The Contributions of Wang Daiyu (ca. 1590–1658) in the Intellectual Chinese Islamic Tradition*

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Abstract
Muslims have long constituted a minority in China, yet over centuries they integrated into local culture through intellectual exchange. From the Tang (618–907) to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Chinese Muslim scholars engaged with indigenous philosophical and religious traditions. This article examines the Islamic intellectual tradition in China through the contributions of Wang Daiyu 王岱舆 (ca. 1590–1658), a key figure of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Drawing on descriptive and textual analysis, it explores how Wang articulated Islamic teachings using classical Chinese concepts. His major works—*Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* 正教真诠, *Qīngzhēn Dàxué* 清真大学, and *Xīzhēn Zhèngdá* 希真正答—laid the foundation for Chinese Islamic literature and helped bridge Islamic and Chinese civilisations through shared intellectual discourse.

Keywords:
Wang Daiyu, Chinese Muslim, intellectual Islamic tradition, Islamic key term, and Islām.

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Introduction

As Islām spread into China, Muslim scholars developed a distinctive educational framework to meet the intellectual needs of their communities.[1] Knowledge in fields such as philosophy, theology, and metaphysics—originally conveyed in Arabic and Persian—was gradually rendered into Chinese by authoritative teachers.[2] These languages not only housed the core of the Islamic intellectual tradition but also remained dominant in regions near Northwest China, thereby shaping the textual sources accessed by Chinese Muslims. The Chinese writing system, being logographic, represents meaning and sound through individual characters. For instance, *wénzì* 文字 is phoneticised through tonal variation[3] and constructed from multiple strokes (*bǐhuà* 笔划), i.e., lines, hooks, and dots that are drawn to form characters.[4] Unlike Arabic, which is an alphabetical script based on root-word morphology, Chinese poses inherent challenges to accurately translating the semantic depth of Islamic terms. The complexity of conveying metaphysical concepts across such linguistic boundaries prompted Chinese Muslim scholars to establish a formalised system of religious education known as the Hall Scripture School (*jīngtáng jiàoyù* 经堂教育) in the sixteenth century.[5] This institution became instrumental in training a new generation of scholars who could navigate both Islamic and Chinese epistemological traditions.

By the seventeenth century, this educational movement produced major figures such as Wang Daiyu 王岱舆 (ca. 1590–1658)[6], Ma Zhu (1640–ca. 1710), and Liu Zhi (ca. 1660–1730),[7] who together contributed to the development of a body of Chinese-language Islamic literature referred to as the *Han Kitāb*. This corpus may be considered analogous to the *turāth* tradition of the broader

1. Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, *Pemikiran dan Pembinaan Tamadun: Transformasi Modal Insan ke Arah Negara Maju* (Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Kenegaraan BTN, 2012). An updated and new edition by the same author can be found in *Pemikiran dan Tamadun* (Kuantan: Pusat Kajian Sejarah dan Tamadun al-Sultan Abdullah (AL-ASAR), 2022), 126–127.
2. Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (New York: Curzon Press, 1999), 47. See Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 18, 38, and 118.
3. Chaofen Sun, *Chinese: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8.
4. Ibid., 107.
5. For further details see Kristian Petersen, "Reconstructing Islam: Muslim Education and Literature in Ming-Qing China," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23, no. 3 (2006): 24–53.
6. The date is only an approximation. See Donald Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1981), 72.
7. The date is only an approximation. See Donald Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education), 1986, 72. See also idem, *Islamic Literature*, 72.

Islamic world. Wang Daiyu was an influential Chinese Muslim scholar of the seventeenth century, affiliated with the Ḥanafī-Māturidī school of Sunnī Islām. He played a pivotal role in the Islamisation of Chinese-language scholarship, producing foundational texts that conveyed Islamic teachings using indigenous terminology. His most renowned work, *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* 正教真诠 (*Real Commentary on the True Teaching*), is often viewed as a pragmatic response[8] to the need for articulating religious truths in a manner intelligible to Chinese readers. His other writings include *Qīngzhēn Dàxué* 清真大学 (*The Great Learning of the Pure and Real*) and *Xīzhēn Zhèngdá* 希真正答 (*Rare and True Answers*). Wang's *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*, composed in 1642, charted a new intellectual course for Chinese Muslim scholars associated with the Hall Scripture School.[9] His works on the religion of Islām reflect the true essence of the worldview of Islām, as illustrated by the following statement:

「正教得真主明命，至圣真传，是以了然明白，绝无疑贰。」[10]

Zhèngjiào dé zhēnzhǔ míng mìng, zhì shèng zhēnchuán, shì yǐ liǎo rán míngbái, jué wúyí èr.[11]

8. Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick, and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 6.
9. Hall Scripture School, or Scripture Hall education system had a dual feature. In one perspective, it was similar to the educational system of *madrasah* found mostly in religious communities (using, most of the time, the Arabic and Persian texts written by prominent Islamic scholars), while simultaneously differed in terms of language of instruction which was Chinese. They also made use of the books written in Chinese for things other than Islām, which were the Chinese classics and the official history of dynasties in China. For further details on this educational system and its curriculum, see Petersen, "Reconstructing Islam." This is somewhat similar to the Katip School of the Ottoman empire, which was also known as a *madrasah*. Refer George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981).
10. Wang Daiyu, *Zhèngjiào zhēnquán* 正教真诠 (*Real Commentary on the True Teaching*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1987), 52. This extant edition contains a preface by Liang Yi-Jun which states that it was written in Wanjiang (current day Anqing) in 1642 during the reign of Chongzhen Emperor (1627–1644) which was also the last two years of Ming dynasty. However, the distance between Anqing and Nanjing is around 300km. Thus, *Zhèngjiào zhēnquán* must be written earlier than 1642 before its arrival and dissemination in Anqing. The manuscript of this work is available at the Harvard-Yenching Institute, dated 1642 with the reference number MS 34607. Another edition is dated 1627 prefaced by He Han and Ding Yan. More recent edition is published in September 1987 by Ningxia People's Press at Yinchuan. The text is edited by Yang Huai Zhong as the chief editor and assisted by Yu Zhen Gui together with Liu Jing Long. This edition includes the block-printed edition dated 1931. The latest edition by Ningxia People's Press published in 1999 offered a comprehensive understanding of Wang Daiyu's entire works which include *Qīngzhēn dàxué* 清真大学 (*The Great Learning of the Pure and Real*) and *Xīzhēn zhèngdá* 希真正答 (*Rare and True Answers*). These editions included footnotes, annotations, and commentaries in modern Chinese language together with Wang Daiyu's original traditional Chinese language.
11. This is the pinyin transliteration system.

> The true teachings of Islam, revealed by the clear mandate of True God and the real transmission of the Prophet. The message it conveyed was simple and easily understandable; [it] never leads to confusion and misunderstanding.[12]

Wang Daiyu lived during a period of intellectual flourishing among the Chinese literati, in which Chinese Muslim scholars were deeply engaged with Confucian thought and tradition. His major works were composed within this environment. According to Zhao Chan in his *Genealogy*, these scholars referred to themselves as *shì* 士 (literati), or at times *duān shì* 端士 (upright literati). They were held in high regard by subsequent generations of Chinese Muslim teachers and respected within broader Chinese society.[13] Nanjing, where Wang Daiyu resided, was a leading intellectual hub and the centre of the Hall Scripture School. It thrived in terms of teacher quality, student enrolment, and scholarly activity, particularly in writing and publishing.[14] The city was also home to numerous *jìnshì* 進士 (highest degree holders) and affluent, Chinese-educated Muslims.[15]

Original Chinese-language Islamic writings began to appear in the seventeenth century. Though composed in Chinese, they reflected significant influence from Arabic and Persian sources.[16] Foundational Islamic thinkers shaped the dissemination of Islamic teachings in China and the Malay world through Arabic and Persian texts. Prominent scholars such as Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī (sixteenth century)[17] and Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (seventeenth century) drew heavily on these languages in their works.[18] From these same sources, Chinese Muslim scholars later developed a robust educational framework. This became central to their intellectual tradition and formed the basis of their study of Islām within the Chinese context.

12. The translation is an edited version from the translation by Sachiko Murata in her complete translation of *Zhèngjiào zhēnquán*. Sachiko Murata, *The First Islamic Classic in Chinese: Wang Daiyu's Real Commentary on the True Teaching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017).
13. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 100–101.
14. Kristian Petersen, *Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, Scripture, and Language in the Han Kitāb* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 45.
15. Ibid., 45.
16. Sachiko Murata, "Sufi Texts in Chinese," in *The Heritage of Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 376.
17. See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970).
18. For further details, see idem, *A Commentary on the* Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq *of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986).

The Hall Scripture School and its Influential Chinese Muslim Scholars from the 16th to 20th century

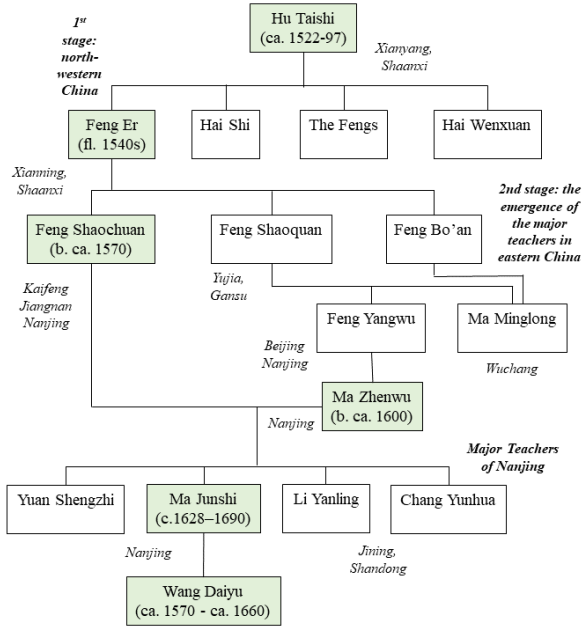
The Hall Scripture School was established by Hu Taishi (ca. 1522–1597)[19] and marked a major development in formalising a curriculum that integrated Islamic sciences with local Chinese literature.[20] Having studied in Central Asia and Arabia, Hu returned to Northwest China and developed an educational system aimed at preserving Islamic knowledge and producing learned Muslims.[21] Retaining the mosque-school structure, he introduced a more comprehensive curriculum than that found in most Islamic religious schools of the period. His most significant contribution was the inclusion of Arabic and Persian texts despite Chinese being the primary language of instruction. This initiative led some advanced students, together with Hu Taishi, to undertake translation activities among themselves.[22] Hu's students furthered his legacy by establishing schools (*madāris*) across China, including in Xianyang (his hometown), Xianning, Shandong, Kaifeng, and Nanjing. In Nanjing, Wang Daiyu received his education at the school of Ma Junshi (ca. 1628–1690), author of *Tiānfāng Wēi Zhēn Yàolüè* 天方微真要略 (*The Comprehensive Sketch on the Subtleties of Islām*).[23] The transmission of knowledge from Hu Taishi to Wang Daiyu can be traced through Ma Junshi's teacher, Feng Shaochuan, who had studied under Feng Er, a direct student of Hu Taishi.[24] Wang's legacy was carried forward by Liu Zhi, who adopted Wang's framework of Islamisation[25] in articulating Islamic concepts in Chinese. Liu authored several key works on Islamic principles, metaphysics, rituals, and the biography of the Prophet.

In the nineteenth century, Ma Dexin (1794–1874) acknowledged the contributions of *Han Kitāb* scholars in integrating Islamic thought into written Chinese. However, he placed greater emphasis on the Arabic language, encouraging Chinese Muslims to reconnect with their heritage and align

19. Hu Taishi, also known Hu Dengzhou, was born in the city of Wei in Xianyang, Shanxi province. At an early age, he had already been exposed to the Confucian classics and the history of the Chinese dynasties, as well as the traditional Islamic education from a local mosque. Later he travelled to Central Asia, to other Muslim countries, and eventually arrived at Makkah. He was staying at Makkah for several years to study Islam. When he returned to China, Hu Taishi initiated this new curriculum which was later known as the Scripture Hall Educational System and gave rise to the tradition of *Han Kitāb* tradition. See Petersen, "Reconstructing Islam," 30–31.
20. Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 41.
21. Ibid.
22. James D. Frankel, *Islam in China* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021), 71.
23. Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, 1986.
24. Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 240–241.
25. On the usage of the term Islamisation and its general meaning, refer al-Attas, *Islām and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 44–45; see also David Lee, *Contextualization of Sufi Spirituality in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century China: The Role of Liu Zhi* (c. 1662–c.1730) (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015).

themselves with the broader Muslim world. Arabic became the principal reference in his works, which incorporated significantly more Arabic terms and transliterations than those of Wang Daiyu or Liu Zhi. This is evident in his *Cháojìn tú jì* 朝觐途记 (*Record of the Pilgrimage Journey*),[26] where Arabic script accompanies each term to familiarise readers with its original form. Ma Dexin's approach was continued by Ma Lianyuan (1841–1903), whose model is described as one that "simultaneously combines the local conservation of Chinese-language interpretations of Islām with a concerted return to Arabic Islamic sources, by both consuming and producing them."[27] This dual orientation—preserving local articulation while re-engaging with Arabic texts—reflected a broader aspiration to situate Chinese Islām within the global ummah. The intellectual lineage from Hu Taishi to Wang Daiyu, and subsequently to Liu Zhi, Ma Dexin, and Ma Lianyuan, demonstrates a dynamic tradition of adaptation, continuity, and renewal in Chinese Islamic scholarship. Figure 1 below illustrates the intellectual lineage from Hu Taishi to Wang Daiyu (coloured green), as reconstructed by the present author of this article from the above references.

Figure 1: Intellectual lineage from Hu Taishi to Wang Daiyu.[28]



26. Kristian Petersen, "Shifts in Sino-Islamic Discourse: Modeling Religious Authority through Language and Travel," *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014): 340–369.
27. Ibid.
28. See Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 39–56 and 240–245.

The process of Islamisation in China can be traced through key figures spanning five centuries—from Hu Dengzhou (sixteenth century), Ma Junshi and Wang Daiyu (seventeenth century), Liu Zhi (eighteenth century), Ma Dexin (nineteenth century), to Ma Lianyuan (twentieth century), as partially illustrated in Figure 1. Hu Dengzhou initiated the first phase of Islamisation by transmitting foundational and *sharī'ah* knowledge acquired from the Middle East—primarily through Arabic and Persian texts—within the framework of the Hall Scripture School. This phase lasted roughly two centuries, paving the way for the second phase,[29] inaugurated by Wang Daiyu's intellectual contributions. Wang Daiyu is regarded as one of the earliest and most significant authors in the *Han Kitāb* tradition. His writings covered a wide range of disciplines, including *fiqh, kalām, taṣawwuf,* and *falsafah*. He articulated Islamic theology, cosmology, doctrines, and practices using rational and spiritual explanations grounded in Chinese terminology and indigenous conceptual frameworks. According to Zhao Chan's *Genealogy*, Wang's intellectual engagement was so compelling that he persuaded a Buddhist monk to embrace Islām after a theological debate.[30] The transition to the second phase of Islamisation is most evident in the works of Liu Zhi, particularly his magnum opus, *Tiānfāng Xìnglǐ* 天方性理 (*The Metaphysics of Islām*).[31]

Parallel to these developments, further Islamisation efforts can be seen in the creation of the Sino-Arabic script known as *xiao'er jing* 小儿经 in the mid-seventeenth century.[32] This system transliterated Mandarin dialect using Arabic script, serving as an approximate phonetic representation. Though used within a limited community, it comprised 36 consonants, based on the 28 Arabic letters with additional modifications to diacritics (*tashkīl*) to match Chinese phonology. This creative adaptation paralleled the development of the Jawi script in the Malay world.[33] Table 1 illustrates the *xiao'erjing* characters.

29. The phases of Islamisation were taken from the writings of al-Attas, *Islām and Secularism*, 170–171. Applying al-Attas's phases of Islamisation—developed for the Malay world—directly to the case of China is, at this point, premature. More research is needed to understand how Islam spread in China before using a framework drawn from a different context. Nonetheless, al-Attas's phases of Islamisation can offer a fruitful directive to that end.

30. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 105.

31. This work of Liu Zhi was completed in 1704. Among the available editions of this work are Liu Zhi, *Tianfang Xingli* (Shanghai, 1863; Beijing, 1922; Shanghai, 1928, in Satō, Ryū Chi no Shizengaku, 279–362). In the 19th century, the work was translated into Arabic by a Chinese Muslim scholar by the name of Ma Lianyuan (Muḥammad Nūr al-Ḥaqq ibn Luqmān al-Ṣīnī) with the title of *Sharḥ al-Laṭā'if*. It was also translated into English by Murata et al. as *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*.

32. Florian Sobieroj, "Standardisation in Manuscripts written in Sino-Arabic Scripts and Xiaojing," in *Creating Standards: Interactions with Arabic Script in 12 Manuscript Cultures*, edited by Dmitry Bondarev, Alessandro Gori, and Lameen Souag (Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 177–216.

33. Refer al-Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 1999), 41–44.

Table 1: All 38 of the *xiao'er jing* letters with their corresponding Roman letters.

چ	ج	ڧ	ث	ت	پ	ب	ا
ch	zh	q	q/x	t	p	b	a
س	ژ	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح
s/x	r	z	r	z	d/j	h	h
ع	ظ	ط	ڞ	ض	ص	ش	سْ
e	z	z	c	ḍ	s	sh/x	s
ل	ڬ	گ	ک	ك	ق	ف	غ
l	j	g	k	k	k	f	ġ
		ى	ي	و	ه	ن	م
		yi/i	y	wu/u	h	n	m/n

Figure 2 shows an example of the use of *xiao'er jing* letters in the work by Ma Tianmin, titled Questions and Answers on Islamic Prayer and Fasting (*Taḥāwur al-Kalām fī Masā'il al-Ṣalāt wa al-Ṣiyām* or *Yīsīlán jiào lǐbài fēngzhāi wèndá* 伊斯兰教礼拜斋问答).[34] Table 2 provides the transcription of the *xiao'er jing* text from *Taḥāwur al-Kalām fī Masā'il al-Ṣalāt wa al-Ṣiyām* as shown in Figure 2. The excerpt begins at the sixth line from the bottom of the right-hand page. Only the text written in *xiao'er jing* and its English translation are presented in Sobieroj's article. Based on the brief edition found in Sobieroj's study,[35] parts of the Arabic text have been supplemented by the present author of this article (see the top two lines of Figure 2). The modern Chinese text has also been added in accordance with the translation provided in Table 2. The role, use, and authority of the Arabic language in the Islamic tradition—as displayed by Ma Dexin, who wrote his works solely in Arabic; followed by Ma Lianyuan, who encouraged the use of the *xiao'er jing* transliteration system; and as demonstrated by Ma Tianmin in the mid-twentieth century (as shown in Figure 2 below)—are examples of the continuous process of Islamisation.[36] The works of Chinese Muslim scholars continue to be studied by contemporary scholars, especially the extant texts belonging to the *Han Kitāb* tradition. These works embody both civilisational heritages.

34. Ma Tianmin ibn Ma'ṣūm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, *Taḥāwur al-Kalām fi Masā'il al-Ṣalāt wa al-Ṣiyām* (Linxia: Baozi Mosque, 1985–1986). For further discussion, see Sobieroj, "Standardisation," 197–200.
35. Sobieroj, "Standardisation."
36. Ibid.

Figure 2: Six lines of Arabic text that are accompanied by 7 lines of *xiao'er jing* transcription covering about two thirds of the page in a work by Ma Tianmin.

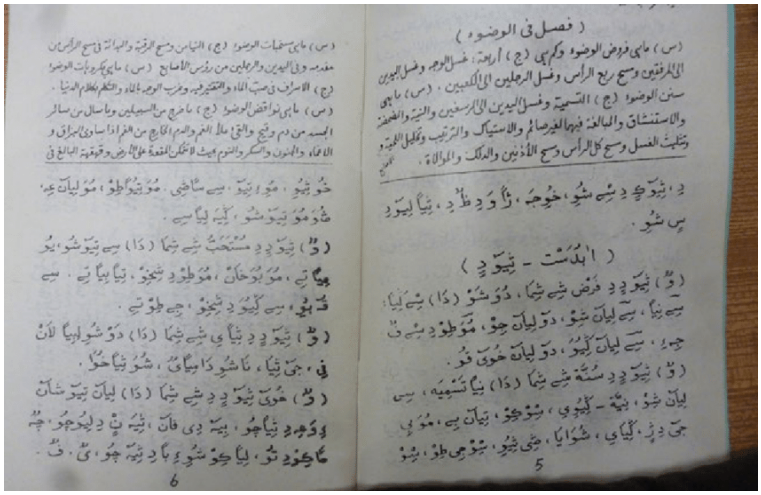


Table 2 Text extracted from Figure 2 on the right-hand side, starting from the sixth line until the third line from the bottom.

(وٌ) ثِيَوْ دِ دِ فرض شِي شِمَا ، دُوَ شوْ (دَا) سي كِّ يا : سي نِيا ، سي لِيَان شوْ ، دَوْ لِيَان جِوْ ، مُوْ طِوْ دِ سِي فٌ جِ ءِ ، سِي لِيَان كِّ يَوْ ، دَوْ لِيَان خُوَى قُو	*xiao'er jing* 小儿经
(问)小既的 فرض 是什么，多少 *(Wèn) xiǎo jì de farḍ shì shénme, duōshǎo* (答)四件：洗脸，洗脸瘦，洗两手，到两肘，抹头的四副之一，洗两脚，到两踝骨 *(Dá) sì jiàn: Xǐliǎn, xǐliǎn shòu, xǐ liǎngshǒu, dào liǎng zhǒu, mǒ tóu de sì fù zhī yī, xǐ liǎng jiǎo, dào liǎng huái gǔ*	Chinese (Mandarin)
(س) ما هي فروض الوضوء, وكم هي (ج) أربعة, غسل الوجه غسل اليدين إلى المرفقين وسمع ربع الرأس وغسل الرجلين إلى الكعبين	Arabic
Q: "What duties are involved in the minor ablution? How many are there?" A: "There are four duties: to wash the face, to wash both hands up to the elbow, to wipe a quarter of your head, [and] to wash both feet up to the ankles."	English Translation

Han Kitāb Tradition and its Prominent Sources

The *Han Kitāb turāth* tradition comprises texts on Islamic teachings produced between the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries. It represents a standardised body of knowledge used to train scholars versed in both Islamic sciences and Chinese literature and culture,[37] particularly within the Confucian framework. Some scholars consider the *Han Kitāb* tradition to span nearly five centuries, from the 1500s to the mid-1900s. As proficiency in Arabic and Persian declined among Chinese Muslims, the need to teach Islām in Chinese became pressing. Consequently, the *Han Kitāb* tradition emerged as the foundational curriculum of the Hall Scripture School,[38] introducing new features into Chinese Islamic pedagogy. Wang Daiyu was one of the early contributors to this tradition, while Liu Zhi is often regarded as its principal representative, with Yuan Guozo attributing twenty-nine works to him.[39] These texts, reproduced with similar form, style, and subject matter, enabled the instructional system to spread throughout China within a few generations. Later scholars actively enriched Islamic literature in the Chinese cultural context.[40] Chinese Muslim scholars such as Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi, and Ma Dexin drew on works in Arabic and Persian authored by prominent Muslim thinkers.[41] Their writings include translations, commentaries, and original expositions. A few key Arabic and Persian texts served as primary references, some of which were translated into Chinese by local scholars. In its early stage, the *Han Kitāb* corpus consisted mainly of translations of Ṣūfī texts.

One such source was *Miṣād al-ʿIbād min al-Mabdaʾ ilā al-Maʿād* by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1221),[42] translated from Persian into Chinese as *Guīzhēn Yào Dào* 归真要道 (*The Essentials of Returning to the Truth*) by Wu Zixian (伍子先).[43] Comprising forty chapters in five parts, the book outlines man's spiritual journey, ascent to certainty, moral development, and comprehension of divine attributes. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī also authored *Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl* (*Aromas of Beauty*

37. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 35.
38. Ibid, 38.
39. Petersen, *Interpreting Islam in China*, 6.
40. Wei Wang, "The Evolution of Chinese Muslim's Classical Learning and Schools in the Ming and Qing Dynasties," *Religions* 13, (2022): 553.
41. Petersen, *Interpreting Islam in China*, 57–62.
42. Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Miṣād al-ʿIbād min al-Mabdaʾ ilā l-Maʿād* , ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥi (Tehran: Bongahi Tarjuma va Nashr Kitāb, 1973). The text was translated into English by Hamid Algar, *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1982).
43. It was translated into Chinese approximately in 1660. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite made reference to the later publication in Wu Zixian, *Guīzhēn yào dào* 归真要道 (n.p., 1891). See Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 129–133.

and Preambles of Majesty),[44] a reflective work on spiritual experiences during retreat and mentorship, touching on key themes in *taṣawwuf*. It is also considered to be his intellectual autobiography. Other influential references include *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* (*Memorial of the Friends of God*)[45] by Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 1230), a Persian biographical work on ninety-six Ṣūfī saints, highlighting their virtues, miracles (*karāmāt*), and spiritual wisdom. Another major text is *Ashiʿat al-Lamaʿāt* (*Rays of the Flashes*)[46] by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492), a Persian commentary on Fakhr al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī's *al-Lamaʿāt*, which addresses metaphysical themes including divine attributes, existence, and manifestations of Divine Love. This was the first of Jāmī's works translated into Chinese.[47] Jāmī's *Lawāʾiḥ* (*Gleams*)[48] also held influence. Written in both prose and verse, it summarises core ideas of Ibn ʿArabī, notably the doctrines of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (transcendent unity of existence) and *tawḥīd* (Divine Unity).[49] *Maqṣad-i Aqṣā* (*The Furthest Goal*)[50] by ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafī (d. ca. 1300) is another concise but influential work. It includes chapters on prophecy, sainthood, as well as understanding God's essence, attributes, and acts, prefaced by an extensive introduction. Also prominent is *Gulistān* (*The Rose Garden*) [51] by Saʿdī of Shīrāz (d. 1291 or 1294), a celebrated Persian literary work divided into eight chapters of prose, poetry, and moral tales. It provided a model of ethical instruction through narrative and reflection. *Kāshif al-Asrār* [52] by Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī[53] (d. 1317) is another important work, inspired by a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet pertaining to the "70,000 veils of light and darkness that separate Allah [from His creation],"[54] concerning the journey on the path of the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), that is, God.

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44. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, *Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*, ed. Yūsuf Zaydān (Cairo: Dār Suʿād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1993).
45. Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, ed. Mānal al-Yamani ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, 2 vols. (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li al-Kitāb, 2006).
46. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Ashiʿat al-Lamaʿāt*, ed. Hādi Rustgār Muqaddam Gūhri (Qom: Būstān Kitāb Qom, 1964).
47. Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yü's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 115. Liu Zhi was the first Muslim Chinese scholar who translated the work into Chinese.
48. ʿAbd al-Raḥman Jāmī, *Lawāʾiḥ*, ed. M. H. Tasbīḥī (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Furūghī, 1342/1963). Its English translation is by E. H. Whinfield and M. M. Kazvīnī, *Lawāʾiḥ: A Treatise on Sufism* (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1906).
49. Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, 115.
50. See the discussion and analysis of the work in Lloyd Ridgeon, *ʿAzīz Nasafī* (Richmond: Surrey, 1998). Other important works of ʿAzīz Nasafī are *Bayān al-Tanzīl*, *Kashf al-Ḥaqāʾiq*, *Kitāb al-Insān al-Kāmil*, and *Zubdat al-Ḥaqāʾiq* most of which were written in Persian.
51. Saʿdī Shīrāzī, *Gulistān*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm Qarīb Garakāni (Tehran: n.p., 1962).
52. Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbdurrahmān-i Isfarāyinī, *Le Révélateur des Mysteres: Kâshif al-Asrâr*, ed. and trans. Hermann Landolt (Paris, 1986).
53. Abū Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Kisraqi was a Ṣūfī master in a Ṣūfī tariqah.
54. Reported by Abū al-Yaʿlā in his *Musnad*, al-Ṭabarānī in his *al-Kabīr* and Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim.

A major factor contributing to the citation and adoption of the aforementioned Arabic and Persian works was the geographical proximity between China and Persia.[55] Diplomatic and commercial relations between the two regions date back to the second century, long before the advent of Islām. Following Islām's arrival—particularly during the ninth and tenth centuries—the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad initiated formal diplomatic missions with China. However, early Muslim sources offer scant information on Sino-Persian relations and, for instance, do not record Ziyād bin Ṣāliḥ's victory over the Chinese at Ṭarāz (Talas), east of Samarkand, in 751.[56] Chinese records, for their part, often failed to differentiate between diplomacy, tribute missions, and commercial exchanges—if such distinctions existed at all. During the Abbasid period, flourishing ties between Persian territories and Chinese communities led to sustained intellectual exchange. It was through this corridor of contact that the Islamic intellectual tradition made its way into China in more concrete terms.[57] Wang Daiyu's writings reflect indirect influence from these exchanges. Notably, his treatment of the creation of man and the cosmos in *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* (*The Real Commentary on the True Teaching*) closely follows the structure and content of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's *Mirṣād al-Ɨbād*.

Following Wang Daiyu's pioneering work in 1642, a number of scholars contributed to the burgeoning *Han Kitāb* corpus through translation, commentary, and original authorship.[58] Zhang Junshi (Zhang Zhong, 1584–1661) was instrumental in this development. He translated the Persian Ṣūfī text *Imān-i Majmūʿ* into Chinese as *Guīzhēn Zǒng Yì* 归真总义 (*General Principles of the Return*), and *Chahr Faṣl* (*Essentials of the Four Chapters*) as *Sìpiān Yàodào* 四篇要道. He also wrote a work of *kalām* titled *Kè Lǐ Mò Ɉiě* 克理默解. Wu Zixian (Wu Zunqi) later rendered *Mirṣād al-Ɨbād* into Chinese as *Guīzhēn yào dào* 归真要道 (*The Essentials of Returning to the Truth*). After these key translations, a new generation of original authors emerged—Chinese Muslim scholars who composed works on Islamic principles directly in Chinese, often using

55. See some explanations in I. Ecsedy, "Early Persian Envoys in Chinese Courts," in *Studies in the Sources of the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta (Budapest, 1979), 153–162.

56. The Battle of Talas was the first and only military clash between the Tang Dynasty of China and the Abbasid Caliphate in the summer of 751 to vie for control over the Syr Darya region of Central Asia. Because the province was on the Silk Road, its control was commercially advantageous to the Abbasid Arabs. The battle's outcome, an Abbasid triumph, had significant immediate and long-term effects on local and world history. Details on the history of battle and its implication to the Central Asia, see James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroad: A History of Xinjang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017) and Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

57. H.A.R Gibb, "Chinese Records of the Arabs in Central Asia," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 2, no. 4 (1923): 613–622.

58. Alexander Wein, "Islām in China: The *Hān Kitāb* Tradition in the Writings of Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu and Liu Zhi, With A Note on Their Relevance for Contemporary Islam," *Islam and Civilisational Renewal Journal* 7, no. 1 (2016): 27–46.

Confucian terms and philosophical frameworks. Wang Daiyu was the first of these. Ma Zhu followed, producing in 1684 what is widely regarded as his magnum opus, *Qīngzhēn Zhǐnán* 清真指南 (*al-Murshid ilā ʿUlūm al-Islām* or *The Guide to the Sciences of Islām*), a voluminous and highly respected text within the *Han Kitāb* tradition. The most systematic writer of the tradition was Liu Zhi (Liu Jia Lian). His three major works gained wide influence: *Tiānfāng Xìnglǐ* 天方性理 (*The Principles and Metaphysics of Islām*, 1704), *Tiānfāng diǎnlǐ* 天方典禮 (*The Rules and Proprieties of Islām*, 1710), and *Tiānfāng Zhì Shèng Shí Lù* (*The Record of the Last Prophet of Islām*, 1726). He also wrote *Tiānfāng Zìmǔ Jiě Yì* 天方字母解義 (*Explanation of Arabic Script Letters*),[59] contributing further to the Chinese articulation of Islamic knowledge.

The Background and Contributions of Wang Daiyu (王岱與)

Several sources inform the background and contributions of Wang Daiyu, including his own autobiography. His family, he states in the preface to *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*,[60] came from Arabia, known to the Chinese as *tiānfāng* 天方, and migrated to China during the reign of Emperor Taizu of the Ming dynasty (r. 1368–1398) by imperial invitation. He descended from a lineage of *'ulamā'* (religious scholars) who had lived in Nanjing for several generations.[61] His great-grandfather arrived from Makkah to offer tribute and was appointed to the Imperial Academy of Astronomy after resolving complex astronomical problems faced by the emperor. Within this context, the astrolabe—an advanced scientific instrument in the Arab world—represented the technological sophistication of Islamic civilisation, which was likely known to the Chinese court through envoys, travellers, and scholars. Wang Daiyu's ancestors, knowledgeable in astronomy and cosmology, were said to have calculated the heights of the nine heavens and the depths of the nine seas.[62] Wang was deeply aware of his lineage's prestige and saw his writings as a means to uphold the honour of his family.

He lived in Nanjing during the Ming–Qing transition, later relocating to Beijing with the support of patrons. The last Ming emperor, Chongzhen (r. 1627–1644), was overthrown by the Manchurians in 1644, ushering in the Qing dynasty under Emperor Shunzhi.[63] Wang Daiyu's grandfather introduced him

59. Petersen, *Interpreting Islam in China*, 67–70; Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 144–153.
60. Wang Daiyu, *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*, 1.
61. Ibid.
62. The "nine heavens and nine seas" is a metaphor that illustrates the unimaginable vastness of the universe. See Tu Weiming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature," in *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 70 and 73–74.
63. Tan Koon San, *Dynastic China: An Elementary History* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2014), 272 and 463. See also John Keay, *China: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 369–479; or regarding the dominant and influential philosophy during that time, see Fung Yu Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York: The Free Press, 1948).

to Islamic teachings from an early age.[64] He only began his study of Chinese history, philosophy, and *Xìnglǐ* 性理 (*The Book of Nature and Principle*) at around eighteen, after mastering the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth, and Islamic languages. Under Ma Junshi,[65] at one of the leading branches of the Hall Scripture School, Wang absorbed a tradition of translating Arabic and Persian texts, especially in theology and Ṣūfī metaphysics. This grounding enabled him to contribute both to Islām and, to some extent, the Neo-Confucian scholarly tradition. Wang Daiyu became one of the earliest contributors to *Han Kitāb* scholarship, systematically writing about Islām in Chinese.[66] In his works,[67] he borrowed terms from the Three Teachings—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—to explain Islām to an audience more familiar with these traditions. His second major text, *The Great Learning of the Pure and Real* (*Qīngzhēn Dàxué* 清真大学), systematises Islamic principles using Confucian terminology. Its title combines *qīngzhēn* (清真, "pure and real," referring to Islām) with *dàxué* (大学, a title from the *Lǐ jì* 礼记 or *Book of Rites*, associated with Confucian moral education).[68] Although initially reluctant to write the book, Wang completed it with the hope that it would benefit his contemporaries and be refined by future generations. His work focuses not on polemical differences with other religions but on articulating Islām's core principles.

In his author's note, Wang humbly claimed that his religious knowledge was "a single drop in an ocean" and that his forty-chapter book conveyed only fragments of what he had learned. Though he acknowledged that the work expressed his own views, this did not stem from personal bias; rather, his writings were grounded in revelation—specifically, the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth. He firmly stated that his use of Buddhist and Daoist references to elucidate Islamic concepts did not imply a deficiency in Islamic sources. As he explained in the preface:

> 「予特著论以彼达此,悉属借用,顾其理何如耳,其词何一,非借又奚以二氏为异乎?」[69]
>
> *Yǔ tèzhe lùn yǐ bǐ dá cǐ, xī shǔ jièyòng, gùqílǐ hérú ěr, qí cí hé yī, fēi jiè yòu xī yǐ èr shì wèi yìhū?*

64. Wang Daiyu, *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*, 1.
65. For more details on their relationship, see Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 56.
66. Wein, "Islam in China," 27.
67. The year 1642 is the earliest date recorded in *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* (正教真诠) with the preface by Liang Yi-chun.
68. Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History*, 181. Dàxué 大学 is one of the books in the *Four Books*, together with the *Confucius Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. *The Four Books* was compiled during the Sung dynasty (960–1279) and was regarded as the primary text for Neo-Confucianism.
69. Wang Daiyu, *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*, 15.

> I wrote and discussed using their expressions precisely to make our teachings comprehensive. All the borrowed expressions I used were because of my concern to show how the principles work. The expressions do not carry the same meaning, but if I had not borrowed them, how could I make clear that these two doctrines are different from us?[70]

From the above quotation, it is clear that Wang Daiyu was firmly rooted in the worldview of Islām. His *tawḥīd*-centred methodology enabled him to harmonise certain Chinese values with Islamic truth, while critically rejecting elements incompatible with Islamic principles. In his magnum opus, *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*,[71] Wang articulated Islām's distinctive features within the Chinese intellectual context. Wang's interpretation of borrowed terms was marked by originality. The meanings he assigned did not necessarily correspond to their traditional Chinese interpretations, even when superficial similarities existed. Such resemblances should not be mistaken as proof of a shared truth. Similarity in expression does not imply sameness in meaning, let alone ideological identity. Two distinct worldviews cannot coexist within a single individual. One's worldview becomes the standard by which all others are evaluated, generating inevitable tension. This tension enables the individual—guided by foundational principles—to discern between competing truth claims. In Wang's case, he encountered Islām before engaging with other traditions, allowing him to assess them from within an Islamic framework. His writings became formative for Chinese Islamic scholarship, especially among the literati. They laid the groundwork for later intellectual contributions, particularly those of Liu Zhi, and fostered sustained engagement with Arabic among Chinese Muslims well into the twentieth century.

In the preface to *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán,* Liang Yi-Jun (d. 1642) identified two reasons why Islamic texts were scarce in China, despite claims that Islām was a complete religion: a lack of accessible content and linguistic limitations. Liang praised Wang Daiyu's intellectual calibre—his deep understanding of Islām and other traditions, and his mastery of both Arabic and Chinese. Liang wrote his preface in Anqing around 1642, when Wang was still in Nanjing, prior to relocating to Beijing in 1644 with the rise of the Qing dynasty. Though they lived in different cities, Liang's preface reflects the intellectual proximity among *Han Kitāb* scholars, who regularly commented on and responded to one another's works. Other prefaces, such as those by He Han (1657) and Ding Yan (date unknown), also attest to the high regard in which Wang's works were held. These authors highlighted his ability to distinguish Islām from Confucianism, his emphasis on Islamic sources, his articulation of Islām's

70. See Murata, *The First Islamic Classic in Chinese*, 39.

71. On this "*tawḥīd* method," see al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islām* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1995), 3.

presence in Chinese history, and his personal qualities—humility and intellectual confidence. Wang acknowledged the scarcity of Islamic resources in China, not only for Muslim readers but also for the Chinese literati interested in deeper knowledge of Islām. This scarcity prompted him to write *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* in a language accessible to most Chinese Muslims. He reportedly spent his days in scholarly discussion and his nights transcribing and refining the insights gained from these dialogues. Although the work does not include explicit citations, readers familiar with the Chinese literary tradition can detect the embedded influences. Wang made reference to major Chinese works, including Confucius's *The Analects* (*Lúnyǔ* 论语),[72] Laozi's *Dàodé Jīng* 道德经,[73] *The Book of Odes* (*Shījīng* 诗经),[74] Zhu Xi's *Reflection from Reading Books* (*Guān Shū Yǒu Gǎn* 观书有感),[75] and *The Great Compendium on Human Nature and Principle* (*Xìng Lǐ Dàquán Shū* 性理大全书),[76] among others.

The Main Ideas in *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* (正教真诠)

Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán is among the most foundational texts for articulating the principles of Islām within the context of Chinese Islamic history.[77] Composed around 1642, with a second edition dated 1657, it stands as Wang Daiyu's most extensive work. The text is structured into two volumes, each comprising twenty chapters, amounting to a total of forty chapters. In the first volume, Wang Daiyu presents a rational exposition of the truth of Islām, drawing clear distinctions between Islām and other Chinese traditions such as Confucianism, Daoism,

72. Written by Confucius and known as *the Analects of Confucius or the Sayings of Confucius.* It was translated into many languages. Some of the notable translations into English are by James Legge, "Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean," in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1 (Hong Kong: London Missionary Society; London: Trübner & Co., 1861); D.C. Lau, *Confucius Analects* (*Lun yü*) (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1979); and Burton Watson, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

73. Its first English translation was done by John Chalmers in 1868 and many translations appeared after that. See John Chalmers, *The Speculations on Metaphysics, Polity, and Morality of the "Old Philosopher" Lau-tsze* (London: Trübner & Co, 1868).

74. This is the oldest work or compilation of poetry in Chinese and is regarded as among the Classics compiled by Confucius. James Legge produced and published his translations of this work in 1871. See James Legge, "The She-king, or the Lessons from the States," in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 4 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1871); idem, *The She-king*, or *The Book of Ancient Poetry* (London: Trübner, 1876); idem, "The Shu king, The Religious Portions of the Shih King," in *The Sacred Books of China*, vol. 3 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1879).

75. Written by Zhu Xi, or Chu His, who was a philosopher, historian, poet, calligrapher, and politician. See the translation in *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, trans. and comp. by Wing-tsit Chan (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 588–653. See also Ch'en Ch'un, *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained (Pei-his tzu-i)*, trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

76. This is a compendium on Neo-Confucian teachings compiled under the supervision of Hu Guang. See Hu Guang, *Xìng lǐ dàquán shū* 性理大全书 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1986).

77. Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, 19.

and Buddhism. The second volume focuses on Islamic practices, explaining their spiritual and ethical dimensions while offering both social and spiritual justifications.[78] Approximately ten chapters are devoted to the nature of God and how Islamic conceptions differ from those in other traditions. In this context, Wang Daiyu introduces the term *zhēnyī* (真一) to refer to the Islamic understanding of God as the "True One."[79] Another ten chapters address the nature of man and the creation of the cosmos. Broadly speaking, these chapters deal with key themes in Islamic theology and cosmology, including discussions on divine attributes, the act of creation, prophethood, and the human relationship with God.

In *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán*, Wang Daiyu devotes several chapters to correcting what he sees as prevalent misinterpretations of the nature of God. These include chapters titled "Similarity to the Real" (*sìzhēn* 似真), "Changing the Real" (*yìzhēn* 易真), and "Darkening the Real" (*mèizhēn* 昧真). In particular, the chapter on "Darkening the Real" addresses the ways in which other religious traditions—namely Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and various ancient belief systems—obscure the proper understanding of the Divine. These chapters serve to clarify the uniqueness and purity of the Islamic conception of God in contrast to alternative cosmological and metaphysical views. Wang Daiyu also includes a chapter titled "Huihui" (*huíhui* 回回), which he explains as the return of the body to its origin in two ways and the return of the heart to its origin in two ways. Additionally, the first volume contains a chapter entitled "Husband and Wife" (*fūfù* 夫妇), where Wang Daiyu addresses topics such as marriage, celibacy, and the obligations of marital roles. Of particular note is his emphasis on the duty of obedience owed by a wife to her husband.

The second volume of *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* opens with a chapter entitled "The Five Constants" (*wǔcháng* 五常), which offers a detailed exposition of the five pillars of Islām. Beginning with the *shahādah* (profession of faith), Wang Daiyu systematically addresses all the pillars while simultaneously introducing a new set of five ethical principles to guide man's proper placement of himself (*adab*) in worldly life. These proposed virtues reflect his effort to harmonise Islamic teachings with moral expectations familiar to Chinese readers. Subsequent chapters in the second volume address a wide range of social and ethical issues, including filial piety, friendship, animal sacrifice, vegetarianism, gambling, the consumption of alcohol, usury, and the hoarding of wealth. The final three chapters focus on death and the afterlife. Taken together, the structure and content of the entire work reveal Wang Daiyu's intention to provide a holistic account of Islām—both theoretically and practically—that encompasses ritual observance, moral conduct, and metaphysical insight specifically adapted for Muslims living within the broader context of Chinese society.

78. Idem., *The First Islamic Classic in Chinese*, 2–3.
79. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 135.

Conclusion

The intellectual climate among Chinese Muslims underwent a significant transformation following the dissemination of Wang Daiyu's writings. Trained by influential scholars, Wang Daiyu helped redirect the focus of the Muslim community in China towards education and intellectual engagement. His works marked a turning point not only for the *Han Kitāb* authors but also within the broader development of Islām in China. Wang Daiyu emerged from the Hall Scripture School tradition, founded in the sixteenth century by Hu Dengzhou. This educational system developed a curriculum that preserved core Islamic sciences—especially *fiqh, kalām,* and *taṣawwuf*—while integrating elements of classical Chinese literature. Through Arabic and Persian texts, Chinese Muslim scholars engaged deeply with traditional Islamic learning, including the metaphysical and ethical teachings of key Ṣūfī figures such as Ibn ʿArabī, Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, and Saʿdī of Shīrāz.

The era also saw the rise of a distinctive body of literature known as the *Han Kitāb*, comprising Islamic works written in Chinese. Muslim scholars appropriated Chinese terminologies, reinterpreting them through an Islamic lens. Wang Daiyu's *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* was one of the earliest and most influential works of this tradition. As both a theoretical exposition and practical guide, it clarified Islām's distinctiveness from Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. His method of translating Islamic concepts into Chinese with philosophical precision shaped later *Han Kitāb* scholarship. By the eighteenth century, this influence matured in the writings of scholars like Ma Dexin and Liu Zhi, who further refined Wang's framework and gained recognition even among the imperial elite. This article identifies a previously uncharted intellectual linkage between Wang Daiyu in Nanjing and Hu Dengzhou of Xianyang, thereby highlighting a continuous scholarly tradition overlooked in earlier studies. Arabic and Persian sources further affirm the depth of Wang's grounding in the broader Islamic canon. While the Sino-Arabic script *xiao'er jing* (小儿经) emerged about a century later, its usage remained limited. This study includes a revised transcription of a *xiao'er jing* manuscript with English, Arabic, and modern Chinese translations to complement the analysis. Wang Daiyu's *Zhèngjiào Zhēnquán* thus stands as a pivotal text for understanding how Chinese Muslim scholars articulated Islamic principles in a Chinese context and preserved them through intellectual synthesis.

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