the world's four ancient civilizations according to the Written history of China dates back to the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600-1046 BC), over 3,000 years ago. Prehistoric china's chronology is divided into the Paleolithic Age, the Neolithic Age, and the Bronze Age. Most probably the first dynasty in ancient China, it's generally believed that the xia Dynasty consisted of several clans living alongside the Yellow River. Most of the evidence for the Xia Dynasty, including its name, is perhaps just legend. Islam has been practiced in China about 1,300 years. The Hui people are an East Asian ethnic group predominantly composed of Chinese speaking adherents of Islam distributed throughout China, mainly in the northwestern provinces of the country and the Zhongyuan region. Though Hui Muslims are the most numerous groups, the greatest concentration of Muslims is in Xinjiang, with a significant Uyghur population. According to Chinese Muslims' traditional accounts, Islam was first introduced to China in 616-18 AD by Hazrat Saa,d bin Abi waqas a companion of the Prophet of Islam Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) then Ming dynasty, Yuan dynasty ,song dynasty and so on ;muslim played their pivotal role in shining and spreading Islam through the all corners of china .I will try my best here to enlighten age of Muslims .

Keywords. China. Islam in china. Muslims of china. Arrival of islam in china.

The purpose of this treaties is to study the shining, charming and golden history of Muslims and to enlighten their pivotal role in this region until religion Islam was elevated to the altitudes. Islam's history in China is nearly as old as the religion itself, but it is still treated as 'foreign' in the region. Muslims used both Chinese and Islamic ideas to navigate a Cultural and political landscape to build and maintain their presence and Identification. *Zhēn zhǔ* can be roughly translated as "Allah" – though Chinese Muslims throughout history have struggled to find a word for "Allah" that was not used very frequently by Chinese people - both to Avoid confusion with other concepts and give it a sense of exclusivity Reserved for the Divine. But this rich tapestry of religious and cultural Exchange and growth is being denied its rightful place in history.

The Faith has been present for about 1300 years in China: The Tang Emperor Gaozong gave official authority to allow Muslims to practice their Religion in the city of Xian, in the Shaanxi Province, in 651AD while The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) died in 632AD. (1)

Islam gradually began to spread across the Silk Road during the "7th to the 10th centuries through preach Jihad, trade and diplomatic exchanges (2)

According to Chinese Muslims' traditional accounts, Islam was first introduced to China in 616-18 AD by the companions of the prophet Muhammad: Hazrat Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas. (3)

Variety of Muslim natives.

Muslims were called with variant names like, Hui, Huihui, Dungen, zhongyuan muslim, pantheys etc. Hui Muslims are an East Asian ethnic Group predominantly composed of Chinese speaking adherents of Islam distributed throughout China, mainly in the northwestern Provinces of the country and the Zhongyuan region. According to the 2011 census, China is home to approximately 10.5 million Hui people, the majority of whom are Chinese-speaking Practitioners of Islam, though some may practice other religions. The 110,000 Dungan people of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also Considered part of the Hui ethnicity. (4)

“According to a Cambridge researcher Dru.C gladeny: The Hui, the most numerous of ten Muslim nationalities in china, are spread across the length and breadth of the country and often hold nothing in common with each other except Islam. Other Muslim people in china maintain linguistic, territorial and historical affinities that led to their special national identification. The Hui uniquely inhabit every city, town and 97% of all country in china and boast a 1300-years internal history within china. (5)

Muslims in Tang Dynasty

An Iranian Scholar ,Abul fazal Izzati wrote on the initial steps of Muslims in Tang dynasty of china that three companions of the prophet Muhammad returned to china from Arab in 637 by the Yunan-Manipur-Chittagong route, and they were Saa,d bin Abi Waqas, Suhaila Abu rajj,a and Hassan bin thabit(R.A) they were sent as an official envoy to Emperor Gaozong during Caliph Uthman's reign. The Tang emperor who is said to have received the envoy then ordered the construction of the Memorial mosque in Canton, the first mosque in the country, in memory of Prophet Muhammad(PBUH).(6)

Side by side the preaching of their great and peaceful religion Muslims settled themselves as merchants in Guangzhou and established trade day by day for they had find significance of trade from the saying of their prophet as well as found Importance from the Holy Quran also.

Trading and business have been declared by the prophet as a very much beneficial way and blessed source of income in Allah's eye.

The Prophet said. التاجر الصدوق الأمين مع النبيين والصديقين والشهداء

“A merchant dealing with fairness of truth will be with Prophets and True speakers and martyrs ,,(7)

Moreover, Muslims find significance in Holy Quran also as term which is used as ابتغاء فضل الله which means Searching of Allah's Blessing. (8)

These were the Inspirations due to which Muslims paid obligation of searching Halal and Tayyab Business as well as did Jihad in Allah's way and preached their peaceful religion far beyond the corners of the world.

In short, Agitation raised against Muslim Merchants so rebels of

Guangzhou killed Muslim Arab and Persian natives who were 120,000 approximately in number. Emperor of Guangzhou was unable to resist and control the situation so in the year 751, Abbasids defeated Tang dynasty at the battle of Talas resulted in Muslim control of Transoxiana for the next 400 years. (9)

Song Dynasty and Golden Character of Amir syid(So-fei-er)

Muslims paid a major role in import /export industry in the age of song dynasty even in 1070 the song king shenzong united more than five thousand Muslims from bukhara to settle in china between shin-a liu empire in northeast. Later on, Muslims settled between the sung capital and yen-ching (Currently Beijing) these Muslims were led by prince Amir syid (so-fei-er,a Chinese name) who was called as father of Muslim Community in China .Prior to him Islam was called in song Dynasty as Dashi-fa (laws of Arab) .He renamed it Huihui jiao(religion of huihui).(10) Hagra Hamda reported that in 1080, another group of 10,000 Muslims men and women to join sofier. They all were settled in various provinces of china.Pu-shougeng was a prominent Muslim foreigner trader showed his endless loyalty to song dynasty .In 1276 loyal of song empire launched a resistance against Mongols in the leadership of pu-shongeng .

After successful invasion against Mongols pu-shogeng was appointed as military commissioner for Fujian and Guangdong. (11)

Yuan dynasty and outstanding contribution of Hui Muslims

During the Mongol-founded Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), a number of Muslims settled and well established in China. The Mongols used Arab, Persian and Buddhist Uyghur as administrators who were known as semu which means ("various eye color") to act as officers of taxation and finance. Muslims headed many corporations in China in the initial age of Yuan period. Muslim scholars were brought to work on calendar making and astronomical research. The famous architect Yeheidie'erding (Amir al-Din) worked as an expert architecture and helped to design the construction of the capital of the Yuan Dynasty, Dadu, otherwise known as Khanbaliq or Khanbaligh, the predecessor of present-day Beijing. (12)

Ming and Qing Dynasties, Golden era of Muslim Community.

According to Ming code of law and its article 122, Ming Emperor Hongwu passed a law in his dynasty that it was dire need that Mongols and Asian Muslim will have to be settle in china. Gradually Muslims became very much influential in Govt circles. (13)

Six of the Ming dynasty founder Hongwu Emperor 's most trusted Generals were Muslim including Lan Yu who, in 1388, led a strong imperial Ming army out of the Great Wall and won a decisive victory over the Mongols in Mongolia, effectively ending the Mongol dream to reconquer China.(14)

Zhu yuanshang wrote a praise of Islam titled “, the Hundred word Eulogy”.It is also said that His Majesty ordered to build Mosques in the two capital cities Xinjing and Nanjing.His Majesty also wrote an Eulogy also on praise of prophet Muhammad's virtue. The youngle Emperor took the services of Zheng, perhaps the most famous chines Muslim and china,s foremost explorer to lead seven expeditions to the Indian ocean in 1405.Mosque architecture began to follow traditional Chinese architecture.(15)

This era is considered the Golden age of Islam in china even Nanjing became a very important center of Islamic study. Muslims get maximum freedom of religion with no restriction of worship and to perform any obligation. (16)

Conclusion

Muslims of china played a pivotal role to generate and to establish the whole region of China .Muslims spread throughout the whole provinces and all corners .They were successful traders and merchants ,explorers, expert architects, Generals and Army commissioners preachers .In their early history ,Muslims residing in china had closer interactions with adherents of other various faiths .Muslims showed good interfaith harmony even they treated the work of confusious with considerable respect, pointing out harmony between two doctrines and ethical norms. Muslim General Ma Bufang allowed polytheists to worship without any

restriction and also to Christian missionaries even his son received Ma jiuan received silver cup from Christian missionaries. Islam influenced technology, science, philosophy and the arts. In terms of material culture, one finds decorative motifs from central Asian Islamic architecture and calligraphy. In short, it seems Muslims of today will make and establish a healthy relation with china through CPEC again as it was started in the early age.

References

1. Islam's history in China is nearly as old as the religion. Retrieved from TRT world magazine on 20 june 2020 from <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/islam-s-1300-year-history-in-china-29583>
2. Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Tombs & Ethnic Folklore-Hui Identity*, in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, California, vol.16, No.3, Aug. 1987, p. 498, p. 498
3. Ibid
- 4, The Economist Magazine. "By choosing assimilation, China's Hui have become one of the world's most successful Muslim minorities". *The Economist*. 8 October 2016. Retrieved 8 October 2016. <https://www.economist.com/node/21573751/2016/10>
- 5. Dru C. Gladney , *The Study of Islam in China*, Volume 27, Issue 1
- July 1993, pp. 23-30 Retrieved from:
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-middle-east-studies/article/study-of-islam-in-china-some-recent-research/81B42A2EF3A6F260445338156802147B>
6. Abul-Fazl Ezzati, 1994, *The Spread of Islam*, Tehran: Ahlul Bayt World Assembly Publications, pp. 300,303, 333
7. -الترمذی، محمد بن عیسیٰ - السنن الترمذی - دار السلام - لاہور - ج ۹، ۱۲۰۹
8. -الجمعیۃ - ۱۰
9. Frank Brinkley (1902). *China: its history, arts and literature*, Volume 2 BOSTON AND TOKYO: J.B.Millet company. pp. 149, 150, 151, 152. Retrieved 2011-12-14. Original from the University of California.

-
10. Israeli, Raphael (2002), *Islam in China*, United States of America: Lexington Books. p 283.2
 11. Hagra, Hamada (2019). "Xi'an Daxuexi Alley Mosque: Historical and Architectural Study" *Egyptian Journal of Archaeological and Restoration Studies "EJARS"*. 1: 97–113. Archived from the original on 2019-12-13. Retrieved 2019-07-05.
 12. Houissa, Ali. "LibGuides: Exhibition: Islam in Asia: Diversity in Past and Present: Islam in China" *guides.library.cornell.edu*. Archived from the original on 2019-11-10. Retrieved 2019-11-10.
 13. Jiang, Yonglin (2011). *The Mandate of Heaven and The Great Ming Code*. University of Washington Press. p. 125
 14. Farmer, Edward L., ed. (1995). *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation: The Reordering of Chinese Society Following the Era of Mongol Rule*. BRILL. p. 82
 15. Maria Jaschok; Jingjun Shui (2000). *The history of women's mosques in Chinese Islam: a mosque of their own* (illustrated ed.). Psychology Press. p. 77.
 16. Dillon, Michael (1999), *China's Muslim Hui Community*, Curzon. P 338.